

I Don't Feel Alone Anymore

Torture Survivors Help Each Other Heal in Groups

When torture survivors come together in structured groups, profound changes can happen:

"I refound a family and refound some of my old familiar habits — this was a surprise to me."

"The most important thing is I don't feel alone anymore."

"I feel I am able to control my emotions and hostility and I have a feeling of hope."

"During the sixth week we started to talk about the effects of torture and it was difficult. We had to look at what is black in our hearts, but it is now helping me feel relief."

These clients all participated in a group approach to treatment made possible by a \$48,000 grant from the Rose and Jay Phillips Foundation. CVT is developing this approach while continuing to

provide multidisciplinary services to clients.

Group participants work through three distinct levels, from achieving stability to mourning to reconnecting with community. This year 49 clients participated in the pilot project.

"Our group work complements our individual therapy very well," said Rosa Garcia-Peltoniemi, CVT's director of client services. "Our first priority is always what's best for the client. All new clients in St. Paul are carefully evaluated for their readiness to attend group sessions to ensure it will meet their needs. Those who would benefit most from individual therapy and social services receive this level of assistance. All of our clients who participate in groups still get the personal attention they need while

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A New Way to Think About our Work New Tactics in Human Rights International Symposium

"There are a lot of optimistic people working against all odds to change the world." That's what one participant concluded after four intense days at the Symposium. He and more than 400 people from more than 80 countries had spent that time learning about specific new tactics that they will be able to apply to their work, building networks and learning about the importance of tactical and strategic thinking.

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having the opportunity to build new relationships and learn that they are not alone in their pain.”

Chuck Tracy, a clinical social worker, has been working on this project from the beginning. “I have observed a positive response from clients to the group approach,” he said. “The potential therapeutic value can sometimes be greater in a group because there are more people there to affirm the person’s experience and the loss, fear and anger they may be experiencing now. As part of the group process, clients are able to support each other and share techniques and resources that have helped them.”

In exploring group therapy options in Minnesota, CVT is applying what we have learned through our work with torture survivors in West African refugee camps. Since 1999, CVT has helped more than 1,500 Sierra Leonean and Liberian torture survivors heal using group and individual therapy and community programs.

Also, in the past four years CVT has begun to use group interventions to target the specific needs of U.S. clients, such as a support group for women who have been victims of sexual torture.

In these experiences we have been struck by the power of

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The Symposium, held September 29 - October 2 in Ankara, Turkey, was a key milestone in CVT’s New Tactics in Human Rights

Project. The New Tactics project aims to give people working on a broad range of human rights issues access to tools that will help them improve the way they do their work.

Many participants came from torture treatment programs around the world and were able to take home new ideas for healing torture survivors and working to end torture.

You can find more about the New Tactics project, including several new publications, at www.newtactics.org.

I have identified specific tactics which will allow me to solve some problems in my country for which we have not been able to find the best solution.

Participant from Senegal



the
storycloth

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Our mission: To heal the wounds of torture on individuals, their families and their communities, and to stop torture worldwide.

Restoring the dignity of the human spirit

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groups to:

- ◆ Create a sense of safety for clients
- ◆ Reduce symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety
- ◆ Connect people to the group and eventually to the community
- ◆ Reveal to survivors the universality of trauma experiences: “I am not the only one”
- ◆ Tap into the capabilities survivors already possess. The strength-based approach focuses on the survivor’s resilience and adaptive coping mechanisms; group members are able to contribute to one another’s recovery.
- ◆ Provide a vehicle for education and interpersonal healing for more survivors using fewer agency resources

Group work gives clients the opportunity to experience the healing power of participating in a community. They learn that they are not alone in their torture experience, they heal through helping other torture survivors and they develop a support system beyond CVT staff.

One client said, “I learned a lot of things, saw people from different places. We shared — which was hard for me to do, I listened to people’s problems and they listened to mine. It was hard for me to come to this group. I felt nervous, but now I don’t worry about it. This group brought back old memories which were hard and made me sometimes not want to come, but when you are sick you go to the doctor and the injection is painful but later it helps you come to yourself”

We will begin to offer a group therapy option at our Minneapolis site this winter.

As with our individualized model of client care, all new clients are still referred individually for intake consultations and follow-up care with a psychiatrist, a primary care doctor, a nurse and, if appropriate, auxiliary medical professionals, such as physical therapists and massage therapists.



Shop, Entertain, Relax and Support CVT

CVT supporters are an inspiring lot. In the past year people and organizations have opened their homes, shared their profits, held concerts and even written poetry to help raise money and awareness.

When Mark Michelson and Joseph Saavedra heard that CVT would not be holding the annual Healing Gardens Tour this year, the two took matters into their own hands: They spread the word, inviting friends and colleagues to their own Twin Cities home for a one-garden tour and raffle. Their guests learned about torture and CVT’s work and generously gave more than \$3,000.

A number of other Twin Cities-area supporters also hosted private house parties to benefit CVT. They invited people they knew who were likely to be interested in CVT’s work, giving them a chance to learn more as well as the opportunity to give. One host said afterward, “I knew it was something I should do, but I didn’t know that it would turn out to be such an enjoyable evening as well.” Anyone interested in hosting a house party, even outside Minnesota, should contact Mary Kelley at 612 436 4859. While these are private events held on CVT’s behalf, our senior staff members are happy to come and speak.

This holiday season shoppers in St. Paul will be able to put their money where their hearts are. Ten Thousand Villages, a shop specializing in fair-trade goods from around the world, will host a benefit night for CVT. On the evening of December 16, 20 percent of all profits will go to the center. Ten Thousand Villages began holding the benefit nights — there will be 12 this year — five years ago when, according to manager Kathy McGinley, “We decided that we needed to help our local communities as well as artisans around the world. Some of our customers would ask, ‘What are you doing locally?’”

Other inspiring efforts include a concert by contemporary folk singer and songwriter Jeshua Erickson at Grace University Lutheran Church in Minneapolis on November 20 and a book of poetry that a long-time and dedicated friend of CVT plans to publish. (We’ll tell you more about it when it comes out!)

If you’re looking for creative ways to support CVT, you might also consider:

Honoraria. Many donors choose to dedicate their gifts to the honor or memory of a loved one. Others mark important life events, such as birthdays, graduations and bar and bat mitzvahs. Just indicate this on your gift and we will send a special thank you to the honoree or the honoree’s family.

Giving at the office. Many company’s have charitable-giving committees or events. If your company is one of these, why not get involved? We’ll be happy to provide any information you need to suggest CVT as a beneficiary. If your company matches gifts, all you need to do is request an application for a match (usually from your human resources office) and send it to us with your gift for verification.

Upcoming Benefits

December 16, 5 - 8 p.m.

Ten Thousand Villages
867 Grand Ave, Victoria Crossing
St. Paul, Minn.
20 percent of the evening’s sales will be donated to CVT

November 20, 7:30 p.m.

Jeshua Erickson and Steve Wolbrecht
Concert to benefit CVT
Grace University Lutheran Church
324 Harvard St SE
Minneapolis, Minn.

What will you find at
www.newtactics.org?

29 downloadable
publications

from **25** countries,
exploring creative and courageous
tactics people have used to advance
human rights. New Tactics in Human
Rights is a project of CVT.

Do you know anyone who would be interested in learning more about CVT? Please pass on this newsletter or contact us at cvt@cvt.org or 612 436 4800.

CVT Briefs

McKnight Foundation Recognizes CVT Volunteer

Jim Andre has been a friend and advocate for many CVT clients over the years, driving many to and from appointments, helping others find housing and jobs, even helping one client recover essential documents that had been lost. This spring, he spearheaded a letter-writing campaign aimed at full funding for the federal Torture Victims Relief Act. On November 19, Jim's efforts will be recognized by the McKnight Foundation, which will present him with the Virginia McKnight Binger Award in Human Service. The award is granted to Minnesotans every year to honor those "who go out of their way to help others in their communities without expecting anything in return."

CVT Granted Consultative Status by UN

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations has granted CVT special consultative status. This gives CVT the right to consult with members of the council's secretariat, submit written statements and attend the council's meetings. Only 2,500 organizations worldwide have been granted this status

Did you know? When you contribute shares of appreciated stock to CVT, you not only help stop torture and heal survivors but also enjoy considerable tax benefits under current U.S. law. ♦ You avoid paying capital gains on any appreciation ♦ If you have held the shares for more than one year, you may deduct the full fair market value on your federal tax return. ♦ The fair market

value of the assets can be deducted against up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income for 2003. Any excess deduction can be carried forward as many as five tax years. ♦ For more information, please contact Mary Kelley at mkelley@cvt.org or 612 436 4859. ♦ CVT does not give tax, financial or legal advice. Please consult your qualified advisor to determine how a gift of securities will affect your tax situation.

CVT Offers Technical Assistance to Torture Treatment Programs

Since 2001, CVT has offered technical assistance and training to torture treatment programs around the country through its National Capacity Building Project. With the renewal of a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement for two more years, we will be able to continue the project. More than 40 programs are eligible for subgrants, training institutes, targeted consultations and other programs. In this second phase of the project, we will also be able to offer some programs to mainstream care providers who may have torture survivors as clients.

Working Assets Supports CVT

Working Assets, a nonprofit telecom company, distributes donations to a select group of organizations each year, based on voting by its members. This year, CVT is on the ballot. The size of our donation will depend on the number of votes we get. If you are a Working Assets customer, be sure to cast your vote for CVT, either on the paper ballot you received or online at www.workingassets.com/vote. Thank you for your support!