A Place of Their Own:
Missoula’s Women’s Place 1973-1995

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“I cannot win, but I will not stop. This is why I work with rape survivors.”¹ These are the last two lines of a poem by S. Melissa Hewley, found in the unprocessed collection of Missoula’s Women’s Place held at Archives and Special Collections in the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. Women’s Place existed in Missoula from 1973² to 1995.³ It helped women from all socioeconomic backgrounds with rape counseling, abortion referrals, and much more⁴. In its twenty-two year existence, Women’s Place struggled to stay open. The members burntout and lack of funding plagued the organization. The staff and volunteers of Women’s Place knew that they could not stop trying, could not stop working. They knew that they needed to do whatever they could to keep helping Missoula’s women in need and for a long time; the staff and volunteers did not stop. They finally stopped when they knew that Missoula’s women could be and would be supported without them. Despite the struggle to stay open and serve Missoula’s female community, Women’s Place stayed open for twenty-two years. It persisted

For this essay, I primarily worked in the unprocessed records of the Women’s Place found in the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. I also used the oral histories of former members. At the start of this project, the only things I knew about Women’s Place was: it was an organization that no longer existed in Missoula and Judy Smith was involved in its founding.⁵ One of the oral histories mentioned in-fighting among the members of Women’s Place and I heard about a phenomenon called the “star system.” The star system is where one person’s voice or opinion rises louder than others in a collective where everyone should have an equal voice. Since Judy Smith had a reputation of being opinionated,⁶ I hoped to find proof of the star system in Women’s Place; connecting a national trend to a local organization. Since the records were unprocessed, Donna McCrae Head of Archives and Special Collections shared a list of the names of the folders available. From this list I selected random folders. Folders were
chosen based off whether I thought they would contain evidence of infighting (WP Newsletters, folders on the various restructuring, etc.) as well as amusement of name ("Lesbian Hippie Flophouse")\(^7\). Now that I have finished my research, I look back at the folders I could have chosen with a new eye. Ultimately, my quest for finding signs of the star system proved unsuccessful, but that does not mean my research was unsuccessful. The folders I chose enabled me to get an understanding of the services offered and the lives impacted by Women’s Place. My research allowed me to state that Women’s Place persisted for twenty-two years despite facing challenges. One source of great information was the collection of Women’s Place newsletters. The newsletter began in 1986, during the 1986 restructuring. The newsletter was sent only to women in the organization and was used to share information. Written in July of 1986, the oldest newsletter in the archives at the University of Montana had this to say,

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\text{I am the Women’s Place member Newsletter. I do not have a name. Yet, I will materialize miraculously every two weeks or so, covered with any and all information, tasks, strokes,}\ ^8 \text{poetry, etc. that all WP members want to share with each other.}\ ^9
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The newsletters shared announcements, schedules, proposals and strokes. Strokes was a method of providing praise/support to the women of Women’s Place. While strokes could be physical, in the newsletters they were verbal affirmation\(^10\) Most interesting for me in the newsletters were the rare letters/announcements of women leaving Women’s Place. A lot of women just disappeared into the ether. They simply stopped signing up for shifts and showing up for meetings.\(^11\) Some women however crafted a letter to say that they were leaving the organization. Some of these letters said that other commitments came up and that is why they had to leave Women’s Place.\(^12\) Others said more. They talked of burnout\(^13\), stress\(^14\), wanting more radicalism in the community\(^15\). The newsletters were very cordial when it came to other women in the organization. To me, two notes are closest to referring to infighting, but could also pertain to something else. One was
Barbara’s October, 1994 goodbye note, in it she mentioned that this time she is leaving happier. Barbara left in the summer of 1993 with as she put it, “many hard feelings.” The other was a simple notice in the announcements that Kay was leaving due to philosophical differences. It is murky though whether Barbara’s hard feelings were owing to a restructure, burnout, or other members. Similar for Kay. Was her philosophical difference to the structure of Women’s Place? How meetings were ran? Or other members whose views she did not agree with?

The folders I used were informative as well as chaotic at times. It was not always easy to find which services Women’s Place offered or at what time. Many documents in the records are not dated which makes it difficult to exactly discern when they were written. Documents are also repeated within folders, so the same document might appear in the 1986 restructuring as well as the 1993 restructuring. Jennifer Gibson talks about the lack of dates in her April 27, 2001 interview with Dawn Walsh. “There was no date on anything. When I closed Women’s Place I had twenty years of documents to try to put in order with varied dates.” At times I have had to reference other folders for dates. When creating the list of services, I compiled a list of Women’s Place addresses and used the years of when it was at each location to estimate when the document was written. (See Appendix A)

To help support the information found in the archives, I used the oral histories from the Montana Feminist Oral History Collection and the Montana Feminist History Project. The oral histories contained information on the women’s individual experience in Women’s Place as well as behind the scenes information that were not included in the newsletters.

Though the folders I accessed provided great information, I would choose additional folders if given the opportunity. In this essay, I argue that the creation of SARS (Sexual Assault
Recovery Services) on campus helped enable Women’s Place to close along with other factors. There are folders devoted to the negotiations as well on the training Women’s Place did for SARS. Those folders could shed additional light on the creation of SARS and if Women’s Place put too many resources into the training of student advocates helping Women’s Place run out of funds. These folders would provide me with additional information on the relationship between Women’s Place and SARS. I would also look at the YWCA and Diane Sand papers at the Archives. The YWCA records, to get further information on its interactions with Women’s Place particularly in the late 1980s when Women’s Place and the Battered Women’s Shelter looked at a merger of services. The Diane Sands papers, for instances of infighting.

There is a lot of research on battered women and the organizations that helped them. A lot of the research focuses on the history of battered women. *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* by Linda Gordon is one such book. In the book Linda discusses the history of child abuse, incest, and domestic violence. She offers case studies of the different types of abuse and how society responded to them. Her book examines the 1870s to the 1960s, while it is interesting and provides some historical context, it does not focus on the time era that I am. David Peterson del Mar’s book, *What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence Against Wives* also focuses on the history of abuse, particularly in Oregon (Gordon focused on Boston.) This book does go into the post-World War II era, that chapter mostly discusses divorce and the experience of violence, not the solution to it.

A book that does not discuss historical context, but rather the approach to the issues of domestic violence is, *Listening to Battered Women: A Survivor-Centered Approach to Advocacy, Mental Health and Justice* by Lisa Goodman and Deborah Epstein. Listening to Battered Women, does not go into the history of abuse, but rather the transformation that support services
went through. The authors focus on three main areas: advocacy, mental health, and judiciary. I focused on one, advocacy. In the chapter on advocacy, Goodman and Epstein discuss the history of the anti-battered women’s movement. They explain that it came out of the greater feminist movement particularly consciousness-raising.\(^\text{19}\) According to them, there were three main goals in the beginning of the movement, “(a) securing shelter and support for battered women, (b) raising the nation’s awareness of the problem, and (c) designing legal protections specially tailored to promote women’s safety.”\(^\text{20}\) Interestingly, you will see that Women’s Place completed two of the three goals.\(^\text{21}\) Most of the anti-violence organizations were feminist organizations, designed to empower staff and volunteers. They were, “decentralized, nonhierarchical [sic] power structures that included consensual decision making…”\(^\text{22}\) At the start of the movement, these organizations resisted government involvement and focused on autonomous choices of the women they served.\(^\text{23}\) As time went on and the organizations and the numbers they served grew, they saw that they needed more support and more money. The organizations embraced structure and hierarchy as a way to secure funds. When this happened there became less client autonomy and more of clients needing to complete certain tasks by a certain time.\(^\text{24}\)

Another book that focuses on the services offered to battered women instead on the history of abuse is *Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*, by Stephanie Riger, et al. In Evaluating Services, the authors of the book evaluated the services provided to women in Illinois. Before examining what was offered in 1998 to 2000, they looked at the beginnings of the movement. I’ll focus on the beginnings of the movement, as Women’s Place was not open in 1998. Just as in *Listening to Battered Women, Evaluating Services* discusses the grass roots beginnings of the movement. They discuss the staff of the early rape crisis centers saying that they often were, “… community volunteers who did not have
counseling or professional services backgrounds. Women joined these groups because they were committed to helping victims and changing society.  

25 Most of the battered women shelters and rape crisis centers in the 1970s were feminist collectives, where members shared power and decision making.  

26 Even though the organizations sprung from individual grass root beginnings, they were remarkably similar in the services they offered. Most had: a twenty-four hour crisis line, volunteers trained to be legal and medical advocates, counseling and prevention education, community demonstrations, and were involved in the legal aspect. Again, these could be seen in Missoula’s Women’s Place.  

27 In 1973, Women’s Place opened at the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in Missoula, Montana.  

28 In its beginning, Women’s Place focused on giving health information to women, primarily about abortion, which was legalized that year with the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade.  

29 At that time the community of Missoula was not open to the idea of abortion, so Women’s Place provided education and counseling as well. When Blue Mountain Clinic opened in Missoula, Women’s Place started focusing on other services. A description of its history talks about how the opening of Blue Mountain affected the services Women’s Place offered:  

Once this [abortion] service was available, women also began contacting Women’s Place for rape information and counseling. In response to this need, Women’s Place became involved in the issue of violence against women.  

30 Women’s Place employed few staff; volunteers provided most of their labor. From July 1993 to June 1994 volunteers gave 10,000 hours of work.  

31 An undated pamphlet describes the women of the organization as “…a group of community women who are interested in health education, health care, personal relationships, and how women see themselves. We are 20 to 43 years old. We are single, married and divorced.”
Women’s Place had three goals that it strived to achieve. Those goals were “to end violence against women in the greater community; to achieve self determination for all women in society; and to maximize the equalization of power within our organization.” The women of Women’s Place worked towards these goals using the Women’ Place Philosophy. The philosophy was geared towards ensuring that all women in the group worked together fairly, treated each other and the clients they served with respect, allowed for all women the ability to make autonomous decisions, and that all women were comfortable with feminism.

Women’s Place offered important services to the women in Missoula. Volunteers provided these services and they varied year to year. One undated document talks about how the organization changed.

By 1975, we were receiving a number of requests for help from rape victims although we had never advertised services for them. Because of the apparent need, we began training in the areas of rape counseling and advocacy, and began advertising our services as a rape crisis line.

Women’s Place volunteers were open and willing to help women in whatever capacity they could, even if it was a service they hadn’t offered or perhaps even considered offering. A pamphlet in the Women’s Place collection lists some services offered at that time. The pamphlet written between 1976 and 1978 listed that Women’s Place provided: information on gynecological care, birth control, abortion, venereal disease, menopause, human sexuality, self-breast exams, and vaginal infection. They had a rape relief line, where victims of rape could call and receive support from the staff or volunteers of Women’s Place. Members of the organization would also offer to accompany victims to hospital or to talk to police. The members would provide information and assistance when a victim wanted to prosecute a rapist. Women’s Place had a rape education program addressing the problem of rape as well as share statistics when
they were doing outreach. The statistics showed Missoulians that the services offered by
Women’s Place were needed and of the utmost importance, it also let people know that rape was
real and could (and did) happen in Missoula. It offered basic counseling, discussion groups, and
a referral system. The referral system recommended Mental Health Center, private therapists,
and local physicians to women; however they always made sure the person they were referring to
was acceptable. Lastly, they presented to schools, clubs, and many other groups who had worked
with young women.\(^37\)

Women’s Place offered more services as time went on. In the spring of 1986, Women’s
Place offered a Women’s Issues Group, which involved working on relationship issues,
depression, anger, and stress. There were workshops for drug and alcohol counselors. Additional
services included a lending library, peer-counseling trainings (for staff and agencies in domestic
abuse and sexual assault) and advocacy services.\(^38\) In addition to trainings, workshops, and
advocacy, Women’s Place produced literature. Some of the titles are: *A Flight from Abuse: The
Problem of Domestic Violence and What You Can Do About It, Rape: It Happens Here, Choices:
A Guide to Violence-Free Dating*,\(^39\) and *Communication Toward Nonviolence: A Teacher’s
Guide*.\(^40\)\(^41\)

While open, Women’s Place served a lot of women. In 1986, Missoula created the Blue
Ribbon Commission. The Blue Ribbon Commission was compiled of local Missoula citizens that
were selected to be on the committee with the intent of, “... to review local human service
organizations such as yours, … and will be primarily financial and administrative in scope.”\(^42\) In
the report, Women’s Place recorded that they mainly served women aged 14 to 40 in the lower to
middle income bracket. Though in their children’s group they served boys and girls aged 4 to 17.
The unduplicated (not repeated) count of people served was listed as: in 1984, 904 people served; in 1985, 1,094 people were served; and in 1986, 1,300 people were served.\textsuperscript{43}

The Women’s Place internal newsletters shared statistics with staff and volunteers. For three quarters in 1994 and 1995 the newsletters shared the numbers served by Women’s Place. While Women’s Place served any women (and a few men) who called or stopped by its office, in the last year they served mainly white women aged 30 to 44. Of the records available, each quarter more than 150 individuals were served. The volunteers at Women’s Place worked hard for the women in Missoula.\textsuperscript{44}

Women’s Place was a feminist collective. According to Benita Bunjun in Feminist Organizations and Intersectionality: Contesting Hegemonic Feminism, feminist organizations “…focus primarily on equal rights and opportunity for women while recognizing the goal of empowerment.”\textsuperscript{45} Women’s Place served primarily women, with a small percentage of men.\textsuperscript{46}

The staff and volunteers supported the feminism of Women’s Place.

Women’s Place members were thrilled to be part of a feminist organization. In a newsletter introducing herself, Lisa, in her second week as a Member Coordinator, said this, “I’ve spent years trying to be heard as a feminist. Years spent trying to speak in the face of trivialization, hostility, and occasional tokenism. Yet now, I am asked, in part, to coordinate inservices \textit{[sic]} for the development of feminist consciousness…”\textsuperscript{47}

Women’s Place tried to represent marginalized women. In a note about a sexual assault survivors packet a request for different types of women was made:

We hope to have a representation of many different survivor [sexual assault survivors] experiences as – a survivor and as a high school student as survivor and as Jewish,
as survivor and as lesbian, etc. etc. 48

Women’s Place tried to practice inclusion and empowerment of all women. In terms of empowerment, the structure of Women’s Place lent itself to empowering women. There was no hierarchy in the membership. A student who did her practicum at Women’s Place described the structure of Women’s Place as: “The organization functions from a feminist perspective without a rigid hierarchical structure of authority or official channels of communication.” 49 Every woman had an equal voice.

In a team building statement from the “Women’s Place Organizational Policy September 1985 First Draft,” Women’s Place members declared themselves as “…a collective women working together to achieve our goals together as a team, rather than individuals competing with one another.” 50 Funk and Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary describes collectivism as “A system in which the people as a whole, or the state, own and control the material and means of production and distribution.” 51 For the Women’s Place this translated into each member of the organization having an equal voice in the services they provided, how money was earned and spent, and other choices and/or decisions that might arise. A paper in a folder about the 1984 restructuring of Women’s Place discusses why Women’s Place was a collective. The paper, “Some Wpmen’s [sic] Place History”, discusses the advantages of being a collective. “In absence of authority figures, women often feel freer to explore facets of development discouraged by traditional sex-role stereotyping, … in short, finding our ‘voices’” 52 The thought was that in a masculine environment women tended to be more demure and less outspoken. In a collective, the hope was that women would feel more comfortable speaking out.
It did not matter how long they had been with the organization or how many hours they volunteered a week, a month, or a year. Every woman at Women’s Place had an equal say, however, issues regarding the voice of some collectives would arise. When describing the collective nature of Women’s Place, it is announced that for the Women’s Place Collective to be successful every woman needs to be committed to the approach, vocalizing their thoughts feelings, and opinions, or else it would not be successful. Members were aware of the possibility of this problem and would try their best to mitigate them, no matter how many times it was needed. Below are two mentions for two separate newsletters of the need to fix the lack of equality.

We don’t have a collective. We have a few people making decisions for us all. There are a few people who also feel more comfortable taking power and others that give it to them. I want to encourage all of you to find your voices and speak what is in your heart and mind.  

and

We are not a true collective if only 25% of us are making decisions. However, we can continue to involve you in issues through the newsletters, the monthly meetings, and phone calls, etc. And, we can make certain you have access to meetings and ways to let us know your feelings. I encourage you to write letters to the newsletter or for it, sharing your thoughts and experiences to keep us involved in the issues of shared power, shared work, and commitment to each other and this incredible process we are involved in…. called Women’s Place.

Realizing that not every woman was sharing her voice, these two authors make the plea for everyone to speak up and let their opinion be heard. That way the collective could continue to be successful.

Unfortunately the collective was not always successful. In handwritten notes from a 1993 Worker’s Council meeting a comment was made that the organization was not a collective, members felt scared that their opinion and voice would not be heard. Many volunteers and staff of the Women’s Place dealt with burnout. The September 1993 newsletter included a list of
problems that members had with the organization as well as a list of solutions. Burnout made the list of problems. Joan Arches in “Social Structure, Burnout, and Job Satisfaction” describes burnout as “…a cluster of physical, emotional, and interactional symptoms related to job stress and includes emotional exhaustion, a sense of lacking personal accomplishment…” In a folder devoted to the 1989 restructuring, there is a piece of paper labelled, “Organizational Development Work with Entire Collective 6/12/90.” This paper includes questions and responses. One of the questions examined how the structure could be changed to increase efficiency. The follow up included, “…prevent burnout of members…” The very first question on the mind of members was of burnout. This was evident in the newsletter. In the March 9th, 1987 newsletter Amy’s goodbye included the fact that she felt burnt out. 

According to Shanti Kulkami, Holly Bell, Jennifer Hartman, and Robert Herman-Smith in “Exploring Individual and Organizational Factors Contributing to Compassion Satisfaction, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Burnout in Domestic Violence Services Providers” there are key features of an organization that contribute to burn out: higher work demands, lower resources, and turnover.

The Women’s Place exemplified each burnout feature. Women in the collective put in long hours. In one month, member Myra was on call for 179 hours! The average work week is forty hours, in a month of four weeks an average worker will put in 160 hours. Those 179 hours just included on call. It did not include other work done for the collective. Women’s Place lacked in resources. In her goodbye letter, outgoing member Amy clearly shares her feelings in regards to Women’s Place problem “The basic problem as I see it...is that we’re an over extended agency and group of wom’n [sic] running out of lack. Lack of money… Lack of volunteers...lack of recognition and support.” She continued on speaking on how no one gave
her clear guidelines to run her program.\textsuperscript{63} There was a turnover in the collection.\textsuperscript{64} During the long term planning retreat of 1987 a “Don’t Like” was the loss of staff and volunteers.\textsuperscript{65} During the 1990 reorganization retreat, one of the big gaps listed was the “drop-out rate of volunteers.”\textsuperscript{66} Women’s Place restructured to mitigate the burnout of its members.

Over the course of its twenty-two year history, Women’s Place restructured many times. Most of the restructuring was centered on the fact that for many, the collective form of the organization did not work. The women at the Women’s Place were burnt out. They were working long hours on intense projects. In 1986 the Women’s Place began restructuring.\textsuperscript{67} The 1986 restructure might have come about as a result of the stress and burnout women felt. Danette from the Women’s Place wrote a letter to the Rape Crisis Network in Eugene, Oregon. On August 13th, 1986 a response was penned. The letter introduced shared documents on evaluation which was something Amy pleaded for in her 1987 departure letter from Women’s Place.\textsuperscript{68} The letter from Oregon also responded to Danetta’s request of burnout. At the start of the burnout section, is a simple note, “…good luck.”\textsuperscript{69} The women in Oregon, too, experienced burnout. The letter continued suggesting why women burn out\textsuperscript{70} The advice given was to support everyone. Allow them to say no. Encourage them to take a break from the organization and return again when ready. The group in Oregon created seven focuses for the volunteers to choose from.\textsuperscript{71} Following her advice, Women’s Place created eleven caucuses.\textsuperscript{72}

These eleven caucuses were created to help break the collective up into more manageable parts. Having everyone in Women’s Place share and discuss all at once could be overwhelming for the women. In smaller groups discussion perhaps could be more forthcoming. A way to communicate the information from the caucuses with the larger group was by writing it in the newsletter.\textsuperscript{73} If a caucus made a decision it would need to write in the newsletter afterwards other
members had one week to respond to the decision. If no one responded it was believed that all women agreed with decision. Other things that went in the newsletter would be community concerns. If a decision needed to be made and it was a big one, there would be a discussion of it at one of the meetings.

Another solution for burn out given in the 1986 Reorganization was to create caucuses another was the “sister system.” The sister system was older members being paired with new members. The older members gave support, helped them feel like they were “part of the Women’s Place family” Newer members could check in with their sisters when needed. Even with the 11 caucuses of smaller groups and the sisters to offer support, Women’s Place still restructured more times.

Burnout continued to be a problem in the collective. Recall the 1989 restructuring first questions related to stress and burnout of members. In the newsletter from 1989 glimpses of burnout were shared. The January 1989 newsletter shared a story about a Workers Council. The first line was, “It wasn’t tense, but it was a was amazing and exciting a 45 minute discussion…” Opening with a statement denying any tension, shows that oftentimes tensions were present at meetings. In 1990 Women’s Place held a reorganization retreat. The notes from the retreat showed that Women’s Place members still experienced burnout even if they did not say it. In Kulkarmi’s et al article they discuss how work environment can add to the burnout of workers. One thing that adds to burnout is “...role ambiguity…” In notes members state that ambiguous decision making is not going well. Later in the notes, staff shared what they needed more of. Everyone but one person said that they needed more support and communication with others. One of the things Kulkarmi et al mentioned as a preventative method to burn out was
more support. The 1992 restructuring notes, again did not mention or hint at burnout. However it mentioned “lacking” as we have seen lacking connects with burnout.

One thing Women’s Place lacked was money. Members did a lot of fundraising for the collective. Women’s Place funding was never always secure. It relied on grants, garage/rummage sales and phone campaigns all which enabled them to stay open. Although money was tight, Women’s Place was able to make it work. Women’s Place purchased a house in February of 1992. The purchase of the house put a greater financial strain on the organization. The house was purchased for $125,000, at time of closing a total of $25,000 was paid. In order to help pay for the house Women’s Place created a fundraising coordinator position. The creation of this position did not ultimately help however. Women’s Place was still behind financially, in the July 1995 newsletter an outgoing member states, “Things are still hectic around here, and we are still scrambling for money to make ends meet.”

The scramble became more dire. In the Women’s Place Collection there is a folder labelled “Very last ditch efforts for $ June 1995.” This folder holds pleas sent to foundations requesting money. In a letter to James Murtaugh Program Manager of Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenburg Foundation, Board President Gail Hammer and Program Director Jennifer Gibson write,

Unfortunately, as is often the case for small non-profit organizations dedicated to serving low-income people, Women’s Place currently faces financial short-falls as we approach the end of our funders fiscal year…. Women’s Place faces severe cash-flow problems this summer.

The cash flow problem was so severe that a month later Women’s Place penned another letter to the J.W. Kieckhefer Foundation. Someone jotted a handwritten note on the letter, the note states, “not sent. decision to end services pending.” Later in the letter to the J.W. Kieckhefer
Foundation a request for funds is made. Requested is $10,894 to pay the mortgage and interest costs for a year. Previously a building fund paid these, at the writing of the letter that fund was depleted. Women’s Place persisted for twenty two years, getting by with garage sales, phone campaigns, and grants. The financial burden of purchasing a building left the organization unable to endure.

Before financial difficulties really hit hard, Women’s Place worked with other agencies in the community. Women’s Place could not battle abuse and assault alone. The women who worked there knew they had to work with other organizations and so they partnered with others. Women’s Place helped create Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) at the University of Montana. In 1992, the university and Women’s Place began talking about creating a drop in center on campus. This began after some “guerilla advertising” at the university. After two staff members presented to students about date rape, they hung up Women’s Place rape fliers in two buildings on campus. The estimate was that fifty-two contact tabs were removed from those fliers. However, Women’s Place did not receive any calls from college students. The coordinator of the rape program at that time mentioned that she would speak with, “the Dean’s office, Student Health/Counseling and the Sexual Assault Task Force Shortly.” Seven months later, Women’s Place members were able to meet with staff from the University of Montana. At that meeting it sounded as if the university would contract with Women’s Place for rape prevention and response on campus. The conversations between Women’s Place and the University of Montana went on for a couple of months. When ultimately it was revealed that campus did not want to partner with Women’s Place for services, rather the University wanted to create its own program for rape counseling. Instead of leading rape crisis counseling, the
University of Montana had Women’s Place help them create their own program. Women’s Place helped create the SARS program at the University of Montana.

Women’s Place also helped create the YWCA’s battered women’s shelter. Even though Women’s Place helped create the YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter and even though they served the same population, battered and abuse women, by the time of the Blue Ribbon Commission of 1986, Women’s Place and the YWCA did not work closely together. The Blue Ribbon Commission requested that all of the nonprofits they were examining complete a questionnaire. One of the questions on the questionnaire asked if the nonprofit had discussed merging with another agency. Women’s Place responded with they were going to use the Blue Ribbon Commission as an opportunity to strike up a conversation with the Battered Women’s Shelter.

Following the Blue Ribbon Commission, a suggestion was sent out to all non-profits and the city on how to best continue. Women’s Place was recommended to work with the YWCA, supporting what was decided in the beginning of the commission, “A heightened level of cooperation and coordination should be developed between the YWCA, which administers the Battered Women’s Shelter and Women’s Place.” The conversations did not go well. The YWCA was on the defensive and did not cooperate. In notes from a meeting, it says, “The executive director (of the YWCA) has overtly obstructed most efforts to coordinate services with Women’s Place.” Those conversations lead to the creation of “The Forum” and “Women’s Crisis Network.”

The Women’s Crisis Network first met on May 7th, 1987. In the meeting they shared why they were meeting and what their goals were. Ultimately, their hope was to create a new
organization. They did not succeed. A memorandum from the county commissioners, said that the two organizations created the separation and that the two organizations, YWCA and Women’s Place needed to fix the separation. The forum grew from this. In a unity statement Women’s Place and YWCA members shared that they were committed to working together and supporting victims of assault. The two organizations showed their commitment through action. The YWCA and Women’s Place worked on “Love Without Fear” week together. They did trainings for one another.

Women’s Place closed after 22 years in 1995. One source of the ending of Women’s Place, say it wasn’t financial that caused it to end, but rather it was the final restructuring that caused Women’s Place to close. The final restructure included the decision to have an executive director. During the 1986 restructuring, Jacquie Gibson writes to Women’s Place possible structure models they can have. Jacquie admitted that how Women’s Place currently functions was “slow and cumbersome” and talked about the choices Women’s Place had. It could change to an hierarchical organization, with an executive director and a board of directors. Jacquie said that if they wanted that structure, then it would be a process that happened over a few years. Jacquie’s did not think the Women’s Place should change into a hierarchical structure. However, she did lay out a way for Women’s Place to become more hierarchical. It involved three steps and would take two to five years. At the beginning of the section on hierarchy, Jacquie shared a fear, “I fear that creating a hierarchical structure will deny your own reality.” Jacquie was very astute in her trepidation; soon after Women’s Place transitioned to an executive director it closed down.

An Executive Director started at Women’s Place in Spring of 1994. The restructure previous to that in 1993, only mentioned a modified hierarchical structure or a “...modified
collective management structure…” The new system which debuted in May of 1993, acknowledged the issue of the previous system. Issues included: women did not have enough information to make a decision, but were expected to and there were too many women with different viewpoints expected to agree. To solve these issues Women’s Place members would make decisions in smaller groups. If a decision had to be made that included the whole group, it would be made at a retreat. The newsletters of this time mentioned nothing more aside from the change had occurred.

In December of 1993, two members resigning from the positions they were leaving in the newsletter. One of them, Claudia the outgoing Sexual Assault Program Coordinator, stated in her letter, “I’ve also been disappointed at how the restructuring effort failed to safeguard against the same power dynamics that it set out to address.” Lisa who resigned from the member coordinator position simply stated: 1) she was more an observer rather than doer, 2) she disliked the crisis line, and 3) she hoped to see more activism/involvement in the community from Women’s Place. Two more women fully quit the Women’s Place in February, 1994. Janet quit via a note written on an article titled, “Power and Helplessness in the Women’s Movement.” Gwen quit with a note that said, “I have issues with Women’s Place that has left me very discouraged, and a lack of energy to do anything about it.”

At some point between May of 1993, when the modified structure was put into place and February of 1994, more women most have quit. In the archives there is a folder titled, “Feb ‘94 Transition.” In it are job descriptions, lists of questions, and a document that shares program information for new staff. Whenever and however the decision was made to hire an executive director, not every women in the collective agreed with it.
Roberta, the first executive director resigned after only 30 days. The time and money they lost in order to hire their first director was irreparable. “So, we did all of that and we hired a Director who quit like a month later.” As they were searching for a second executive director to hire, two different staff members had to relocate due to the passing of family members. Women’s Place had to figure out how to hire two new staff members, plus get an executive director on board. The hiring and onboarding of three new employees was not something Women’s Place was prepared to do. Coupled to that was the Women’s Place current financial crisis. Other organizations in town were offering or at least starting to offer similar services; the YWCA had a crisis line, SARS was starting counseling group.

While Women’s Place offered vital services to the women in Missoula, there were similar services offered by other organizations. The stress of them needing to hire a new staff person coupled with the fact that the services they offered could be found in other organizations as well as its financial difficulties enabled Women’s Place to decide they could close down. The plethora of women who they had supported over the years would still be able to receive the much needed support. A long time member had this to say about Women’s Place: “I think maybe that it was. Women’s Place was.”
Appendix A

1973-1976: 207 E Main Street

1976-1978: 1130 W Broadway


1983?-1985?: 127 East Main Street Room 218

1985-1992: 521 N Orange

Appendix B

Key: [ ] quitting or leaving the Women’s Place; { } just completed training or received a promotion

For women who time at Women’s Place was known, I put the length of time in the brackets with them. IE: when Mary Beth left after 4 months in 1989, she has 4 months in her bracket.

11/1977 Karen F
5/1978 Dorothy W
7/1980 Patti, Lee
2/1981 Deb T
11/1981 Pam
2/1982 Deb T
6/1983 Vicki K, Deirdre B
5/1985 Lynn C, Kerry M, Lynn S,
6/1985 Sue W-M
2/1986 Sue W-M
7/1986 Lynn, Kristina, Andrea, Margy, Wilma Moran, Leslie, Amy, Danette, Lynne, Janet
8/1986 Deirdre, Kristine, Leslie, Danetta, Lynne, Kate, Linnea, Margy, Andrea, Amy, Sonia, Mel, Sue W-M, Sue S, Deb T
9/1986 Deirdre, Kristina, Becky, Mel Harrington, Amy, Grace Allen, Margy, Neva, Leslie, Sue Silverberg
10/1986 Margy, Trisha, Janet, Sue S, Becky, Kristina, Lynne, Neva, Deirdre, Donetta, Danetta, Mel, Deborah, Kathy, Sue W-M, Andrea, Kate, Leslie, Linnea, Maya, Kim, Rosemary, Grace A, Andy L
11/1986 Sue S, Amy G, Rachel S, Deirdre B, Janet, Mel, Kristina S, Rosemary, Lynne, Danetta, Deb, Kate, Becky, Donetta

12/1986 Janet, Kate, Danette, Amy, Deirdre, Becky, Deb T, Sonia, Ann, Char, Andrea, Kristina, Myra, Lynne, Rashel J, Mel, Rosemary, Neva, MaryLou, Maureen, Suzanne, Chloe


2/1987 Janet, Margy, Amy, [Kay K], Mary, Deb, Adie, Lynne, Ann, Deirdre, [Mel], Myra, Kate, Kristina, Danetta


   *This is the first Janet S.

4/1987 Kristina, Margy, Ann C, Myra, Star Danetta, Deirdre, Mary, Donetta, Roxie, Janet


7/1987 Myra D

8/1987 [Deirdre B]


   *I believe this is the second Janet S.


2/1988 Deborah, Kim D., Myra D, Ann, Donetta, Star, Terry, ErnaRae, Rachelle, Teresa, Janet S, Nancy A, Beth F


24
5/1988 Star G


7/1988 Ann C


?/1988 Kim, Lissa, Sonia, Myra, Star, Ellen, Donetta

10/1988 Myra, Jerra, Maralyn, Neva, Cecelia, Kim, Maggie, Star, Deb, Chris G, Maggie, Marvalene, Nancy A


12/1988 {Ellen, Kate, Candace, Sue, Janet*, MaryBeth, Betsy, Jan, Heidi, Sam} Amy, Kim, Sonia, Kristina, Star, Deb

   *This is Janet H, second Janet S left before now

1/1989 [Maggie] Sonia, Marvalene, Beth, Star, MaryBeth, Chris, Amy, Virginia, Kim, Myra, Deb


5/1989 Carla, Star

7/1989 Deb T, Star G

9/1989 Kim, Myra, Star, Cecilia, [Amy 2 years], Donetta, Karen, Deborah,

10/1989 Barbara G, Kim, Kate, Karen

11/1989 Kim, Myra

1/1990 Lissa, Donetta, Myra, Star, Robin Jennifer, Jane, Deb

2/1990 Jennifer, Lissa, Donetta, Karen, Deb, Kate, Kandace, Janet, Jane

3/1990 Mary, Creshelle, Star, Kandace, Kate, Myra, Deb, Janet, Donetta, Pat, Jennifer, Lissa, Chris, Karen L, Karen T, Karen Marie*

   *I don’t know if this is a third Karen or the middle name of Karen L or T

4/1990 Myra, Mary, Karen, Robin, Creshelle, Deb, Pat, Star, Jennifer, Lissa, Youpa, Jane
5/1990 Creshelle, Mary, Deb, Star, Myra, Lissa, Julianna, Kate, Robin, Janet, Jennifer, Darlene, Clare, Pat, Youpa, Katie, Chris, Bridget, Carrie, Christine, Karen {Jan and Jane}


9/1990 Star, Janet, Amy, Myra, Betsy, Jennifer, Chris V Laurie, Kathleen, Jamie, Christina, Anna, Deb

10/1990 Myra, Chris, Jennifer, Betsy, Mary, Katie, Amy, Star, Youpa, Deborah T, Paula, Chris V, Kim S Terril L

11(?)/1990 Star, [Jen], Chris, Kate, Janet, Kathleen, Becky

2/1991 Janet, Star, Kandace, Betsy, Joanne, Myra, Mary, Christine, Deb, Chris V

4/1991 Kandace, Larua, Danielia, Connie, Lissa, Melissa, Karen, Mary, Janet, Chris

5/1991 {Claudia, Laurie, Louise, Marcy, MaryAnn, Megan, Michelle, Mo, Paula, Sandra, Sara, Terrel} Deb, Amy, Susan, Janet, Danielia, Kathy, Diane, Mary, Chris, Myrta, Lissa, Star

6/1991 Amy Rubin, Lissa, Mary, Deb, Star, Myra, Janet, Carol, Myrta, Daniella, Diane, Susan, Katie, Laurie M, [Kandace] Chris, Kathy, Laura, Carla, Chris, Claudia, Daniela, Dodie, Jamie, Janis, Joanne, Julie, Karen, Kathy, Laurie GH, Marcy, MaryAnn, Michelle, Paula, Sandra, Sara, Shannon, Terrel, Viola

7/1991 Star, Mary, Claudia, Laura, Jamie, Marcy, Lissa [Laurie Gadbow-Hunt 1 year]

8/1991 Janet, Chris V, Claudia, Diane, Susan, Sara, Chris, Viola, Mary, Laurie, Myrta, Michelle, Terrel, Sandra, Dodie

9/1991 Amy, Deb

10/1991 Deb, Janet

11/1991 Mary, Sara, Teresa, Laurie, Sandra, Katie, Terrell, Michelle, Dodie, Deb, Laura, Janet, Myra, Mary, Creshelle, Paula

2/1992 Amy R-H*, Holly, Ann, Charlotte, Liz, Marcia, Kathy, Karen, Victoria, Dodie, Lissa, JoAnn, Laura, Myrta, MaryAnn, Myra, Mary, Claudia, Jamie, Laurie, Viola [Chris V 1 year 8 months] Sandra, Elaine

    Formerly Amy R
3/1992 Amy, Deb T, Janet, Ann, Mary, Victoria, Holly, Lissa, Carol, Charlotte, JoAnn, Myrta, Deb B, Sara, Laura, Claudia, Dodie, Susan

4/1992 Deb T, Mary, Sarah R, Amy, Anne, Deb, Janet, Kathy, Sandra, Victoria, Claudia, Karen

7/1992 Sandra, Anne Charlotte, Victoria, Deb, Janet, Martha, Myrta, Holly, Claudia, Carol, Mary, Lissa, Sara

8/1992 [Mary], Jill, Susan, Myrta, Victoria, Amy, Deb T, Lisa, Sandra, Ellie, Holly, Laura, Margaret, Janet, Kelly, Carol, Charlotte, Sara


12/1992 Jamie, Donetta, Kandace, Anna, Amy, Betsy, Chris, Creshelle, Deb, Janet, Jennifer, andy, Katie, Laurie, Lissa, Mary, Myra, Star, Viola {Carla, Daniellia, Janis, Carol, Kathy, Sarah, Joanne, Laura, Susan, Melissa, Shannon, Connie, Myrta, Diane, Wendy, Julie} (Inactive: Jen, Chris, Clare, Kathleen, Robin, Jasmine, Youpa)

Winter/1992 Holly, Ellie, Stacey, Janet, Lisa, Char {Carol, Jenny, Lorraine, Barbara, Darcy, Christi, Ellen, Katie, Judi, Sherrie, Kristen, Deirdre, Sue, Gwen, Mary Ellen, Stephanie, Catie}

?/1992 Emily, Lissa, Charlotte, Kelly, Laura, Deb, Emily, Martha, Margaret, Lissa, Myrta, Jill, Sara, Susan, Claudia

?/1992 Claudia, Yvonne, Mareb, Liz, Myrta, Holly, Laura, Lissa, Mary, MaryAnn, Sara, Emily, Amy, Sandra

1/1993 Claudia, Ellie, Myrta, Susan, Katie Dean, Carol, Victoria

2/1993 Janet, Jami, Sherrie, Claudia, Susan, Myrta, Charlotte K, Barbara L, Holly, Mary Ellen, Margaret, Deirdre

3/1993 Katie D, Christi, Jenny, Carol B, Jami, Claudia, Ellie, Stephanie, Deirdre, Sherrie, Darcy, Ellie, Sue R, Myrta W, Jenny

4/1993 Sherrie, Katie, Ellie, Jami, Deb, Amy, Kathy, Kelly, Christi, Carol B, Judi, Myrta, Catie, Janet, Ellen, Mary-Ellen, Stephanie, Jenny, Lorraine, Sue R, Gwen, Jenny, Claudia, Martha, Katie D

5/1993 Ellen, Janet, Deb, Amy, Claudia, Lisa

7/1993 Claudia, Janet, Christi, Holly, Deirdre, Stephanie, Carol B, Judy, Deb T, Barbara, Yonith, Amy, Ellie, Kate

27
8/1993(?) Christi, [Judi] {Anne-Marie, Jen, Gia, Joanne, Eliza, Yonith, Carey} Holly, Katie, Sherrie, Ellie, Ellen, Gwen, Catie, Deb, Lorraine, Stephanie, Martha, Lissa, Katie, Victoria, Amy, Deirdre, Charlotte

8/1993 Janet, Yonith, Carey, Lisa, Sherrie, [[Ellie]] Kelly, Deb, Claudia, Katie

9/1993 Deb, Janet, Eliza, Joanne, Catie B, Jami, Deb, Amy, Kathy, Kelly, Lisa, Yonith [Ellie*] Claudia, Carol, Charlotte, Jen, Stephanie, Anne-Marie, Sherrie

*Ellie is reiterating the fact that she is leaving

10/1993 Claudia, Stephanie, Anne-Marie, Charlotte, Jen, Sue, Eliza, Myrta, Deb T, Holly S, Laura L, Joanne, Sherrie, Katie, Yonith, Katie D, Carol B

11/1993 Barbara, Charlotte, Sara, Carey, Anne Marie, Lisa, Carol B, Margaret, Claudia, Victoria, {Kate}

12/1993 {Bev, Jodi, Roxie, Gail, Kathy, Julie, Heather, Francine} [Claudia*, Lisa] Yonith, Sherrie, Deb

*Just quitting her position, not the organization

1/1994 Sue, Jen, Carol W, Carey, Gail

2/1994 Jodi, Jen, Bev, Roxie, Carey, Holly, Margaret, Victoria, Anne-Marie, [Janet, Gwen], Lisa


7/1994 Kristina S, Claudia M, Gail H

9/1994 Francena G, Catie B, Jennifer G, Barbara L,

5/1995 Jennifer G, Catie B

1 Unnamed Poem, [Box 5, Folder POEMS, ETC.,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

2 Women’s Place Newsletter Special Edition, September 1995, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

3 Organization Qualification, [Box 5, Folder Organizational Charts≈1978,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT. Some sources have 1974 to be the start of Women’s
Place, one source claims 1972. I selected 1973 because the newsletter announcing the closing of Women's Place refers to 1973.

4 Judy Smith Interview April 2001 Mansfield Library, Missoula, Montana
5 Judy Smith Interview April 2001 Mansfield Library, Missoula, Montana
7 In this folder a local man is upset that county funds were going to Women's Place. He claimed that Women's Place was full of lesbians and since they had programming for kids, the members were indoctrinating children into lesbianism. This folder did not contribute to my essay, but it was interesting.
8 Strokes is praise, shared between members.
9 Women's Place Newsletter, July 28, 1986, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women's Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
10 Guidelines for Giving Constructive Criticism pg 4 Box 2 Folder: Info for Orange St Volunteers
11 Women's Place News, December 1990, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women's Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
12 Women's Place News, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women's Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
13 Women's Place Newsletter, November 2, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women's Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT. By declaring she’s not burnt out shows that burn out was an issue at Women’s Place
14 Women’s Place Newsletter, December, 1993, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
15 Women’s Place Newsletter, February 23, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
16 Women’s Place, October, 1994, [Box 5, Folder Internal Newsletters,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
17 Women’s Place Newsletter, February 23, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
18 Jennifer Gibson Interview.
19 In consciousness-raising people get together and talk about a specific issues. In this case it was women getting together and discussing domestic violence. As they spoke, they realized that it was a shared problem.; Lisa Goodman, Listening to Battered Women (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association), 31.
20 Lisa Goodman, Listening to Battered Women (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association), 32-33
21 This would be a great topic for future researchers!
22 Lisa Goodman, Listening to Battered Women (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association), 35
25 Stephanie Riger et al, Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Chicago: Sage Publications) pg 5
26 Stephanie Riger et al, Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Chicago: Sage Publications) pg 5
27 And again, a great topic for future researchers.
28 Judy Smith Interview April 2001 Mansfield Library, Missoula, Montana
29 Daphne Spain, Constructive Feminism: Women’s Spaces and Women’s Rights in the American City (New York: Cornell University Press, 2016) pg 3
30 The Herstory and Politics of Women's Place, [Box 5, Folder WP- Herstory Unprocessed, Women's Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
Just because a service was offered, did not mean it was free from scrutiny. In the 1990s, Women’s Place had a Child Sex Assault program. The program had been running for a few years. There was a constant need and request for facilitators, but beyond that everything appeared to be running well. However, the February 1992 newsletter a decision that was made at an earlier meeting was shared. The decision was made to close (temporarily) the child sex assault program. The decision to close was made because of numerous issues among them:

- lack of adequate training and supervision of group facilitators, lack of leadership and administration, lack of policies and procedures for facilitators, and recent program incidents including molestation of a child in group and an inadequate response to this group, and mishandling of offender issues in adult survivor groups.

Members of Women’s Place cared about the services they offered, however they also cared about the people they offered the services to. If a program could (or did) hurt someone, Women’s Place closed it. The services offered by Women’s Place served a lot of women.

It struggled on how to work with men. The front cover of the April 1993 newsletter has a picture of two men standing in front of the Women’s Place building; all around are signs advertising that it is a space for women only. One of the men says to the other, “I don’t get it—why can’t I go in?” In 1987, the lesbian battering task force compiled answers from a questionnaire that focused on men at Women’s Place. A month later a proposed policy on “The Role of Men at WP” was revealed. The policy contained six points. Among them were; men would not be allowed in the collective and men could not be in the building during business hours. Women’s Place staff and...
volunteers worked with women who had been sexually assaulted; experienced domestic violence, etc. They wanted a safe space for themselves and their clients away from the sex that caused them pain.

Women’s Place Newsletter, July-The Whole Month, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletters, March 1993, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

S.W. Comp Exam on Ritualistic Abuse, June 3, 1991, [Box 2,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Policy Manual, Memorandum, [Box 2, Folder Personnel Policies 1985] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.


Some Women’s Place History, [Box 5, Folder W.P. Reorganization 1984 Memorandum,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, March 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, February 1988, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

W.C. disc., [Box 5, Folder Restructuring,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, September, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.


Women’s Place—Organizational Development Work with Entire Collective, June 6, 1990, [Box 5, Folder Restructuring Consultant Work 1989,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, March 9, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.


Women’s Place Newsletter April 6, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, March 9, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, March 9, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

See Appendix B.

Long Term Planning Retreat, October 11, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Reorganization Retreat 1990] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Accountability Focus Group, page 2, box 5 folder: reorganization retreat 1990

This is not the first restructuring. There are notes from a 1984 restructuring as well as drawing pad with notes from what is possibly a 1985 restructuring.

Women’s Place Newsletter, March 9, 1987, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
The reasons for burnout: unresolved issues of own experience with sexual assault that the women did not want to come to terms with. Issues of heterosexual women returning home to men after working with women who had experienced violence at the hands of men. Issue of women just burning out after working there.

Letter from Rape Crisis Network to Women’s Place, August 13, 1986, [Box 5, Folder Restructuring 1986,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

I will not go into all the restructuring and burnouts. In the collection at the archives there is a folder labelled “Reorganizing” it does not specifically say burnout, but through the notes it is evident that Women’s Place members battled burnout at that time.

Women’s Place Organizational Development Work with Entire Collective, June 12, 1990, [Box 5, Folder Restructuring-Consultant Work 1989,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

The notes do include the beginning of a conversation, beginning of a thought on restructuring the hierarchical organization of Women’s Place.

Letter from Defunct restructuring task force to women of Women’s Place, October 30, 1986, [Box 5, Folder Restructuring 1986,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, April 1988, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, November 3, 1990, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, July, 1993, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, February, 1992, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.
Letter from Jacquie Gibson to Steering committee, July 24, 1986, [Box 5, Reorganization 1986] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, May, 1994, [Box 5, Folder Internal Newsletters,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

New Structure at Women’s Place Begins, May, 1993, [Box 5, Folder Restructuring,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Women’s Place Newsletter, December, 1993, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

Claudia still worked with Women’s Place after she quit being the Sexual Assault Program Coordinator, I cannot definitively say whether or not Lisa stayed on in another position.

Women’s Place Newsletter, February, 1994, [Box 5, Folder Newsletters WP,] Unprocessed, Women’s Place Collection, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.

One newsletter stated that because the women never officially signed papers and started, she was never officially an executive director. The women who wrote that note was adamant that the press not think that the women was officially hired

Jennifer Gibson Interview

Deb Tomas Interview

Unless otherwise noted, this list was compiled by looking at the dates and addresses of various documents


“The following are extracts of...” Box 5, Folder Unlabelled.

These names were all found in newsletters or other documents from the archives. I did not go through all of the documents. If a woman’s last name was given, I shortened it to her last initial for privacy.