



Photo Credit: Karen Kasmauski.

WOMAN, YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Methodology to facilitate women’s support groups (WSG)

BACKGROUND

Violence against women is a phenomenon with multiple parts that interact to negatively impact women’s lives and the lives of their sons and daughters, their families and their communities. It constitutes a violation of their fundamental human rights and should not be seen as a private matter, but rather as something that affects the society as a whole since it affects the possibilities of a little over half of humanity to live their lives freely and fully.

Latin America and the Caribbean have the highest rates of sexual violence in the world, the highest rates of violence by a partner or former partner, and alarming levels of femicide. In 2017, in 23 countries in the region, 2,795 women were reported murdered because of their gender. In 2016, the Central American region showed the highest murder rate of women in the world, with 4.8 women for every one hundred thousand women.

The methodology used by CRS, **Woman, you are not alone!**, was designed to respond to this problem with a psychosocial approach to violence prevention and attention. The methodology promotes the creation of women’s help groups in which women themselves, after going through a personal transformation process, can become community therapists, helping other women to overcome the adverse effects of violence in their lives and avoid future cycles of violence. Thus, a path is developed of individual and collective healing that contributes to the well-being of women, their families and their communities.

WHO



Women affected by different forms of violence

IN WHICH CONTEXTS



Rural and urban



Schools



State centers for victim assistance



Detention facilities



Church groups

IMPACT

687 GROUPS

(5,800 WOMEN BETWEEN 2015 AND 2018)

WHERE



CONTENT AND WORK DYNAMICS

The guide provides an experiential and participatory journey to train facilitators (starting with a personal process with the facilitators) who can then support the women's groups. It is based on **twelve support strategies** and **twenty thematic areas**.

The **thematic areas** are approached from the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions and are:



Each thematic area is developed in a 2.5 to 3-hour session for a total of 22 sessions, including one for introductions and one for closing and celebrating success.

The facilitators, as community therapists, contribute to strengthening the women's and the group's autonomy through support networks that promote the reconstruction of the social fabric.

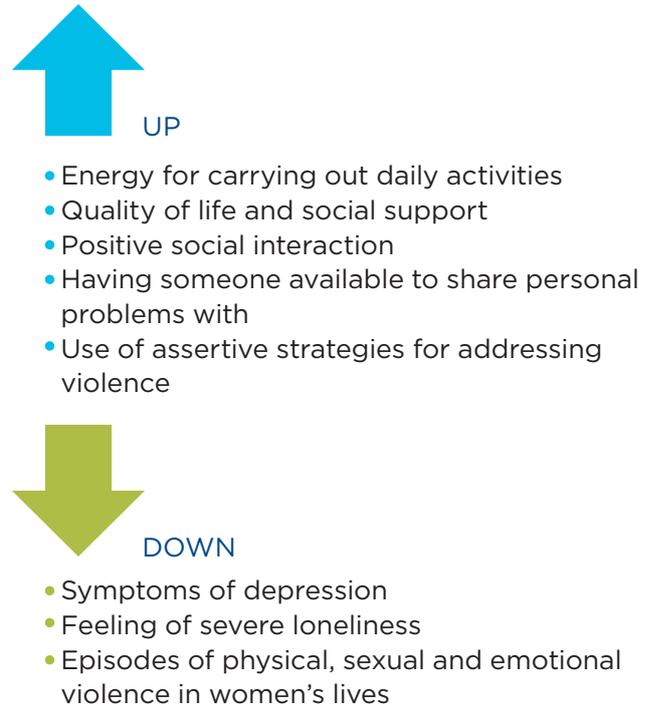
METHODOLOGY

Having healed and increased their self-esteem, the women place limits on violence, make decisions based on their well-being and autonomy, and improve their family and community dynamics. They become a driving force of social change.

The support groups are based on maieutics, which consists of women becoming aware that the truth

is in themselves through a series of questions. Humanistic psychology has recovered this method and applied it in various therapies that focus on the individual as the source of their own transformation. Based on this, women experience, share, reflect and act.

RESULTS OF TWO IMPACT STUDIES ¹



WHAT DOES CRS' SUPPORT CONSIST OF?

- 1.** We provide the **methodological guide** which contains the strategies that facilitators should use as well as the topics to be addressed with women who belong to the WSGs.
- 2.** Face-to-face 6-day **training** for facilitators prior to using the methodological guide (between 6-9 days).
- 3. Training for mentors** who accompany the facilitators, to strengthen their work and apply monitoring, evaluation and learning strategies.
- 4. Certification for facilitators and mentors** to strengthen the skills of their institutions.
- 5. Community of practice** which connects the facilitators and the mentors to each other in order to learn, socialize and tackle difficulties together.

¹ Both studies used quasi-experimental methodologies.