



YWCA Edmonton Counselling Services Presents:

TOWARDS HEALING

“Women recovering from trauma and transforming their lives”

Description: This group is intended for people who are struggling with or who have struggled during their recovery from traumatic life events. The sessions involve establishing safety and trust in the group, communication skill-building, education on trauma and goal-setting. All participants will take part in an exercise where they create a 2 page written review of significant life events that have impacted them. These written exercises are then read in the group, using a structured format that ensures safety is maximised. Exercises will include active participation. This group seeks to provide a safe environment for all participants. In this group, participants have the opportunity to engage in an action-based intervention to repair injuries from the past; a technique called Therapeutic Enactment.

Program Objectives: The objectives of the program are to: (1) Assist participants in understanding the impact that their traumatic experience has had on their lives in a systematic and professionally facilitated environment; (2) Provide participants with a group-based learning experience that focuses on communication skills, developing coping skills for dealing with trauma and engaging in on-going therapeutic support when necessary; (3) Provide participants with referrals to other complementary services that may assist them; (4) Provide participants with the opportunity to engage in action-based therapy (i.e., Therapeutic Enactment) as a means of repairing a psychological injury from the past that may be impacting their current functioning; and, (5) Provide participants with the opportunity to set career and transition goals that are personal, realistic and attainable.

Requirements: In order to participate in this group participants must: 1) Be able to commit to attend all 10 sessions; 2) Be willing to actively participate in all exercises; 3) Commit to being a respectful group member; 4) The program is alcohol and drug free while participating in the sessions. Any participant who drinks or uses drugs (not including prescription medications, unless used outside prescribed dosage) prior to or during a session will be asked to leave.

A **key** requirement of the group is that members seek to *understand* each other. Group leaders will establish and maintain group rules to ensure that members interact in a supportive and productive way with each other.

Risks and Benefits: There are risks and benefits to participating in this program. Participating may involve the risk of remembering unpleasant events and may arouse strong and/or unanticipated feelings. Listening to other group members tell their stories and watching group members enact events from their lives may trigger and/or intensify symptoms of trauma or PTSD. Benefits of participating in the program may be an increased ability to live more effectively by improving your ability to cope with issues that arise in areas of your life such as interpersonal relationships, family, friends and career. You may also gain a better understanding of yourself, your goals and your values, which will assist you in your personal and career growth. You may also experience a decrease in a sense of isolation, due to the group-based nature of the program.

Your Responsibilities: Personal commitment to the program is crucial for success. It is important that you be active, open and honest with yourself and the facilitators. You're most important responsibility is to work toward the goals you and the facilitators have agreed upon. Your responsibility as a group member is to work to *understand* other participants, regardless whether or not you *agree* with their statements or beliefs. Participating in the program is often enhanced with additional efforts made outside the group. This effort can include thinking about the material covered in the sessions, monitoring the behaviours you are trying to change, or working on specific skills learned in the program.

Expected Outcomes:

It is expected that participants will: (1) leave with a new understanding of how traumatic and other significant life events may have impacted their recovery and life goals, (2) develop skills for self-regulation and the development of resources for coping with traumatic and other memories, (3) acquire referrals to complementary services, and (4) potentially experience a decrease in their sense of isolation and struggle in transition.

Who Should Attend this Group:

The program is most suitable for:

1. Women who are interested in participating in a group and examining the impact that their traumatic experience has had on their recovery and current ability to function.
2. Women who are interested in acquiring knowledge and skills in dealing with memories of events leading up to, during, or following significant events in their lives.
3. Women who are interested in doing therapeutic work to repair psychological injuries that are negatively impacting them.
4. Women who are able to support their fellow group members who wish to do repair work in the group.

The program is not suitable for:

5. People who, for whatever reason, are unable to maintain their membership in all ten group sessions.
6. People who, for whatever reason, are unable to be active and respectful members in a group-based learning environment.
7. People who, for whatever reason, are unable to maintain sobriety during the 10 sessions of the program. Any group member who is unable to attend the 10-session program without consuming drugs or alcohol is not suitable for this group. Any group member who is found to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol during the 10-session program will be asked to leave immediately.
8. People who feel that exposing themselves to the stories of others in a group setting would be personally harmful or re-traumatizing.
9. People who are actively suicidal.
10. People who are currently or recently experiencing episodes of psychosis (e.g. hallucinations, delusions, breaks from reality).

Additional Information:

Start Date/End Date: TBD, will run group once we have enough participants

Time Frame: 10 Sessions/1 session per week.

Length of each session: 2 hours 45 minutes

Start time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Minimum number of participants required: 5

Maximum number of participants allowed: 8

Cost: This group is offered on a fee-for-service basis. The fee is \$180.00 for the entire group. \$45.00 will be charged for the initial intake assessment interview. Please speak to service coordinator for more details about payment.

How to Sign-up:

Please contact us to schedule an intake session for the group. The intake session will be approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The session will be conducted by one of our practicum students who are completing their Masters in Counselling Psychology degrees. The purpose of the intake session is to determine suitability of fit between yourself and the group.

If you have any further questions please call us at 780-970-6501 or email us at counselling@ywcaedm.org.