

Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge and The University of Northampton Reading Group.

Following on from two similar successful projects this initiative was established with a Northampton-based charity working with the victims of domestic abuse. Project aims included:

- To engage the university with the local community.
- To improve participants' confidence and literacy.
- To encourage participants to realise their potential and possibly consider further study.

Seven women attended the first session in March 2011 and the group has been meeting once a month since with a core of five women in attendance. We compile a catalogue of books (fiction and non-fiction) and decide together which ones we would like to read.

As a result of attending these meetings participants have improved levels of confidence and self esteem and have been able to practice building healthy relationships in a safe and positive environment.

NVCFR staff said:

"As a support worker it has been great to be able to encourage women to attend the group to meet others without them feeling that the focus will be on the only thing they have in common which is domestic abuse."

Each participant has been given a reading journal within which they are encouraged to record their thoughts and feelings about books they've read.

Participants said:

"Talking to other people about books helps you think about them in different ways."

"Absolutely brilliant! I'm really enjoying it and am getting better at talking in front of people."

"The group gives me a more rounded insight into books I wouldn't otherwise choose."

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