



Cronecle

Newsletter of the Lower Hutt Women's Centre

Hakihea 2010 Vol.18 No.5



Hope you have peaceful and joyful and restful holidays. We close on the 24th December 2010 and open again on the 25th January 2011

In this Issue:

- ◇ Workshops and Courses
- ¥ Women's Studies At Vic.
- ☒ Under the India Spell
- **HIV Gel**

Women's Centre Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday 10am – 5pm

Friday 9am – 5pm

Ph: 04 569 2711 Fax: 04 570 2820

Email: info@lhwc.org.nz

186 Knights Road, Central Hutt

Lower Hutt 5011

Thanks to all the women that helped put the newsletter together. Thanks to Sandra Dickson and Stephanie Parashar for your stories.



FREE COMPUTER LESSONS AND FREE ACCESS COMPUTER

The Women's Centre has a free public access computer available for all women to use during our opening hours. We have programmes such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, Pagemaker, Mavis Beacon Typing Tutor, Publisher and Power Point; Internet and Email access.



book a lesson

We are now offering offering free half hour or hour computer lessons with our computer tutor, Natalie Gray. We are offering the lessons two days per week - Monday and Friday. If you want a lesson just phone the centre to book in a time.

At present we charge for printing and paper but the computer use, internet and email is totally free. If you want to use the computer just phone up and book in. You can send e-mails, surf the net or whatever else you need to do. **Phone: 5692 711 to**

Friendship Group

We are a facilitated group who meet weekly for discussions and occasionally an outing.

Our focus is on learning about friendship, maintaining, developing and exploring the ideas.

Friendships are a vital source of emotional sustenance. As well as providing the pleasure of companionship, your friendship network offers you a sense of support and belonging.

This group is open to all women and you can join the group by turning up to the Women's Centre on Thursdays from 10am to 12noon.

Our ability to make and sustain friendships is influenced by our ability to develop and maintain a nurturing relationships with ourselves.

Facilitator: Yvonne Broadley

If you are interested please phone or come along.

All welcome.
For more information 5692711

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

The Women's Support Group is for support or if you are having a hard time coping with stress, day to day hassles, depression or oppression.

You don't need to book, just turn up.

Every Wednesday at 1pm - 2.30pm
Facilitator: Julie Smart



My Mother My Self

The inspiration to run the Workshop "My Mother My Self" has grown out of Women Who Love Too Much workshops. Guilt was one of the emotions that women identified, through these workshops, as influencing them today.

The workshop will look at the issues of guilt including; mother guilt, our mother's guilt – how much did we inherit from her, and how we are controlled through guilt.

Other issues include; looking at concepts of what stops us from living our own authentic lives, our relationship with our mother, how our relationship with our mother influences how we are today.

"Understanding what we have with our Mothers is the beginning of understanding ourselves".

"Our Mothers had not raised us to feel

comfortable with autonomy, sexuality, a life different from theirs". Both quotes from Nancy Friday in My Mother My Self.

This is an experiential workshop and participants need to have a commitment to their own development and need to have previously attended other growth groups.

Weekend Course:

Facilitator: Ally Andersun

Dates: Friday 8 Saturday 9 and Sunday 10th April 2011

Time: Friday 7 – 9,30pm, Sat 10-5pm Sun 10-4.30pm

Venue: Women's Centre

Enrol: Only by payment or deposit

Cost: \$62/\$31 Waged/Low waged

10 maximum and 6 Minimum for course to commence.

Self Development for Women Using the Psychodramatic

This weekend will give participants opportunity to explore personal issues using the psychodramatic method. This workshop will be useful for women wanting to expand and develop their experience of life and the issues that hold them back. Women new to the psychodramatic method are welcome.

Dates: Friday 13 Saturday 14 and Sunday 15th May 2011

Venue: Women's Centre

Enrol: Only by payment or deposit

Cost: Waged \$62 Low or Unwaged \$31

Participants are expected to attend the full course

6 Minimum for course to commence and 7 Maximum.

Facilitator: Ally Andersun

Once you
accept yourself
there is no
reason to hold
anything back

this is your
world honour
it as your
own and
enjoy its gifts

[DO YOU WANT
To learn more about
yourself?
To have fun?
To be more confident?
To grow in self respect?
To grow in self worth?
To grow in self esteem?
To accept yourself as you
are?
To develop an understanding
and respect of yourself and
others?

[ENROLMENT FORM
SELF ESTEEM FOR TEENAGERS

Name:
Address:

Phone:
Email:
Please post to:

Lower Hutt Women's Centre
186 Knights Road

Lower Hutt
For more information:

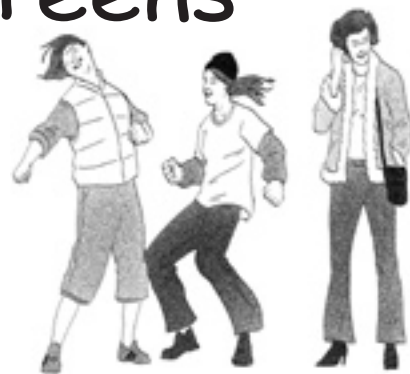
Phone: 569 7211 or
Email: info@lhwc.org.nz



LOWER HUTT WOMEN'S CENTRE
186 KNIGHTS ROAD
LOWER HUTT
PHONE: 569 2711
EMAIL: INFO@LHWC.ORG.NZ

We are all different
Who we are
What we like
What we don't like
Our culture and our
background
There is no-one else
quite like you

Self Esteem for Teens



Dates: 10 Weeks
beginning Tuesday
15th March 2011
4-6pm
Cost: \$40
Two weeks off for
school holidays

[FACILITATOR BIOS.

Johanna Pibal has a Playcentre Federation Certificate, a BA in Education and Psychology, a BA HONS in Psychology with a counselling paper in Education, a Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences (Child Mental Health), MA in Psychology and has completed Family Therapy and Group Work training.

Johanna has many years of experience tutoring and facilitating learning groups for young children, adolescents, and adults. She has been involved in the Lower Hutt Women's Centre over the past 18 years.

Self Esteem Workshops

For Women

Lower Hutt Women's Centre
186 Knights Road
Lower Hutt
5692 711

Now is the time for all good women to stand up and say who we will be

We now have **Self Esteem Workshops on a Friday morning and a Tuesday Evening.**

Each workshop is separate. You may attend one or as many as you like. Creche is provided for **pre-school children only** without extra charge only on Friday morning. Please make enquiries about babies because they need a lot of attention and we have one creche worker. The workshop is for women only so try to avoid planning on taking your children into the workshop.

Time: Friday morning 9.45 - 12noon and Tuesday evening 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

The workshop starts right on time at 10am and 6.30pm and late comers can't go into the morning workshop.

If you have children you need to arrive about 20 minutes early to settle them in.

Cost: Friday \$2.00 and Tuesday \$5.00

All women welcome.

You don't need to enrol, just turn up.

Facilitators:

Friday Morning Stephanie Brockman

Tuesday Evening Julie Smart



Friday Morning

2011

Accepting Responsibility for Self	Jan 28
Coming to Grips with Feelings	Feb 4
Talking About Ourselves	Feb 11
Beliefs About Self	Feb 18
Expressing Pride in Self	Feb 25
Letting Go of the Past	Mch 4
Respecting Self and Others	Mch 11
Striving for Pure Motives	Mch 18
Putting Yourself in Neutral	Mch 25
Having the Courage to be Imperfect	April 1
Developing Courage	April 8
Willpower	April 15
Anger as a Strength	April 22
Developing Self Knowledge	April 29
Self Love	May 6
Acknowledging Self	May 13
Enhancing Self in Terms of Awareness	May 20
Acceptance and Use of Strengths	May 27
Positive Thought and Talk	June 3
Messages About Self	June 10

Tuesday Evening

2011

Developing Courage	Jan 25
Willpower	Feb 1
Anger as a Strength	Feb 8
Developing Self Knowledge	Feb 15
Self Love	Feb 22
Acknowledging Self	Mch 1
Enhancing Self in Terms of Awareness	Mch 8
Acceptance and Use of Strengths	Mch 15
Positive Thought and Talk	Mch 22
Messages About Self	Mch 29
Accepting Responsibility About Self	April 5
Coming to Grips with Feelings	April 12
Talking About Ourselves	April 19
Beliefs About Self	April 26
Expressing Pride in Self	May 3
Letting Go of the Past	May 10
Respecting Self and Others	May 17
Striving for Pure Motives	May 24
Putting Yourself in Neutral	May 31
Having the Courage to be Imperfect	June 7

Assertiveness for Women

Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. It is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication which is self-enhancing and expressive. Acting assertively will give you the opportunity to feel self-confident and will generally gain you the respect of yourself and your peers and friends. It can increase your chances for honest relationships, and help you to feel better about yourself in everyday situations.

Dates: 6 Weeks beginning Wednesday 16th February 2011

Time: 7-9pm

Cost: \$50

Enrol WEA 5692292

Facilitator: Stephanie Brockman

Menopause for Women

If you are starting menopause, experiencing full on symptoms, post menopausal or just curious about what lies ahead this course is for you. We will look at different aspects of menopause, physical, emotional, spiritual, social and psychological. We will have guest speakers and discussion.

What is Menopause?

Menopause literally means cessation of menstruation or last period. It marks the end of a woman's fertile years when the ovaries produce lower levels of the reproductive hormones oestrogen and progesterone.

The average age for menopause in New Zealand is 51.5 years. 'Perimenopause' is the official term

Dates: Six weeks beginning 30th March 2011

Time: 7-9.00pm

Cost: \$50

Enrol WEA 5692292

Facilitator: Ally Andersun

used to describe the average of five or so years up to the last period.

When periods have stopped for a year it can be assumed that a woman is post-menopause. After menopause the body achieves a new hormonal balance by producing hormones from the adrenal glands, the brain, muscles, and hair follicles as well as continuing to produce lesser amounts of hormones from the ovaries.

Anger as a Strength

Anger is a misunderstood emotion and energy. This training is skill based on providing opportunities and techniques to express anger using tools of assertiveness.

Tutor: Ally Andersun

Dates: 6 Weeks beginning Wednesday **25th May 2011**

Time: 7-9pm

Cost: \$50

Enrol: WEA 5692 292 Facilitator: Ally Andersun

Women Who Love Too Much (Workshop One) **(Codependency/Addiction/Losing yourself in Relationships)** **Weekend Course**

Dates: Frid 11, Saturday 12 and Sunday 13
March 2011

Time: Frid: 7-9.30pm 10-5pm each other day

Venue: Women's Centre

Enrol: Only by payment or deposit

Cost: Waged \$62/Low or Unwaged \$31

Facilitator: Ally Andersun

6 Minimum and 10 Maximum for course to commence

Participants are expected to attend the full course.

Workshop One is an educational weekend. This weekend will give participants an opportunity to explore their own issues around co-dependency and process addiction, the origins of your behaviour and ways of changing and developing in yourself.

Women Who Love Too Much , co-dependency, relationship addiction; all names which reflect different aspects of this issue that some women have in relationships. If you have difficulty with relationships; partners, children, parents, then this workshop may help you in understanding how to look at your behaviour in the relationship and where that behaviour comes from. This workshop will help women that want to look at the damaging or dysfunctional relationships they have been/or are in. Using the group work process and action methods we will begin the process of personal recovery

Women Who Love Too Much **(Workshop Two)** **(Codependency/Addiction)**

Weekend Course

Dates: Frid 10 Saturday 11 and Sunday 12
June 2011

Time: Frid: 7-9.30pm 10-5pm each other day

Venue: Women's Centre

Enrol: Only by payment or deposit

Cost: Waged \$62/Low or Unwaged \$31

6 Minimum for course to commence and 10 Maximum

Participants are expected to attend the full course.

Facilitator: Ally Andersun

This weekend is for women that have completed the first weekend. This weekend will be for women that want to work therapeutically with these co-dependency issues. The workshop will give participants an opportunity to explore their own issues around co-dependency and process addiction. We will also explore the origins of your behaviour and ways of changing and developing in yourself.

Free Legal Advice

The Women's Centre has free 30 minute consultations available during the first week of each month. Phone the Centre and make an appointment.

The primary objective of this consultation is to advise you if you have a legal problem, and whether you need to see a solicitor. If you do need to see a solicitor the lawyer can advise you about your eligibility for Legal Aid and give you some idea of the legal procedures involved in solving your particular problem.

If you don't have a legal problem the lawyer is sure she can give you some sound practical advice

anyway.

The lawyer can also advise you about facilities available to help you solve your own problems, such as the Disputes Tribunal, Family Court Counselling etc. All consultations are held in private and are strictly confidential.

Who for? This service is being offered to all women.

When? and Where? During the first week of the month at the offices of Thomas Dewar Sziranyi Letts, Level 2 Corner of Queens Drive and Margaret Street.

Art Workshop

There will be a variety of art workshops next year; including Weaving with Hara-akeke, Clay, Painting and Mosaics. Dates haven't been set yet.

Homeopathy

A great opportunity to experience the benefits of homeopathy

Hello! My name is Helena Tobin, and I'm passionate about making homeopathy accessible to everyone. Homeopathy is all about the individual. We believe in empowering you to make positive health decisions by working with your *individual* requirements.

What Can Homeopathy Do? Homeopathy is powerful system of natural medicine which can treat a wide range of health issues, both physical and mental including:

And many more... in fact anything that prevents you from functioning at your best. **What's Involved in Consulting a Homeopath?** Because homeopathy attempts to treat the 'whole person' the homeopath's interview is in-depth. The initial consultation is usually between one to two hours and follow-ups are around half an hour. There are no invasive examinations and you don't need to stop any current medication you may be on. Confidentiality is assured. I am aware that my normal fee of \$85 per first consultation is too much for a lot of us. **Therefore I have decided to work for a donation only for my Women's Centre clients. Helena Tobin Phone: 569 6164 Mobile: 021 161 3987**

VUW Gender and Women's Studies Bites the Dust

By Sandra Dickson

If you want to study Gender and Women's Studies, give Victoria University a miss – their programme, first established in 1974, has been dumped.

The department were advised by the University in November 2010 that they would cease to exist just three months later. Programme Director, Dr Lesley Hall is to be made redundant in May 2011.

What happened?

In May 2010 the GWS Working Party met and produced recommendations with two options for the programme. The first, and preferred, option from the GWS Working Party was the development of a new interdisciplinary gender studies programme, integrating expertise throughout the university. The second option was shutting the programme down.

This document was made available to the Gender and Women's Studies department in September 2010. In October 2010, a University "change proposal" group was established. They called for submissions over the next five weeks. Despite this corresponding with students finishing for the year, the group received fifty-seven submissions from interested people.

The "change proposal" group say in their resulting report that those who supported the programme were confused about whether they wanted the existing set-up or an inter-

disciplinary set-up; didn't understand the harsh economic reality of university now; and were making claims of GWS usefulness that could not be proven.

According to the "change proposers", running the programme across disciplines in an integrated way is too hard and too expensive.

What wasn't said

This wasn't about numbers of students enrolling. Which is just as well, since the University unilaterally cancelled intakes to GEND 101, the GWS Major, and all post-graduate courses of study following the retirement of long-time staff member Alison Laurie in April 2010. It's almost as if they had already decided what would happen next.

This wasn't about politics, apparently. Despite GWS paying intimate attention to how gender and sexuality are constructed, how power relations are maintained and re-created. The "change proposers" say repeatedly that gender studies is important, and reject comments from submissions to them that this process is politically motivated:

There were two fundamental issues that underpinned much of the Decision Panel's discussions. The first, very easily resolved in the affirmative, was whether gender studies should continue as a topic of study across the University.

What happens now?

The "change proposers" recommend:

- a new "high-level" gender studies implementation group, made up of Associate Deans from each faculty, who will audit current gender teachings in their

department, and help interested students work out what to study. They will report annually on course developments.

- A new gender studies network be established for staff and post graduate students with research and teaching interests in gender and sexuality. This will be run by a new .25 full time equivalent “network co-ordinator”, who will run seminars and lecture series on gender research
- The new network will identify supervisors for students interested in gender and sexuality studies, and tell them about scholarships
- A new annual gender focussed conference at VUW

The School of Gender & Women’s Studies is under threat...



PROTEST!

**Bring signs, banners,
friends & noisemakers.
All genders welcome
CAKE will be provided**

**HUNTER BUILDING
COURTYARD
12 NOON
WEDNESDAY 28th MAY**

**Bannermaking 9am Women's Space
(women only)**

But why no expertise?

The problem with many of these proposals is that it is difficult to trust VUW’s intentions when it comes to Gender and Women’s studies. This process has been fraught in the extreme, and many feel the programme has been under attack for several years. Leaving it up to Associate Deans to work out how their department does gender might be just fine, or it might be disaster. I can remember laying sexual harassment charges against one Head of Department when I was at VUW due to his continued appalling behaviour. What is the guarantee Associate Deans will have any commitment to gender equality? Why has no expert advice been sought from

the programme with this specialism?

There are no safeguards built into these new proposals. No commitment to introducing quality courses to continue to keep gender on the agenda. No reference to following best evidence available in terms of gender and sexuality research. Nothing about gender equality. With the looseness of the current wording, a sociology course could introduce evidence that women are as violent as men according to some (exceptionally flawed, but that's another article) pieces of research – and call it their “gender component”.

Without the political component of Gender and Women's Studies – the commitment to challenging oppression and inequality, naming discrimination and researching how it is maintained, these new options without guidelines are dangerously open to being co-opted. Or to not happening at all – read Josie's story to see how it's been for students enrolled this year

Josie's Story

“I graduated this year from Victoria university with a hard won major in Gender and women's studies. In my final year it was becoming evident that finishing my degree was going to be a challenge. First of all, the Gender and women's studies department was moved from Kate Edgar house on campus at Kelburn to Karori which made it harder to access invaluable resources as well as have a place to network and study. Then being able to enroll in key third year papers that I needed to do in order to finish my degree became uncertain, as often the papers were not open for enrollment until the first week of the trimester or not run at all.

To apparently solve this issue, papers were introduced as supplementary papers from other departments. For me this was not a solution nor was it satisfactory as I was doing a Gender and women's studies degree, not any of the other subjects offered as replacements. The third year supplementary papers were in film, media studies, history, education and sociology and unless you had done the prerequisite first and second year papers you could not enroll in them. As I came from none of the other disciplines this made the apparent solution to lack of Gender studies papers redundant to myself and

no doubt many other students in the class.

I begged and pleaded my way into a third year film paper after being initially flatly refused entry for lack of prerequisite papers only to have to drop it as it clashed with the other two core gender papers that were being run that trimester. In desperation I talked to the head of the Gender department, who after looking through my other third year papers considered that one of my Social science papers could probably do as a supplementary paper. I was able to use this paper to supplement a Gender and women's studies paper but this was not what I had wanted out of my degree. At my graduation this year I had anticipated that my degree would consist of all the Gender and women's papers that I had read about on the Victoria course website prior to my first year of study as these had inspired me to undertake my degree there in the first place.

I am deeply disappointed that the University I chose to fulfill my lifelong ambition of having a Gender and Women's studies degree treated my major and one of my passions as unimportant and even dispensable.”

UNDER THE INDIA SPELL

I thought coming back to the village would be relaxing and peaceful. Boy was I wrong. My house was a bomb site with builders slopping cement everywhere. My husband was no longer available, I was confined to the bedroom and made to keep the windows closed, my drinking and washing water was bright orange, and my only visitors were well meaning but very irritating aunties and other family members, and this was only my first day back. There were many more visitors to come, and each one of them would have so many wonderful words of advice for me. In between all of this I had a newborn baby to care for...one that spent A LOT of time crying.

One evening while I was eating my dinner (which by the way is always the time when babies cry.) Riya was being held by her Auntie Nirmala. As if on cue - she started to cry. Nirmala tried to settle her by jiggling and swaying her across her lotus positioned thighs rustling Riya in the folds of her red polyester sari. Suddenly, her breast was being pulled out of her sari blouse, and her dark brown Indian aunty nipple was about to be placed into Riya's mouth. I nearly choked on my dal...my stomach lurched. Everything in my whole body screamed "THIS IS WRONG!!" Oh my god! "Please Riya - recognise she is not your mother, spit her milk out!" I telepathically sent to Riya. She did seem to splutter. Later we joked that Auntie Nirmala's milk was too spicy for Riya. I got up from my meal, went over to Riya and took her into my arms. They had really gone too far. Now here I was, UPSET AGAIN! When was I not upset? Touchy, tearful, emotional, sensitive, unsure, doubting, uncertain of myself, my role, Riya? What she wanted? What everyone's

roles were. Who was I? Who had I become? I was so confused, paranoid, sleep deprived and depressed I was struggling to get a grip on what was "normal." Each day I was presented with at least two cultural challenges, one family challenge, and one environmental challenge.

"Riya, Riya. My darling I am so sorry I did not protect you. I will take you away from here. We will be safe soon." I said to my baby. I felt so fiercely protective of her. I held and held her in my arms for hours that night. The never ending well of tears leaking out of my eyes was enough to moisten the parched Rajasthani desert.

I was desperate to get out of India and return to New Zealand. It was now late November, and we were awaiting Riya's citizenship application to be approved in Wellington. I started looking into flights, it was actually becoming a reality! But of course I had run into the Christmas rush, it was not looking hopeful we would get home in the next four weeks. I had managed to procure Riya's Birth Certificate in Delhi earlier when she was six weeks old. That is another whole story in itself, involving visits to at least five overly officious extremely old fashioned offices attended by ancient clerks buried under piles of old paper files, tattered, sealed and stamped. Not an ounce of modern technology in site. No photocopier, computer, or even a neon sign in sight. The council type department staff were happy, joyous and strangely compliant that day. The energy was unusually bright and cheery in the Birth Certificate Section because according to the political parties making the laws, the more people who hold birth certificates, the more voters there will be.

Birth Certificate in hand. Yet it still had to be stamped and verified at the District Courthouse, which required an "affidavit" granted by yet another official antique office in another part of town. The "affidavit" was typed painfully slowly

by an antiquated manual typewriter driven by an equally antiquated office person. The “affidavit” is quite a spectacular document and is my absolute favourite of all Indian official documents. This particular paper gets a Ten Rupee, or sometimes a One Hundred Rupee “Stamp” (depending on how serious the affidavit is you are swearing) on the top of the paper which looks like a giant postage stamp crossed with an actual note of currency. The information from the ten or one hundred rupee affidavit then gets cross referenced into a huge bound book, and stamped and sealed all over again. Much “stamping” is going on in India I can tell you, it is an understatement to say there is quite a ridiculous amount of “red tape” in India.) But they LOVE IT! Every single affidavit produced, and copied into the bound book is handed over so ceremoniously, each leaf of paper is handled with such pomp and pride.

Meanwhile, my mother is in NZ having an equally tough time. I had signed and sealed all of Riya’s citizenship papers and couriered them faithfully back to her. She immediately took them in to be processed at the Wellington office. The NZ clerk noted my signature had not been dated. “I am sorry, the application is incomplete, it needs to be dated and re-signed.” My mother gritted her teeth and snarled. “These papers have come all the way from India. We are on the knife’s edge of time and stress right now. If you



do not process these papers today, you may have a death on your hands.” She was that worried about me. The official duly processed the papers that day.

You see prior to that, the Wellington office had already denied the first application for six week old Riya’s NZ citizenship because the photo background (Photo had been taken in India at an official passport photo shop) was “too blue.” That hiccup delayed our application by at least five working days, which felt like an absolute eternity for me. The stress was immense coming from all angles during that little pocket of time in November/December 2006. And I still haven’t even told you about the major accident with Riya.

I wasn’t allowed outside the compound of our house, but I wrangled permission to be able to go up on the roof everyday for some fresh air and sunshine. Our house was still a construction zone, the staircases were unevenly cemented, covered in globs of cement, dusty gravelly slippery stones, and brick rubble. You really had to watch your step. I was terrified of slipping and dropping Riya every time I went up and down the stairs, so we had decided to carry her in the car seat capsule for safety. The other danger was that QUITE OFTEN the builders and labourers would accidentally drop bricks and bits and pieces from the roof down below. Let me tell you there are NO HEALTH AND SAFETY LAWS in India. No hard hats, goggles, fluoro vests, gloves, dust masks, or overalls. The women look fabulous however decked out in their shimmery saris and skirts. Their embroidered veils sweep the ground as they carry infants on their hips, while balancing a tray of cement, sand or half a dozen bricks on their head. The men wear very little at all, just a lungi (Ghandi nappy type garment). Sorry, I am digressing.

One day, I was coming back downstairs in the early evening. Dinesh had a ‘thing’ about us being out after dark, which in December in the Northern Hemisphere is about 6.00pm. There

were so many rules and cultural superstitions. He considered dusk a time when ghosts and spirits can cause accidents. Dinesh had come to help me back down and popped sleeping Riya in the car seat capsule. He draped her pale yellow cotton shawl over her and made his way down the stairs. A few moments later I heard a scuffle, then Riya's familiar "wa wa" cry.

Dinesh came back up the stairs carrying Riya in one arm and the car seat in the other. "We fell" he said looking worried. "The car seat handle slipped and she fell out, but I caught her..." He said quickly. I was trying to inspect Riya but the light was fading. I could feel some small gravel stones around her neck area and on top of the shawl. "How far did she fall Dinesh? Did she fall on the ground?" I asked starting to panic.

"Let's go downstairs so I can see in the light"

"Slowly slowly." Dinesh warned. I could tell he was worried. When we got downstairs I could just make out the beginning of a lump, bruise and a one centimeter square graze on the top of Riya's forehead.

"How far did she fall to get this on her head?" I asked Dinesh.

"She didn't hit the ground. She just hit her head on the plastic handle." Dinesh said, demonstrating how the plastic handle had not been clicked into place and had slipped.

"I don't believe she got this bump and the gravel on her neck from bumping her head on the plastic. Tell me the truth Dinesh! Why won't you tell me what happened!" I screamed at him. I wanted to take Riya to hospital to get her checked, I was in panic mode.

Unfortunately our brother in law had taken our car to a temple twelve kilometres away to do a puja and wasn't due back for at least one hour. "Let's go on the motorbike then." I demanded. "Riya will be alright shanti shanti, stop worrying. "Just wait. She is not crying now, see she is fine. "

Dinesh said rubbing her head. Clearly he did not want to take me anywhere in my hysterical state. I really felt I could lose control at that point. I was a qualified social worker, and had worked in child protection. I remembered a case of a baby that had been hit on the head and died. I couldn't bear the pain. I know it doesn't seem quite as bad now looking back. **BUT AT THE TIME**, I kind of understood how it might feel for a mother to lose her child. I really thought my baby might get brain damaged, or even go into a coma and die. At the least, my perfect baby was **DAMAGED**.

After all I had been through to actually **HAVE RIYA**. Suffering seven miscarriages, enduring the most stressful nine months of my **ENTIRE LIFE**. Followed by a **VERY PAINFUL** labour and birth. Then, to top it all off.... the lovely cherry on top....a nasty case of Post Natal Depression! What a lovely beginning to life... And now she was being dropped on her head!



In the end, Riya was OK. But, you can imagine how important getting out of India, and returning to New Zealand was becoming for me, it was all just too much. I was **VERY**

CLOSE to completely losing the plot. One day, I was **VERY CLOSE** to jumping off the roof with Riya in my arms.

One thing however, was working in my favour - Dinesh and his family were actually happy with the idea I return home to New Zealand for a **HOLIDAY**. It was quite within the Indian cultural norm for a new mother to return to her own family in the last months of pregnancy, have the baby and to stay for up to one year in some cases. All was going to plan. The time frame would be while I was on maternity leave for the next five months. Till about the first week of April....then Dinesh would come out and join me. I as good as had Riya's citizenship in my hand, (Mum had sent it and it was on its way

from NZ), I as good as had two seats confirmed on a Thai Airways flight to New Zealand arriving on the 15th of December (my mother's birthday). Things were actually starting to look positive. I could just about allow myself to start getting just a little bit excited...but I didn't want to tempt fate.

All I had to do was organise our bags and suitcases, train tickets back to Delhi, and one night accommodation in Delhi. Then we would be on that plane. I could hardly believe we would be actually going!

Surely it couldn't be that easy...Bharat, Hindustan, Mother India was not going to let go of us that easily. One last challenge was in wait. It seemed I had not yet filled the ex-pat's quota of annoying and unnecessary bureaucratic procedures. There was to be one final challenge that after ten years of living in India was going to either make or break me.

Stephanie Parashar

Ten Ways to Avoid Rape

Don't put drugs in people's drinks in order to control their behavior.

When you see a woman walking by herself, leave her alone!

If you pull over to help a woman with car problems, remember not to assault her.

NEVER open an unlocked door or window uninvited.

If you are in an elevator and a woman gets in, DON'T ASSAULT HER.

Remember, people go to laundry rooms to do their laundry: do not attempt to molest someone who is alone in a laundry room.

If a woman is drunk, don't rape her.

If someone tells you he raped someone, report him to the police.

Don't tell your friend that being raped was in any way her fault.

Tell your sons, god-sons, nephews, grandsons and sons of friends that it's not okay to rape.

HIV Gel Called Poor Substitute for Women's Rights

By Allyn Gaestel
WeNews correspondent
Thursday, July 29, 2010

Some advocates at last week's International AIDS Conference greeted news of the results of an HIV gel coolly, saying more was needed than a "medicalized" response to an epidemic that travels a social pathway of infringed women's rights.

VIENNA, Austria (WOMENSENEWS)--The preventive benefits of an HIV vaginal gel dominated the headlines of the International AIDS Conference in Vienna last week, but failed to allay the concerns that Mabel Bianco has about the public-health response to the epidemic.

Like many other women's advocates at the meeting, Bianco, an Argentinean feminist and member of Women ARISE, an international coalition of women's HIV networks, thinks women's problems negotiating safe sex and other HIV-AIDS preventions are intrinsically

linked to the abrogation of their rights in other areas, such as land ownership, access to education and participation in politics.

"I'm afraid the response to the epidemic is very medicalized," Bianco said. "There is not a pill for gender equity."

Women continue to carry the weight of the HIV epidemic, numerous advocacy groups said, noting that the proportion of women infected with HIV has been rising.



In sub-Saharan Africa, which hosts two-thirds of the world's HIV-positive population, 60 percent of people living with HIV are women. In the Caribbean and the Middle East, women are more than 50 percent of the HIV-positive

population.

While medical research news is welcome, Purnima Mane, deputy executive director of the United Nations Population Fund, said that women's infection risks are often aggravated by social, rather than medical, issues.

"The vulnerability of women, the issues that are impacting women, haven't changed as much

Do you want to know "What's on in Wellington for Lesbians" then check out the web site www.wellington.lesbian.net.nz



as they should because they are not related to HIV, they are related to women's situations in general," she said in an interview.

Women still struggle to negotiate condom use, are vulnerable to sexual violence, often lack education and access to prevention information and when economically disadvantaged are more likely to use transactional sex or sex work to support themselves. All of these vulnerabilities heighten their risk of contracting HIV.

Women who are free of HIV also bear the disproportionate brunt of caretaking that the disease brings.

"As women we are young women, we are positive, we are sex workers, we are drug users, we are mothers, we are caregivers, we are everything," said Bianco.

The CAPRISA study of the vaginal gel produced the first positive results for this new technology. Unlike condoms, the gel, called a microbicide, does not require the consent of a male sex partner.

With further research advances, women could hypothetically apply the vaginal gel before and after sex to decrease their risk of getting HIV. In the study, the gel was only 39 percent effective, and effectiveness decreased over time. Women who applied the gel regularly were 54 percent less likely to be infected with HIV. But it is a useful first step for scientists to build on, researchers widely agreed.

While some heralded the gel as an

advance for women's control over their own protection, others worried that it might be treated as a substitute remedy for an underlying and deeper social issue: women's lack of agency to negotiate condom use or other protection measures.

Some activists see CAPRISA as emblematic of a wider simplification of women's risks and roles in the epidemic.

Given women's wide exposure to HIV risks, activists want to see an approach that stops focusing on individual women's risk groups and makes a broader link to women's overall rights.

"We will be talked about as mothers, we will be talked about as partners, they will talk about our roles; but they

forget about our rights," said Everjoice Win, the international head of women's rights at ActionAid, an international anti-poverty agency.

Kiren, an HIV-positive woman from Malaysia, agreed with that criticism. "In order to tackle HIV we need to tackle the other issues surrounding HIV."



Part of the problem, according to a report published by UNIFEM at the conference, is that women are not included in the design and appraisal of HIV programs.

“Positive women, in particular, are actually not involved in the response in a meaningful way,” said Nazneen Damji, co-author of the report.

At best, women are involved “tokenistically or formally” but are not empowered to be in leadership or decision-making roles.

The report found a significant lack of documentation of women’s participation as decision-makers in national and international HIV responses. One hundred women interviewed for the report cited barriers, including cultural factors and gender norms (79 percent) and economic disempowerment (58 percent) that prevented their full participation.

A broader, more integrated connection of women’s rights to the anti-HIV agenda should be sought through coalition building among the various populations of affected women, said Meena Seshu, founder of SANGRAM, an HIV organization in India.

“Women who just identify as women, sex workers who identify as sex workers and women who identify as transgender women; these are not

natural alliances,” said Seshu. “But over the years I think one has started realizing that alliances will have to be made if all women are to benefit.”

Some organizations are seeking entry points for more integrative community care of HIV-AIDS.

Robin Smalley, international director of Mothers2Mothers, a multi-national nongovernmental organization that supports HIV-positive mothers in Africa, said that in countries with limited health infrastructure, prenatal checkups can be the only time women seek medical care.



“If we can take that time and engage her in a relationship of trust and support then through her we can engage her whole family,” she said.

Women’s eNews is a nonprofit independent news service covering issues of concern to women and their allies. Women’s eNews is supported by our readers; reprints and licensing fees; and foundations.

Would you like to Comment but not sure how? Visit our help page at <http://www.womensenews.org/help-making-comments-womens-eneews-stories>.

Allyn Gaestel is an international freelance journalist.

Private prison contract goes to nuclear weapons company

14 December 2010

The Minister of Corrections has just announced that the first contract under the Corrections (Contract Management of Prisons) Amendment Act 2009 has been awarded to the British based corporation, Serco - the announcement is available at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/mt-edenacrp-contract-manager-announced> and a copy is provided below.

There are three main areas of concern about this decision. Firstly, there are many issues around the desirability of privatisation of prisons as expressed, for example, by the UN Human Rights Committee earlier this year about the government's privatisation plans: "... the Committee reiterates its concern at the privatization of prison management. It remains concerned as to whether such privatization in an area where the State party is responsible for the protection of human rights of persons deprived of their liberty effectively meets the obligations of the State party under the Covenant and its accountability for any violations, irrespective of the safeguards in place. (arts. 2 and 10)." [1]

Secondly, there is the matter of Serco's less than positive record of running places of detention. One of the well documented cases is Serco's management of the Yarl's Wood detention centre in England, where conditions have been condemned by the Children's Commissioner in 2009 [2] and the Prisons Inspector in 2010 [3]. Following a hunger strike by women detained at Yarl's Wood [4] earlier this year, in March the British High Court gave the go-ahead for a judicial review into the cases of four women held at the detention centre [5], and complaints were lodged with the General Medical Council about the poor standard of health care [6].

In October, a court case was launched on behalf of two mothers whose children became ill after being detained in Yarl's Wood [7]. Also in October, it was revealed that 21 children had suffered injuries while being restrained at the Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham, another Serco run establishment [8].

And as if that isn't bad enough, there is another reason for concern about this announcement - Serco is heavily involved with the manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons.

Serco is one of the unholy trinity of corporations that make up AWE Management Ltd [9]. AWE is the British Atomic

Weapons Establishment, which produces and maintains the British government's nuclear weapons arsenal: "AWE covers the entire life cycle of nuclear warheads; from initial concept, assessment and design, through to component manufacture and assembly, in-service support, and finally decommissioning and disposal". [10]

Apparently not content with their contract to manufacture and refurbish weapons of mass destruction at Aldermaston and Burghfield, AWE Management Ltd is currently bidding to take over the running of Britain's nuclear bomb base in Scotland [11] ..

So much for the provision in the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act (1987) which prohibits any agent or servant of the crown from aiding and abetting anyone involved in the manufacture or possession of any nuclear explosive device ...

References

[1] ***Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee: New Zealand, 7 April 2010, CCPR/C/NZL/CO/5 - <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/hrc98.htm>***

[2] ***See, for example, 'Inside Yarl's Wood: Britain's shame over child detainees: Emily Dugan on the shocking treatment of families in immigration centres', The Independent, 26 April 2009 - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/inside-yarls-wood-britains-shame-over-child-detainees-1674380.html>***

[3] ***See, for example, 'Yarl's Wood detained baby for 100 days, damning report reveals: Prisons inspector Dame Anne Owers says force used against children twice in last year at immigration removal centre', The Guardian, 24 March 2010 - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/mar/24/yarls-wood-children-baby-report> and 'Child asylum-seekers 'split from their families by force': Report on immigration centre reveals heavy-handed treatment of young detainees', The Independent, 24 March 2010 - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-asylumseekers-split-from-their-families-by-force-1926169.html>***

[4] ***'Asylum seekers win new strength to fight after Yarl's Wood hunger strike: 'We are determined to win justice for the violent and vicious way we were treated,' says mother in family detention centre protest', The Guardian, 2 August 2010 - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/aug/02/yarls-wood-hunger-strike-asylum?INTCMP=SRCH>***

I didn't have space to put all the references: If this interests you the full article is the following address: Peace Movement Aotearoa <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/>

Newsletter Collective Statement

We would like this newsletter to be:

- ✂ a creative outlook for writers and artists and that means you
- ✂ a publication that provides information relative to women
- ✂ a publication that informs women on Women's Centre activities and other activities for women in the region.

We know we will make mistakes but hope we can learn from these and be open to criticism and change, and to sharing skills and resources with other groups.

The newsletter collective reserves the right not to publish letters which conflict with Women's Centre philosophy. We may not agree with the views expressed in letters. Some letters are edited in consultation with the writer. We do not publish personal attacks. Letter addressed to the newsletter collective are assumed to be intended for publication. Please indicate clearly if they are not.

Women's Centre philosophy

The Women's centre:

- i) recognise and work in the spirit of the Tiriti o Waitangi;
- ii) confront women's oppression and empower women to take control of their own lives
- iii) oppose discrimination by those who have power against those who do not. This includes discrimination against women, especially Maori women, Pacific Island women, women of colour, lesbians, those who are differently abled, young, old, working class and those with different spiritual beliefs.
- iv) promote a safe supportive environment for all women and children;
- v) promote the sharing of power and resources;
- vi) act as a resource and information centre for the community.

The news letter is free to Women's Centre members and women's organisations. To join the Lower Hutt Women's Centre, send \$27 waged, \$15 unwaged, \$10 teenage, \$5 children to 186 Knights Road Lower Hutt. Membership also entitles you to borrow books, magazines, tapes, videos etc from the library for up to one month.

Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Enclosed is:	
Subscription:	
Waged/Unwages/Teenagers/Children	\$27/\$15/\$10/\$5