



# The Family Peace Initiative's Professional Facilitator's Guide



*A trauma-focused curriculum to  
end cruelty in relationships*

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The Family Peace Initiative's

# Professional Facilitator's Guide

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This curriculum has been influenced by so many people, it is impossible to name and thank them all. Over the years, we have been touched by determined survivors, passionate advocates, remarkable thinkers along with thousands of determined individuals working to get out of the **River of Cruelty**. Our work has evolved over the years thanks to influence of so many. In a field full of tragedy, pain and suffering, we have found love, connection and meaning. We are forever grateful.

Having the opportunity to support, guide, and listen to victims/survivors of domestic violence is humbling. Their courage in navigating the danger is inspiring. Often misunderstood, blamed and criticized for being violated, their stories and experiences have shaped this curriculum and our work in countless ways. Listening to them has helped us to examine our own beliefs and attitudes about how to intervene in domestic violence. To the thousands of victims/survivors who have shared with us, we want to say thank you! You have touched us through your struggles and your incredible strengths, and your sharing has touched others as we apply what we have learned from you.

We want to also acknowledge the men and women who have dedicated themselves to ending the cruelty they have inflicted on their families. Their commitment to creating a better life for themselves and their family has shown us time and again that change is possible. We have experienced the contradiction of incredible acts of kindness from people who have committed incredible acts of cruelty. We have seen the struggle of learning to love when the fear of loss was overwhelming. We have seen the shame when the realization of “What have I done?” sets in. Getting out of the **River of Cruelty** is a difficult task, and we have the honor of seeing people find a way out, almost every day.

We will be forever grateful to the amazing staff of the Family Peace Initiative. Your creativity, commitment and courage has made a difference beyond measure. We will never know how many domestic violence incidents have been prevented as a result of your work, but your willingness to lead by example is creating a safer world for families, communities and beyond. Thank you for trusting, challenging and pursuing mastery of your craft.



## **A Curriculum Guide for a 27 or 52 Week Program**

This guide has been designed to be used for a 27 or a 52 week program. The guide has been divided into 9 sections. Within each section there are weekly lessons along with additional optional weeks. Programs that are 52 weeks will utilize the optional weeks. Programs that are using the 27 week format are welcome to experiment with the optional weeks if there is information that would be appropriate to meet groups where they are at a given time.

The Family Peace Initiative believes that this guide is just that: a guide. Group processes are rich in opportunities for personal introspection, and once doorways into introspection are opened, the guide has fulfilled its mission. In addition, with the Midway Report at week 18 and the Week 27 completion process occurring somewhat randomly as participants are ready, it is assumed that a 27 or 52 week program will likely not complete all of the lessons written in this guide during that time period.

In the 27 week program, the first week is the assessment process followed by the orientation in Week 2. This is followed by 25 group sessions. Inside of these weekly group sessions, participants will be expected to complete an individual process at Week 18 and a final completion project at week 27. Using an open group format, participants can begin the class at any time, and complete at any point in the curriculum.

In the 52 week program, the assessment and the orientation count as the first two weeks of the program. Ideally, the participant will complete the nine sections twice during their one year participation: once with the required weeks, and incorporating many of the optional weeks the second time around. There is some material that is valuable to receive two times during the course. This will allow participants a more in-depth program over the course of the 52 weeks. A Midway report has been built into the 52 week course at Week 26.

In addition to the structure of the program, there is a corresponding Course Workbook, newly designed to use in conjunction with the Facilitator's Guide. This workbook contains most of the homework assignments that are made throughout the course. It has always been a challenge to create accountability for participants when it comes to workbook completion. The Family Peace Initiative now requires the workbook to be completed at the time of the Midway Report. Participants are only asked to complete the sections that have been covered at the time of their report. The workbook should be submitted to the facilitator for review. Participants who turn in incomplete workbooks are held at their current week of programming until the work has been satisfactorily completed. The remainder of the workbook should be completed and turned in for review prior to completion.

Finally, the success of both the 27 and 52 week programs depend on much more than implementation of this guide. Great facilitators build amazing relationships with their participants. Participants are held accountable for the expectations of the program, and victims and survivors are taken into account every step of the way. A curriculum is only as good as the facilitator that puts it into use.

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# INTRODUCTION

There is a special responsibility in writing a trauma-focused curriculum for battering intervention. Creating a process that engages and invites both participants and facilitators to self-examination without losing sight of those victimized by domestic violence is a challenge. Creating opportunities for those who have used violence to explore what has happened to them, without creating an excuse for what they have done to others is also critical.

This Facilitator's Guide contains many of the lessons that we have learned over the last 30 years of dedication to this work. However, the curriculum standing alone is not enough. The skill and courage of the facilitator is the "x-factor" of this work. The knowledge and skill to engage, lead by example, and create a safe space for intense emotional work to occur are ingredients that can not be written in these pages. This curriculum is designed to be a tool for those facilitating battering intervention groups. It is not the intervention. We think of it as a road map for the facilitator who desires to lead others in ending relationship cruelty.

The **River of Cruelty** is the foundational philosophy for the Family Peace Initiative approach to battering intervention. Recognizing that cruel behaviors are often evidence of unresolved cruelty changes the way that we interact with those who are abusive in relationships. We are asking participants to not only be accountable for the impact of their behaviors toward others, but also to be accountable for healing the impact of the cruelty that was done to them long before they were able to do anything to protect themselves. It is a huge request to ask people to examine the parts of their lives that have been long repressed, hidden away and forgotten. That is the task in this trauma-focused approach.

There are several key components to this material that facilitator's must master. The impact of trauma is introduced through the **ACE Study**, and expanded upon through the introduction of the **River of Cruelty**. The ability to manage **The Shadow Process** and the **Golden Shadow** offers facilitators the ability to guide participants into their adverse feelings and make the connection between cruelty experienced and cruelty done to others. Understanding the **Motives of Those Who Batter** gives the facilitator the template for examining the behaviors and thought patterns of each person in the group, providing the key to predicting different dangers at different times under different circumstances. It will also give the participant a clearer understanding of their own behavior, their personal red flags, and steps they can take to change.

There are processes designed to create opportunities for vulnerability, as well as accountability. These processes challenge the participant by requiring them to decide how much of themselves they are willing to share. As people make their way through the curriculum, facilitators will have the chance to encourage, support, and guide participants into deeper emotional risks and more self-understanding through the conversation. All the while, participants are invited to self-evaluate where they are in **The Change Process: From Cruelty to Family Peace**.

Finally, there is plenty of room left in this program for facilitator creativity. Facilitators who understand the Family Peace Initiative approach know that there are many ways to present a topic. One of the goals of this program is to help people understand how cruel behaviors are evidence of unresolved cruelty experienced, giving them an avenue for change rather than shame. We do this by increasing the internal focus of each participant. Helping participants make this connection and then guiding them to live more comfortably with their adverse feelings associated with their story can lead to nonviolence: the sum total of the Family Peace Initiative.

Of course, leading by example is key. Facilitators who master this curriculum have been willing to do what they ask of their participants. This is a courageous and powerful approach to battering intervention and, we believe, to life itself.

# THE CHANGE PROCESS: FROM CRUELTY TO FAMILY PEACE

DOMINATION AND CONTROL (Pre-Painful Shift)	PEACEFUL INTERACTION (Post-Painful Shift)
<b>CRUELTY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Imposing one's will on another; the blatant disregard for another</li> <li>⇒ Using physical violence</li> <li>⇒ Threatening behaviors that create fear of harm to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>another</li> <li>their family member/loved one</li> <li>their pet</li> <li>the person's identity/reputation</li> <li>the person's things</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>RESPECT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Acceptance of the right of others to have their own opinions, thoughts, and choices</li> <li>⇒ Validating the rights, thoughts, and feelings of others</li> <li>⇒ Using peaceful means to get needs/wants met</li> <li>⇒ Knowing physical triggers and taking responsibility for remaining peaceful</li> <li>⇒ Talking and behaving in a way that creates safety for others</li> </ul>
<b>MINIMIZATION, DENIAL, BLAME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Avoids personal responsibility</li> <li>⇒ Says abuse did not happen or it was someone else's fault (pass the football)</li> <li>⇒ Believes that their stated intentions rather than behavior should count</li> <li>⇒ Believes if says "I'm sorry," others should forgive and forget</li> <li>⇒ Colluding with others who are violent</li> </ul>	<b>INTEGRITY, HONESTY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Doing what you say you are going to do</li> <li>⇒ Accepting responsibility for your own behavior</li> <li>⇒ Accepting responsibility for changing your own behavior</li> <li>⇒ Does not support others' dishonesty, minimization, denial, or blame</li> </ul>
<b>PROJECTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Critical of others</li> <li>⇒ Highly judgmental</li> <li>⇒ Avoiding self-disclosure</li> <li>⇒ Hiding perceived weakness and vulnerabilities</li> </ul>	<b>PERSONAL INTROSPECTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Examining adverse emotions</li> <li>⇒ Seeking self-understanding</li> <li>⇒ Acknowledging the impact of our cruelty to others</li> <li>⇒ Acknowledging the impact of the cruelty done to us</li> </ul>
<b>COERCION, CRITICISM AND FORCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Resolving conflict through control</li> <li>⇒ Winning at all cost</li> <li>⇒ Unwilling to compromise</li> <li>⇒ Resistant to, and sabotaging change</li> <li>⇒ Using aggressive or passive/aggressive behavior; violating others rights</li> <li>⇒ Disregarding interests of our partner</li> </ul>	<b>NEGOTIATION AND FAIRNESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Seeking mutually satisfying resolution to conflict</li> <li>⇒ Willingness to compromise</li> <li>⇒ Considering our partner's interests</li> <li>⇒ Accepting of requests for change</li> <li>⇒ Using assertive behavior; standing up for own wants/needs/rights without violating others</li> <li>⇒ Communicating and setting healthy boundaries in a nonthreatening way</li> </ul>

# THE CHANGE PROCESS cont'd.: FROM CRUELTY TO FAMILY PEACE

## EMOTIONAL CRUELTY

- ⇒ Putting others down, degrading them
- ⇒ Calling them names
- ⇒ Humiliation
- ⇒ Playing mind games
- ⇒ Using guilt, fear, and blame to get our way
- ⇒ Isolation
- ⇒ Criticism and defensiveness
- ⇒ Using jealousy to justify actions

## SELF-CENTERED PARENTING

- ⇒ Using fear tactics to have control
- ⇒ Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- ⇒ Vicarious parenting
- ⇒ Dehumanizing our kids
- ⇒ Using our kids:  
to get what we want  
as a weapon against partner  
as a co-conspirator  
as a spy
- ⇒ Escaping responsibilities regarding  
nurturance
- ⇒ Modeling violent behaviors and intolerance

## SEXUAL DISRESPECT

- ⇒ Measuring a person's worth by their sexual  
appeal/willingness to sexually gratify
- ⇒ Discriminating against others due to their  
sexual orientation or gender
- ⇒ Using sexual gestures or terms to attract  
attention, degrade, or humiliate
- ⇒ Using force or coercion to obtain sexual  
interaction
- ⇒ Not letting potential partner know of  
safety risk

## PRIVILEGE AND MIND GAMES

- ⇒ Using privilege to avoid certain duties and  
to assign roles
- ⇒ Using privilege to make money decisions to  
benefit self, at the expense of partner
- ⇒ Expecting partner's perfection in fulfilling  
assigned roles and responsibilities
- ⇒ Using Entitlement
- ⇒ Using Sadistic behaviors
- ⇒ Demanding perfection of partner

## TRUST & PARTNERSHIP

- ⇒ Valuing our partner's interests
- ⇒ Accepting our and our partner's strengths  
and weaknesses
- ⇒ Supporting dreams of partner
- ⇒ Owning insecurities
- ⇒ Embracing independence

## PARENTING WITH RESPECT

- ⇒ Ensuring safety and security for child
- ⇒ Interactions with child are focused on the  
child's needs/wants, not the adult's
- ⇒ Supporting other parent's parenting
- ⇒ Separates children issues from partner issues
- ⇒ Uses respectful discipline
- ⇒ Sharing equally in nurturance  
responsibilities
- ⇒ Being a positive, nonviolent role model
- ⇒ Acceptance of child

## SEXUAL RESPECT

- ⇒ Valuing social and sexual intimacy in  
relationship
- ⇒ Treating people with equal respect  
regardless of sexual orientation or gender
- ⇒ Valuing the rights, thoughts, and feelings of  
others
- ⇒ Engaging in only consensual sexual activity
- ⇒ Informing partner of safety risks
- ⇒ Understanding the harmful impact of  
objectification

## HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- ⇒ Agreeing to fair distribution of  
responsibilities
- ⇒ Sharing decision-making
- ⇒ Valuing partner as your equal
- ⇒ Making money decisions with equal  
consideration
- ⇒ Making family decisions together
- ⇒ Recognizes role conflicts for self and partner
- ⇒ Respectful problem solving