



THE MEND PROJECT

educate. equip. restore.

Annette Oltmans and Johanna Tropiano, co-founders of **THE MEND PROJECT**, each experienced personal and institutional abuse. Each were in marriages where the Primary Abuse of domestic violence, overt and covert, emotional or physical, had been an everyday struggle and reality. When they reached out for help, their trauma became exacerbated by the Double Abuse® of certain friends, family members, counselors, and church leaders who either refused to believe them or responded with judgment, ultimatums, incorrect therapeutic treatment, or patriarchal demands. This Double Abuse® pushed each of them into oppression, isolation, and hopelessness. What helped give Annette the validating clarity she needed was seeing Double Abuse® occurring simultaneously to a minor aged child close to her. For Johanna, reading and hearing about parallel experiences of others that resonated with her own, illuminated the truth of what she had been suffering. Each involved with International Justice Mission, one professionally, the other as a donor, they were contemplating cultural blind spots supported by Double Abuse® occurring throughout the world. Over coffee, they questioned, "Who Is Confronting These Blindspots Here At Home?" Through their response to each others' stories, The MEND Project was born. Realizing that healing takes place through strong connections, The MEND Project now offers a comprehensive pathway for victims in their various communities to access empowering tools while supporting alleged perpetrators in finding proper accountability.

Stigmas, being rooted in ignorance, isolate victims by breaking connections. We are breaking stigmas by shining light on the taboo subject of primary and Double Abuse®.

OUR VISION

The vision of The MEND Project is to end Double Abuse®.

OUR MISSION

The MEND Project seeks to educate, equip, and restore those impacted by Primary and Double Abuse®.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

is the most common form of INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3876290>

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IS OUR #1 PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM:
over drug & alcohol addiction, HIV AIDS, cancer, heart disease, air quality, etc...

*Lundy Bancroft - www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmbrAWDFt0s

NEARLY **50%** OF ALL RELATIONSHIPS EXPERIENCE LIFELONG EMOTIONAL ABUSE BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3876290>

EACH YEAR, THE COST OF INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE IS **8.3 BILLION DOLLARS**

*http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics

OUR VALUES

We operate under the following Biblical principle:

” **It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible-and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. Ephesians 5:12-13**

We seek to boldly expose the hidden issues of Primary and Double Abuse® in our culture, and bring them into the light so that we do no further harm to victims. With this as our guide we hold these four core values sacred:

LISTEN RESPECTFULLY

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS

PROCLAIM TRUTH

DO NO FURTHER HARM

WHY KINTSUGI?

We take our inspiration from the Japanese art of Kintsugi, which literally means GOLDEN REPAIR. The idea behind this stunning work is MENDING the cracks of broken pottery with precious metals, like gold, making the ordinary piece of pottery even more valuable and beautiful. The MEND Project seeks to bring about healing in the repair processes for survivors of Primary and Double Abuse® resulting in a restored and beautiful creation.

” **Traumatic events destroy the sustaining bonds between individual and community. Those who have survived learn that their sense of self, of worth, of humanity, depends upon a feeling of connection to others. The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group recreates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores her humanity. Herman, Trauma and Recovery, p 214)**

OUR TEAM



ANNETTE OLTMANS
FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Annette Oltmans is a philanthropist and passionate human rights advocate. She currently serves on the Board for Pepperdine's Boone Center for the Family. She is a survivor of covert abuse, especially the kind of secondary abuse and group abuse that emerges via patriarchy emboldening the perpetrators. The uncommon conclusion to Annette's story is that when her husband was appropriately confronted and held firmly accountable, he was able, over time, to make significant changes in his thinking patterns and actively work to restore their marriage. In 2016, Annette founded The MEND Project out of her personal experiences of recovery and extensive research into the topics of abuse and trauma. Annette's passion is in providing information to religious, institutional and support communities regarding covert abuse and the correlation between unconscious and conscious patriarchy, the abuse it fosters and the liability it creates.



JOHANNA TROPIANO
CO-FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Johanna Troiano has spent the last eight years working with International Justice Mission and other organizations on justice related human rights issues, such as human trafficking, violence towards women and children, and police brutality. She is a survivor of domestic violence and Double Abuse from friends, family members, and church leaders who refused to believe her cries for help and emboldened her Alleged Perpetrator. As a result, Johanna is a passionate advocate for those who have no voice. Her work has been published in multiple media outlets, including The Huffington Post, Darling Magazine, The Girl Who Knows, The Yellow Conference, Holl and Lane, and others. In 2016, she co-founded the The MEND Project with Annette Oltmans.