



radius

A Newsletter Serving Individuals Working with Female Juvenile Offenders

From Corrections
to Connections:
**Working
-With-
Girls**

Winter 2010

Issue 7

Amicus Training Update:

Amicus has been working in recent years to develop professional trainings based on the Radius model of providing **gender appropriate relationship-focused services to adolescents**. To that end, Amicus has recently delivered two trainings on behalf of the Minnesota Corrections Association that focused on developing gender-responsive practices when working with females, both adult and adolescent, in the correctional system. Below are comments from participants:

“You have changed my perspective on how I see female offenders.”

“Terrific training, Great examples of complex concepts. Trainers showed how care and relationship can be incorporated into most settings. Very insightful. I don’t know if it was these trainers and/or Amicus in general, but I thought the blending of “relationship” with the realities of the work environment was effectively communicated.”

“In the end, this approach [taught in the training] will make a true difference and is cost effective.”

Additionally, on May 19 in Duluth, MN, Amicus presented a training entitled, **“It’s All About the Relationship”** – forming safe, healthy relationships as the first step in helping adolescents achieve goals and function in society.” The training focused on the following topic areas: Gender, strength-based services, relationship-building, grief and trauma, historical trauma and cultural competency.

This training was customized as an in-service training for the MACCRAY (Clara City) school district, and kicked off their new school year. The MACCRAY school district is interested in **relationship-building with students as a way to create a better school culture**, particularly when students are having problems.

All Amicus trainings are **fine-tuned to and adapted to match the specific needs and goals** of the staff or agency being trained, but are always strength-based and focus on forming relationships that empower clients. More training will be offered in other parts of MN and in the metro area over the coming year. If you’re interested in bringing an Amicus training to your organization or area, contact Marissa Steen at Marissa@amicususa.org or 612-348-8570.

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Staff Changes:

Amicus hired **Zayed Lamu** in September of 2009 to work in our Hennepin County Radius Program. Zayed has numerous years of experience in program development and evaluation, most recently acting as Program Manger with Family and Children’s Services. She holds a Masters Degree in Psychology and is a third year doctoral student in the field of psychology. Zayed’s interests reside around the impacts of trauma and violence, and ways in which using community healing influences holistic health and outcomes for community members. She has worked for several years creating programming that addresses both the need for cultural competency when working with youth of color and alternative means of mental health service delivery.

Meet our interns:

Priya Saihgal is a second year MSW student at the University of Minnesota. Her interests are in violence prevention and understanding the impacts of trauma on healthy development. She came to Radius because she wanted to learn more about the juvenile justice system and how the gender responsive programming at Radius can help girls stay out of trouble.

Laura Chapeau is a MSW intern with the Ramsey County Radius program. As a Social Work, Family Practice student at Augsburg College, she is greatly enjoying becoming involved with the Radius program, and getting to know the girls. She has worked with women and girls in several settings, both in Minnesota and abroad, and is impressed with the gender-specific model used within the Radius program. She looks forward to continued involvement and development as she participates in the Radius program!

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Escape from Babel: Toward a Unifying Language of Psychotherapy

by Kasey Curtis, LMFT

Learning how to be helpful is not easy. Each of us decides we would like to become a “helping professional” for a variety of reasons, and some form of “helping” others has something to do with it. But what does “helping” mean? Who “needs” the help? What actions, behaviors, words, ideas really are helpful, and which are not? Does everyone have the same idea of need, or the same desire to be helped?

What do clients need? How does working with me benefit the client in any way? Or, does it benefit at all?

I still attribute it to being an only child—that is, my tendency to face struggles alone and try to work things out on my own. Only recently did I come to the conclusion that it is a little arrogant of me to expect that my clients, who are court ordered to my wonderful services, might not want or think they need someone else involved in their struggles. It is even more arrogant to come alongside these individuals and to assume that I know how I can help them, or know what they need from me. There are a lot of assumptions that come into play here, and many of these are based on my own upbringing and life experience. I can guarantee that this set of assumptions is very different from the set of assumptions my client is working under.

It stands to reason, then, that after admitting my own inability to accurately and respectfully assume what people need from me, that attempting to really be helpful and not a hindrance is a huge learning process. What do clients need? How does working with me benefit the client in any way? Or, does it benefit at all?

We learn many things in graduate school about the how-to’s of respectfully attending to someone’s story and it is an overwhelming amount of information: don’t forget to paraphrase, clarify, challenge, instill hope, validate, notice potentially harmful or psychotic thought or behavior processes and ask the right questions and make the right referrals...the list goes on. There is a lot to keep in mind when someone actually takes the step and begins to tell the intricate story of their life.

In the book “Escape from Babel: Toward a unifying language for psychotherapy practice” by Miller, Duncan, and Hubble, authors look at research that attempts to define the characteristics of relationships that are helpful. To the scholarly, therapeutic model analyzer, the results were a bit surprising.

Authors cite research conducted by Lambert (1992) and Frank & Frank (1991) and arrived at four “common factors” of helpful therapeutic relationships. According to these researchers, change in counseling most frequently occurs when the following four elements are present: relationship factors, extra-therapeutic factors, the therapy model being used, and placebo/hope/expectancy.

To briefly define, the first common factor refers to the therapeutic relationship. Authors describe this term as meaning the client is motivated and engaged in the work being attempted with the counselor, and the counselor matches the clients’ expectations on what it means to be empathic, warm and genuine. This positive relationship accounts for 30% of the success of counseling.

Extra-therapeutic factors refers to what is happening outside of the counseling/helping relationship that is actually supporting the changes the client is attempting to make and maintain. This accounts for 40% of the success of counseling.

Only 15% of the success of counseling is based on what therapy model the counselor is using. In most cases, it seems that it really isn’t making a huge difference as long as the relational piece is present.

Finally, if the counselor models the spirit of hopefulness about change being possible, this seems to increase the client’s hopefulness. The client is more likely to generate hope about counseling and to become more involved if they get the impression the counselor really believes in the work. Expecting positive things to occur does seem to influence the outcome. This factor accounts for the final 15%.

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For the sake of time, I am not going to discuss research methods and results. What is apparent after reading this book is that so much of how we want to measure our work as being good may not be in the best interest of our clients (i.e. therapeutic model, etc). The ideas and questions this information brings up are many, without sufficient time to address them all. In this moment, personally, I find that the implications are that we as helping professionals must

be working to provide the clients what they say they need, not what we think they need.

Perhaps the true work, then, lies not in us trying so hard to change others, but in our adjusting our own expectations. When our work is really truly based specifically on the feedback we are getting from clients regarding what they need and want, that is the starting point for change. And just when we think that our clients are the ones responsible for doing all the changing, we may find that we change too in the process—for their benefit, and for our own.

The Little Book of Conflict Transformation

John Paul Lederach (2003)

The use of the term *transformation* is very meaningful in this book. The book challenges the use of terms such as *resolution* and *management*. These commonly used terms may serve to erase the problem instead of allowing change. Transformation more than allows change: it encourages it.

The author bases this on two realities: Conflict is normal in human relationships and conflict is a motor of change. Conflict transformation attempts to see the whole picture when it comes to conflict. It not only looks at the immediate situation, but also underlying patterns and context. Examining only the immediate situation may point to an oversimplified way to resolve the issue.

The author uses his family's example of fighting over whose turn it is to do the dishes. To solve the immediate problem, a parent may just assign a child to do the dishes that night. However, there are hidden factors at play, such as the negotiation of power and decision making in the family relationship. If an arbitrary decision about the dishes is made the same fight may crop up when another chore is due.

Key questions to ask in order to address context and underlying patterns are, "Who's washed them in the past? Who will wash them in the future?" These questions negotiate and foster a feeling of equality and fairness, creating a pattern that is desirable and inclusive of all.

This is a worthwhile read that helps identify an approach that not only resolves conflict, but identifies and constructs what is beneficial for all.

RESOURCE CORNER

Step Up: A Curriculum for Teens Who Are Violent at Home

Lily Anderson and Greg Routt, 2004

<http://www.mincava.umn.edu/documents/stepup/intro/stepupintroduction.html#id2355641>

Summary: This 21-session curriculum for teenagers who are violent at home and their parents, provides separate activities for parents and teenagers as well as combined activities for both. Topics for parents include Adolescent Development, Consequences for Behavior, Encouraging Your Teen, and Listening to Your Teen. Topics for teenagers include: Understanding Violence, Understanding Power, Understanding Feelings, Understanding Self-Talk, and Responsibility. Combined activities include: Making Amends, Assertive Communication, and Problem Solving Together.

Teen Grief Groups an Eight-Week Curriculum

Scott Johnson, MA, 2000

<http://www.hospicenorthcoast.org/pdf/teengriefgroups.pdf>

Summary: This is an 8-week curriculum for teens who have lost someone they love. Themes include: Family and other changes since the death, Coping, Tools, and Good-byes.

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