

Working Against Violence, Inc.

Serving the Black Hills community since 1978

Our Mission:

To create a community free of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking through advocacy, education, and support services

Our Clients:

Those who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking

WAVI is an equal opportunity provider to all genders, sexualities, races, ages (minors must be accompanied)

Our Services:

24 hour crisis line, ED response, emergency shelter, emergency financial assistance, community education, legal and court advocacy, case management services, individual and group emotional support, information and referrals

Address: 527 Quincy St. Rapid City, SD 57701

Business line: M-F 8am-5pm — 605-341-3292

24/7 Crisis line: 605-341-4808

24/7 Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-888-716-9284

Email: wavi@wavi.org

Website: wavi.org

Working Against Violence, Inc.

EDUCATION | TRAINING | COMMUNITY EVENT BOOTHS

All of our trainings are available for middle school, high school, adults, and professionals. They are tailored to specific needs and demographics.

Creating a safer community through prevention education

Available Education, Training, and Community Support

WAVI
Education Department
Contact us to discuss how we can best support you.



605-341-3292 X 1016



Ashleyw@wavi.org



**527 Quincy Street
Rapid City, SD. 57701**

- WAVI Services/WAVI Tour
- Rapid City Area Community Resources
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault/Harassment
- Stalking
- Human Trafficking
- Teen Dating Violence
- Healthy Relationships
- Bystander Intervention
- Mental Health/Suicide Awareness
- Trauma Adaptation and Resilience
- Trauma Informed Care
- Vicarious Trauma and Self-Care
- Intersectionality
- LGBTQ+
- Communication + Conflict Resolution Styles

The six key principles fundamental to a trauma-informed approach include:^{24,36}

- 1. Safety:** Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve, whether children or adults, feel physically and psychologically safe; the physical setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety. Understanding safety as defined by those served is a high priority.
- 2. Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building and maintaining trust with clients and family members, among staff, and others involved in the organization.
- 3. Peer Support:** Peer support and mutual self-help are key vehicles for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and utilizing their stories and lived experience to promote recovery and healing. The term "Peers" refers to individuals with lived experiences of trauma, or in the case of children this may be family members of children who have experienced traumatic events and are key caregivers in their recovery. Peers have also been referred to as "trauma survivors."
- 4. Collaboration and Mutuality:** Importance is placed on partnering and the leveling of power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff from clerical and housekeeping personnel, to professional staff to administrators, demonstrating that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach. As one expert stated: "one does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic."¹²
- 5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice:** Throughout the organization and among the clients served, individuals' strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon. The organization fosters a belief in the primacy of the people served, in resilience, and in the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to heal and promote recovery from trauma. The organization understands that the experience of trauma may be a unifying aspect in the lives of those who run the organization, who provide the services, and/or who come to the organization for assistance and support. As such, operations, workforce development and services are organized to foster empowerment for staff and clients alike. Organizations understand the importance of power differentials and ways in which clients, historically, have been diminished in voice and choice and are often recipients of coercive treatment. Clients are supported in shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting to determine the plan of action they need to heal and move forward. They are supported in cultivating self-advocacy skills. Staff are facilitators of recovery rather than controllers of recovery.³⁴ Staff are empowered to do their work as well as possible by adequate organizational support. This is a parallel process as staff need to feel safe, as much as people receiving services.
- 6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues:** The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases (e.g. based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, gender-identity, geography, etc.); offers access to gender responsive services; leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections; incorporates policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic and cultural needs of individuals served; and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

Four Types of Social Support

While there are many different ways that people can support one another, much research has been done on the effects of four distinct types of social support; emotional, esteem, informational, and tangible. Most people need each of these at different times. Communication is helpful to let others know what you are needing.

Emotional Support

This type of support involves listening and empathizing and may include physical comfort such as hugs or pats on the shoulder. This support could include a sympathetic look to show you understand what someone is going through or a full empathetic discussion of someone's frustrations.

Esteem/affirmational Support

This type of social support is shown in expressions of confidence or encouragement. Someone offering esteem support might point out the strengths you're forgetting you have, or just let you know that they believe in you. Having accomplishments and skills recognized can keep up someone's motivation. Life coaches and many therapists offer this type of support to let their clients know that they believe in them; this often leads to clients believing in themselves more.

Informational Support

Those offering informational support do so in the form of advice-giving, or in gathering and sharing information that can help people know of potential next steps that may work well. Informational support can come from others or even from looking up helpful information for yourself online. Any receiving of supportive and positive information that fosters intellectual or mindful growth is informational support. Informational support should not be in the form of unsolicited advice/telling people what they need to do to solve a situation. Help by sharing information you have learned and present options, help brainstorm, but so not say what to do.

Tangible Support

Tangible support includes taking on responsibilities for someone else so they can deal with a problem or in other ways taking an active stance to help someone manage a problem they're experiencing. This type of support is practical. Someone who offers you tangible support may bring you dinner when you're sick, help you brainstorm solutions, or in other ways help you actively deal with the issue at hand.

Four Faces of Trauma

The four faces of trauma are archetypes/generalizations of how people may socially adapt to trauma. Each person is individual with their own experiences, personality, perspectives, emotions, and needs. It is always best to ask someone how they feel and how they want to be supported rather than assuming.

- **People pleaser**

- Cooperative, kind, wants to befriend/help everyone, feels bad for asking for things, may apologize unnecessarily, motivated, more concerned with the needs of others than their own, defers to others when making decisions, people are everything, shares their experiences/emotions and wants others to share theirs, may want to be in social work, psychology, or victim services field
- Anxious, fears not being loved, finds purpose in helping others
- Fawn or appease response
- Reframing stigma/bias:
 - Needy, suck up, clingy, push-over
 - Puts others first, wants to help, close relationships are important to them, wants to uplift others
- Ways to support: encourage them to make their own choices and support those choices, no need to apologize, making sure they don't feel like a burden, engage in active conversation, work on helping yourself so that you can better help others, affirmations, quality time

- **Perfectionist/workaholic**

- Self-sufficient, difficulty asking for help, afraid of getting close to others, may try to micromanage others, may sleep and eat too little, escapism into work and productivity, difficulty sharing their experiences/emotions, ignores emotions hoping they will go away, no time to deal with them
- Compulsive, fears not being good/strong enough, finds purpose in productivity
- Flight response
- Reframing stigma/bias:
 - Rigid, bossy, arrogant, cold
 - Confident, independent, goal oriented, comfort in understanding what to expect
- Ways to support: encourage self-care (it is important and without it productivity is decreased), emotions don't make you weak, you can do it on your own but you don't have to, if you need any assistance we are here

- **Angry**

- Cynical, distrusting, attack them before they get the chance to attack you, expects everyone to have their own agenda, has experienced several traumas possibly from several people, walls themselves off from others, may demand things instead of asking, people are dangerous, emotion makes them vulnerable
- Angry, fears being vulnerable (being hurt and not expecting it), finds purpose in surviving
- Fight response
- Reframing stigma/bias:
 - Manipulative, demanding, rude, aggressive
 - Survivor, asserting their needs in a way that has worked for them, takes extra time to trust others, self-protective
- Ways to support: patience (understand that this is their survival mechanism), work on boundaries together, connections and vulnerabilities can be positive, if you become a trusted person they may tell you a lot then become afraid they gave you a lot of ammunition against them and shut you out; let them know you will continue to be there for them (while keeping your own boundaries in mind)

- **Depressive**

- Small tasks or choices are overwhelming, may sleep too much, escapism into media/video games, detached from others, people are exhausting, feels like they need to pretend they are okay or that they are a burden so they avoid others, may return to old comforts (re-watching movies or shows because there is comfort in knowing how it goes, favorite blanket/stuffed animal, etc.)
- Freeze response
- Sad, overwhelmed, detached, fears being stuck/never feeling better, finds purpose in coping
- Reframing stigma/bias:
 - Lazy/unmotivated, messy, dramatic, flaky
 - Overwhelmed, needing extra support, doesn't want to bring others down, coping in a familiar way
- Ways to support: break things down into small steps (too tired to shower, try sitting down), celebrate the little things, give extra support through the process, it's okay to not be okay, you don't have to do this alone, provide tangible support, provide hope and things to look forward to, check in on them

Dating violence is a pattern of coercive tactics perpetrators use to obtain and maintain power and control over their partners.

Acts of violence are not random and are not initiated by people who are out of control or unaware of what is being done. Every act is **terrifying** with the **intent** of **systematic terrorization**, resulting in **domination** over the victim.

Types of Abuse

Emotional/Verbal Abuse



Non-physical behaviors to mistreat and control through threats, insults, constant monitoring, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, making unrealistic demands, giving orders, etc. This is sometimes disguised as caring, but it's a form of control.

Physical Abuse

Any intentional use of physical force with the intent to cause fear, injury, or assert control: hitting, shoving, biting, strangling, kicking, using a weapon. Physical intimidation includes punching walls, destroying possessions, throwing items, and cornering someone.



Sexual Abuse



Sexual activity without willing, active, unimpaired consent, such as unwanted sexual touch, sexual assault, rape, coercion, or tampering with contraceptives. Ability to consent is impaired when someone is under the influence, underage, or there is a significant power gap.

Financial Abuse

Exerting power and control over a partner through their finances, including taking or withholding money from a partner, prohibiting a partner from earning, or spending their money.



Stalking



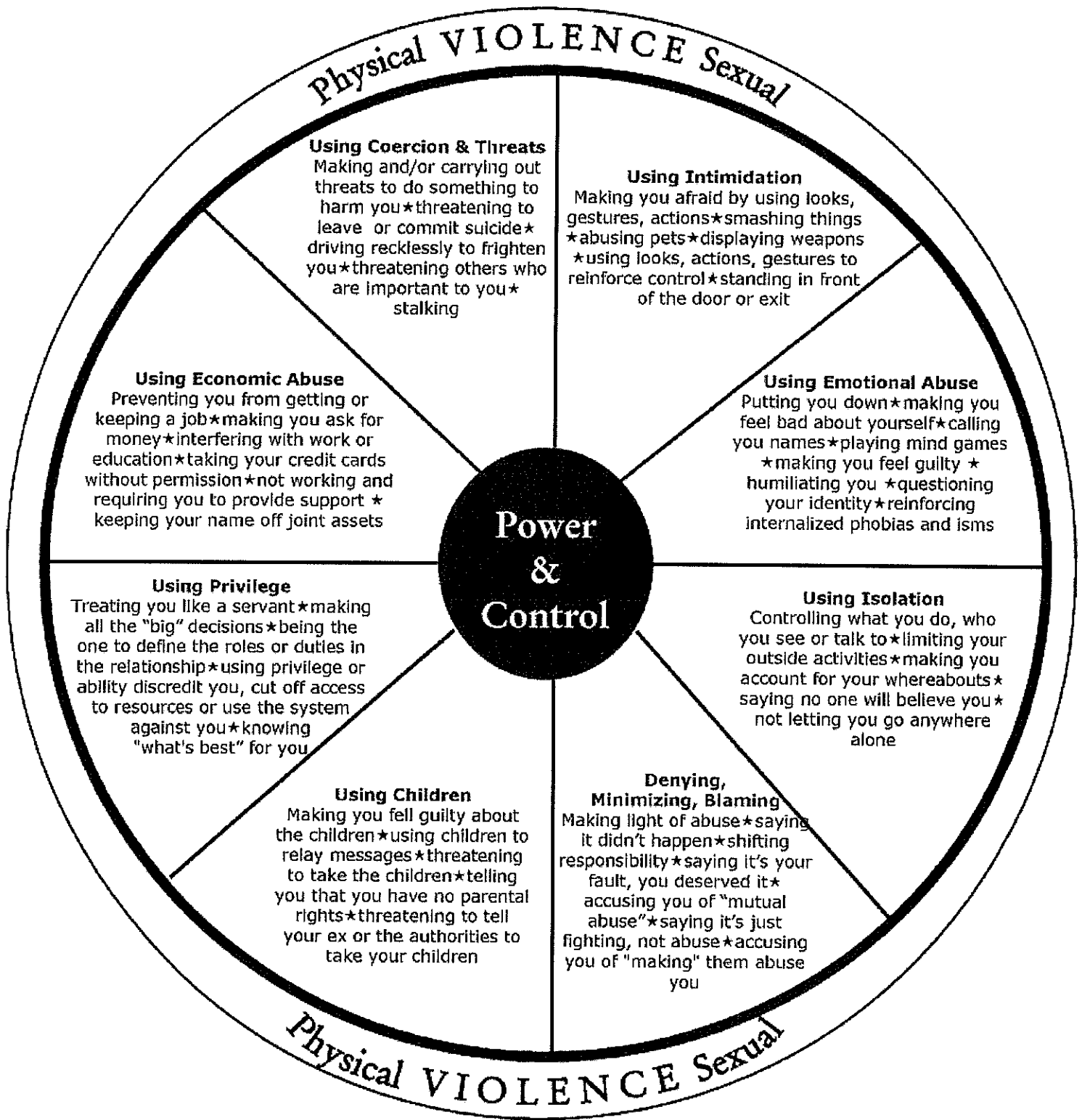
Being repeatedly watched, followed, monitored, or harassed. Stalking can occur online or in person, and may include giving unwanted gifts. Stalking is a criminal act that causes fear and can lead to physical violence. Keeping a stalking log of incidents may aid in reporting to police and developing a legal case.

Digital Abuse

Use of technology and/or social media to intimidate, harass or threaten, such as demanding passwords, checking cell phones, location tracking, cyberbullying, non-consensual sexting, excessive or threatening texts, or stalking on social media.

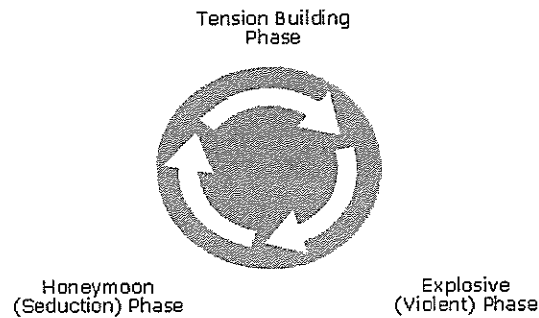


Power and Control Wheel



*Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
 Duluth, Minnesota*

Power and Control: The Cycle of Violence

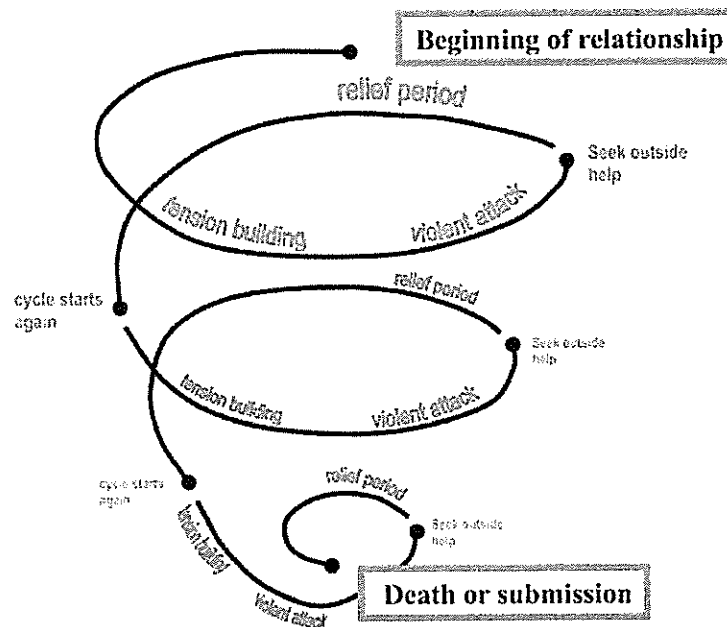


Domestic violence has a consistent pattern of behavior that continually repeats itself. As time goes on, and without proper intervention, the pattern repeats more frequently and the violence becomes more severe.

Tension building phase: Commonly described as feelings of "walking on egg shells." The victim knows that things are not going well. The perpetrator is edgy and easily agitated. The victim tries to manipulate his or her surroundings by being extra pleasing (cooking, keeping the house clean, making the kids behave) during this time to appease the perpetrator.

Explosive (violent) phase: This is when someone gets hurt. Verbal fighting has occurred, and the perpetrator uses some type of physical violence. When the victim is in crisis mode, the police are sometimes called.

Honeymoon (seduction) phase: The perpetrator is remorseful to varying extents; promises are made and sometimes gifts are given. The perpetrator becomes scared of losing control of his or her partner and will try whatever means necessary to keep the victim in the relationship.





Perpetrator Red Flags

Emotion and personality traits

- Excessive jealousy or insecurity
- Unexpected bouts of anger/ rage, explosive temper
- Unusual moodiness
- Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde personality
- Manipulative
- Low self-esteem, poor self-image, insecurity
- Inflated ego, sense of entitlement
- Dislike for authority figures
- Reduced empathy and understanding for others
- Impulsivity/ excessive thrill seeking

Controlling tendencies

- Invasions of your privacy
- Preventing you from going out with or talking to other people
- Constantly monitoring your whereabouts and checking in to see what you are doing and who you are with
- Falsely accusing you of things
- Blaming you for problems in the relationship/ not taking responsibility

Harmful behaviors (can escalate to abusive behaviors)

- Breaking or striking objects
- Taunting or bullying
- Preoccupation with weapons
- Abuse of alcohol or other drugs/ pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol
- Isolation
- Cruelty to animals
- Lying
- Past history of violence
- Threatening self harm to get what they want

Perpetrators

Perpetrators can be any gender, sexuality, age, race, religion, etc. just as victims can be

Victims and perpetrators often have common characteristics:

- Both may have been raised in abusive homes;
- Witnessed violence or been abused or neglected as children;
- Learned abusive behavior as a normal response to stress, relationships and lifestyles.

Childhood trauma is NOT an excuse for the perpetrator's behavior

Tactics used by abusers to make victims stay

- Make victim believe they caused the abuse or deserved it
- Minimize the severity of the abuse
- Blame the abuse on outside forces; alcohol, stress, etc.
- Isolate victims from family and friends
- Make the victim dependent on abuser for everything
- Make the victim think no one will believe them
- Act like all relationships are abusive
- Say victim should be grateful
- Make victim believe they are crazy
- Scare victim into staying
- Make victim feel guilty for wanting to leave
- Make victim believe they will lose custody of child(ren)
- Threaten self harm
- Apologize/ promise it won't happen again (honeymoon stage)

Domestic violence is defined as, *“One individual systematically abusing another to gain power or control in a domestic or intimate relationship.”* In relationships where domestic violence occurs, instead of both partners being equal in the relationship, the balance of power is uneven and the perpetrator tries to maintain control over the victim. Abusers use a variety of tactics to exert power and control over their victims.

It is a common misconception that perpetrators just “lost control” when they emotionally or physically abuse their partners. However, this is not true. Domestic violence is the exact opposite of losing control; perpetrators know what they are doing and use their abusive tactics of choice to maintain dominance in the relationship. A victim could never do anything to be deserving of abuse and are only responsible for their own actions. The perpetrator is the only one responsible for their attitudes and behaviors.

Some common statements abusers may use to excuse or minimize the violence they perpetrate against their partners include:

- “It wasn’t me, it was the alcohol/drugs”, etc.
- “You made me do it”, “You know how to push my buttons” or “You know how to get me going”
- “I didn’t mean it”
- “I just lost control”
- “I’m just under a lot of stress at work.”
- “I won’t do it again”

Abusers will do anything to control the narrative and their partner. There is often evidence that they have control over their actions despite claims that they don’t.

- Destroying possessions, but never touching anything important to them
- Being calm when law enforcement is called
- Manipulating relationships, having a good public image

Abusive behavior is driven by long-held attitudes. There is no excuse for abusive behavior.

- Abuse as a learned behavior from society, their upbringing, widespread misogyny, toxic gender stereotypes, etc.
- Sense of entitlement, control, objectification, ownership over others, etc.
- Decreased empathy for others, self-centered
- Learned that rewards for abusive behavior outweigh consequences

Substance abuse, economic stress, etc. does not make someone who is not abusive into an abuser. Substance abuse and economic stress may correlate to escalated behaviors. Substance abuse correlates to decreased likelihood of changing.

Perpetrators rarely change. Often “change” is a short-term solution to get what they want and is part of the power and control cycle. For there to be real change the abuser must acknowledge the harm they have done, the behaviors they need to change, accept responsibility for their actions, and accept consequences for their actions.

Trauma Bonds and Dependency

A trauma bond is a connection between an abusive person and the individual they abuse. It typically occurs when an abused person comes to rely on the abuser for their needs (emotional, financial, social, etc.) and also develops sympathy or affection for the abuser. The abused person may go to the abuser for comfort even when the abuser caused the hurt, particularly if they are reliant on the abuser for emotional support. The abused person may rationalize the actions of the perpetrator. This may be through blaming themselves for the abuse in order to make sense of what is happening and allow the abuser to continue to seem “good”. The abused persons in a trauma bond, particularly children, start to associate abuse with love and believe it is a normal association. A trauma bond can develop over days, weeks, or months. Stockholm syndrome is a specific type of trauma bond involving someone held in captivity who develops positive feelings for their captor. Not everyone who experiences abuse develops a trauma bond.

How abusers manipulate relationships to create and enforce trauma bonds and dependency

- Social isolation
 - Separate abused person from friends, family, and supportive acquaintances
 - Give abused person no one to turn to
 - Perpetrator may befriend abused person’s social supports
 - Make abused person believe no one will believe them
 - Spread rumors
 - This can lead social supports to socially isolate themselves from abused person
 - This can lead abused person to socially isolate themselves from social supports
 - Make abused person look crazy to social supports
 - Abused person may socially isolate themselves to maintain the bond with the perpetrator, particularly if social supports attack the character of the perpetrator
 - Perpetrators may use jealousy as a way to socially isolate the abused person
 - Jealousy is sometimes disguised as caring, but is a form of control
 - “You are lucky to have me, who else would love you?”
- Cycles of violence – Honeymoon phase
 - In the honeymoon phase of cycles of violence the perpetrator fulfills some part of the abused person’s needs. This is often in the form of emotional needs showing some element of remorse, promising change, being especially kind, giving gifts, etc.
 - The honeymoon phase mirrors the love bombing that likely occurred at the beginning of the relationship where there were gifts, grand gestures showing love, affection, and kindness. This reminds the abused person why they got into the relationship and that those good times are still there.
 - Honeymoon phase behavior is meant to reinforce the bond when the perpetrator feels they may be losing control over the abused person such as when the abused person is contemplating leaving or has left the relationship.
- Financial abuse
 - Withholding money
 - Giving an allowance
 - Obstructing ability to earn money
 - Not allowing abused person to work
 - Stalking in the workplace
 - Missed days of work or lack of focus at work due to abuse
 - Lease, possessions, accounts in abusers name
 - Creating debt and/or destroying credit for abused person

- Creating eviction history for abused person
- Threatening to or destroying possessions
- Make abused person feel complicit in the abuse
 - Make abused person believe they deserve it
 - Make abused person believe they don't deserve any better
 - Use abused persons self-defense behaviors against them
 - "You hit me, you will get in trouble."
 - "You haven't left." "You keep coming back."
- Gaslighting
 - Minimize the abuse
 - Act like the abuse is normal
 - Make abused person feel crazy
 - Make abused person feel like they should be grateful

Breaking a trauma bond

It is normal to still have some feelings of positivity and loyalty toward your abuser even after you realize the relationship is harmful. After leaving there may be temptation to return to the relationship. Feelings of attachment from a trauma bond don't go away immediately. It is a process that goes along with the process of healing from the trauma.

- **Focus on the present:** Hope that an abusive person will change or nostalgia for good times in the past can keep people in their trauma bonds. Try to acknowledge what is currently happening and the impact that it has by pausing to reflect on it. Are your needs really being met? At what price? If it is safe to do so, keep a diary.
- **Focus on the evidence:** Look at your experiences with the repetition of the cycle of violence. Are the promises about the future accompanied by genuine acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility of the harm they have done? Has the violence continued in the past after these promises? If there have not been steps to accept responsibility and get help the promises may be part of the honeymoon phase to continue their control.
- **Practice positive self-talk:** Abuse can lower a person's self-esteem and make them feel that they cannot be without the abusive person. Noticing negative self-talk and challenging with positive alternatives can start to change this. Practice praising yourself, noticing when others give you praise, and talking to yourself like you would a friend. Nothing you could do makes you deserving of abuse. You deserve a safe and healthy relationship.
- **Utilize supports and resources:** Receiving support from positive sources can reduce the desire to turn to an abusive person for comfort. Reconnect with healthy support systems like friends and family. Utilize victims' advocates, counselors, and support groups. Domestic violence programs and victims assistance may be able to help with safety planning, legal aid, financial aid, and emotional support.
- **Practice self-care:** There are many symptoms of trauma. Be patient with yourself and acknowledge that you need time to heal. Journaling, meditation, exercise, hobbies, and talking to trusted friends can help.
- **Education:** Take opportunities to learn about trauma, abusive relationships, safety planning, coping, healthy relationships, resources, etc. to equip yourself with tools to understand your experiences and seek out positive relationships.



Working Against Violence, Inc.

PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

This form is a guide to help me develop a plan that will prepare me to be safe in the case of a violent event. Some of the preparations for a safety plan might seem obvious, but it can be hard to think clearly or make logical decisions during moments of crisis. Having a safety plan laid out in advance can help me protect myself and others in high-stress situations. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond and how to best get myself and/or my children to safety. An advocate can help me create my safety plan, but I know my situation better than anyone else. I will use this knowledge to fill out my safety plan. I will try to think of multiple options to be able to prepare in case the plan needs to be changed or one option is not possible.

NAME: _____

DATE FORM COMPLETED: _____

REVIEW DATES: _____

Safety during a violent incident in our shared home: *I realize that I cannot always avoid violent incidents. However, to increase my safety, I may use a variety of the following strategies:*

- A. I will practice how to get out safely by determining which doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, fire escapes, etc. will be most accessible.
- B. I will keep my purse/wallet and car keys easily available in order to leave quickly. When at home, I will keep them: (place) _____
- C. I can tell (who) _____ about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- D. My code word will be " _____ "; and I will tell my family and my friends that if they hear me use that word, they should call the police for help.
- E. If I have to leave my home, I will go (where) _____.
- F. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a low risk space, such as _____ . I know bathrooms, garages, kitchens, or any places near weapons are dangerous; and it is best to be in a room with an outside door.
- G. I can keep my phone close in case I need to call for help _____.
- H. If the situation is very serious, I will use my judgment and intuition and may give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down until I can protect myself or until I can get out of danger.

Safety when preparing to leave: *I realize victims frequently leave the residence they share with their battering partner, when their safety is at risk. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a victim is leaving the relationship. Therefore I may use some or all of the following safety strategies:*

- A. In case I need to leave without my purse/wallet, etc., I will leave money, an extra set of keys, important documents, and extra clothing with (who or where) _____.
- B. I will open a savings account in my own name to increase my independence.
- C. I will keep the local domestic violence program's hotline number in a safe available place. I know I can seek shelter by calling the hotline.

- D. I will keep my cell phone charged and on me at all times. I understand that a telephone bill may show numbers that I have called and my batterer may have access to them. I will have important numbers memorized so I can use a different phone if needed.
- E. Police numbers and shelter numbers can be stored in my phone as other locations.
- F. I will check with friends and family members to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me money.
- G. I will review my safety plan every (how often?) _____ with (an advocate or trusted friend) _____.

Creating a go-bag - items to take when leaving: *I know when victims leave their battering partners, it is important to take certain items with them. These items might be best to place in one location, so that if I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.*

- * Identification for myself
- * My and my children's birth certificates
- * My and my children's social security cards
- * My children's school and vaccination records
- * Marriage license
- * Divorce papers
- * Medical records for all family members
- * Money
- * Checkbook, ATM card, credit cards
- * Bank books
- * Keys to house, car, work, etc.
- * Driver's license, proof of insurance and registration
- * Medications
- * Welfare identification
- * Work permits, identification cards, etc
- * Green card
- * Passports
- * Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- * Insurance papers and cards
- * Small sellable objects
- * Address book
- * Pictures
- * Jewelry
- * Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- * Items of special sentimental value

Telephone numbers I need to know:

- * Police Department: 394-4131 or 911
- * Domestic violence services program: 341-4808 or 1-888-716-9284
- * Work: _____
- * Child care/school: _____
- * Clergy: _____
- * Other: _____
- * National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (TTY): 1-800-787-3224

Safety in my own residence: *Once I am living separate from my batterer, I know there are many things I can do to increase safety in my home. I realize it may be impossible to do everything at once, but I can implement safety measures step by step. Safety measures I can use include:*

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel-metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my home.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.
- G. If I live in an apartment I can speak with the renter to see what safety measures exist and what we can add.
- H. I can keep my phone close in case I need to call for help.
- I. I can inform neighbors, clergy, family, friends, etc. that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.
- J. Other things I can do: _____

Safety with a protection order: *I know some batterers do not obey protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order. The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:*

- A. I can file for a protection order if there has been violence or threat of violence. I can ask for an immediate temporary protection order to protect me until my hearing. The permanent protection order can be granted up to 5 years and may be renewed. A protection order states that the abuser cannot come within 100 feet of me, other protected parties, and protected locations. I understand a protection order protects me in any state.
- B. I will keep my protection order on or near my person at all times.
- C. I will give a copy of my protection order to law enforcement in the community where I live, where I work, and in those communities where I visit regularly.
- D. I can check with the county clerk of courts office to be sure that my court order is registered. That phone number is: 394-2575
- E. I can call the local domestic violence program to assist me with any problems I may face with the protection order. 605-341-4808 800-716-9284
- F. I can inform the following people that I have a protection order: __employer; __religious leader; __friends; __family; __others: _____.
- G. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation. Violation is a mandatory arrest, but I am responsible for reporting violations.

Safety in Public: *I understand that even after leaving an abusive situation abusers may continue to seek power and control. This can be in the form of stalking and I can use any of the following strategies to keep myself safe:*

- A. I can consult with a locksmith about enhancing lock mechanisms on the car.
- B. I can park my car in populated, well-lit areas that may have security cameras.

- C. If I have a key fob to unlock my car I can press it only once to unlock only the driver's door instead of the whole vehicle.
- D. I can look inside and underneath the car before entering.
- E. If problems occur when I'm driving home, I can: _____
- F. I can leave room between my car and the car in front of me to quickly change lanes.
- G. I can tell _____ where I am going and stay in contact with them when I get there.
- H. If I use public transportation, I can: _____
- I. I can vary the routes I take to places of frequent travel.
- J. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those that I used when residing with my battering partner.
- K. I can use a different bank, medical clinic, etc. and/or go different hours from those I used when residing with my battering partner.
- L. I can determine a safe exit plan from a public building and get help from staff if needed.
- M. I can keep my phone near me at all times or ask others to call for help. If I do not have a phone domestic violence shelters may be able to provide a phone that only calls 9-1-1.
- N. Other things I can do: _____

Safety on the job: *I know friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect victims; and I know I should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure safety. I might do any or all of the following:*

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, or other co-workers at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask my boss, security, or coworkers to call the police if they see the abuser on the property.
- C. I can ask the person who answers the phone to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- D. I can ask my co-workers to refuse to disclose information about me.
- E. I can make arrangements to take time off, change my hours, or change my position if needed.
- F. I can ask to eliminate times I work alone.
- G. I can tell my coworkers and supervisors to never accept gifts or messages on my behalf.
- H. When leaving work, I can ask someone to walk with me to the car, or other: _____
- I. If there is harassment at work I can go through appropriate channels to have the situation addressed.

Safety at school (for children, adolescents, and college students):

- A. The safest way for me to get to and from school is _____.
- B. If I need to leave school in an emergency I can get home safely by: _____.
- C. I can alert school staff, security, and friends about the abuse. _____.
- D. I can make sure that a friend or school staff member can walk with me between classes. I will ask _____.
- E. I will eat lunch and spend free periods in an area where there is school staff nearby. Areas I feel safe: _____.
- F. I can ask the school counselor, principle, teacher, or coach if I need to rearrange my schedule or take off time for my safety _____.
- G. I will ask school staff if I can have my phone on in class so that I can receive or make a call in a dangerous situation.

- H. I will avoid speaking to my abuser. If it is unavoidable, I will make sure there are people around in case the situation becomes dangerous.
- I. I will stay out of isolated places in or around the school and try to never walk alone.
- J. I will have a code word " _____ " with friends and staff that informs them I feel uncomfortable and need to leave class.
- K. I will have a code word " _____ " with friends and staff that informs them that I am in danger and need an escort or the police called.
- L. If I am having trouble with my mental and emotional health I can talk to the school counselor, _____, a teacher _____, or a friend _____.

Safety and my emotional health: *I realize the process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:*

- A. When I feel down or feel like returning to a potentially abusive relationship, I can: _____
- B. To feel self-confident if I have to communicate with my partner in person or by phone, I can: _____
- C. I can use "I can" statements to be positive with myself and assertive with others. _____
- D. Whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me, I can tell myself: _____
- E. Books, poems, phrases, and lyrics I can read to help me feel stronger: _____
- F. Safe activities I can do to help take my mind off the problem/trauma when needed: _____
- G. I can use sites like unconsentingmedia.org and doesthedogdie.com to avoid/be aware of triggers in media.
- H. I can take days for myself without feeling bad for taking time away from other things. My emotional health and safety is the most important thing.
- I. People I can call as resources to be supportive to me: _____
- J. I can attend support groups at the domestic violence program to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people. _____
- K. I can talk to a professional counselor/psychologist for help with my emotional health
- L. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger: _____

Safety with technology: *I understand technology is part of daily life and that this can be exploited by abusers. Technology can help protect me if I use safety precautions.*

- A. I can create a new email address that does not include my name and my partner does not have access to. I can use this email for setting up new bank accounts, contacting government agencies, or using local resources. If I need to use another email to verify my identity, I can use an email of a trusted friend or family member to avoid any emails or phone numbers my partner may have access to. I can keep using old email accounts for day-to-day communication that will not upset my partner or make them suspicious.

- B. I can use a device my partner does not have access to for seeking out resources. If this is not possible, I can use private or incognito mode so my partner cannot see sites I have visited. I can use the quick exit button on online DV resources.
- C. If it is safe to do so I can keep track of abusive and stalking behaviors using apps like DocuSAFE collecting date/time information, description, photos, screenshots, etc. that can be used to detect escalation and for evidence if I decide to pursue legal action.
- D. I can disable location tracking on my device. If I believe my device is being tracked I can leave it at home as often as possible. I can get another device.
- E. I can read the information on apps before I install them to know what information is being used and if they use location tracking.
- F. I can keep my phone with me and charged at all times. I understand that a telephone bill may show numbers that I have called and my batterer may have access to them. I will have important numbers memorized so I can use a different phone if needed.
- G. I can set my phone to auto-lock and open with a password, preferably a fingerprint or facial recognition.
- H. I can change the passwords and email address associated with my accounts.
- I. I can use different passwords, never save passwords, and always log out of my accounts.
- J. I can block unsafe contacts from my phone and social media and ask others to do the same.
- K. I can set my social media accounts to private and ask others to do the same.
- L. I can be careful about any personal information I post and ask others not to post about me or tag me in anything.
- M. I can delay posting photos or social updates until I am in a different location and ask others to do the same.

Safety planning with children and adolescents:

- A. I can teach my children any of the above safety planning measures while being mindful of age appropriateness.
- B. I can rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- C. I can ensure I have my children's important documents and needed items in my go bag.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the phone and how to contact police and the fire department.
- E. I can create a code word " _____ " with my children to tell them to hide, run, and call police.
- F. I can teach my children important numbers and how to use the phone to make a call to me or to a friend/ family member, etc. in the event that my partner takes the children.
- G. I can tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. People who need to be informed: __school; __daycare; __babysitter; __church; __other:_____.
- H. If I have a protection order I can give a copy to my child's: __ school; __ daycare; __ babysitter; other _____.
- I. I can ask others for help with child care if I need time to adjust without feeling guilty about caring for myself. I can best help my child when I am healthy and it is okay to ask for help. I can attend parenting classes, support groups, and parent mentor programs if needed.
- J. I can help my child with their emotional health and get them any resources they may need.
- K. I can be aware of how trauma affects children of different ages and practice trauma informed caregiving.
- L. I can help my children understand that the violence that happened or is happening in the home is not okay and is also not their fault. Abuse is only ever the abusers fault.

- M. I can teach my children about healthy/unhealthy relationships, consent, and boundaries while being mindful of age appropriateness. I can ask educators/children's advocates to help with this process.
- N. If my adolescent child is in an abusive relationship I can help them with safety planning and getting connected to resources.

Safety co-parenting with an abuser: *Co-parenting is the requirement that both parents work together in a civil, and respectful manner in order to do what is best for the child. Co-parenting is difficult in any case but a history of abuse makes it even harder to want to find common ground with the abuser. I can use some or all of these methods to stay safe while co-parenting:*

- A. If there is a protection or restraining order courts often do not allow unsupervised visits. Even without a protection order, I can request from the courts that visits are supervised.
- B. I can set up a parenting plan with the help of an experienced lawyer. The parenting plan must be highly specific and spell out exactly what days children will reside with which parent, how holidays and vacations will be handled, how transportation to and from school events will take place, etc. A detailed parenting plan minimizes the need for contact with my abuser.
- C. I can establish a communication process through scheduling tools to minimize direct correspondence that may result in manipulation or aggression. Scheduling tools allow co-parents to coordinate events, set custody schedules, and discuss issues related to their children in a system that is not susceptible to manipulation or alteration.
- D. I can use a co-parenting app like Talking Parents to communicate with my ex. By using this app every conversation between myself and my ex is on-the-record, timestamped and unalterable for the court and lawyers to review. In order to stay calm I can pre-script what I want to say and if my ex tries to manipulate me or threaten me I can hang up and have comfort that any abusive language can be used as evidence.
- E. I can arrange for all exchanges to be done in a public space. I can request police, advocate agencies, or another third party be present during an exchange.
- F. If my ex breaches the custody agreement through consistently showing up late, having the child when not designated, scheduling activities during my designated time, etc. I can request my attorney message them or request mediation, ask the judge to change the arrangement, or file a motion of contempt.
- G. Power and control are the center of abusive behavior. Even after I am out of the situation my ex may try to control me through my children. This may be through relatively small rebellions such as allowing the child to stay up later than I allow. As long as the children are safe from abuse I can allow these small concessions so I am not controlled by my ex's behavior and maintain safety.
- H. I can work to minimize the stress levels of my children and protect their relationship with the co-parent by not negatively discussing their time they had with the co-parent.
- I. I can model behaviors I want my children to learn. I can show them love, stability, and support. My children may have witnessed arguments and violence throughout the abusive relationship which does not need to continue while we are living separately. I may seek out aid from a family counselor or therapist to help myself and my children through the transition.
- J. If there is suspected abuse of the child I can alert the authorities and go through proper legal channels to protect my child and attempt to gain full custody.

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Emotional Safety Plan

Creating an emotional safety plan can help remind or teach you how to take care of yourself. Emotional safety plans can help coping with stress, mental health concerns, trauma, etc. Your reactions to these things are normal. You are not weak for needing an emotional safety plan. Healing is cyclical, there will be times where symptoms are minimal or heavy. The shift between these can cause negative thinking that nothing is changing, or good times aren't valuable because there may be more bad times. Be confident in your ability to get through those dark times and get through to the good times, which will return. Recognize your strengths and skills you have or are working to build and how they help you. Think about healthy self-care that you can do when you are struggling. You do not have to go through anything alone; think of your healthy support systems, what you need in a support system, what you feel comfortable sharing with whom, what barriers exist that prevent you from reaching out, etc. You do not need to answer every question; just answer the ones that are useful to you.

1. Ask yourself: "When I'm not okay, what happens to my thinking? My body? My senses?"

a. Some reactions are: _____

b. Does my body give me any warning signs before negative experiences surface?

c. Some triggers that increase trauma reactions are:

2. Try to create a feeling of safety and tranquility where you are. Grounding techniques often use senses (focusing on things you can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell) to bring us back to the present. This can help particularly when encountering a trauma trigger and/or experiencing a panic attack.

a. Some things I can do to ground myself and bring myself back to the present are:

b. Some things I can do by myself to make me feel safe are:

c. Mindfulness techniques I can use to be present in the moment are:

3. Trauma, stress, and mental health issues take a toll on you physically and emotionally. It is important to take care of your body and your mind.

a. Activities I can do to rest are:

b. Activities I can do to connect with my body are:

c. Activities I can do to help me process my emotions are:

d. Activities I can do to move my body are:

4. Having negative and/or painful feelings about yourself or your experience is common. The things we read, watch, and hear can also have an impact on our wellbeing.

a. Some social media accounts that make me feel good are:

b. Some shows, movies, and books that uplift me are:

c. Some podcasts and music that make me feel good are:

d. If I'm feeling bad about myself, some things I can do to help me remember how strong I am are:

e. People and spaces (at home, outside of home, or digital) that uplift me are:

5. Setting boundaries can help me communicate how I want to be treated. I have a right to set and maintain boundaries with myself and others.

a. Some boundaries I can set for myself (including negative self-talk, values/beliefs, online, etc) are:

b. Some emotional or conversational boundaries I can set for my interactions with others are:

c. Some physical boundaries I can set for my interactions with others are:

6. Coping strategies are the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions we use to help us manage and reduce stress. Some coping skills are active (addressing the stress), while others are avoidant (trying to ignore the issue for a while). Coping strategies can be healthy or unhealthy. Do not blame yourself for unhealthy coping, but work to find healthier coping that works for you. Healthy coping includes things like sleeping, seeking support, problem-solving, journaling, distraction, humor, exercise, relaxation, meditation, hobbies, and countless others.

a. Some coping strategies that help me manage stress are:

b. Some coping strategies that help me relax are:

c. If I feel the urge to engage in unhealthy coping, instead I will:

d. If I am having thoughts of hurting myself, I will:

7. It can help to talk about your thoughts, emotions, and reactions with people you trust and feel safe with.

a. Trusted interpersonal supports I can talk to:

b. Trusted community and/or professional supports I can talk to:

c. Trusted people to go to for different types of support:

Emotional support: _____

Esteem/affirmational support: _____

Informational support: _____

Tangible support: _____



Transition: Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Separation – How will it feel?

Separation is not easy. Everyone has a different timeline to going through the steps. Knowing what to do and what to expect does not stop you from having feelings. You will probably feel all your emotions more strongly than ever. You may feel betrayal, grief, anger, joy and freedom, weakness and strength, often at the same time. You may feel that you are going crazy because of all the emotions you have, which are sometimes overwhelming, contradictory, and unexpected. You are not crazy. This is a normal process. Remember that your emotions are just a part of you, a changing part, and they are not “you, the whole person.” Let yourself feel your emotions fully. Do not judge yourself for having them. You will pass through each one in time. Knowing what to expect may not take away the pain, but will help you in maintaining your independence.

Relief and Euphoria:

You may experience a great euphoria when you leave the relationship. This may last for weeks or months. This is usually felt if you have made a clear decision. This euphoria can help give you energy to get yourself on your feet again.

Don't be surprised if a month or a year later, you feel grief or anger or depression. This is normal and part of the process of change and separation. You will have to work through all the stages at some time. The timing may vary with each individual.

Grief:

Grief is a large part of the process of letting go of a relationship. When you feel grief, let yourself cry. You may feel like you will never stop. You are facing a death, the death of your relationship. You will stop crying when the mourning is over.

Sometimes you will feel sadness for the abuse you endured in the relationship and other times you will miss the good things. This is to be expected. You may be starting to see the reality of the relationship. But, remember you did have to pay a price for more good things – a very high price.

Anxiety and Loss of Control:

You are probably accustomed to judging your safety by predicting your partner's mood and picking up the signals from them, so you could anticipate and react. When you leave, the absence of your partner may feel frightening. You may feel you have lost control. Your feelings of safety are gone when you lose your signals.

The feelings of loss of control are normal in transition. You are moving the center of control from your partner to yourself. It can be as frightening as it is freeing and it just takes time.

Disorientation:

Changed memory can create a feeling of disorientation, disbelief in yourself, and betrayal from your partner. You are not crazy if you see your past, yourself, and your partner differently. You may remember only the good times with your partner or only the bad times.

It's normal to look at yourself, your partner, and the world in a new way. Your situation is different now and you will have a different perspective.

Loneliness:

Your partner may have isolated you from others so leaving your partner may make you feel alone. Your friends may change over time. They may take sides with your partner. You may feel alone in your status as survivor and in your experiences. It may take you a while to trust or to have energy for anyone else. This is normal and self-protective.

You may want to isolate yourself, but friendships are very important. Reconnect with healthy support people your partner isolated you from. Strengthen positive bonds. Attend support groups to know you are not alone. Reach out! It may seem less painful to isolate yourself, in the long run it's not.

Anger:

You may feel more anger after separation than you have ever felt before. You may suddenly feel all the anger that has been built up and denied during your relationship along with the growing frustration of not having your needs met, and the powerlessness of your position.

It is safe to feel angry now. Accept that your anger is normal. Anger can give you power and motivation. Use it to your advantage. The goal of letting yourself feel anger is to express it constructively so that you become free of it. Do not use anger for revenge. Acting in revenge may destroy your self-respect in the end.

Feelings of Failure:

You may feel that admitting "failure" in your relationship confirms your inadequacy. This is not true. You have probably done all you could to make it work. Your partner was also responsible for creating and maintaining a healthy relationship and they failed. You are not at fault for the abuse they inflicted. You leaving for your own protection is not a failure. Recognize your success in making a difficult decision. Give yourself credit.

Your Identity:

You may have identified yourself with your relationship. When you leave the relationship you may experience a real sense of loss of your self-identity. Your role in the relationship may be the way you see yourself and how you are known in the community. You have a new status as a survivor which can be isolating at times, support groups and advocacy centers can help.

Leaving involves getting to know yourself in a new way. Now you can become your own boss and your own person. Being on your own is a wonderful feeling as well as a scary one. It may be the first time you have had the freedom to experience this responsibility. It sometimes takes many trials to discover who you are and what you want.



Anniversaries:

Dates of the relationship beginning, dates of abuse, date of leaving, etc. are anniversaries that may be particularly painful. It is important for you to be aware of that and plan for it. You may arrange to spend that time with close friends. You may also get in touch with advocate community organizations, support groups, or counseling to get reinforcement and support.

The Difficult Days:

There will be some days that are worse than others, where one or many of the effects of leaving the abusive relationship becomes overwhelming. Do not overwhelm yourself with other things on these days. Take time for yourself to heal. If you feel down use self-affirmations, utilize your strengths, practice healthy coping, utilize your support systems, and take it one day at a time. There have been good days and will be more good days in the future.

If you feel like returning to the potentially abusive relationship remember why you left, the cycles of violence, and that you deserve safety and happiness. After being in a controlling relationship you may have to readjust to having independence and being able to think and act for yourself. Embrace your freedom and rediscover yourself. If you do decide to return to the relationship remember your safety planning and that your community resources are always there if you need them.

New Relationships:

New relationships may trigger memories of your old relationship. It takes hard work, a great deal of commitment and communication to be in a relationship.

A second relationship has different problems from a first. Be sure you feel strong enough to live independently again. Get to know yourself again; your interests, values, triggers, how you best cope, your personal boundaries, etc. In your new relationship remember you are deserving of a safe, healthy relationship with someone who respects you and your boundaries.

It is important to remember that life is up and down. You will have good days, when you are feeling strong and capable, and bad days when you are feeling depressed and vulnerable. Know that feeling bad will not last forever and there are things you can do to help yourself through the down time.

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Effects of DV on Children

Children do not need to be direct victims of neglect or violence to be impacted by it. Children experience effects of trauma along with the adults in the home. These trauma effects can look different in different age groups. Childhood traumas can impact adult victimization and perpetration, mental and physical health, social relationships, and opportunities.

Age 0-5

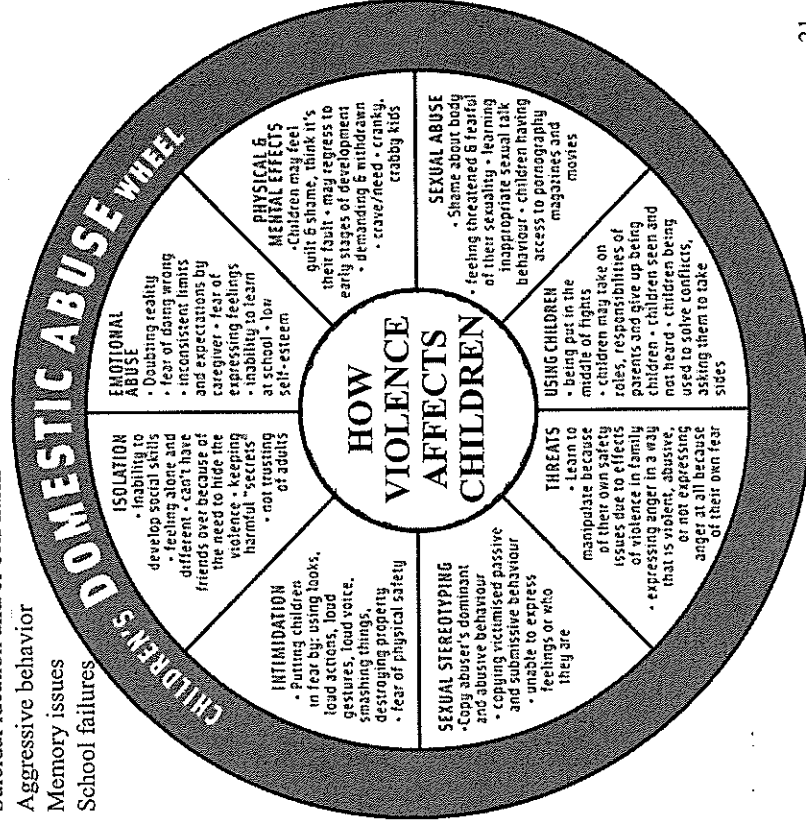
- * Hypervigilance
- * Helplessness/ passivity
- * Clinging and separation anxiety
- * Nightmares and other sleep disturbances
- * Difficulty identifying feelings
- * Somatic symptoms (headache, stomach ache, etc.)
- * Excessive difficulty self-soothing
- * Delayed speech
- * Developmental regression (bedwetting, loss of acquired speech, etc.)
- * Exaggerated startle response
- * Excessive impulsivity
- * Uncharacteristic crying, neediness, fussiness

Age 6-11

- * Anxiety
- * Attentional disorders
- * Attachment disorders
- * Depression
- * Hypervigilance
- * Feelings of responsibility, guilt, and shame
- * Repetitious traumatic play and retelling
- * Nightmares and other sleep disturbances
- * Concerns about safety, preoccupation with danger
- * Aggressive behavior, angry outbursts
- * Close attention to caregivers anxieties
- * Excessive worry or concern for others, trying to take care of everyone
- * Social isolation, inability to develop social skills, social ostracism
- * Somatic symptoms (headaches, stomachaches, generalized pain)
- * Low interest in activities
- * Lack of concentration in school, lowered school performance
- * Poor language skills
- * Belief in foreshortened future
- * Exhibits dissociation and "spacey" behavior
- * Less consolidation of memory
- * Suicidal ideation and gestures
- * Dangerous acting out
- * Excessive emotional arousal and difficulty self-soothing
- * Developmental regression (thumb sucking, bedwetting, loss of acquired speech, etc.)

Age 12-18

- * PTSD symptoms similar to adults
- * Attentional disorders
- * Anxiety
- * Depression
- * Relational disorders
- * Dangerous reenactments of trauma
- * Delinquent behavior (truancy, running away)
- * Risk taking behavior (sexual acting out, drug and alcohol use, etc.)
- * Social withdrawal/poor peer relationships
- * Dissociation from self and community
- * Somatic symptoms (headaches, stomachaches, generalized pain)
- * Preoccupation with death
- * Preoccupation with revenge
- * Sleep and eating disturbances
- * Self-consciousness/self-esteem issues
- * Rebellion at home and/or school
- * Efforts to distance oneself from feelings of shame, guilt, and humiliation
- * Excessive escapism to manage inner turmoil
- * Struggling with sense of identity
- * Suicidal ideation and/or self harm
- * Aggressive behavior
- * Memory issues
- * School failures





Why Children in DV May Act Out Against the Abused Parent

Children and adolescents are affected by DV similarly to adults and have similar survival mechanisms. Even if a child isn't directly experiencing the abuse first hand, living in a household where abuse is happening is traumatic.

Parental Alienation – using children as tools of control

- Abuse stems from a desire to have power and control over others. Abusers use anything at their disposal to establish and maintain this power and control including; harassment, intimidation, threats, violence, isolation, and even kindness. In intimate partner violence, children are often used in some way as one of these tools.
- Parental alienating behaviors are those in which a parent tries to baselessly turn a child against the other parent, through actions like bad-mouthing, lying, guilting, or rewarding. Such behaviors result in parental alienation, in which a child turns against a parent for unjust or untrue reasons. Parental alienating behaviors more closely resemble coercively controlling violence, intimate terrorism and battery than other more common types of abuse. While parental alienation is essentially partner abuse, the children suffer, too. Parental alienation is most commonly discussed in relation to divorce and custody disputes, but alienation can begin long before this.
- Parental alienating behaviors
 - Lie to child about abused parent
 - Justifying abusive behaviors through pointing out to child what the abused parent did wrong to deserve the abuse
 - Undermine abused parents authority to child
 - Reward child for being hostile toward or dismissive of abused parent
 - Be overly accommodating to child to make abused parent look like the strict or mean one
 - Antagonize abused parent until they act against abusive parent
 - Collective punishment – punish child for abused parents actions
 - Punish child for siding with abused parent
 - Abused parent may alienate themselves from child so child does not intervene and get hurt
 - Blame abused parent for leaving, calling police, or breaking up the family
- Signs of parental alienation in children
 - The child expresses a relentless hatred for the targeted parent
 - The child's language parrots the language of the alienating parent
 - The child vehemently rejects visiting the targeted parent
 - Many of the child's beliefs are enmeshed with the alienating parent
 - Many of the child's beliefs are delusional and frequently irrational
 - The child's reasons derive from what has been told to the child by others
 - The child has no ambivalence about his or her negative feelings; they are all hatred
 - The child feels no guilt about his or her negativity toward the targeted parent
 - The child and the alienating parent are in lockstep to denigrate the targeted parent
 - The child can appear like a normal healthy child, but, when asked about the targeted parent, it triggers his or her hatred

- Effects of parental alienation on children
 - an impaired ability to establish and maintain future relationships
 - a lowering of the child's self-image
 - a loss of self-respect
 - the evolution of guilt, anxiety, and depression over their role in destroying their relationship
 - with a previously loved parent
 - lack of impulse control (aggression can turn into delinquent behavior)
 - educational problems, disruptions in school
- Even children who are not fully alienated from and hateful toward abused parent has internalized messages against the abused parent.
 - Statement of child who attacked abusive parent to protect abused parent "My dad has violent reactions to my mother's stupidity"

Dependency

- Children are innately dependent on their caretakers as they cannot provide for their own needs. Children react similarly to adults who are in trauma bond situations and dependent on their abusers. Children may rationalize the actions of the abuser to preserve their bond and make sense of what is happening. Children are particularly susceptible to normalizing abuse or seeing it as a sign of love due to a lack of experience to tell them theirs is not normal.
- To maintain their view of the abuser and make sense of their circumstances they may blame themselves or the abused parent for what is happening in the home.
- If police have been called, the abused parent has left with the child, or there is separation or divorce the child may blame the abused parent for the change and for depriving them of the source of their needs. The child may feel anxious about having their needs met since the abused parent is no longer around.

Appease and Displace – Survival

- Children, just as adults, may work to give the abuser what they want to protect themselves and those they love. They may be hypervigilant of warning signs of abuse and obsessive about doing everything right to please the abuser.
- Displacement is a psychological survival mechanism in which strong emotions are directed toward a person or object that doesn't feel threatening. This allows a reaction with significantly reduced risk of consequences. The person that the feelings are directed towards is not the target of the emotions, but reacting to this person is likely less dangerous or problematic than reacting to the actual target. Adults also have this survival mechanism, but reactions may be more extreme in children and adolescents due to decreased understanding and control over their emotions.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/09/210916114558.htm>

https://www.ncsc.org/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/42152/parental_alienation_Lewis.pdf

Lundy Bancroft – presentations from Network Child Abuse Conference 2021

Children and Domestic Violence

Listening and Talking to Your Child About Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior that one person in a relationship uses to control the other. The behavior may be verbally, emotionally, physically, financially, or sexually abusive. You as a parent may have left an abusive relationship or you may still be in one. This fact sheet is #4 in a series of 10 sheets written to help you understand how children may react to domestic violence, and how you can best help them to feel safe and valued and develop personal strength. For other fact sheets in the series, visit www.nctsn.org/content/resources

When children see, hear, or know about abuse by one parent against the other, they may have many feelings, thoughts, and questions. As a caring parent, you are the most important person to your children as they try to sort things out. It may not be easy for you to talk about what's happened. In some families' culture and religion it is not the custom to talk to children about adult problems. However, your communication and support can help your kids do better in the aftermath of their experiences.

If you still feel unsafe at home, you may worry that talking with the children will put the family at greater risk. If this is the case, talk to a domestic violence advocate or someone else you trust to help you increase the family's safety. Let your kids know that you are taking steps to make them safer. And remember, if you are in immediate danger, call 911 for emergency assistance.

HOW TO TALK, WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

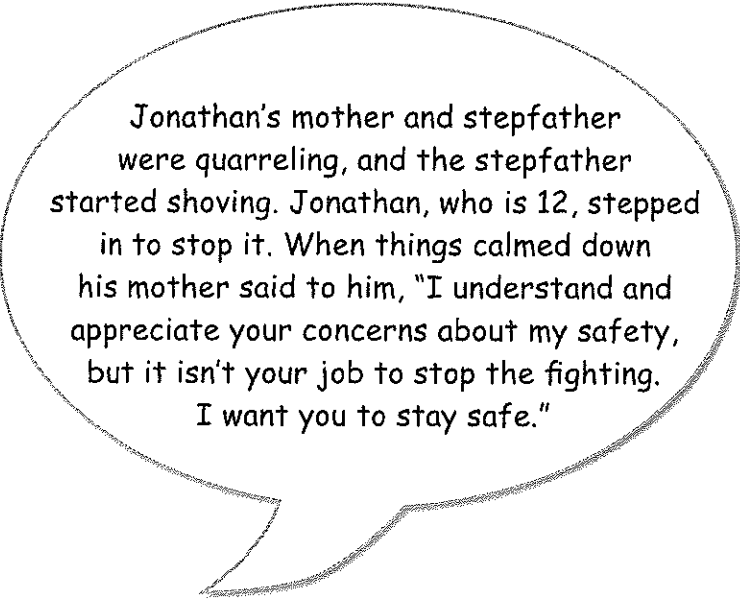
Conversations with children can't always be planned—sometimes they just happen. The following tips will help you make the most of the conversation whether it's planned or spontaneous:

- ▶ Take the lead: when you open the conversation, you're telling your child it is safe to talk and that she doesn't have to be alone with her thoughts and worries.
- ▶ Open with messages of support, like "I care about you and I will listen to you."

Helpful Messages for Kids About Domestic Violence

- Violence isn't OK.
- It isn't your fault.
- I will do everything I can to help you be safe.
- It's not your job to fix what is wrong in the family.
- I want you to tell me how you feel. It's important, and I can handle it.
- It's OK to have mixed feelings about either or both of your parents.

The Co-chairs of the NCTSN Domestic Violence Work Group Betsy Groves, Miriam Berkman, Rebecca Brown, and Edwina Reyes along with members of the committee and Futures Without Violence developed this fact sheet, drawing on the experiences of domestic violence survivors, research findings, and reports from battered women's advocates and mental health professionals. For more information on children and domestic violence, and to access all fact sheets in this series, visit www.nctsn.org/content/resources



Jonathan's mother and stepfather were quarreling, and the stepfather started shoving. Jonathan, who is 12, stepped in to stop it. When things calmed down his mother said to him, "I understand and appreciate your concerns about my safety, but it isn't your job to stop the fighting. I want you to stay safe."

- ▶ Ask what your child saw or heard or already knows about the troubling events in the home.
- ▶ Support and acknowledge your children's feelings, experiences, and their version of the story.
- ▶ Expect that your children will know more than you think, no matter how young they are. Sometimes when adults assume children are asleep or not paying any attention, they are actually listening to everything. If they are too young to get what's going on, they may fill in the gaps with their imaginations and end up worrying about something that's worse than reality.

- ▶ Let your child know it is always OK to ask you questions. Often the ideas or questions that trouble children are different from the ones that adults think about. Listening to your child's questions helps you know what is really on his mind.

- ▶ Talk to your children in a way that's right for their ages. Use words that you know they understand. Be careful not to talk about adult concerns or at an adult's level of understanding.

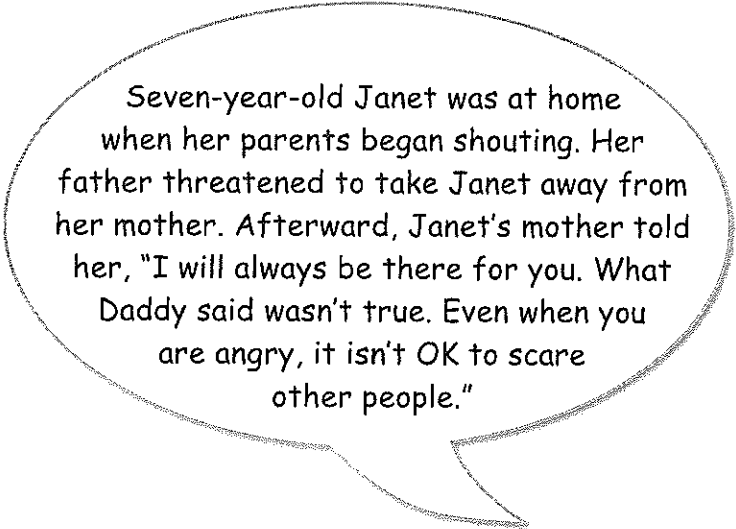
- ▶ If your child asks a question you're not ready to answer, you can say, "That's a really important question. I need some time to think about it and then we can talk again."

- ▶ Monitor your own feelings. If you are able to talk calmly and confidently, you convey a sense of security. A calm tone sends the message that you are in charge and capable.

- ▶ Be alert to signs that your child is ready to end the conversation. Children who have heard enough may get restless or silly, stop listening, or stop asking questions.

- ▶ Have other adults for your own support so your children are not your only support system. You don't want to put undo worry or stress on your children.

- ▶ Be mindful of the age of your child. For younger children, sharing too much of your worries or fears may make them more worried or upset.



Seven-year-old Janet was at home when her parents began shouting. Her father threatened to take Janet away from her mother. Afterward, Janet's mother told her, "I will always be there for you. What Daddy said wasn't true. Even when you are angry, it isn't OK to scare other people."

Talking to children about DV

Denial or lack of discussion about the DV by a caregiver can be detrimental to children. It's a lot scarier for kids when no one ever talks to them about the violence.

- Child learns that the violence is normal
- Child is afraid to talk about the violence
- Child is confused, doesn't understand
- Blames themselves
- Learns to deny and not to talk about their own feelings
- Makes them feel like they are crazy
- Makes them feel lonely, isolated from their friends
- Learns that it's not OK to ask about the violence or discuss it
- Gives children unrealistic beliefs about the causes of the violence
- Uncertainty about their safety

Benefits of talking to children about violence

- Children feel safer
- Children feel more in control
- Learn that violence is not okay
- Help them feel loved
- Help them feel understood
- Children learn it is okay to talk about their feelings

Overcoming obstacles to discussing violence

- "They didn't know it happened, I don't want to traumatize them. They are too young to hear about it. They won't understand."
 - Children understand and perceive more than adults may realize. Ask them about their feelings and experiences. Answer what you can. Validate and help them process their emotions. They might be confused, angry, sad, feel guilty, etc.
- "I have tried to talk about it. My child won't listen."
 - Be patient. Don't push it. Try another time. They usually hear you anyway. Through your attempts to discuss it they know it is safe to talk to you and can come to you when they are ready.
- "I feel uncomfortable. I'm not ready to talk about it. I'm scared to bring it up."
 - Acknowledge that it may be uncomfortable for you to talk about the violence. Try to get more comfortable by talking to someone you trust.
 - Acknowledge that it may be scary for you to remember the violence. It's scary for your kids, too. Once you start talking, it may feel less scary.
 - Let them know that even though it is hard to talk about it you are glad they feel safe opening up to you.
 - You can address smaller aspects of what happened and emotions surrounding it as you and the child are ready and work up to longer conversations. Use phrases like "That is a really important question. I will try to answer it, but it might be difficult and we might need to stop and continue the discussion later."
 - A child advocate or counselor can help the child process their trauma and be an additional support person for them.
- "I don't know what to say."

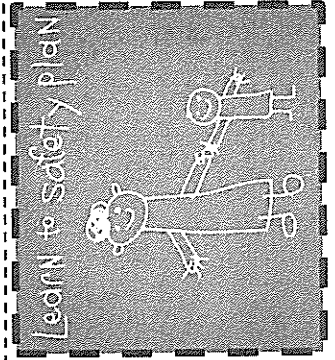
- Let them know it's not their fault, let them know the abuse is not okay, let them know you love them, show understanding, let them talk and express how they feel, help them feel in control and safe
- You don't need to have all the right words. Actively listening and being there to support them is the most important thing.
- "I'm embarrassed."
 - Remind yourself the abuse was not your fault. You could never do anything to deserve abuse. You did what you could to protect yourself and your children.
- "I don't think it's such a big deal. It's over now, why talk about it."
 - The effects of trauma are ongoing and may worsen if they aren't addressed and the child doesn't feel like they have a safe space to process them.
 - Acknowledge it may be difficult to talk about, but these discussions are important for you and the children.
- "I don't want them to hate their parent."
 - You can address that the actions were wrong without villainizing the person.
 - Discuss the importance of safety.
- "They'll just be more scared."
 - Show them that you care about their safety and let them feel a sense of security and control by being involved in safety planning.
 - Create structure and stability wherever possible. Find areas in their lives where they can have control and make plans and decisions.
 - Be mindful of the triggers and anxieties of the child. Help your child get out of crisis mode when it comes up through healthy coping, grounding, breathing, etc. Teach them techniques they can use to self soothe and let them know you are there to help them.
 - Acknowledge their fear and help them feel comforted and safe.
 - Act in ways that are non-threatening and non-violent
- "They'll tell other people."
 - Children reach out for help and support in different ways. Through your discussions with them they can learn appropriate and safe ways to reach out. Discussing it and building a support network can help them to process what happened rather than internalizing shame and closing off.

Listening for and accepting feelings

- Work on being in the right headspace to listen. If you are tired, in a hurry, hungry, or not emotionally able to listen address those obstacles.
- Children may say something you don't agree with or something you don't want to hear. Acknowledge this is their experience and their feelings. You can feel differently or may understand the situation differently. That is okay.
- Listen for the feeling you hear.
- Let them know you hear them.
- Say, "It seems like you feel _____."
- Don't say anything else. Allow some time for the child to respond.
- Don't tell your child what to do, how to feel better, or why he feels the way he does. After your child has had time to respond, you can let them know you understand by saying things like
 - That sounds frustrating, hard, etc. Sometimes I feel that way, too. I understand. I'm here for you if you want to talk about it now, or later.

Safety Planning with Children and Adolescents

- ✓ I can review my safety plan with my children and teach them safety planning measures while being mindful of age appropriateness.
- ✓ I can rehearse my escape plan and practice it with my children.
- ✓ I can ensure I have my children's important documents and needed items in my go bag.
- ✓ I can teach my children how to use the phone and how to contact the police and the fire department.
- ✓ I can create a code word " _____ " with my children to tell them to hide, run, and call the police.
- ✓ I can teach my children important numbers and how to use the phone to make a call to me or to a friend/ family member, etc. in the event that my partner takes the children.
- ✓ I can tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. People who need to be informed: ___ school; ___ daycare; ___ babysitter; ___ church; other: _____.
- ✓ If I have a protection order I can give a copy to my child's: ___ school; ___ daycare; ___ babysitter; ___ other _____.
- ✓ I can teach my children online safety.
- ✓ I can help my children with their emotional health and get them any resources they may need. I can let them know that their feelings are valid and help them with healthy ways to process them.
- ✓ I can help my children understand that the violence that happened or is happening in the home is not okay and is also not their fault. Abuse is only ever the abusers fault.
- ✓ I can ask others for help with child care if I need time to adjust without feeling guilty about caring for myself. I can best help my children when I am healthy and it is okay to ask for help. I can attend parenting classes, support groups, and parent mentor programs if needed.
- ✓ I can teach my children about healthy and unhealthy relationships, consent, and boundaries while being mindful of age appropriateness. I can ask educators and children's advocates to help me with this process.
- ✓ If my adolescent child is in an abusive relationship I can help them with safety planning and getting connected to resources.
- ✓ Other things I can do to help my children be safe:



Safety Co-Parenting with an Abuser

Co-parenting is the requirement that both parents work together in a civil, and respectful manner in order to do what is best for the child. Co-parenting is difficult in any case but a history of abuse makes it even harder to want to find common ground with the abuser. I can use some or all of these methods to stay safe while co-parenting:

- ✓ If there is a protection or restraining order courts often do not allow unsupervised visits. Even without a protection order, I can request from the courts that visits are supervised.
- ✓ I can set up a parenting plan with the help of an experienced lawyer. The parenting plan must be highly specific and spell out exactly what days children will reside with which parent, how holidays and vacations will be handled, how transportation to and from school events will take place, etc. A detailed parenting plan minimizes the need for contact with my abuser.
- ✓ I can establish a communication process through scheduling tools to minimize direct correspondence that may result in manipulation or aggression. Scheduling tools allow co-parents to coordinate events, set custody schedules, and discuss issues related to their children in a system that is not susceptible to manipulation or alteration.
- ✓ I can use a co-parenting app like Talking Parents to communicate with my ex. By using this app every conversation between myself and my ex is on-the-record, timestamped, and unalterable for the court and lawyers to review. In order to stay calm I can pre-script what I want to say and if my ex tries to manipulate me or threaten me I can hang up and have comfort that any abusive language can be used as evidence.
- ✓ I can arrange for all exchanges to be done in a public space. I can request police, advocate agencies, or another third party be present during an exchange.
- ✓ If my ex breaches the custody agreement through consistently showing up late, having the children when not designated, scheduling activities during my designated time, etc. I can request my attorney message them or request mediation, ask the judge to change the arrangement, or file a motion of contempt.
- ✓ Power and control are the center of abusive behavior. Even after I am out of the situation my ex may try to control me through my children. This may be through relatively small rebellions such as allowing the children to stay up later than I allow. As long as the children are safe from abuse I can allow these small concessions so I am not controlled by my ex's behavior and maintain safety.
- ✓ I can work to minimize the stress levels of my children and protect their relationship with the co-parent by not negatively discussing their time they had with the co-parent.
- ✓ I can model behaviors I want my children to learn. I can show them love, stability, and support. My children may have witnessed arguments and violence throughout the abusive relationship which does not need to continue while we are living separately. I may seek out aid from a family counselor or therapist to help myself and my children through the transition.
- ✓ If there is suspected abuse of the children I can alert the authorities and go through proper legal channels to protect my child and attempt to gain full custody.

When Children Disclose Abuse

DO listen carefully

When a child discloses abuse, it is our job to make sure the child feels heard. This isn't the time to ask about details or become overly emotional. The best thing we can do is give the child our full attention and the chance to share their story.

DO tell the child it's not their fault

Children feel a significant amount of guilt and shame about what has happened. They need to know child abuse is NEVER the child's fault. NEVER ask questions implying fault like "Why didn't you say anything before? Why didn't you stop it? What were you doing there?"

DO tell the child you believe them

A lot of children will not tell anyone they are being abused because they have been told by the abuser that no one will believe them. If a child is telling you, it means they trust you and are asking you, as a safe person, to help.

DO report to Child Protective Services (CPS) or Law Enforcement immediately

If you suspect there is abuse happening, it is critical for you to report to CPS immediately so they can take the appropriate steps to investigate. It may also be necessary to call Law Enforcement to file a police report on the witnessed or disclosed abuse. The sooner you report what the child disclosed, the better. The details will still be sharp in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

DO NOT make promises you can't keep

Sometimes when reassuring children or comforting them, it is tempting to say things we cannot follow through with. A common thing to say when a child tells an adult they were abused is, "I won't tell anyone," or "You won't ever have to see that person again." Sometimes we don't want to embarrass the child or worry them, but if neither of those things can be guaranteed, then in an attempt to comfort them, it can do more harm than good.

DO NOT ask for more details or ask direct questions.

By prodding for more details or asking direct questions, you run the risk of inserting your own assumptions or potentially harming an investigation by "planting" ideas in the child's head. A trained child forensic investigator will ask them questions in a safe environment where the child can use their own terms that will be able to be used in the investigation. This also minimizes re-traumatization of telling several people.

DO NOT confront the alleged abuser

By confronting this person, it could potentially put the child's safety at risk. This can also make the investigation more difficult. It is best to leave this part up to the professionals.

Trauma Informed Caregiving

1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence. 1 in 7 children have experienced some direct form of abuse or neglect. Below are some tips for helping children who have experienced trauma.

- Discuss safety planning with children and practice as needed so they know what to do in a dangerous situation. Reassure the child that you will do what you can to make sure they feel safe.
- Reassure children often that the traumatic situation was not their fault. Guilt and shame is a normal symptom of trauma, help them through this and reinforce that they did nothing to cause the trauma.
- Children may feel bad for telling the truth because it got someone in trouble or it made others around them sad. Reassure them that telling the truth was a brave and good thing to do. Thank them for confiding in you and encourage telling the truth even when it's difficult.
- Listen to and validate their feelings while explaining/showing them safe ways to cope with them. They may have conflicting feelings like loving and hating an abuser at the same time. Reassure them that they can trust you with those feelings, you are glad they are sharing, and their feelings are not a burden to you. Ask how you and others can best support them.
- Be consistent about demonstrating and voicing love and support. Tell them you love them often in several ways. Children and adolescents, just like adults have different love languages they may be more receptive to. Find out how comfortable the child is with words of affirmation, physical affection, receiving gifts, quality time, and acts of service. Support them in the ways they are most comfortable with.
- Teach and maintain boundaries so they know what is appropriate behavior for themselves and others. Teach them consequences to overstepping boundaries. Some children may engage in inappropriate play re-enacting trauma. These boundaries and rules may help.
- Clear rules and consequences show the child stability and that others care. Inconsistency with rules and enforcement is confusing. Children working through trauma may try to regain control through rule breaking and risk taking. Help them understand that rules are to keep them safe. Discipline is done in love to shape behavior. Discipline is never physical and should never demean the child. Involve children in the discussion of appropriate discipline. Writing rules down can help children remember them.
- Develop a routine that you and your child can stick to. Routines provide feelings of safety and security and can help with symptoms like eating and sleeping habit changes. If the routine is going to change discuss this with your child ahead of time to prepare them.
- Children can use the same healthy coping and stress relieving tactics as adults (pg 39 + 41). Walk children through some of these techniques to help them learn to cope and more quickly get out of crisis mode.
- Children process trauma differently at different developmental stages. It is not uncommon for a young child who worked through trauma in therapy to revisit therapy later as they hit developmental markers. Be mindful to their needs as those needs change.
- If you feel you need additional support to help your children, reach out to parenting resources, support groups, counseling agencies, child care, etc.

Ways to Help Children Develop Self-Esteem:

- **Set clear limits:** Set limits that are reasonable and appropriate to children's ages, to help them feel valued and secure. Children can be part of the process of setting limits and consequences. If the limit is clear, the purpose is understood, and they are aware of possible consequences they will be surer in their choices and more likely to follow the limits. Sticking to limits while also being understanding, patient, and kind helps the child have respect for the care-giver and the limits and models how they can set and enforce limits for themselves. Consequences should never be demeaning, aggressive, excessive, or violent.
- **Listen carefully:** Pay attention to what children say, and let them know you hear what they are saying.
- **Communicate respectfully:** Share your feelings, expectations and needs with children in a way that is respectful.
- **Be affectionate:** Use the five love languages to show you care. Pay attention and listen to what they respond best to in order to make them feel supported and loved in ways that are comfortable for them.
 - Words of affirmation: complements, praise, kind words, encouragement, etc.
 - Quality time: doing activities you both enjoy together, being attentive, sharing quality conversations, making time for them, etc.
 - Receiving gifts: give thoughtful gifts and tokens of appreciation or remembrance, do not need to be expensive
 - Acts of service: doing favors, giving time and effort, helping
 - Physical touch: hugs, pats, kisses, show concern through touch, etc.
- **Allow them to solve problems:** Encourage children to solve problems and make some decisions for themselves.
- **Promote independence:** Allow children to play and make choices independently in a safe environment. Show that you are there if they need you and trust that they will know when they need you.
- **Arrange for new activities in which children can succeed:** Set up new activities that they enjoy, like playing sports on a team, taking music lessons, etc., so that your children learn new skills and gain confidence in themselves. Support them in their interests and activities, even if you wouldn't have chosen them.
- **Be a positive, non-violent role model for your children:** Maintaining safe, reliable interaction with your children and others in their lives can help them develop self-esteem. If someone is violent you can distance the child from the violence through safety planning. Discuss how the actions are not acceptable without villainizing the harm-doer. Ensure the child knows the violence is not their fault.
- **Let children know they are capable:** Allow children to have responsibilities and let them know you have confidence in them.
- **Let children know they are worthy of love just for who they are, not related to their behavior or things outside of their control:** Tell them you like them, enjoy them, and appreciate them, etc., without relating it to their behavior, appearance, etc.

If a child is anxious, has low self-esteem, is overly negative, or is internalizing self-blame, guilt, or aspects of emotional abuse work with them on recognizing the negative self-talk, where it came from, what isn't accurate about it, and how they can alter it into more positive self-talk. Talk to them about their strengths, achievements, resiliency, etc. and continue to enforce a positive image. Help them find what works for them to calm themselves and take care of their emotional and mental health. Never minimize or diminish their struggles, rather support them through it.

