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MALE THERAPISTS OFTEN UNFIT TO COUNSEL WOMEN SAY ONTARIO PSYCHOLOGISTS

Toronto: Speakers at a workshop on feminist values in mental health held in Toronto Feb. 9 agreed that male psychologists should not treat women.

Panel chairwoman, Eleanor Burwell, a Carleton University psychologist, said female patients have difficulty developing independence when the therapist is a man because women are trained to depend on men and respect their views.

Dr. Sandra Pyke, a York University psychologist, said male psychologists have ingrained sexual biases. "Gender is all important in our society," said Dr. Pyke. "By the age of three human beings are aware of their roles. Many of the problems of people who come for counselling are tied to their gender."

Psychiatrist Gustav Tolentino said all women are oppressed "whether these women are conscious of it or not" and male therapists must realize this before they can be considered qualified to treat women patients. Sexism is prevalent in our society said Tolentino and it is abnormal and pathological.

"We as men in the mental health field have a lot to learn from women. And those of us who are resistant will have to be made to see. We have to develop a totally new psychology devoid of sexism," he said.

Tolentino advised women in mental health who have trouble with male co-workers because they do not conform to traditional ways of thinking to tell their male colleagues to go to hell.

Guelph University psychologist Dr. Shirley Bowen criticized high school counselling of female students. Most high school guidance counsellors, she said, are middle aged males with traditional sexist views on occupations for women and often advise female students against trying to break into fields traditionally reserved for men. As well, they often steer male students toward university even if they are not academically inclined because it is incumbent upon the male to get a good education.

In an interview after the workshop, Dr. Tolentino condemned psychiatrists who have sexual relations with their women patients and justify their actions by saying they are helping women liberate themselves from sexual inhibitions.

Sexual relations between psychiatrists and female patients is rape because of the power relationship involved said Tolentino. The female patient is especially vulnerable in a relationship with a male psychiatrist, he said, because she has come to him for help in the first place and has been taught to look upon men as authority figures.

Tolentino says psychiatrists who have sexual relationships with patients-- and this practice is prevalent--should be punished. The Ontario Medical Association is aware of the problem but prefers to ignore its existence because of its "protective" attitude towards its members at the expense of patients.

The OMA will continue to do nothing, he added until women who have been victimized by psychiatrists complain.

The West Kootenay Status of Women Council is made up of representatives from Nelson, South Slokan, Slokan Valley, Thrums, Castlegar, Fruitvale, Trail, Rossland and Warfield. Most of us present a group from where we live. We come together two times a month to discuss what news might be of interest, to all of us, what courses and activities might be developed and where. One of us, Susan Charlton, is an appointee to the Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and acts as the liaison between us and that council. We call ourselves a coordinating and educating council and we have a small Secretary of State grant to provide funds for our various projects and for the Newsletter. We sponsor courses at Selkirk College where the Council has been given an office, (Monashee2) Council meetings are held in the Faculty Lounge at Selkirk. All women are welcome to attend. The next meeting will be in March, as yet unscheduled. For information call Women's Centre, 352-9355.

Status of Women Council, contd.

As a political force, we are stronger when we join together, as an educational tool we can learn more if we come together to share. As for recreation, we have much, in our individual selves (that is creative) to share with each other--for joy and support.

The Newsletter keeps us informed of all the important legislation that will affect us as women, and lets us share some of the creative thoughts and feelings we are having about our struggles.

MARCIA

WEST KOOTENAY STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL

AND SELKIRK COLLEGE PRESENT

PERSONAL POTENTIAL

Wednesday, March 6 - 27, 7:30 P.M., Room B-15, Selkirk College.

March 6 - Working Women in the West Kootenays. A panel discussion to illustrate the problems and solutions of all ages and life styles in the West Kootenays.

March 13 & 20 - How to evaluate yourself and assess your capabilities, and Creative Job Search Techniques - with Dr. Cathy Davison, Skill Development Advisor, Selkirk College, and Canada Manpower.

March 27 - How to gain confidence and handle put downs - workshop of skits and role playing organized by the Trail Status of Women

Fees - \$4 per person. Free to all students. For those who enrol in both Personal Potential and Speak Up, a special fee of \$6 will include both courses.

SPEAK UP

Public speaking, speech writing and the use of visual aids and equipment; psychology of women in public world.
Co-sponsored by the West Kootenay Status of Women Council.

- 4 Wednesday evenings at 7:30 P.M. beginning on April 3rd in Room B-15.

INSTRUCTORS: Various resource people will be involved.

FEE: \$4 per person. For those who enrol in both Speak Up and Personal Potential, a special fee of \$6 will include both courses.