



Session 3

Aims and Objectives

- Identify the reasons leaving an abuser is so hard.
- Identify the five responses to trauma of fight, flight, flop, freeze, and friend.
- Recognise that, regardless of our situation, we do have some choices.
- Consider how and why we communicate about an abuser in the ways we do, and potentially more productive ways to talk about him.
- Identify how history and law impact our current experience and context.

Resources

- Own My Life playlists for when participants arrive.
- Tea, coffee, milk, sugar, sweetener, juice, biscuits, fruit.
- Tissues.
- Group rules stuck on wall.
- Evaluation resources:

- Evaluation box
- Laminated emoji options
- Own My Story (1pp).
- Pens, pencils, pencil crayons, felt tips, stickers.
- Flipchart and pens.
- Ball of string.
- AV Equipment.
- Tables to work on.
- Internet access for the Own My Life e-Hub.
- Own My Choices Traffic Light Laminates and pens.
- Copy of Reflective Evaluation (from WoManual page 83) with session preparation completed.

Session Plan

1. Own My Self (15 mins)
 - a. As participants arrive give them time to make a drink and collect their **Own My Story journal**.
 - b. Begin the session by discussing in pairs "My favourite song".
 - c. Ask participants to feedback to the group. As they feedback, invite each person to say one thing they've been thankful for over the past week.



2. Own My Mind (15 mins)

- a. Draw a woman on the **flipchart**.
- b. Invite the group to name the woman.
- c. Explain that the woman has an abusive partner and is struggling to leave him.
- d. Ask the group to form a circle.
- e. Stand in the centre of the group.
- f. Holding the end of the **ball of string**, throw the ball to someone in the circle, as you do, give a reason as to why the woman on the flipchart might find it hard to leave her abusive partner.
- g. Invite that person to name a reason, holding onto the string and throwing the ball onto another person in the group.
- h. Continue to do this until all possible reasons have been given.
- i. Answers could include:
 - Children.
 - Finances.
 - Love.
 - Self-hatred.
 - Nowhere to go.
 - Job.
 - Fear.
 - Hope that things will change.
 - Special occasions (e.g. Christmas/birthdays).
 - Religious beliefs.
 - Cultural expectations.
 - Partner convincing us back.
 - No support.
 - Keeping up appearances.
 - Social services.
 - House.
 - Possessions.
 - Friendships.
 - The unknown.
 - Health problems.
 - Don't recognise it is abuse.
 - Having committed criminal offences.
 - Partner is a police officer/judge/politician/vicar.
 - It didn't work last time.
 - Too exhausted.
- j. The result should be a web around the facilitator.
- k. Ask them if they can see how hard it is to get away.
- l. Invite each person to throw the ball of string back the person who threw it to them while saying on thing that could help the woman on the flipchart break free from the web.



m. Answers could include:

- Speak to a friend or family member.
- Speak to a domestic abuse service.
- Talk to the children's school.
- Secretly set up a new bank account.
- Begin saving money.
- Secretly get a second phone.
- Talk to the children.
- Start documenting everything in a journal.
- Report to the police.
- Start counselling.
- Speak to a GP.
- Go on the Own My Life course.

3. Own My Body (15 mins)

- a. Play video: **3a The Seven Steps of a Breakup.**
- b. Ask the group to discuss in groups of 2-3 whether they recognise any of the video for their own lives.
- c. Feedback people's thoughts.
- d. Turn to Own My Story **page 29.**

- e. Invite participants to complete the Seven Steps Exercise about a previous breakup.
- f. The Seven Steps of a Breakup could be linked to the Traffic Lights exercise, to show what barriers there may be in moving forward.

4. Break (15 mins)

5. Own My Choices (15 mins)

- a. Ask for 3 volunteers
- b. Give each volunteer a **White Board Pen** and a set of **Traffic Light Laminates:**
 - Volunteer 1: Road
 - Volunteer 2: Red Light
 - Volunteer 3: Green Light
- c. Read the following:
 - Marjorie has been with Tarquin for the last five years. Tarquin has treated Marjorie terribly. He puts her down, exhausts her, lies to her, has affairs, has raped her and has tried to turn their five-year-old son Jasper against her. Marjorie has spent a long time trying to find ways to fix her relationship with Tarquin for Jasper's sake. Recently Tarquin has been shouting at Jasper and on a



few occasions grabbed him, shaking him hard. Marjorie has decided to leave Tarquin.

- c. Ask for suggestions of actions Marjorie could take. Volunteer 1 writes these on the Road Laminates and places them on the floor.
- d. Ask for suggestions of obstacles Tarquin might use to sabotage Marjorie's actions. Volunteer 2 writes these on the Red Light Laminates and places them in front of the written on Road Laminates.
- e. Ask for suggestions as to how Marjorie could keep moving forward. Volunteer 3 writes these on the Green Light Laminates and places them in front of the written on Red Light Laminates.
- f. This exercise will show the group that:
 - Leaving can be really hard.
 - Our partner will always sabotage any actions we take.
 - There are often more choices than we first realise.

6. Own My Relationships (15 mins)

- a. Turn to Own My Story **page 31**.
- b. Ask participants to discuss the statements in groups of 2-3 and complete the Communication Quiz.
- c. Once completed, discuss the statements with the group.

d. Ask the group:

- Are there any more helpful/constructive ways of communicating about an abuser?
- Turn to Own My Story **page 32**.
- The core principles of effective communication in relation to an abuser are TALK Safely:
 - Truth: With ourselves and those around us. Choosing not to believe the abuser's minimisation, denial and blame.
 - Aim: An abuser's aim to keep us controlled, focus on his aim not his behaviour.
 - Lovable: We are lovable and people do care
 - Knowing the pain: Not trying to deny or hide from the reality of how painful the abuser's behaviour is.
 - Safety: Keeping ourselves and our children safe.

7. Own My World (15 mins)

- a. Play Video: **3b Women's Rights Timeline**.
- b. Turn to Own My Story **page 34**.
- c. In pairs complete the Women's Rights Timeline.
- d. Invite participants to share their thoughts.



8. Own My Feelings (10 mins)

- a. Explain that:
 - What we are experiencing can be so confusing and consuming that we never stop to consider how we feel. This part of every session is about everyone having the chance to define their feelings and have space to make notes and record their journey.
 - There is a difference between emotions and physical sensations. Checking in with how we are physically experiencing our emotions can help us make sense of what's going on and help us to become more grounded.
 - Participants can choose how much to engage with this section, and if it doesn't work for them, they can instead make notes or read through the week's materials.
- b. Turn to Own My Story **pages 166 - 167**.
- c. Invite participants to identify their feelings and make notes.

9. Final thoughts (5 mins)

- a. Ask participants to pause for a moment and think of between one word and one sentence to sum up their thoughts about the session.
- b. Share your word/sentence and then invite each participant to share theirs with the group. People can pass if they'd rather not.

- c. Explain what the following week will focus on.
- d. Remind participants of the email address they can contact you on during the week.
- e. Invite participants to put one of the laminated emoji options in the evaluation box before they leave.
- f. After participants have left finish completing your copy of the Reflective Evaluation on WoManual page 83.