



Women Healing Women

With the generous support of the Germeshausen Foundation, Women Healing Women (WHW) brought together a diverse group of women healers (physicians, nurses, alternative and holistic practitioners, chaplains, mental health professionals, etc.) in order to:

- present and discuss the diverse ways in which the healing modalities represented by the group interpret and respond to older women's health issues
- think of ways in which women who work in diverse healing modalities can have positive impacts upon the care of women within their own modalities
- contribute to the development of women's leadership within the different healing modalities
- share information that will enable women healers to work together across their particular modalities in order to help women patients
- develop specific projects that enhance women's health

The goal of WHW is to enhance women's health through empowering women healers, through developing dialogue among women healers, and through facilitating projects carried out by women healers. In the course of a series of workshops, women healers network with one another, learn about the range of healing approaches that could be useful to their patients/clients, and gain experience by carrying out a project that reflects the more holistic vision shared in the workshop series.

Women Healing Women is a program that easily can be replicated in other cities and settings. For more WHW materials, please contact Susan Sered.

During 2002-2003, the first WHW group met regularly. In 2003-2004, it continued to meet while women conducted pilot projects in areas of particular interest.

Medicine Voice Project: Women with Breast Cancer Find a Healing Voice

With the Reverend Maureen Chase, certified SpiritSong teacher and energy healer. In the fall of 2003, this experiential 8-session workshop, held at the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden, introduced women with breast cancer to techniques for using the voice as a source of healing. Based on a process called SpiritSong, each session combined ritual healing and community building. At the request of participants, Maureen will continue to offer monthly workshops and she will begin a second series in the spring of 2004.

Health, Healing Rituals, and the Role of Fatima

With Noor Kassamali, MD, Specialist in Internal Medicine and International Medicine, University Health Services, Harvard Medical School.

Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, is invoked by Muslim women in traditional healing rituals. Through interviews with Muslim women in the greater Boston area, Noor explored the range of women's prayer practices and how Muslim women integrate these practices with other healing modalities, including allopathic medicine.

No Angels Here: The Closing of the Pine Street Inn Women's Clinic

Grace Moore, Nurse Practitioner, formerly with the Pine Street Inn Women's Clinic.

Drawing upon her own experience and the experiences of other nurses at the Pine Street Inn, Grace has documented the groundbreaking work of the Pine Street Inn Women's Clinic, a shelter-based clinic run by nurses. The goal of this project is to increase the understanding of the myriad of issues faced by the nurse providers in their effort to assist substance abusing, mentally ill, homeless women in meeting their health-care needs.

The Best Is Yet to Come: Women Talking about Sex and Menopause

Gina Ogden, PhD, Marriage and Family Therapist [[website](#)].

Mary Maxwell, RN, Nurse Practitioner.

This project explores sexual issues for menopausal and post-menopausal women, with the intention of stimulating group discussion on cultural, relational, emotional, and spiritual issues as well as medical, moral, and psychological ones among women of diverse sexual orientations and ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds. During the first stage of this project, Gina and Mary created a PowerPoint presentation, which will be expanded into a CD-ROM during the project's second stage.

Post-Menopausal Stories of Mexican and Mexican American Women

Edith Silvas Villalobos, MDiv candidate, Andover Newton Theological School, and formerly a bilingual health information specialist.

Using face-to-face, open-ended interviews in both English and Spanish, Edith has explored the psychosocial responses and folk and biomedical treatments of peri-menopause and menopause in Mexican born and Mexican American women in San Antonio, Texas. Edith hopes to publish these narratives to facilitate dialogue and education on menopause, a topic not often discussed in her community. Click on the following links for information on two organizations that helped Edith in her research: [Presa Community Center](#), San Antonio, and the [Center for Women in Church and Society, Our Lady of the Lake University](#), San Antonio.

Re-Membering: African American Women Healing through Sharing

Jacquelyn Smith-Crooks, EdD, Director of Community Outreach Programs, Harvard Medical School.

This oral history project about health, healing, and spiritual resources in African American communities brought together elders and younger women to affirm and validate ways in which intergenerational connections can help them to reclaim the power of resources that

they have for healing. This group may serve as a model for setting up future groups in churches.

Empowering the Caregiver: The Touch of Compassion

Patricia Warren, Reiki Master, Licensed Massage Therapist [[website](#)].

This project taught home health aides and nursing assistants to use compassionate touch in their delivery of personal care to patients they are working with in nursing homes, with home-bound elders in their own homes, and with elders in assisted living facilities. The project's dual goals were to help the health aides recognize the spiritual potential of the work that they do, day in and day out, and to train the aides to use the touching involved in helping their clients bathe, walk, and dress as opportunities for healing. The highly successful project now has been extended to reach additional facilities and to develop a professional training program for apprentices in the Touch of Compassion.