

# Guideline M.5. Part B: Addressing Sexual Misconduct Resource Document

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### **Basic RC Theory and Early Hurts Related to Closeness and Sex**

We are born fully human: intelligent, loving, with a capacity for closeness, joy, connection, and curiosity. We want and need substantial and aware human contact. When young children are greeted with such awareness, they can use the reassurance as a buffer against any irrational challenges they face in a world that they can't yet fully understand or take charge of.

Unfortunately, from their earliest moments, children are confronted with irrationality. This can be due to the physical conditions and/or adult distresses (including those of well-meaning adults) that they experience. Being hurt and abused sometimes has a physical component (for example, being shaken, beaten or physically isolated). Sometimes there is a sexual component. In addition, the surrounding societies generally do not respect young people's full intelligence and humanity, which adds to and reinforces the other hurts. Then it is difficult for young people to trust others and trust their own fully intact intelligence.

When hurt in the above ways, children need to be given aware attention and thoughtful physical closeness, and be allowed to discharge. Without this, they are left with distress recordings whose patterned rigidities affect their future relationships. The recordings may

include the following: self-blame, a strongly felt need to pull back from others, a “never ending” loneliness, a distrust of others, a feeling that there is no help, and a desperation to please, or accepting unwanted contact. As they grow older, they may feel that they are not safe or in charge of physical contact or closeness, long past the time when that was true. These acquired, rigid “survival” patterns and “triggers” make us vulnerable in many ways. These include mistrusting our own perceptions, being unable to stand up to mistreatment, and acting out distress patterns that are hurtful to others. We may feel like we are being mistreated in a situation that seems to be the same as a past hurtful situation but is not actually harmful.

Because of the above hurts, there is widespread confusion about closeness and sex in our societies. Various industries deliberately restimulate people’s sexual distresses so that they can sell more products. The speeding up of our lives under capitalism makes it more difficult for people to connect with each other. People long for closeness, and sexual contact can seem the best or only solution. If not discharged on, all of this interferes with building close, supportive relationships.

Fortunately, we can recover from our hurts by using our inherent healing process—discharge—which is the release of painful feelings. Over time, we can resolve the rigid behaviors and the confusions and feelings left from those hurts.

Our experience tells us that no one oppresses or otherwise harms anyone without first having been hurt or oppressed themselves. It tells us that undischarged hurts are the source of irrational (inhuman) behavior.

Our experience also tells us that anyone trapped in a pattern of harming others wants to be prevented from doing so. By deciding, discharging, and continuing to work on their hurts, a person can become an ally to others. We have found that everyone is always doing the best they can, that we are all trying to act on our inherent humanness despite the pull of the often-heavy hurts experienced early in our lives. We know it is possible to resist the pull to act in patterned ways. We are not helpless. We can always act differently. And this is so much easier to do when we can discharge and re-evaluate. The past does not determine our present or our future.

## **Human Connection and the Role of Societal Oppressions**

Human connection is essential for the full functioning of our minds and our relationships. for our well-being, and to living fully. Co-Counseling can support and help us build on our inherent closeness as humans and help us resist the oppressive conditioning and roles.

Our experience tells us that sexual misconduct comes from growing up in societies filled with sexism, racism, classism, and many other oppressions. This is in addition to the widespread hurts and misinformation about sex and the lack of opportunities to systematically discharge and re-evaluate about it.

Sexism, internalized sexism, and patterns of male domination have become part of our families, schools, neighborhoods, and cultures. They are regarded as “normal.” But they have nothing in common with our inherent human nature.

Young people’s oppression is the foundation for all the other oppressions. Adults are unable to recognize that infants and the very young are fully human—and other oppressions build on this absence of respect. Very young children are much smaller and less physically capable than older children and adults and have much less information about the world. This leaves them extremely vulnerable to being victimized by the distresses of older children and adults, which can include sexual mistreatment. The resulting distress recordings can make it difficult to stand up to mistreatment later in life, even when we are adults and no longer helpless. These recordings can also consist of unaware longings and compulsions to act out sexual mistreatment.

Anyone can be targeted by sexual misconduct, but members of certain oppressed groups are targeted as a key feature of their particular oppression. Women and children (from every racial and ethnic group) are the most often targeted. In most societies it is assumed that adult males are “entitled” to control and/or have access to women’s and girls’ bodies.

LGBTQ+ people and disabled people are also frequently targeted. These groups must also overcome internal and external barriers to speak up and to seek help after experiencing sexual misconduct.

Men in certain groups are set up by society to have their sexual distresses be made the most visible and/or be seen as the most harmful. These are men who are also targeted by racism, Indigenous oppression, classism, religious oppression, ageism, and more. This scapegoating obscures the structural nature of these oppressions. It divides and separates men from each other and keeps all of us from working together to end oppression. To be very clear, these men are not any more or less sexist than any other groups of males. At the same time, we must challenge all sexual misconduct, as well as offer counseling and other resources to those who are the target of these distress recordings or are trapped in acting them out.

## **Showing Affection, Caring, and Love in RC**

In almost all societies, we get fewer and fewer chances to show affection as we grow older. Unworkable economic systems increasingly squeeze for more profit regardless of the destruction of people and habitats. People have to work harder to survive or to not fall behind financially. This intensifies divisions among groups and makes people afraid of and suspicious of each other. This derails the fullness of human possibility.

Distresses and oppressions keep piling on us as we get older. This dampens our natural interest in and affection for the world and other people. We play less and less often. Teenagers often want to remember and play games that allow them to laugh off embarrassments about being interested in and affectionate toward one another. We need ways to show affection and feel any embarrassment about wanting affection. We need to support each other in doing this.

Some of us have chances to be fully affectionate with our children or grandchildren for a few years. We get to show everything we feel for them. This frees our children to keep showing affection, too.

Our current societies make it difficult to find out what it's like to show someone how much we like them or to find out what it's like to be physically affectionate with them, without it being derailed by frozen longings and desperations, or others' restimulations.

This material is so universal and so heavy that it is hard to find a safe person with whom to work on it. It can feel dangerous to approach it. We can fear that someone will either show their desperation in some way, be standoffish, or alternate between the two. This can be too much like early times of feeling abandoned, or being unawarely touched.

Our attempts to be affectionate with each other can get twisted in odd ways. We get embarrassed, we get secretive, we get exclusive. But being affectionate toward someone isn't about any of those things. Those are how fears and embarrassments get wrapped around affection.

We need someone with us, someone who will think past where we got hurt. Someone who provides a reference point as we look at our struggles with being close and affectionate with other people. This is why we co-counsel.

When we do enough counseling and we discharge enough of the hurts that keep us separate, we get hopeful about each other—and about everything. We can dare to begin to show affection.

Humans function better when they have a safe place to be affectionate and care. Sometimes being “safe enough” means that the object of our affection is far away. Sometimes that’s the only thing that makes it safe.

When we glimpse someone to whom we might be able to show our wishes for affection or our wishes to give affection, we get hopeful that there will be a place to be ourselves, to be fully human.

This material is best worked on with a solid Co-Counselor in the safety of a group of thinking people, for example, up front at a workshop. At this point it does not work well in individual Co-Counseling sessions.

## **The Role of Leadership**

As we discharge on these hurts, we can now battle our fears and isolation, reaching past where we were left alone with our fears and isolation.

And at times this is life-saving.

It is very hard to not have a place where we can care as much as we want. This is much harder on us than not being cared about. Being prevented from caring and from finding people to care about is extremely hard on human beings. Teenagers are belittled for showing their caring for a “teen idol” who is far away and thus “unreachable and obviously unimportant”—but it is very important. It is an attempt to keep alive the ability to care deeply about somebody else. It takes these odd forms when there is no other place that is safe enough to try to care, fully and openly.

We may get hopeful in a particular leader’s direction. The hope is that if someone is leading they will be a safe place to care and a safe place to show that we care.

Most adults are starved for anyone to treat them affectionately, even in the most frozen way. We need to understand that people need a chance to care deeply and work on caring deeply by trying to care deeply in someone’s direction. And not have that mean anything else.

We all need safe places to undo where we got stuck. It is very important that we understand this and that we not belittle each other for it. We do not need to believe any bad feelings we have—for example, that we haven’t found someone yet, or that “it isn’t happening for me at the ‘right moment’ with the ‘right person,’” or that we are “not getting the right person fascinated with me” (“the one I’m fascinated with”!).

Most societies try to isolate everybody from each other and then try to pair us off and send us off into that isolation. There aren't many places where this is being faced well, or where people have a chance to struggle and work through these feelings. It's a very important body of work to do.

We have to keep working on this to be able to do the work we intend to do—that is, to continue reaching for others with increasing thought, to communicate what we intend to say, to have the relationships we want, and to care enough about ourselves and each other.

We want to allow the space for this work to happen. We want to be able to laugh about it while we work on it. We want to keep it out in the open. We do not want shame or other hurts from when we were young, to cloud our attempts at affection. We want to have enough support so that the irrational pieces of any attempt at affection can be discharged—not freeze on us in odd or old ways.

Again, we want to find ways for people to work on what gets difficult about being close to other people, about caring about other people, and about being affectionate with other people. All our fears can come up around “liking people”—for example, not liking anyone, nobody liking us, being left out, jealousy, isolation, not being chosen, not being special to anybody, and so on.

The centuries of human hurts with no ability to discharge them, can make our judgement about showing affection uneven. Our fears or discomfort about closeness can make us abandon someone to struggle alone. Or we might move toward someone unawares and too quickly, out of our own desperation to help or to feel less lonely. However, it is possible to become more relaxed, effective, and thoughtful as we work in this area. We don't need to be anxious about it. We can avoid making the same mistakes that others have made while not abandoning people to live isolated lives.

Like humans everywhere, we are going to stumble. Missteps are going to happen. No one is in good enough shape to do this perfectly—and that's okay.

We are counting on each other to do the discharge work, so that we can reach for closeness in our Co-Counseling sessions without our distresses confusing us.

## **Females, Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation, and Recovery**

All females are good, smart, powerful, courageous, loving, connected, committed to human life, and have bodies exactly suited to their needs. Women and girls have a natural

sense of adventure and courage. They constitute the majority of the world's people and overlap with every other oppressed group, except men.

The oppression of females is based on our society's exploitive use of women for reproducing and raising the next generation of young people (to produce new workers). Sexism and male domination condition females to accept the exploitation. Simply being able to give birth is used as the excuse for the oppression (there is no rational reason for any oppression).

Most societies have historically sanctioned, assumed, or accepted that adult males are "entitled" to control and/or have access to women's and girls' bodies. Society uses female bodies to further its own ends—as though they do not fully belong to the females. As a result, girls and women may feel separate from and not in control of their own bodies. The oppression encourages the treatment of females as objects, and this makes it possible for society and those who abuse women to excuse the mistreatment. Every girl grows up with an unspoken expectation that she will serve males, especially males who dominate because of their financial position, age, class, caste, race, or other dominance. In almost all cultures, young girls are abused, physically and sexually.

Sexism, male domination, and the oppression of males are deeply intertwined with young people's oppression. Young boys are conditioned to harass, dominate, and objectify girls. Girls are conditioned to accept being targets, to accept being dominated and objectified, to accept playing a subservient role for their entire lives. Powerlessness is systematically installed on all females.

Everyone—female, male, intersex, of all races, classes, religions—has been heavily hurt around closeness and sex. These hurts are especially evident between women and men.

Women are sexually harassed to keep them out of the workforce, out of leadership positions, and in lower paid jobs. Multi-billion-dollar industries install, restimulate, profit from, and reinforce female exploitation world-wide.

## **Women's Bodies Are Used As the Means of Their Oppression**

Women's bodies are used for unwanted sex; to reenact patterns of domination, such as rape or assault; to control reproduction; to disable women's enjoyment of sex (by female genital mutilation) or promote hyper-sexualization of women; and women's bodies are used in the sex industries. Sexual exploitation is entwined with economic exploitation. In the current era this involves sexual trafficking of women and young girls, and "grooming" young women and girls for future sexual exploitation.

Almost every female experiences life-altering sexual exploitation and abuse at some point(s) in her life. RC makes it possible to recover from those harms.

Women have made valiant efforts to gather and organize allies to change the systems that cause their objectification and victimization. But they have been hampered by both the commonplace and pervasive nature and depth of sexism and by internalized sexism.

In RC, women's workshops are set up to challenge the misinformation, harms, oppression, and the internalized oppression of sexism. These workshops may also include—with skilled leadership—options for women to engage in physical activities: lifting weights, running, physical sessions, basketball, jump rope, and so on, where we use activities of physical resistance to challenge hurts that had passivity and/or a physical component recorded in them or where we may have given up on the joys of physicality as females. In these settings women have chances to break free of physical inhibitions to recover the full sense of our bodies and their strength.

Work on early sexual memories (ESM) provides a helpful structure for women to discharge on the underpinnings of all later hurts related to sex. It can help women work on recovering our voices—our ability to speak up and to know our own minds. This work can help us better understand the particular recordings that got reinforced by later mistreatment and how they may have made us vulnerable. Discharging on early sexual memories is one important part of the work of recovering from the harms of sexual mistreatment and exploitation.

RC can provide the safety for women to tell the truth from the viewpoint of their memories, without having to justify themselves, 'prove' their recollections or withhold any feelings, whether of heartbreak, wanting to defend their abuser, or wanting to do harm to those who harmed them. It is most effective when their Co-Counselor is not confused by how they express their hurt. They can finally share all the details of any experience of sexual abuse and exploitation. They can review good experiences of closeness and connection, with or without sex. Women can fully appreciate their bodies, as well as their minds and every female part of themselves exactly as they are. They can celebrate how great it is to be female. They can reclaim the full and accurate sense of themselves.

Our goal is for each person to live a life of her choosing. We want all women and girls to have access to their full minds, power, and humanity. We especially want all of us to experience our inherent ability to be close to people, and to be able to decide if, how, when, who, and what we want in our relationships.



## **Young People, Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation, and Recovery**

Young people are naturally easy-going, loving, and cooperative. We are curious about the world and eager to learn. Each of us is uniquely important and valuable. We all belong and are to be treasured. Young people expect all things to be in harmony. We expect to have cooperative relationships with the other humans around us. We know we are “in charge of the universe.” We know that just being ourselves matters and makes a big difference.

Young people expect a welcome befitting the importance of every human being—cherished, valued, respected.

Young people are conceived, and usually born, knowing our value. We begin life proud and powerful. We understand that the universe is benign, that it works elegantly, and that we are an integral part of it.

However, our deep intelligence and these understandings do not fit into constricted, oppressive, patterned societies.

The oppression of young people encourages adults, as the agents of the oppression, to treat young people as less than fully human—and to disregard our powerful perspective on reality.

Young people are left alone to act out the internalized oppression, sometimes with adult encouragement.

All the messages of the oppression are untrue. All are lies.

The hurts from our earliest moments as young people go on to limit all humans’ inherent intelligence resulting in widespread unloving, fearful, inflexible, and other harmful behavior.

Instead of the steady thoughtful care that they assumed would greet them, young people are met by distress patterns that distort adult human minds, faces, voices, and actions. They may experience neglect or abuse from those they love and feel close to (anyone whose care they are entrusted to) and whom they must rely on for their care. Adults often unawarely play out their distresses, verbally and physically, in a misplaced effort to be free of them. Young people may be unawarely expected to reassure adults and to fulfill their frozen longings for love, contact, and caring.

The oppression of young people is then passed on—generation after generation—creating unaware, misinformed, confused, humiliated, lonely, and desperate adults.

Young people rely on the adults around them to be thoughtful, kind, loving, and to meet their basic survival needs.

Being targets of sexual misconduct or other sexual exploitation is extremely harmful to young people. Young people are acutely vulnerable to enduring the abuse because they need adult assistance for their basic survival. Submitting to the distresses of adults can be their only survival strategy.

As societies collapse, and the pull to extract profits, abetted by marketing, becomes more desperate, younger and younger people are sought as sources of profit. And, as poverty increases globally, the vulnerability of girls, and increasingly of boys, makes them easy targets of the exploitive sex industry (especially those who are poor, Native and Indigenous and Global Majority people, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants, war and climate refugees, and so on).

Desperate and damaged adults may be pulled to take advantage of young people's intact, natural, and vast reservoir of love, care, and attention, and prey on their vulnerabilities. These adults are deeply lost in distress. These situations require immediate intervention.

We can recover from the distresses resulting from the abuse with patient, no-blame, slow, kind, listening attention. Eventually, after much work, the young person can be helped to trust again and to reclaim their ability to choose closeness and connection. It is important to hold out that complete recovery is possible though it requires much time and work.

Most adult women were abused as girls, and many adult men were abused as boys. They need assistance similar to the above. They also need the perspective that they, too, can fully recover.

Young people are not powerless—but we do need information about distresses and about reality.

We can end the passing on of mistreatment from generation to generation—with intention, by organizing among ourselves, by building allies, by using the discharge process, and by reiterative decision. We can hold onto or fully recover our voices. We can use our voices to speak up about and stop any abuse of ourselves or other young people, and to end this worldwide.

We and our allies can insist that the harsh world we experienced was due to distresses. The benign world we knew to be true—always was true. We no longer have to accept any adult's irrational view that humans are "powerless to do anything to change the world."

We can discharge the loneliness that we were left with and notice that we are surrounded by other humans who want a human connection.

We do not need to "grow up" by believing distresses and misinformation about our power and reality. Everyone wants a better world, and many share a similar vision.

For our own recovery, we can remember that distress patterns are parasitic, including on an adult who acts out distresses, and that the adult was and is fully intact underneath the patterns.

We can internalize the knowledge that patterns are completely reactive and unintelligent and use the inherent discharge process to end the pattern's repetition. We can recover our inherent knowledge that the rest of the universe is still benign, still hospitable to us.

We and our allies can intervene if a young person is being humiliated or treated as unimportant, stupid, insignificant, or "not yet fully human."

As young people we can encourage and listen to one another's thinking. We can refuse to allow other young people to be teased or mistreated in any way. We can discharge our own patterned pulls to act out the internalized oppression.

We can take charge of ensuring that our inherent recovery process is widely known and that it works. We can remind one another of our true natures and insist that our adult allies do the same. We are experts on this. At the same time, every human being once knew what we know.

We are an important, essential part of the universe, a beloved, unique, proud, weighty presence.

## **Males, Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation, and Recovery**

Like all humans, all males, of all ages and backgrounds, are inherently intelligent, loving, and cooperative. Males are born interested in and able to have aware and mutually beneficial relationships with other humans. Like all humans, males are vulnerable to acquiring rigid distress patterns of behavior from undischarged hurts and oppression.

There is some variation among different cultures and groups, but the treatment of males in oppressive societies usually includes tremendous amounts of isolation, harshness, violence, competition, domination, and exploitation. This mistreatment often includes systematic suppression of feelings and discharge as well as very little thoughtful physical contact. Many younger males are targeted with sexual misconduct, mostly by men or other boys, but sometimes by older females.

The above conditions deeply affect all males. Males are also trained and expected to target others in these ways, especially females through sexism and male domination, but also other males through domination of younger or smaller males, LGBTQ+ oppression and other ways. Males are also trained and expected to play the main role in carrying out and enforcing other oppressions—for example, classism (by owning- and middle- class men) and racism (by white men).

This whole mix of conditioning harms and confuses males, especially in regard to human connection, relationships, closeness, and sex. Men often feel both desperate for, and hopeless about, close human contact. The society presents sex as almost the only way for males to find such contact and encourages them to act out sexual compulsions and to use sex to numb painful feelings. Men's distresses are consistently manipulated by a variety of institutions, resulting in huge financial gains for the small number of people who own and operate the businesses involved. This manipulation relies on the objectification and sexual exploitation of females (and sometimes of males and intersex people). The sex industries (pornography, prostitution, sex trafficking, and so on) play a major role in the manipulation and exploitation, as do some parts of advertising, media, and other industries.<sup>1</sup>

Every male tries repeatedly to be as human as possible, but every male still ends up with distress patterns of sexism and male domination. This includes everyone raised male, whether heterosexual, GBQT+, or any other identity. The distress patterns include mistaken attitudes about girl's and women's worth, abilities, power, and purpose. These distresses can play out in subtle and not-so-subtle ways that include the following: belittling and humiliating girls and women, treating women as intellectual inferiors, keeping women in subservient roles, assuming male needs are more important, treating women as sex objects, sexually victimizing women, and acting out violence at women.

The very heavy conditioning and manipulation of men, combined with early hurts around closeness (that often include physical abuse and sometimes sexual abuse), leave many men preoccupied and compulsive around sex. There is little awareness in society of how to assist men to challenge these distresses. As a result, some men act out these compulsions toward females, young people, and sometimes other men, with many negative consequences for everyone, including for men. The oppressive society has an

interest in keeping early distresses attached to sex and thereby available to be restimulated for men. This is a key driver of many aspects of sexism, male domination, addictions, and especially sexual misconduct.<sup>2</sup>

Males are heavily targeted by society and heavily conditioned to carry out the oppressive work of society. Like all humans, no male is to blame for any distress patterns, including those that lead him to harm others, such as sexual exploitation and misconduct. This is the result of many generations of worldwide oppression and hurt. However, it is in every male's best interest to take responsibility for getting free of these patterns and actions. And, it is in all men's interest to support each other in this effort, including preventing and stopping one's own and each other's harmful actions.

Prioritizing good, human, close, and kind relationships with other males is an important contradiction to this harsh conditioning. Consistently participating in Co- Counseling sessions, support groups, and workshops with other males can play a key role in the healing process. The work can include counseling on one's life story of being male, from early childhood, before and during puberty, and through teen, young adult, and adult years. It can include counseling on societal messages about the role of males and females, including about their bodies, relationships, closeness, domination, exploitation, and sex.

The work on sex goes best when it includes work on early sexual memories (ESM), and sessions on one's relationship to sex throughout one's life. This can include counseling on memories of witnessing, being targeted by, colluding with, and targeting others with sexual exploitation and misconduct.

After considerable counseling with other males as described above, it can be useful for males to listen to females (and other groups especially targeted by sexual exploitation and misconduct) as they share their experiences and perspectives. This works best when the males discharge with each other before and after listening to the females or members of other groups.

It is our experience that with persistent work, males can reclaim more and more of their ability to have mutually aware, beneficial, and satisfying relationships with other humans. This can include, if, and when, it makes sense for both people to have aware and mutually agreed upon physical closeness. And, with this persistent work, males can become stronger allies to each other and to all other humans.

## **LGBTQ+ People, Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation, and Recovery**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (LGBTQ+) people of all races, classes, and religions are deeply good, fully human,

caring, and intelligent, and are to be treated and welcomed with complete respect and kindness. In the face of vicious oppression, LGBTQ+ people have shown courage and resilience in claiming their humanness and building loving relationships and community.

There are several key points to keep in mind when thinking about LGBTQ+ people and issues of sexual exploitation and misconduct:

- One of the core myths of the oppression of LGBTQ+ people is that we are somehow more likely to be predators or engaged in sexual exploitation. This is simply not true, but it can interfere with LGBTQ+ people feeling safe to raise issues of sexual exploitation or misconduct.
- Our oppressive societies see gay sex as wrong, thus biasing us toward seeing any LGBTQ+ sexual behavior as misconduct or harassment. We need to stick closely to how the new Guideline defines sexual harassment or misconduct, and not fall into oppressive attitudes about Gay sex.
- There is a history of heterosexuals using false beliefs about LGBTQ+ people as an excuse for sexual harassment or predation. For instance, Lesbians have been targeted by heterosexual men with the excuse that they “need a man to show them how to be a real woman, or what real sex is.” It is never acceptable for sexual harassment or predation toward anyone, including LGBTQ+ people.
- LGBTQ+ oppression targets this constituency as “the sex people,” which can lead heterosexuals to assume that LGBTQ+ people are interested in or have slack for having conversations about sex, exploring curiosities about sex, and having sexual contact. The targeting of LGBTQ+ people in this way does not justify this kind of conduct toward LGBTQ+ people—this is a particular kind of sexual harassment.
- The oppression of LGBTQ+ people is built on LGBTQ+ people being dominated by the predominantly heterosexual society. They are targeted for showing any divergence from society’s requirements to adhere to narrow behaviors, modes of dress, and permitted closeness to other humans. (These “requirements” also serve to keep all humans from exploring the full possibilities of human connections.) Having been dominated can also keep LGBTQ+ people from speaking up about sexual harassment or misconduct.

Because of these common stereotypes and pervasive expressions of oppression, when we are thinking about a sexual misconduct situation that involves an LGBTQ+ person, we want to be fully aware of how the society has distorted people’s thinking and perspectives about LGBTQ+ people.

It is important to remember that the oppression of LGBTQ+ people can be a barrier to people seeking help regarding sexual harassment. Someone might be afraid to seek resources for fear they won’t be understood, or they will draw more oppression to

themselves. LGBTQ+ people can be reluctant to seek help because they fear they won't be understood or believed.

Everyone is encouraged to work on LGBTQ+ oppression. There are many benefits, including removing any stereotyped conclusions about LGBTQ+ people. In addition, making this work widespread, visible, and accessible will help everyone when there is misconduct involving an LGBTQ+ person.

Sexual misconduct can happen when both parties are LGBTQ+. In those cases, RC leaders who are referencing the situation will need to have worked on Gay oppression sufficiently to discern any influence it could have on their view of the situation. If the Complaint Review Committee (CRC) is involved, there will need to be a strong LGBTQ+ leaders on the committee. Similarly, if even one party in the situation identifies as LGBTQ+, there should be LGBTQ+ representation on the CRC.

LGBTQ+ Co-Counselors need to establish places to work openly and fully on any mistreatment they have received at any time in their lives. For LGBTQ+ Co-Counselors to be able to tell their stories and share their feelings, the counselor will need to be able to listen without judgment or bias. Sometimes this will be in groups or with counselors who belong to the LGBTQ+ constituency and sometimes with trusted counselors who are not part of the constituency. It will take thought and effort, by the client and the counselor, to overcome the impact of oppressive stereotypes and assumptions about LGBTQ+ people, so that the client is safe enough to work on whatever they need to in those Co-Counseling sessions.

LGBTQ+ people deserve being thought about, treated respectfully, and welcomed in the Co-Counseling context, just as we wish to do with everyone. LGBTQ+ people, like all others, can use RC to fully reclaim their minds and their power to set up lives and relationships of their own choosing.

## **Native and Indigenous and Global Majority People Targeted by Racism, Sexual Misconduct, Exploitation, and Recovery**

Native and Indigenous (NI) and Global Majority (GM) people are a diverse group of brilliant, beautiful, brave, bold, caring, completely good, connected, creative, dependable, determined, generous, skilled, and strong people. All their cultures and languages are treasurable. RC liberation theory offers a perspective and pathway for healing from and counteracting the effects of oppression, including internalized oppression and victimization. RC policies and practices are a pathway for contradicting and healing from the effects of racism and internalized racism. It is possible for everyone to have good relations with all other humans, think well, act wisely and successfully, and enjoy life.

This section is an overview of some of the ways that racism, genocide, and sexual exploitation interact with each other to impact NI and GM people.

NI and GM people make up most of the world's population. However, the cultures of Europe and the United States dominate throughout the Western world as a result of colonialization, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the genocide of Indigenous people. This happened over several centuries (1500s—1960s). This period of colonialism was the most violent, widespread, and complete conquest of people, land, and resources, encompassing nearly the entire world's population. The most active colonizing countries were Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, France, Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, followed later by the United States and Russia.

European colonizers developed and spread false characterizations of NI and GM people to justify the theft of people's land and other resources, as well as to justify the subjugation, murder, loss of autonomy, sexual conquest, exploitation, and abuse of NI and GM people. The false characterizations included the messages that NI and GM people were primitive, savage, wild, childlike, sexually promiscuous, and inferior. These ideas, along with the harmful practices that resulted from them, were experienced and internalized at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels. One result was the world-wide permeation of white male supremacy and domination.

The hyper-sexualization and objectification of NI and GM people results from the entrenched and systemic nature of racism. We see this hyper-sexualization of NI and GM people in the media and in the sex industries (pornography, sex tourism, human trafficking, prostitution, and strip clubs).

Racism, sexual exploitation and misconduct, and male domination have historical roots in almost every society and culture. The following are some examples:

- The Western European Trans-Atlantic slave trade defined African-heritage people as property and commodified the reproductive capacity of African- heritage women and men. Enslaved African-heritage people were dehumanized as objects of sexual consumption through systematic sexual abuse and rape. Currently, Western religion, medicine, science, and media portray African- heritage people as promiscuous. African-heritage men and women are hyper- sexualized, and African-heritage women are debased.
- European settlers violently occupied Indigenous people's land in North and South America, Australia, and New Zealand. They violated treaties and Tribal sovereignty, set up boarding schools for Native children, and tried to eliminate Indigenous people (genocide). Long-standing and thriving cultures were deeply harmed. Native American women are now murdered and sexually assaulted ten times more



often than women in other communities, overwhelmingly by individuals who are not Native American. These crimes often occur in remote settings where transient workers (such as oil workers) live in temporary housing units or “man camps” on and near tribal lands.

- The Imperial Japanese Army forced Chinese, Korean, and other women and girls into sexual slavery before and during World War II in the countries and territories they occupied. The damage to people and whole countries brought by prostitution (particularly in Thailand but throughout much of East Asia) was built or massively intensified by armies of occupation, beginning with the French and later by the United States. One such mechanism was a policy called “Rest and Recreation,” where soldiers spent weeks outside of Vietnam in brothels of sex trafficked women. This contributed to the de-sexualization of Asian men and the exoticization of Asian women as well as the current exponential growth of the sex industries in many East Asian countries, and world-wide sex trafficking.

The above are just a few examples of how NI and GM people have been and are devalued, denied resources, attacked, terrorized, and controlled. This has made them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and misconduct.

We understand that systemic racism makes it more difficult to speak up when targeted. We have learned in RC that it is possible to discharge any feelings of powerlessness, including from having been targeted in the above ways. We can interrupt, contradict, and end the patterns that lead to sexual exploitation and misconduct.

RC workshops, specifically for individual NI and GM constituencies, help to create spaces to work on remembering and reclaiming the reality of the power and intactness of peoples and to focus on liberation without the impacts of genocide and/or racism’s constant presence.

## **What Can We Do in RC?**

When we understand the underlying mechanisms and systems that pass on and perpetuate harm we are more able to stop and prevent harmful behavior. It is more obvious that the causes of mistreatment of all kinds start with oppression, that everyone has experienced some form of oppression, and that every oppression is wrong and is to be opposed. This is in everyone’s best interest.

In particular, the RC Community is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of sexual misconduct and harassment. We are committed to addressing their systemic roots by working on sexism, male domination, and other oppressions. The RC Communities have many policies and practices in place for protecting the safety of the

Co-Counseling relationship and Community and keeping any restimulated longings or sexual feelings from damaging that relationship or leading to inappropriate behavior. The new Guideline M.5. (Handling Oppressor Patterns, including Sexual Misconduct, and Addressing Mistakes, Disagreements, and Criticism) provides an RC-based approach if and when these safeguards are not enough to prevent sexual misconduct.<sup>3</sup>

Blaming, reproaching, or punishing people for acting out irrational behaviors has been proven to be unworkable and ineffective. It perpetuates the ongoing cycle of passing on harm rather than healing harm. These approaches arise out of distress recordings that exist within individuals or in the broader cultures in which we live.

In RC we can find our own clear thinking by discharging on hurtful encounters, both current and old, that may cloud or confuse our judgement. When we have done enough work, especially on past abuse, we are much more able to determine what we want in our relationships. We are much more able to satisfactorily resolve any experiences of mistreatment in the present. (If you have experienced or are concerned about inappropriate behavior in a Co-Counseling relationship, either toward you, or by you, or by someone else, contact a trusted RC teacher or Reference Person.)

The discharge and re-evaluation needed for full recovery goes best in the context of close, trusting relationships. We encourage RCers to build close Co-Counseling relationships with each other that include physical touch as appropriate. Mutually agreed-upon, non-sexual closeness and touch, within the confines of the Co-Counseling relationship, can play an important role in healing from hurts and oppression. This kind of touch can provide the reassurance we need to counsel on many hurts, especially harsh early experiences. Unfortunately, these early hurts have left many of us keeping our distance, emotionally and physically, from others. Handholding, hugging, and sometimes being held, mirror the way children seek out connection with trusted adults to build or recover well-being. Every Co-Counselor always has the right to decline physical contact, in the role of client or in the role of counselor.

Our work in RC is about helping each other recover our innate ability to heal from all forms of mistreatment and oppression. We encourage every RC Community to offer good opportunities for everyone to work on sexual mistreatment and exploitation that may have occurred at any time in our lives.

We also encourage RC Communities to provide opportunities for work on "early sexual memories" (ESM), which can provide a critical grounding for all work related to sex. These incidents generally involved an important break in connection (with or without an element of sexual mistreatment) and were a time when we resigned ourselves to being separate. ESM work helps us understand a lifetime of related hurts and restimulations in this area,

which happened in the context of societies saturated with sexual exploitation, objectification, and domination. Discharging on our earliest memories related to sex will improve the quality of closeness and connection in all our relationships. It is an important component of work on sexual mistreatment.

Close connections with other humans are vital to our well-being. The most important type of connection is that of our minds, in the context of fond, caring, affectionate, and intelligent relationships. These relationships can help us notice that we are not alone. They can help us remember the completely benign nature of human beings. It is in our interests to protect those connections and remove any patterned behaviors that might interfere with establishing or maintaining them.

We are committed to providing opportunities for RCers to recover from early hurts, no matter the characteristics of those hurts, so that we can all be connected to other human beings as we freely choose.

<sup>1</sup> Karp, Joan. "The Sex Industries and RC," [https://www.rc.org/publication/present\\_time/pt192/pt192\\_049\\_jk](https://www.rc.org/publication/present_time/pt192/pt192_049_jk)

<sup>2</sup> Some men's early hurts leave them inhibited in the area of sex, despite the pressures of society. And, some men stay away from closeness and sexual contact because they end up terrified about what is assumed to be men's inherent or oppressive nature around sex.

<sup>3</sup> Guideline M.5., Handling Oppressor Patterns, including Sexual Misconduct, and Addressing Mistakes, Disagreements, and Criticism can be found here. It defines sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in RC. It encourages a Co-Counselor experiencing sexual misconduct in RC to inform an RC leader and/or a Complaint Review Committee (CRC)([committee@rc.org](mailto:committee@rc.org)). It calls for immediate intervention to stop or prevent sexual misconduct. It establishes a process for the person's RRP and the CRC to assess the situation and take appropriate action, which may include addressing the harm caused, restrictions on the actions of the Co-Counselor who failed to follow the Guideline, steps to correct the behavior and prevent future occurrences, and more.