

# ALICE HOUSING

## Healing the Bruises

Healing the Bruises: Healing and Recovery for Child Witnesses of Family Violence employs a holistic and non-punitive philosophy to violence specific interventions. The program addresses the devastation of family violence in the context of the child, their mothers, extended family and the community. The following values and priorities are inherent to the program.

- ✚ Provide a safe place to talk about violence and the child's feelings towards that violence. Children are safe from exposure to violence and mothers from woman abuse.
- ✚ Teach children that violence is learned and the responsibility of the abusive adult. Violence is never the child's fault.
- ✚ Teach that violence is not OK.
- ✚ Teach anger conflict resolution skills.
- ✚ Teach safety skills and plans.
- ✚ Provide socially positive experiences particularly in structured group settings.
- ✚ Support mothers even when the child is the primary client as it is in the best interest of the child to support and assist mothers.
- ✚ Healing the mother and child bond is a critical goal.
- ✚ Not to be judgmental to mothers concerning the perceived damage they may have done to their children and to reinforce to mothers that they can make a difference in the lives of their children.
- ✚ Understand the coping styles and emotional needs of each child as all children are individuals and react differently to witnessing violence even when children witness the same acts of violence in the same family.
- ✚ Help mothers see themselves as proactive parents – not reactive. Try to empower them to see themselves as the healers of their children and that professionals in the community merely complement that belief.
- ✚ Help mothers understand how the abusive partner affected the family dynamic and their ability to be mothers. Help them understand that their parenting was off kilter by the abuse.
- ✚ Children may have unresolved feelings of anger, blame, guilt and a confusion of why the mother did not keep them safe. Children must believe that their mothers love them and are doing the best to keep them safe.

- ✚ Help children adopt healthier manifestations of anger.
- ✚ Encourage women that parenting is here and now and everything they say and do in front of their children counts. It is important for mothers to talk not spank and to tell children the good things they do more than reprimanding them.