

## **SEVERE TRAUMA & STRESS RECOVERY WORKSHOPS**

### **1. WHAT SERVICE USERS HAVE FOUND TO BE HELPFUL IN THIS WORK**

Service users found it helpful when workers:

- Enabled identification of conflicts they were experiencing/feeling
- Encouraged working through these issues, if that is what they wanted
- Promoted self esteem and self confidence
- Encouraged them to take control of their lives
- Allowed them to choose the goals of therapy, in accordance with their wishes and values
- Maximized collaboration; minimized resistance in the work
- Encouraged them to give up secrecy and shame where possible
- Gave information: both verbal and written
- Provided a good quality therapeutic relationship for disclosing: this mobilized the person's capacity for self healing and growth
- Built a trusting relationship
- Provided acceptance and supported and encouraged them to confront conflicts where appropriate
- Helped them to share thoughts and feelings
- Showed understanding
- Gave time
- Enabled correct apportionment of blame
- Acknowledged, validated and normalized wherever possible
- Helped them to express emotions appropriately
- Simply allowed them to disclose what happened in their way
- Asked what they were seeking in treatment and how they will know when treatment has been successful
- Did not assume that they needed to go back and work through traumatic & stressful memories of the incident. (Some do, some don't)
- On rare occasions, made provisions (e.g. contracts) for safety from suicide, homicide and other potentially dangerous situations, if necessary. It was best when these were mutual.
- Remained focused on the goals of treatment; rather than getting lost in the gory details
- Did not give the message that the person is 'damaged goods' or that their future is determined by having experienced the traumatic or stressful incident
- Admitted sometimes to getting it wrong
- Enabled them to feel safe