

Spreading a Culture of Healing

One young woman had been repeatedly sexually abused in her childhood by a close family relative. She had lived in shame with this secret for years, thinking something was wrong with her. For the first time, she shared what had happened to her. She found the courage to speak after hearing a Christian female psychiatrist talk on sexual abuse at a meeting directed by Impact Middle East leaders. The young woman says that she feels a heavy weight has been lifted from her shoulders.

Healing has started for this young woman. The Impact Middle East team that ministers to girls and women in Egypt is dedicated to walking the journey of recovery with her and others like her. N and M, leaders of this ministry, are training a team of 35 women to reach numerous villages and multiply the ministry's impact, spreading a culture of healing and creating safe places for young women to talk about what is happening to them. So far, this team has reached out to 80 women who have suffered either sexual abuse or domestic physical violence.

Certain Middle Eastern cultural forces create additional layers of complexity for young women in Egypt. For example, men can receive money from some Muslim organizations if they succeed in tempting and then converting Christian girls to Islam. Also, Middle Eastern culture is one of shame and honor. Girls who have sex outside of marriage, or even those who have been raped, often hide what happens to them out of fear of the shame that would come upon their families. In extreme cases, these women can be victims of honor killing – being killed by their own relatives for bringing dishonor upon the family. Recently, a culturally Christian girl committed suicide because she lost her virginity before marriage. She had no one to listen to her or support her, so she took her own life out of fear that what happened would become public.

Thank God for placing a vision of this ministry on the hearts of Impact Middle East leaders in Egypt!

Are you, or do you know, a specialist in the field of sexual abuse who would be willing to come alongside the Impact Middle East team to better equip and support them? You could be