



## February 2005 Newsletter

### Did the Cleavers or the Bunkers Consult with FSR? By Helen Truxal, Senior Therapist

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Our Programs & Services:

#### **Counseling**

Outpatient Mental Health  
Outpatient Relationship  
Child Behavior Management  
Psychological Assessment  
Domestic Violence Program for Men  
Restorative Parenting for Men  
Echoes Young Women's Group  
Family Works Program

#### **Education Programs**

Custody and Dissolution Series  
Chemical Health Awareness Program  
Domestic Violence Education Group

#### **In-home Counseling**

Collaboration for Success  
Early Intervention Counseling  
General In-home Counseling

#### **Case Management Services**

Domestic Violence Response Team  
Domestic Violence Children's Group  
Domestic Violence Women's Education Group  
Children's Mental Health  
Family Group Decision Making  
Project Hope

#### **Home Services**

Homemaker  
Handyman/Chore  
Meals on Wheels  
Senior Transportation

#### **Family Access Center**

Family Access Center  
Court Consultation

One of the services that has been provided by Family Service Rochester since its inception nearly forty years ago is relationship counseling. Apparently, being part of a couple has always been a challenging proposition! This is why trained therapists are funded by insurance or a sliding fee scale to help sort out the concerns that arise in marriages and partnerships.

An important first step is defining goals. This might include working on communication, parenting, intimacy or the management of household tasks. Sometimes couples have discussed their goals before coming to counseling and other times considerable effort is expended after their arrival. Before the first appointment, they will have completed background forms, which help them inventory their situation and introduce themselves to the therapist. They may have been referred by an attorney, a physician, a friend, a social worker or they may

have found us in the yellow pages.

It is the therapist's job to help the two people talk to each other and arrive at agreements. For some, this will mean establishing boundaries. For example, how does each find private time or manage extended family in the context of a couple's relationship? Along with this, some people find a need to define ground rules for their conversations, both in the office and at home. Factors such as the use of appropriate language, sticking to the subject, setting aside a time and place to talk and taking time-outs to avoid escalation might be considered. It may be enlightening to look at family histories as they affect the paired relationship. Also, understanding one another's personality type, perhaps through testing, can provide insight.

A significant number of couples find that re-committing to spending time together makes a difference in their lives. While sessions with a

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### Family Access Center Awarded

#### **New Grant** by Lori Byrne, Family Access Center Coordinator

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The State of Minnesota Office of Justice Programs and Center for Crime Victim Services recently awarded a \$35,506 grant to the Family Access Center.

The Family Access Center provides supervised visits and safe exchanges of children to families with a variety of challenges. Our services for abused children was a good match to the grant's funding priority.

The much needed grant will

allow the center to continue to maintain the high quality of services we currently provide as well as grow to meet increasing needs. There is a possibility the grant may become a recurring source of funding for the center; the next application cycle begins in June of 2005.

If you are interested in supervised visits, safe exchanges of children or volunteering at the Family Access Center, please call us at 287-2014.

# Are you or a loved one in an abusive relationship?

By Heather Kraling, Therapist / Program Coordinator

Does his not letting you leave the house unattended or his monitoring your phone calls constitute abuse? Welcome to the Tuesday night women's group. Family Service Rochester, in collaboration with Women's Shelter Inc., Parents are Important in Rochester (PAIR), and Olmsted County Family and Children's Services, offers a Domestic Violence Information Group to women and their children. The group, facilitated by women, provides a place to explore questions such as these in a safe and supportive environment. The facilitators have a wealth of experience working with domestic violence and teaching in the community. A Spanish interpreter also attends the meetings to assist those who speak English as a second language.

The women's group is an informational meeting open to any woman and her children with questions or concerns about domestic violence. The drop-in meetings are a twelve-week series; you may attend once, all twelve weeks, or drop in as you are able. You may also repeat the series as often as you find helpful. The group focuses on domestic violence awareness and education; topics that may be discussed include: the cycle of violence, myths of

violence, increasing our self-esteem, parenting in the context of violence, and court advocacy. We believe that knowledge is power.

The group is held on Tuesday evenings at Family Service Rochester from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. The meeting is free, a light meal is served, and PAIR provides free childcare for infants through pre-kindergarten age children.

A children's group for ages 5-17 also occurs at the same time as the women's group. The children's group often mirrors the information that the mothers are discussing in their group in a "kid friendly" way. In the United States, each year there are an estimated 3.3 million children who are exposed to violence by family members against their mothers or female caretakers (American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence in the Family). Children often find comfort in the group because they realize they are not the only one living with violence in their home. Through group, children learn a name for what is happening in their home, what domestic violence is, and how to identify other forms of abuse. During the group, children are free to explore their feelings and healthy ways to express them. Children also learn strategies to keep

themselves and their siblings safe if mom and dad are fighting in the home. Children are often the forgotten victims in families where domestic violence has occurred.

Women who participated in the group reported that it showed them emotional support, provided important information, and gave them women's solidarity. You may want to attend to determine whether you are with an abusive partner or because you already know you are in an abusive relationship.

You are welcome if you are still in a relationship, have left an abusive partner, or if you suspect a loved one is in an abusive relationship. The group's primary concern is you, your children's, and your family's safety. See you at 6:15 pm on Tuesdays at Family Service Rochester.

If you have any questions or concerns about the group please feel free to contact Heather at Family Service Rochester 287-2040.

Other helpful resources:

- ◆ The Women's Shelter of Rochester, 507-285-1010 or toll free 1-800-438-6439
- ◆ The National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

## Family Service Welcomes New Staff!

- ◆ Holly Brown, Homemaker
- ◆ Brooke Holahan, Early Intervention Social Worker
- ◆ Monica Burrows, Homemaker
- ◆ Kristen Poppe, Administrative Assistant
- ◆ Denise Ellis, Project Hope Case Manager
- ◆ Colin Thomas, Home Services Coordinator

# New Opportunity for FGDM by Scott Maloney, FGDM Facilitator

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Family Service Rochester (FSR) is proud to announce the agency has been selected to lead a new grant funded project. FSR's Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) team, in cooperation with Olmsted County Child and Family Services, will work to increase understanding and build partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Corrections. The goal is to increase FGDM services for youth in the process of transitioning home after a time of incarceration.

FGDM is a facilitated meeting that includes immediate and extended family, community members, services providers, and supportive others who come together to make decisions and plans regarding child safety, well-being, and permanency. The FGDM process inherently fosters cooperation, collaboration, and communication between professionals and families. FGDM is characterized as a practice which is family-centered, family strengths-oriented, culturally based, and community-based. It recognizes that families have the most information about themselves to make well-informed decisions and that individuals can find security and a sense of belonging within their families. It emphasizes that, first and foremost, families have the responsibility to not only care for, but also to provide a sense of identity for, their children. It encourages families to connect with their communities, and the communities to link with their families.

This practice originated in New Zealand, where FGDM meetings are utilized by both child welfare and

youth justice agencies. However, in the United States, FGDM is primarily being used by child welfare agencies when children have been substantiated as maltreated. This project is unique because it utilizes a conferencing process used primarily by child welfare agencies in Minnesota; families develop plans of transition for youth being discharged from Minnesota Correctional facilities.

Scott Maloney, one of four FGDM Coordinators employed by FSR, will be leading this project. Scott will be presenting on FGDM at statewide corrections conferences, and collaborating with three state correctional facilities; Minnesota Correctional Facility in Red Wing, Thistledeew in Togo, and Woodland Hills in Duluth. Scott will also be working closely with 71 of Minnesota's 87 counties who currently have FGDM programs funded by the Department of Human Services.

Family Service Rochester was chosen by the Minnesota Department of Corrections to lead this project, due in part, to the continued leadership and commitment FSR has demonstrated. Family Service Rochester and Olmsted County Child and Family Services formed one of the first FGDM Teams in Minnesota. This public-private partnership is recognized both statewide and nationally for its contribution to the establishment of family involvement practices in the human service field. Both Scott and Family Service Rochester look forward to working on this exciting and challenging project.

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## Did the Cleavers or Bunkers continued . . .

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therapist may be useful, making time in every day life appears to be a necessary part of relationship maintenance. Developing a plan or "contract" about needs and expectations mirrors job descriptions we develop at work but may neglect at home. Tools such as "I messages" may be used or individuals may take turns talking, perhaps even using a timer. The simple act of engaging in a process together can build trust and hope, as well as begin to respond to immediate issues.

Each therapist has a unique style and theoretical background. Therefore, it is useful to be open about questions and preferences. At times, it is easier for partners to tell each other how they are feeling in the safety of a dedicated time and space at FSR. Often, a direction is established within a few sessions. Some

couples benefit by follow-up visits after they have had some time to practice their new- found skills on their own. Where other services are needed, referrals are made.

In the twenty first century, blended families, job stress and financial uncertainty increasingly affect family life. Though a marriage license may be involved, no test is required to prove one's preparedness. Our role models may be "The Simpsons" or "Everybody Loves Raymond". It seems only logical that a periodic evaluation in the presence of a professional might be in order.

# ***What does my gift to Family Service do?***

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All gifts to Family Service Rochester make a difference. Your support helps ensure Family Service Rochester continues to serve all families in need - regardless of their background or income. No one is ever turned away because of an inability to pay for services. Your donations help keep children safe, increase family stability, help an elderly person stay in their home, increase the independence of a person with a disability and much more. Donations to the **Meals on Wheels Fund** support the Meals on Wheels program and covers all or a portion of the cost of a meal for someone unable to pay. Gifts to the **VanLaningham Development Fund** support the development of new and innovative services. Donations to the **Annual Fund** sustain the agency and benefit all programs and services. Other gifts may also be designated to a specific program. For more information, please contact Brenda Walker or Brad Lohrbach at 287-2010; donations may be sent to Family Service Rochester, 1110 6th St. NW, Rochester, MN 55901. Remember that all gifts to Family Service Rochester are tax-deductible.



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