



Support Group Descriptions

The Nurturing Program

The Nurturing Program is a structured, fifteen (15) week, curriculum-based course focusing on family interaction, communication and the development of healthy parent-child relationships; facilitators lead the weekly, three (3) hour classes for moms, dads, and children. The ESH Parent-Child Center Nurturing Program is adapted from the curriculum developed by Nurturing Program International to meet the particular needs of a population that has experienced the constellation of issues faced by our clients: homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Having first developed a curriculum for adult women, children ages 3-6, children ages 7-12, the Stone House recognized that we were not meeting the needs of particular populations we serve. We developed an infant curriculum and a teen curriculum to meet the needs of these children.

Reunification Group

The Reunification Group supports, encourages and informs women and men seeking to regain custody of their children from foster care or DSS custody. ESH recognizes that while most mothers and fathers truly desire to care for and nurture their children, they might not be prepared for the practical challenges and realities of parenting. As a result, mothers can find themselves overwhelmed by or resentful of the pressures of caring for their own children – that is, of getting precisely what they thought they wanted. As a result, both women and children suffer unnecessarily.

The Reunification Group serves to make this transition from non-custodial to custodial parent as smooth and positive as possible for both mothers and their children. The Reunification Group supports women throughout the process of seeking to regain custody of their children, prepares them for the reality of once again being full-time parents, helps them adjust to their new family life and create stable, loving homes for their families.

Mom's Support Group

Helping mothers strengthen the bond between them and their children is an essential aim of ESH's Parent-Child Center. To this end, the Parent-Child Center offers an array of facilitated support groups to resident mothers and community members. The weekly "Mom's Group" focuses on such topics including parenting techniques, childhood development and anger management, providing mothers a supportive venue in which to discuss their challenges and concerns, enhance their parenting skills and share their progress, accomplishments and victories.

Child Witness to Violence Group

This group is designed for 8- to 12-year-old children who have experienced or been affected by domestic violence. It is a curriculum-based group that runs for 8 weeks. Children are educated about the dynamics of domestic violence and are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and thoughts. Topics also include feelings, safety planning, children's rights, and the creation of non-violent strategies for moving forward.

Each group is approximately one hour long, from 4:00-5:00 pm on Wednesday afternoons. That hour includes a break, during which the children are provided with snacks.

For the first session, mothers are invited to attend for a little while so they will have an idea of what the children will be working on and so that we can be sure that they have given permission for their kids to take part in the group. The remainder of the sessions are to be attended by the children only.

We Have Feelings: Emotional Management for Children 8-12

Emotional management for children was created, to give children between the ages of 8 and 12 a basic understanding of normal human emotions and how to deal with them in a healthy fashion. Through engaging activities, role playing and interactive games, children are taught how to manage their emotions in ways that do not harm others. The program is not designed as a class, juxtaposing lecturer and pupils, but in stead a fun and interactive play group that communicates very important life lessons. Children are so entertained that they don't even know they're learning!

This program is open for all children who are willing to learn how to identify, interpret and express their emotions in healthy ways.

Coping After Reunification Is Not Granted ("CARING")

ESH's self-designed Coping After Reunification Is Not Granted ("CARING") support group is for women permanently denied custody of their children by the Department of Children and Families. To ESH's knowledge, the curriculum-based CARING is one of the only, if not the only, support group of its kind in the nation. CARING, which employs fundamental grief counseling principles, offers women the opportunity to work through their feelings of grief, shame and remorse – and develop plans for moving forward despite their devastating loss.

Anger Management Work Group

This group is designed to help women (and particularly mothers) change problematic expression of anger. The Anger Management Work Group is a 12-week, curriculum-based program addressing the following topics: what anger is, what anger looks like, anger and parenting, why we choose anger, the origins of anger, suggestions for dealing with anger, effective communication, anger and addiction, anger and boundary development, and self-care. The group provides women the tools to express their feelings in an appropriate and productive manner, thereby enhancing their ability to foster and sustain healthy relationships, stable home environments and positive work situations.

Domestic Violence Support Group

The Domestic Violence Support Group is designed to help women understand the domestic violence they have witnessed or experienced and find ways out of violent situations. The Domestic Violence Support Group combines the sharing of personal stories and the use of prepared materials such as DVDs with instruction on learning to utilize peer support and building a comprehensive network of support. Topics include:

- The definition of domestic violence
- Warning signs
- The cycle of violence
- Myths, statistics and facts about domestic violence
- How domestic violence affects children
- Safety planning and support
- Suggestions for helping
- Self-esteem
- Healthy relationships

Relapse Prevention

Relapse Prevention helps women recognize the symptoms associated with drug and alcohol addiction and relapse. Women are also educated on the medical effects of a variety of drugs. A 12-step recovery program, as well as peer support, is encouraged for participants in this group. While the Relapse Prevention Group is an open group, it is recommended that newly recovering women attend for at least 6 months.

Trauma Support Group

The Trauma Survivors' Group is a semi-closed, curriculum-based, psycho-educational group that runs on a 10-week cycle. The group's goal is to help women understand both the impact of trauma and that they themselves possess the capacity for healing. The Trauma Support Group encourages survivors to tend to the wounds of trauma while continuing to build safer, healthier, and happier lives for themselves and their children.

Topics include:

- understanding trauma
- transforming dysfunctional coping skills into effective coping skills
- trauma and memory
- understanding triggers

- safety and self-care
- self-abuse
- the trauma antidote
- positive connections
- healing of relationships
- redefining family and community

Community Economic Education Development (CEED)

The CEED program makes economic and financial literacy accessible, supports every individual's personal economic development and provides referrals. The mission of CEED is to address the economic disparities affecting low to moderate income women by making economic literacy accessible to all women through groups and individual support.

Personal Economic Program (PEP)

ESH's Personal Economic Planning ("PEP") group, specially designed for individuals whose lives and families have been disrupted by mental illness, substance abuse or domestic violence, helps participants attain financial literacy and move toward economic stability. PEP helps participants:

- Create an economic plan
- Understand the importance of employment
- Identify previously unnoted skills that can be matched with a job or educational track
- Develop the skills necessary to find work and succeed on the job
- PEP is also open to teens; the teen curriculum takes a preventive approach, teaching young people that they can make proactive decisions to further their long-term economic stability. Young men and women learn that they are part of the bigger picture, have choices as consumers and the capability to build wealth.

Women's Business Opportunity Program ("WBOP")

WBOP is a micro-enterprise program, which increases participants' economic literacy, practical economic skills and provides introductory business start-up education. Through WBOP, women conceive, plan, create a business plan and learn how to obtain financing to establish a business. Offered once a year, WBOP provides women with intensive, individualized training in entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise development. WBOP graduates also receive one year of post-course telephone support to assist them with ensuing business challenges or concerns.

Economic Advocacy

Along with the seminars, the CEED program offers one on one Economic Advocacy. With Economic Advocacy, we aim for economic independence by working with clients to improve their credit/debt situation and by working on their economic barriers, through involvement in school, job training, an internship, or employment.