

## Safety Planning – Emotional Health and Wellbeing

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No matter what types of abuse you have experienced, it will have an impact on your emotional well-being. The experience of being abused and verbally degraded by your partner is exhausting and emotionally draining.

- The process of building a new life takes a great deal of courage and requires a lot of energy. I will be gentle with myself and give myself permission to take the time I need to begin healing.
- I can tell myself, "I'm in charge of my life and confident in my decision-making abilities or (other positive statements about my abilities) when I feel others are trying to control or abuse me".

### Types of emotional abuse:

- Abusive expectations-unreasonable demands, demand for constant attention, constant criticism
- Aggressive name calling, accusing, blaming, ordering, humiliation, intimidation
- Constant chaos, deliberately starting arguments
- Denying a person's emotional needs, deny your sanity, deny your memory, 'silent-treatment' and invalidation of reality
- Dominating, controlling, speaking over you
- Emotional blackmail, plays on your fear, guilt
- Ignoring and invalidation-minimizing, unpredictable responses (tells you one thing one day and something different the next), explosions!
- Denial and Blame-blaming you for their abuse.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation I will:

When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I will:

I can do these things to help me feel stronger:

- I can attend workshops and support groups offered through Churches, community and resource centres, women's shelter, health unit, etc. to gain support and strengthen my relationship with other people.
- I can read my spiritual teachings, poetry, self-help resources, etc. to help me feel stronger.
- I can use my journal to write about an event or feelings.
- Become involved in community activities to reduce feeling isolated
- Take a part-time job to reduce isolation and to improve your finances
- Enrol in school to increase your skills

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- Take part in social activities, e.g. movie, dinner exercise
- Take care of your sleep and nutritional needs
- Try not to overbook yourself to avoid stress
- Be creative and do what makes you feel good
- Write something positive about yourself everyday – your own personal affirmations
- Try exercising; it will increase your energy level and increase your sense of well being
- It is OK to feel angry, but find positive and constructive ways to express your anger
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I can join these groups or clubs to become involved in a healthy activity and to reduce my isolation:

In the past I have used \_\_\_\_\_ (drugs, alcohol, food, impulse shopping, etc.) as a way to deal with stressful situations. I recognize there are healthier ways to deal with stress and will make a commitment to find alternatives to help me:

I can talk to when I need support:

I will review and revise my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ (time frame) to make sure I am on track. I will keep the document in a safe place and out of reach of my potential abuser.

Review Date:

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### Exercise

If I have to communicate with my abuser in person or by telephone, I can

Whenever I feel that others are trying to control me, I can

When I need support or a shoulder to cry on, I can call

Things that I could do or learn to help me to feel stronger and become more independent are

If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can

### If I still have contact/live with my abuser, I can:

- Have a plan to protect myself emotionally.
- Try to have at least one person besides my partner who you can talk to about the abuse in your life and how you are thinking/feeling (Family/Friend, Crisis Line, Outreach Worker)
- You deserve to be treated with respect; you are not to blame for being emotionally abused.
- Break your isolation by talking to someone close to you or by contacting a support group. This will help put your situation into perspective.
- Remember your abuser alone is responsible for his abusive behaviour.
- Realize that you can't change him. However much you love him, or try to make the relationship work, nothing can be done until he accepts responsibility for his behaviour.
- Visit your woman's shelter or doctor who can record what is happening to you, suggest local support groups, and refer you to counselling.
- Realize that emotional abuse is a serious problem and you can get help.
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- Take your own safety and the safety of children seriously.
- Know that emotional abuse can lead to physical violence or death.
- Recognize that you have the right to make your own decisions in your time, and that dealing with any form of abuse may take time.
- Trust yourself and your own experiences. Believe in your own strengths. Remember that you are your own best source of knowledge and strength and that you already have the tools you need to survive.

My biggest safety concern right now is.....

