

## **SHEDDING ABUSE:**

**A Course for Men who use Domestic Violence**



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## **SHEDDING ABUSE: A Course for Men who use Domestic Violence**

*This course is based on a thesis written by Chris Laming. It is inspired by his work with SHED (Self Help Ending Domestic Violence), an organisation that helps men help themselves by taking responsibility and changing themselves and their behaviour. Although SHED is based in Eastern Rural Australia the roots of domestic violence are universal.*

### **Notes for people considering running a course**

The original course had varying success. So far, 860 men have attended for assessment and half that number have attended groups. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some men made only cosmetic changes and others learned more subtle and devious means of controlling. But most changed and the women and children in their families now feel safer and less afraid of them. The type of men who succeed in stopping their abusive or violent behaviour are the ones who move beyond denying, minimising and excusing what they do, and who also stop blaming others.

The SHED course has been adapted by removing elements belonging to only one culture and adding other exercises. It can be adapted further for more effective use in any specific culture. But some elements are fundamental to men who use domestic violence in whatever culture and need to be addressed. For example:

- Abusive men are often poor in their ability to recognise their own emotions and those of others – they are often emotionally illiterate. So they need to practice the vocabulary and the skills involved in emotions.
- They often see their female partners as naturally inferior, as possessions – they may feel they have a right, as a man, to misuse and abuse them as they wish.
- They see their abusive and violent behaviour as tolerated by the religious institution to which they belong – and supported by other men in their community.

The men who go through this course therefore undertake a difficult process. It requires them to be both supported in their change and challenged in their denial, excuses, collusion with other's abuse, and justification of male privilege.

### **Assumptions used as foundations for this course**

1. The safety of women and children is of top priority and the very reason for running this course.
2. Men are not born violent; abusive behaviour is learned, so it can be unlearned and replaced with better habits. But only if the men accept responsibility for their past behaviour.
3. Many men are not good at talking about emotions.
4. Men tend to form a male culture, with agreement about what men can and cannot do. They are often silent in the face of other men's abuse and violence towards women; this is called collusion. The secret needs to become open, exposing the reality.

5. Men can choose to start looking at things differently – people, places, and relationships. They can choose to find a different meaning in events and people. They can learn that if they feel hemmed in, or cornered, there is always a way out. They can choose to see themselves not as the victim of their personal history – there are always other ways of seeing, ways that are more helpful.

## **Where to start: with a Steering Committee**

If your community has a problem with domestic violence, perhaps a course could be run to start changing at least a few men.

The first step would be to put together a Steering Committee with about five people. The members should include:

- someone who has experienced a problem with domestic violence;
- someone who understands the local culture;
- someone who knows about training and group work

Their tasks are as follows:

1. To read carefully the course in this document and check that it is culturally acceptable and useful. If some sessions are not, the committee would decide whether to adapt or remove them. They may also want to add one or more localized sessions of their own: for example, a session that addresses the problem of domestic violence from the point of view of the local religion (they could involve a good religious leader for this).
2. To select, train and support the facilitators.
3. To monitor the progress of the first course so that it can be improved for the future.
4. The committee also needs to look at the extent of the problem. If the culture accepts or even encourages severe beatings of women they should think about other interventions, for community education and attitude change as well as initiating a SHED course.

## **Why a Group Course?**

Group interventions can create an alternative culture that enables an abusive man to see and practice how to be non-abusive and non-violent. Well-run groups provide opportunities for men to be both supported and challenged about their behaviour. A group process, if done properly, is usually more effective than one-on-one counselling to bring about men's behaviour change, because:

- It gives an abusive man the opportunity to experience a different perspective on abuse and violence, from other men.
- The man has a chance to be challenged about his abusive beliefs by his peers.
- There will be no collusion with other men in the group, so it gives the opportunity to experience an alternative male culture to the one that condones his abuse. In this way it provides the chance for him to change.
- A man can change, for example, how he constructs what it means to be a 'real man'; or how he defines abuse. He can also change his understanding of the part

he plays in the pain and suffering of his wife and children, and begin to recognise the effects of his abuse.

- The SHED group also gives the man a chance to realise that he is not the only one with abusive beliefs to support his convenience. He hears others talk, and starts to feel that he too, can actually change. This sense of hope, together with taking up responsibility, can provide a strong impetus and motivation for change.

## The Facilitators

The chief facilitator should be a man with life experience who can run a group well. For best practice there should always be a co-facilitator in the group, no matter how many men there are. Possible apprentice facilitators can sit in on groups or work with a more experienced worker. Men who themselves have undergone a course in behaviour change such as this course can come back as co-facilitators, speaking with the power of their own experience and bearing witness that change is possible.

There is also a role for a female co-facilitator: Male violence is against women, so her presence forces men to test their attitudes, values, behaviour and progress against her point of view. Her relationship with the facilitator would have to be excellent and their interaction serve as a model both of cooperation, and of non-abusive disagreement and compromise.

Facilitators need to be clear about their role. They cannot set themselves up as experts who are more powerful than any participant. They should relate honestly, from a position of common human frailty and struggle, and at the same time challenge abusive beliefs and behaviour. A real warrior does not pick the weak and defenceless to attack, but rather defends them. He does not strike out when something is said or done that triggers his insecurity.

Facilitators also need to consider their own needs in the process, especially the issue of personal safety, both in the group and in private life. For example, they should not give out their addresses or personal mobile phone numbers. However in rural areas it may be difficult to ensure the safety of the family of the facilitator just by keeping addresses private. For example, it may not be possible to go shopping without meeting one of the participants. In most cases this is not a problem, But with the most difficult, volatile and dangerous of men there is potentially a risk. To avoid anxiety, facilitators should take all possible precautions.

Bear in mind that the facilitators will hear detailed accounts of abuse and violence against women. There will also be the many stories of how the men themselves were abused and dehumanised in childhood. It is essential that they have at least one trusted colleague with whom they can talk regularly, particularly after each session. These talks would cover issues that have arisen and focus on the emotional impact on the facilitators. It is an opportunity for them to 'unload'. They can discuss what strategies can be used to ensure they can continue to cope.

The balance between challenging the men to change by confronting abusive beliefs, and at the same time supporting the individual's efforts to remain non-violent, is the key to keeping participants in the course. This balance between challenge and support reflects honestly the tension the men experience, both in the group and in the outside world.

Using the day-to-day language of ordinary people is important. So facilitators must not use jargon. They must not speak down or patronise. If the facilitators ask

themselves how they would want to be treated if they were standing in the shoes of the participants, this will give them a good sense of how to act. No one is perfect, everyone is human. At the same time people need to learn from mistakes. The only real mistake is the one that teaches nothing. All the others are learning experiences.

## Partners

Getting feedback from the partners of violent men, as part of their intake assessment, will help the facilitators to check the level of the men's honesty. It provides a 'reality check' for the men's own accounts of their abuse.

When each man is interviewed for the course, the woman involved ideally is invited too and interviewed separately. She could be visited further once or twice during the course. This would give feedback from both sides. For many women this gives a sense of security – of knowing what is going on and not feeling sidelined, or wondering what goes on in these men's groups. But it would require an experienced facilitator (preferably a woman) to do the partner interviews. Sometimes it may not be possible because the woman is afraid or is no longer contactable.

## Emotional illiteracy

Participants work in a group with other men who have also been abusive or violent. Sharing their stories enables men to become better listeners and express themselves better. They find more words to describe what they have felt and done, and this addresses a general problem of men's emotional illiteracy.

One positive spin-off from this is that the group participants generally become better communicators with their partners and children. They are also likely to be more compassionate and forgiving, as well as respecting difference.

## Who could benefit from this course? Assessment of suitability

Possible candidates need to be interviewed by the facilitators and two or three committee members. Print out the Assessment Form (see [page 9](#)) and fill it in during the interview. The following points determine whether a man is suitable for the programme. He can be accepted if:

- he accepts some responsibility for his abusive behaviour;
- he has some motivation to change;
- he is not abusing drugs or alcohol;
- he does not currently have a mental illness that stops him taking any responsibility; and
- the facilitator feels he can be managed in a group.

After all, or most of the interviews, the committee will have a better idea of the men and what will help the course succeed. So there needs to be time to discuss and make adjustments.

## Convincing men to come

Most men will take a lot of convincing that they need to attend a group programme. So it is worth having persuasive points to hand. For example:

*'The stakes are very high... like losing your family and your kids'*

*'Look in the mirror, and ask... do you like what you see?'*

*'You are not the only one... other men have already come to the group and benefited – and the family is safer than before'*

*'You will see how the programme works, what is on offer. The course is like a table with different plates of food... you can try the various techniques and use what helps, leave what doesn't.'*

What should the facilitator say that will work in *this* community?

## Providing practical assistance

Many of the men who attend because of their violence will have other problems – such as alcohol and drug abuse, financial problems, parenting problems, health issues, housing or employment. The Facilitators or committee members may be able to make practical referrals and personal introductions. Linking an abusive man with practical assistance will re-enforce his hope that the facilitators are there for him and his needs, even when they are challenging him to change his behaviour.

## Individual counselling

Individual sessions could be made available to those who are participating in a group course – but only if you have the people with time and skills, and only for those in the group. For some desperate men these meetings become a lifeline, a rope to which they cling during a flood, a reminder to them that they have a future in which things can change.

## What the course is not

Make it clear to the man, from the start, what the course is not, as well as what it is. For example, it is not just a group where men sit around feeling sorry for themselves and blaming their partners. It is a group where men challenge each other about their abusive attitudes – and have an opportunity to support each other in changing.

## Shape of the course

The course is designed to have twelve sessions of two hours, once a week on a fixed evening. It is important to have a regular and reliable structure to the group, leaving as little excuse as possible for the man to miss a session. There should be a further three meetings after the course is finished.

## Size of the group

If this is the first time you have facilitated a course on Domestic Violence, we suggest you do not have more than eight participants. The task is not easy and you will learn a lot. Later you can increase to about 12.

## Teaching methods and Tools

- The facilitators need a room in which to run the course. It should be fairly soundproof, in a place that participants can reach with public transport.
- They need chairs, a blackboard and chalk. And, ideally, big sheets of white paper, felt pens and something like sellotape to stick the paper to the walls. With these, they can prepare diagrams etc. ahead of time.
- Before the course, handouts have to be produced. The handouts can be found printed at the beginning of the session in which they are first used. If you have the course on a computer with a printer, then printing copies is easy. If you have the course in the form of a printed copy you will need to find a photocopying machine.
- The handouts should be given to each participant so that they can read them at home. Non-literates should also get printed handouts because they may have friends near home who can read to them. During the sessions they can be paired with literates who could read for them.
- For participants who are non-literate, the organisers could provide as a loan some cheap audiocassette players that they could use for homework. Handouts could be dictated onto cassettes and copied. Participants should have the time during class to record important points into their cassettes.
- Each participant should be given something in which to keep his handouts. This could be a cheap file cover or a big brown envelope

## Role-plays

Role-plays are an important component of the course. In some cultures, participants are happy to role-play good guys and bad guys. In other cultures people do not like playing the bad guys. If this is the case, a facilitator must play such parts, at least in the beginning.

## Homework

Homework between classes is often a writing assignment. If non-literates have cassette players they can record onto a cassette instead. Or they could have discussions inside their heads and remember the conclusions for the next class.

## Pairing participants

Participants need a partner so that they can get support in between the weekly classes. Plan the pairing up of participants in advance, so that every participant has somebody they can reach when they need to talk – either someone who lives within walking distance, or, for participants with mobile phones, someone who also has a phone. If there is an uneven number of participants, make one group of three.

## **Learning Objectives for the 12 week Course**

By the end of the twelve sessions the participants will have modified their abusive and violent behaviour through revising their attitudes and assumptions. In particular, they will have learnt:

- what behaviours are abusive and violent — the cycle of abuse — how different kinds of abuse strengthen each other, increasing the man's power and control;
- the cues that warn them that they are becoming abusive;
- about reality — that it is not fixed, it can be seen in different ways — and behaviour can be modified;
- the role their family of origin plays;
- about sexual abuse — how they learnt to “be a Man” — and how women are made secondary by communities;
- how they can manage fatherhood better, so their sons do not become abusive and their daughters do not think that abuse is normal behaviour between adults.

They will also have learnt new tools with which to change their behaviour and practiced them. These include:

- The Seven Flies on the Wall; Time-Out and Avoidance of Danger Zones; Personal Plans for Change; Adopting a Different Role — Rewriting the Script — Conflict Resolution; Planning to Maintain Non-violence.



## ASSESSMENT FORM

Date..... Name..... Age.....

Ask the man why he is here.

How long has he been with his current partner?

When did the abuse get serious?

What was his most abusive behaviour?

What is the level of abuse currently?

Has he been abusive in previous relationships?

What was his pattern of abusive behaviour over time?

Was his mother abused by his father? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, explain:*

Was he abused as a child? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, describe:*

Physically: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotionally: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexually: \_\_\_\_\_

By threats & fear: \_\_\_\_\_

By neglect & isolation: \_\_\_\_\_

Are children currently affected by his abusive behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, how are the children affected?*

*How does he discipline the children?*

Has he had any episodes of depression? Attempted suicide?

*If yes, was he prescribed medication? What?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Other treatment?* \_\_\_\_\_

Does he have a history of mental illness?

Does he have a history of alcohol abuse?

**Suitability for men's behaviour change group programme:**

Accepts some responsibility 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

Is motivated to change 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

Has supports and resources 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

Is resistant to change 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

Has aggression & anger 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

Seems dangerous & ready to hurt someone (perceived) 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

## TIMETABLE

### **SESSION 1. INTRODUCTION, TYPES OF VIOLENCE** p. 13

Preparation

Activity 1.1. Welcome and Introduction (10 min.)

Activity 1.2. Ice-breaker in pairs (15 min.)

Activity 1.3. Agreements, Reminders and Expectations (10 min.)

Activity 1.4. Agreement on Course Rules (10 min.)

Break (15 min.)

Activity 1.5. Defining Types of Violence and Abuse (40 min.)

Activity 1.6. Check-out (15 min.)

Homework

### **SESSION 2. RECOGNISING THE WARNING SIGNS** p. 17

Preparation

Activity 2.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 2.2. "Seven Flies on the Wall" (30 min.)

Activity 2.3. "Naming the Emotions" (30 min.)

Break (10 min.)

Activity 2.4. Cues for Abusive and Violent Behaviour (30 min.)

Activity 2.5. Check-out (15 min.)

Homework

### **SESSION 3. FINDING ALTERNATIVES** p. 23

Preparation

Activity 3.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 3.2. "Tuning Into the Radio" (15 min.)

Activity 3.3. Alternative Behaviour (30 min.)

Break (10min.)

Activity 3.4. Adopting a Different Role (40 min.)

Activity 3.5. Check-out (15 min.)

Homework

### **SESSION 4. MORE TOOLS FOR CHANGE** p. 27

Preparation

Activity 4.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 4.2. Time-Outs (20 min.)

Activity 4.3. Role-play (20 min.)

Activity 4.4. Plan for Personal Change (20 min.)

Break (10 min.)

Activity 4.5. Danger zones (30 min.)

Activity 4.6. Check-out (15 min.)

Homework

### **SESSION 5. FAMILY BACKGROUND** p. 30

Preparation

Activity 5.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 5.2. Understanding your Family Background (60 min. + 10 min. break)

Activity 5.3. Checking on the "Seven Flies on the Wall" (30 min.)

Activity 5.4. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

### **SESSION 6. THE CYCLE OF ABUSE & VIOLENCE – AND HOW TO MODIFY IT** p. 33

Preparation

Activity 6.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 6.2. Cycle of Abuse & Violence (20 min.)

Activity 6.3. Modifying the cycle (30 min.)

Break (10 min.)

Activity 6.4. Rewriting the Event (30 min.)

Activity 6.5. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

**SESSION 7.  
POWER & CONTROL p. 36**

Preparation

Activity 7.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 7.2. Power and Control (30 min.)

Activity 7.3. Female Speaker (15 min.)

Break (10 min.)

Activity 7.4. Who brought money to your marriage? (15 min.)

Activity 7.5. Sayings and proverbs (20 min.)

Activity 7.6. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

**SESSION 8.  
SEXUAL ABUSE p. 39**

Activity 8.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 8.2. What is Sexual Abuse?  
(35 min.)

Activity 8.3. Changing the Relationships  
between Women and Men (10 min.)

Break (15 min.)

Activity 8.4. Action Methods on Sexual  
Abuse & Related Matters (30 min.)

Activity 8.5. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

**SESSION 9.  
CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
USING CONSTRUCTIVE  
ALTERNATIVES p. 42**

Activity 9.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 9.2. Re-writing the Script (60 min.)

Break (10 min.)

Activity 9.3. Role-play: Stepping into the  
Other Role (15 min.)

Activity 9.4. Respectful Conflict Resolution  
(15 min.)

Activity 9.5. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

**SESSION 10.  
'HOW TO BE A MAN' p. 44**

Activity 10.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 10.2. Discussion: How Men Learn to  
be a Man (30 min.)

Activity 10.3. Role-play (15 min.)

Break (15 min.)

Activity 10.4. Discussion: Being the Man in  
the Family (40 min.)

Activity 10.5. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

**SESSION 11.  
FATHERHOOD  
AND SEPARATION ISSUES p. 46**

Preparation

Activity 11.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 11.2. Father-child Relationships  
(30 min.)

Activity 11.3. Action Method (15 min.)

Break (10 min.)

Activity 11.4. Role-play: Stepping into the  
other Role (15 min.)

Activity 11.5. Coping with Separation  
(30 min.)

Activity 11.6. Check-out (5 min.)

Homework

**SESSION 12.  
PEER EVALUATION p. 48**

Activity 12.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Activity 12.2. Peer Evaluation (60 min.)

Break (25 min.)

Activity 12.3. Where do you go from here?  
(25 min.)

Homework

## Session 1. Introduction, Types of Violence

### Preparation

- Have ready the list of participant pairs (See *Pairing Participants*, page 7).
- Have ready copies of Handout 1: “Types of Violence & Abuse”, one for each participant (See page 16).
- Have ready a copy of the Agreement on Course Rules, for signing (See page 15)
- Have a big sheet of paper on the wall, for Activity 1.5 (See page 14)

### Activity 1.1. Welcome and Introduction (10 min.)

The Facilitator introduces himself and any assistants.

### Activity 1.2. Ice-breaker in pairs (15 min.)

You have already worked out pairs for your group. Read out the list of pairs (and possibly one group of three). Explain how the pairs should function between sessions.

Then ask the group to break into these pairs. Each participant spends a short time getting his pair to introduce himself by asking (a) Who are you? (b) Why are you here? (c) Tell me something about yourself.

Then the group gets back together and each participant introduces his pair to the rest of the group.

### Activity 1.3. Agreements, Reminders and Expectations (10 min.)

The facilitator reads each of the following phrases and invites discussion:

“We agree to take responsibility for our violent and abusive behaviour”.

“We can unlearn it. We are not born violent. We can change to non-violence”.

“We agree to challenge attitudes that excuse, minimise or deny men’s violence – or that blame women or drink or anger or whatever for our abuse”.

“We agree to recognise the effects of our violence on our family and others”.

“We agree to commit ourselves to this group process in order to change our violent and abusive behaviour”.

“We agree to be honest in the group and not play games (say one thing but work towards another)”.

“We agree to do the tasks set for ‘homework’ in order to reinforce our learning”.

“We agree to keep confidential any personal information we learn about participants in the group”.

“We agree to keep our partners informed of how the group is going and how we are doing”.

“We agree to continue to the end”.

### **Activity 1.4. Agreement on Course Rules (10 min.)**

Read out the Agreement on Course Rules (see [page 15](#)) and invite discussion over each point. At the end, ask each participant to sign at the bottom.

### **Break (15 min.)**

### **Activity 1.5. Defining Types of Violence and Abuse (40 min.)**

Have ready copies of Handout 1 on “Types of Violence & Abuse” (see [page 16](#)).

Ask the participants to think of a serious recent incident when they used violence.

On a big sheet of paper on the wall write “Types of Violence” and then ask the group to brainstorm.

The group lists as many examples of violence as possible. Write the examples on a big sheet of paper. Group them to show that there are different categories of violence: physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, social, financial, etc.

When the class has found as many examples as they can, pass round the copies of the Handout. Ask non-literates to sit next to literates. Tell them you will be reading through the Handout. Tell the participants to keep the Handout safe, as it will be used again in later sessions. Then read through the Handout out loud and fill in any gaps on the big sheet of paper.

Then ask the participants about their current and previous understanding of violence. Discuss their learned behaviour:

- Where this behaviour was first witnessed by them.
- Whether their children are developing similar abusive behaviours towards their mother, siblings, friends.
- What damage is being caused to their own relationships.
- What fear is and what fear makes us do.
- What change is and how to bring it on.
- What male violence is versus partner violence.
- Discuss anger, other emotions and participants’ learnt reactions/behaviours.

### **Activity 1.6. Check-out (15 min.)**

- Briefly revisit the main points learnt in the session, and invite any last questions.
- Check with the participants how they are, and what they are feeling.
- Remind them that the material is challenging, and may stir up emotions for them. One way that might help them deal with that is by talking about it with a trusted friend, with their pair in the group, and also by writing.

### **Homework**

- Explain how helpful homework can be in reinforcing new learning.
- During the coming week the participants should read through their Handout 1 on the types of violence (or find someone to read it to them, or listen to the cassette).

- And they should look for examples in their own life of the different types of violence, and mentally commit themselves to changing with the course.
- 

## Agreement on Course Rules

I, ..... agree that:

- There must be no violence or threat of violence directed at a leader or any other group member.
- Nobody uses alcohol or drugs on group meeting days.
- A man must not hit his partner or his children while involved in the group.
- The second time a man uses violence but does not report it to the group, he must leave the course.
- A maximum of two missed sessions are allowed.
- A group member should not hit, push, or point at other group members.
- A man may not touch another group member without first getting permission from him.
- Each man must refer to his wife or partner by her name.
- A man may not bring a weapon into the group.
- The names of participants and personal information shared in the group are to remain confidential.

Signed: .....

## Handout 1: Types of Violence & Abuse

<p><b>1. Force and threats</b></p> <p>Made and/or carried out threats to do something to hurt partner</p> <p>Threatened to leave, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare or other authorities</p> <p>Made partner drop legal charges</p> <p>Made partner do illegal things</p> <p>Other</p>	<p><b>6. Isolation</b></p> <p>Controlled what partner did, who she saw and talked to, what she read, where she went</p> <p>Limited partner's outside involvement and friends</p> <p>Used jealousy or envy to justify actions</p> <p>Other</p>
<p><b>2. Anger or intimidation</b></p> <p>Made her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures</p> <p>Destroyed her property</p> <p>Screamed or yelled</p> <p>Drove recklessly</p> <p>Physically abused pets as a warning</p> <p>Stalked partner (phoned/followed)</p> <p>Displayed weapons to intimidate</p> <p>Punched walls, doors, slammed fist on table, etc</p> <p>Other</p>	<p><b>7. Using children</b></p> <p>Made partner feel guilty about the children</p> <p>Used the children to relay hurtful messages</p> <p>Used visitation to harass partner</p> <p>Threatened to take the children away</p> <p>Other</p>
<p><b>3. Economic abuse</b></p> <p>Prevented partner from getting or keeping a job</p> <p>Made partner ask for money or accept an allowance</p> <p>Took partner's money</p> <p>Did not let family members know about or have access to family income</p> <p>Other</p>	<p><b>8. Denying, minimising and blaming</b></p> <p>Made light of abuse and did not take partner's concerns about it seriously</p> <p>Said the abuse didn't really happen</p> <p>Shifted responsibility for abusive behaviour away from self, blaming partner for causing it</p> <p>Other</p>
<p><b>4. Emotional abuse</b></p> <p>Used put-downs with partner, humiliated her</p> <p>Made partner feel bad about herself</p> <p>Called partner names</p> <p>Made partner think she's crazy</p> <p>Played mind-games</p> <p>Made partner feel guilty (e.g. about kids)</p> <p>Other</p>	<p><b>9. Physical abuse</b></p> <p>Pushed, grabbed, tripped or shoved partner</p> <p>Slapped, hit or punched partner</p> <p>Held partner and slapped her</p> <p>Kicked partner</p> <p>Threw partner around</p> <p>Choked or strangled partner</p> <p>Used a knife, gun or other weapon against partner</p> <p>Other</p>
<p><b>5. Gender and social privilege</b></p> <p>Treated partner like a servant</p> <p>Made all the big decisions</p> <p>Acted like the owner/boss of your partner</p> <p>Assumed 'authority' because of being the man</p> <p>Other</p>	<p><b>10. Sexual abuse</b></p> <p>Demanded sexual activity from partner</p> <p>Made partner watch porn</p> <p>Pressured partner to have sex in a way they did not want</p> <p>Physically forced partner to have sex</p> <p>Physically attacked partner's sexual parts</p> <p><b>11. Alcohol, khat or other drugs</b></p> <p>Frequency of use</p> <p>Concern about the level of use by user</p> <p>Time, money, energy diverted into use and away from the family</p>



## Session 2. Recognising the Warning Signs

### Preparation

- Print out Handout 2: “Seven Flies on the Wall” Handout, four copies per participant, for use in Activity 2.2 and throughout the course. (See [page 21](#))
- Print out Handout 3: “Cues for Abusive or Violent Behaviour”, one copy per participant. (See [page 22](#))
- Print out one copy of the Role-plays for use in Activity 2.3. (See [page 20](#))
- Have ready the sketches of faces for Activity 2.4. “Cues for Abusive and Violent Behaviour” to pin on the wall. (See [page 18](#))

### Activity 2.1. Check-in (10 min.)

- What happened in the group last week that was particularly relevant to your situation?
- What did you learn about yourself this week?
- How are participants feeling? (Go around the group).

### Activity 2.2. “Seven Flies on the Wall” (30 min.)

Give out one handout to each participant. The idea is that there are seven flies on the wall. Every time a man carries out an abusive or violent act they see everything that happens, each from a separate viewpoint – adding up to seven points of view. During the course the group will come back to this exercise – it give the participants a fundamental way of thinking about their own behaviour.

Ask each participant to think of a recent episode when they abused or hit their partner and then ask them to think through the seven aspects of that incident, as the facilitator reads out the handout. Each participant writes notes under each fly about the incident.

### Activity 2.3. “Naming the Emotions” (30 min.)

- Have the 12 role-plays on the sheet cut out and ask each participant to pick one.
- Ask one participant to say their piece playing the role of a partner or wife, to you the facilitator, who can respond as the husband. For example: “Well, now I feel angry. How dare she do... whatever it is.”
- She needs to be scared a bit...”
- Do the same with a second participant.
- Now ask the whole group – what else might the husband be feeling? (For example, with the role-play of the wife leaving, make sure that someone mentions “fear of abandonment” and that this is discussed.)
- Then ask a participant to say his piece to another participant. Ask the participant playing the role of husband “What are you feeling?” Then ask the whole group: “What else might he be feeling?”

- Ask the participant playing the husband: “How is your body responding?” Then ask the whole group: “How does *your* body respond in these situations?”
- Ask another man to respond to his paper role-play by standing in the shoes of the husband: “What are the words that annoy you especially?” Then ask the whole group: “What are the words that annoy *you* especially?”
- Give out Handout 3: “Cues for Abusive and Violent Behaviour”. Read it through out loud. Are there kinds of behaviour not covered in the handout?

## **Break (10 min.)**

### **Activity 2.4. Cues for Abusive and Violent Behaviour (30 min.)**

Explain that the point of this next exercise is to enable each participant to identify the way his body, mind and emotions give forewarning of impending violence. If participants are more aware of these personal signals they can stop themselves – like at a road sign.

Such personal warning signs (or cues) may arise suddenly, and a man may choose to be abusive or violent very quickly thereafter. As with road signs, lives are endangered if they are ignored. The warning sign for one man might be quite different from another man’s. Each man must be aware of his own signs and be responsible for choosing to respond in such a way that his partner and children remain safe.

Put up on the wall sketches of faces that you have prepared – each drawn on a separate big sheet of paper – which illustrate a continuum of emotions: frown, scowl, shoulder tension, withdrawing, walking around with big heavy steps, yelling, conflict. Talk about each and make sure that agreement is reached as to where each emotion or action might happen in the build-up to verbal or physical abuse

Have one man direct another according to the way it has gone in his own life: “Now you act hurt – move under the paper that shows hurt – and say ‘how could you betray me?’... Now you turn angry – move under the paper that shows anger – and say the kind of accusation you might make to your wife”. And so on through all the emotions and actions.

Now ask participants to move into pairs and, in turn, say how they moved through the emotions and actions in a recent incident. Each man has to identify the spot at which they lost control. What were the emotions and actions just before that happens?

The men then come back into a group and tell the others their own point of losing control and the warning stages just before that happens.

### **Activity 2.5. Check-out (15 min.)**

- Briefly revisit the main points learnt in the session, and invite any last questions.
- Check with the participants how they are, and what they are feeling. Remind them that the material is challenging, and may stir up emotions for them. One way that might help them deal with that is by talking about it with a trusted friend, with their pair in the group, and also by writing.

## Homework


- During the week talk to someone who knows you really well and can tell you more about your warning cues.
- Make a list of your own warning cues.
- Each participant should ask himself what kind of person he is, perhaps looking into the mirror. He should list four words that are typical of him as he is at the moment.


## Role-plays: “Naming the Emotions”


<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “Before you got back tonight, your boss stopped by in his car. He says there is no more work for you”.</i>	<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “I have to tell you before someone else does. Our daughter stayed out all night. She knows she should not but she is 14 and often foolish”.</i>
<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “We have a letter from the school. Our son has failed the end-of-year exam. And he knows how much it costs to send him...”</i>	<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “Tomorrow morning I am going to leave and go to my mother’s. I can’t take the abuse any more”.</i>
<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “I’m afraid I have finished the housekeeping money. I am very sorry. Can you give me some more for the rest of the month? It will not happen again”.</i>	<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “Somebody stole your bicycle when I was at the shops”.</i>
<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “The nurse from the clinic came by and wants us to bring the baby to the next clinic. I think they want to check on his bruises”.</i>	<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “Here is your dinner. I’m afraid I could not keep it warm”.</i>
<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. I am very frightened. “I’m so sorry, husband, so sorry. I know you are right. So sorry, please forgive me”.</i>	<i>I am the wife; you are the husband “Sorry I’m late, dear. I met a friend and we got talking and had a coffee. It won’t take a moment to cook your dinner”.</i>
<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “Look, I found the housekeeping purse empty. Well, you have the right – it is your money. But the children are hungry...”</i>	<i>I am the wife; you are the husband. “Please put down the knife. I know you are only playing but one of the children might get hurt. Please...”</i>


## Handout 2: “Seven Flies on the Wall”


Imagine that there are seven flies on the wall any time a man carries out an abusive or violent act. They see everything that happens, each from a separate viewpoint:


 1. YOUR ACTION: What happened, what you did to your partner to control her – the look on your face, tone of voice, actions.


 2. YOUR INTENTION: What you believed should really be happening.

 3. YOUR FEELINGS: Your feelings before, during and after the incident.

 4. YOUR DENIALS: The ways you justified, excused, minimised or denied your actions – or tried to blame her.

 5. THE EFFECTS: The affects of your action – on yourself, on her, on others (e.g. children)

 6. YOUR PAST VIOLENCE: How your past abuse and violence affected this situation.

 7. NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES: What you might have done differently. What could you do next time – without being controlling.

## Handout 3: “Cues for Abusive and Violent Behaviour”

### **Physical cues:**

- tension in muscles (e.g. neck, shoulders, back, stomach, legs, arms);
- clenching fists;
- veins in neck or head standing out;
- pacing up and down;
- change in breathing pattern.

### **Emotional cues:**

- feeling misjudged, misunderstood, put-down, unappreciated or demeaned;
- a sense of hurt, frustration, resentment, anger or rage;
- not getting an expected response – e.g. not being obeyed.

### **Fantasising:**

- day-dreaming about getting revenge;
- seeing yourself punishing your partner for a perceived wrong.

### **Danger zones:**

- sensitive topics (e.g. finances, children, sex, in-laws);
- the time or place that usually set the scene for abusive behaviour – e.g. when arriving home after work for the evening meal;
- language that fuels a bad attitude or a sense of being a victim of others' wrongdoing.

## Session 3. Finding Alternatives

### Preparation

- Have a few big sheets of paper stuck on the wall (for Activity 3.3 and Activity 3.4) and other paper and pens available.

### Activity 3.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Review the last session. Ask the men to share the lists they made of their own warning cues before violent behaviour. What did they learn about themselves this week? (Go around the group).

### Activity 3.2. “Tuning Into the Radio” (15 min.)

The facilitator explains that we do not see the world in the same way all the time: sometimes it is more threatening, sometimes more friendly.

And the way we think about things does not always stay the same. If we listen to the radio a love song may sound sweet one day, but just sugary and sentimental a week later. Or sometimes the programme is interrupted by static and we have to retune the radio. We can choose to listen to a different radio station.

In the same way, a man can change the way he responds to things. His response can be less or more “response-able”. A man can choose not to tune in to abusive beliefs and attitudes that he has learnt, just as he can choose to change the radio station he tunes into. Being response-able means deliberately tuning out abusive messages in his head and choosing to tune in to a caring and loving programme, one that is good for all because no one is scared, put down or feeling used.

The facilitator initiates a group discussion over this way of looking at the world.

### Activity 3.3. Alternative Behaviour (30 min.)

Choose one of the types of violence and abuse (from Handout 1) and write the typical behaviours associated with it on one of the big sheets of paper on the wall.

For example:

#### Using children

Makes partner feel guilty about the children

Uses the children to relay hurtful messages

Uses visitation to harass partner

Threatens to take the children away

Other

Then get the men to identify contrasting behaviour, by asking the question: “What is someone like who is not like this but is instead responsible?”

For example:

<b>Using children</b>	<b>Using responsible parenting practice</b>
Makes partner feel guilty about the children	Shares parental responsibilities
Uses the children to relay hurtful messages	Avoids involving children
Uses visitation to harass partner	Tries to be a non-violent role model
Threatens to take the children away	Concerns himself with children's needs
Other	

Now each man in turn suggests another constructive alternatives. He can identify a time when he was abusive, or look at Handout 1: "Types of Violence & Abuse" for a new example and then come up with the answer to the question "What is someone like who is not like this but is instead responsible?"

Over the next week, as homework, each man is asked identify times when he is abusive, or could start being abusive. Then he should ask himself "What is someone like who is not like this but is instead responsible?" Then if he possibly can, he should begin to adopt the constructive behaviour.

## **Break (10min.)**

### **Activity 3.4. Adopting a Different Role (40 min.)**

This exercise is designed to enable the participants to see how it is possible to create a new person – not totally new, of course, but to change. And to do it oneself, to some extent.

1. Ask one of the participants to come up with four words that are typical of him as he is at the moment, e.g. 'intimidating', 'hurt', 'lonely', 'trapped'. (This was part of Session 2's Homework).
2. The words are written on the left of one of the big sheets of paper on the wall.
3. The facilitator then asks: "How would you describe someone different to this?"
4. These answers are written on the right of the paper and discussed. The group helps the participant find how the adjectives can be turned into actions – how they can become 'do-able' through for example role-playing the actions and fine tuning them.
5. It is suggested that everyone can choose to play an alternative role and can act in new ways.
6. Each man now writes the four core elements of his new role (step 4) on a small piece of paper (or speaks them into his cassette player, or has someone help write them). He has now created a new role for himself to play for the following week. He should carry the new role with him and regularly remind himself that he can now act in a different way.



7. The man, called perhaps Asmir, is invited to give his new role a name – perhaps Nelson – and then asked to leave the room. Asmir is now sent on a holiday (which could be permanent!) and the man comes back into the room as Nelson.
8. Only those in the group are to know that this man is now Nelson and that he is playing that role for the next couple of weeks.
9. Each man should note the reactions of people he meets during the week and see whether there is any difference in how they see him and his behaviour.

### **Activity 3.5. Check-out (15 min.)**

- Briefly revisit the main points learnt in the session, and invite any last questions.
- Check with the participants how they are, and what they are feeling.

### **Homework**

- Over the next week, as homework, the participant should identify times when he is abusive, or could start being abusive. Then he should ask himself “What is someone like who is not like this but is instead responsible?” Then if he possibly can, he should begin to adopt the constructive behaviour.

He should come back to the following meeting with examples of constructive behaviour that he managed to carry out, or wished he had carried out.

- In addition, as homework, each man should think about his new role and look at the notes he made. Can he act in his new role at least for short periods?

Can he come back to the following meeting with examples that he managed to carry out, or wished he had carried out?

## Handout 4: Homework for Session 3

- Keep a diary or notes as part of the process of monitoring your change. Record your main thoughts and feelings, and any incidents of violence, anger or abuse since the previous meeting.
- Ask yourself: what did I learn this week in the session?
  - What was my emotional reaction to what I heard, saw or said in the session?
  - How violent, aggressive or angry was my attitude to what was said?
  - How difficult is it to admit my violent or abusive attitude even to myself?
  - What did I like about this week's session? What didn't I like?
  - What did I learn this week? What do I need to keep working at?
- Take a clean copy of Handout 2: "Seven Flies on the Wall". Think of an episode when you became abusive and violent. Work through the seven points making notes under each fly or speak into your cassette player.

## Session 4. More Tools for Change

### Preparation

- Have copies of Handout 5: “Time-Out Procedure” ready for Activity 4.2, one for each participant. (See [page 29](#))
- Have blank A4 sheets of paper for participants for Activity 4.4
- Have big sheets of paper stuck to the wall for activity 4.4.

### Activity 4.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Ask each participant in turn how they got on with their new role and alternative behaviours. What did they learn about themselves this week?

### Activity 4.2. Time-Outs (20 min.)

Give out the Handouts and ask non-literates to pair with literates. Go through the handout with the group, encouraging discussion. Explain that as part of homework this week the participants will be discussing Time Outs with their partner, and they will be practicing it frequently so that it becomes a habit.

### Activity 4.3. Role-play (20 min.)

Demonstrate by use of examples and role plays an argument in which the man calls Time-Out, including one in which the partner keeps following him around. Make it clear to the participants that the main goal of Time-Out is for the man to avoid being abusive or violent.

### Activity 4.4. Plan for Personal Change (20 min.)

- Hand each participant a blank piece of paper. Tell them to write ‘Plan for Personal Change’ and their name at the top, and then make two columns underneath. They should write at the top left: “Changes I need to make” and at top right “How I will Change (what I need to do)”:

Plan for Personal Change	
First Name .....	
Changes I need to make:	How I will Change (what I need to do):
1 .....	.....
2 .....	.....
etc. ....	.....
Remember that this plan can be added to – it is a learning tool.	

- Explain that the Plan for Personal Change is a written record of the goals (‘Changes I need to make’) and (‘How I will change’) to which participants commit themselves while in the programme.

- The steps must be concrete and realistic and should be focused on changing specific abusive behaviours for example by asking “what behaviour would my wife want me to change?”
- When an issue arises for a man, suggest that this becomes a goal for him to work on and which he notes on this piece of paper.
- During the course, the plans will be brought out and progress considered.

## **Break (10 min.)**

### **Activity 4.5. Danger zones (30 min.)**

Ask the participants to bring out their copy of Handout 3: “Cues for Abusive & Violent Behaviour”. One of the issues listed under Danger Zones is

- the time or place that usually set the scene for abusive behaviour – e.g. when arriving home after work for the evening meal;

Part of each participant’s Plan for Personal Change should be to find ways of avoiding or modifying these Danger Zones. For example, some men are very tense at the end of a working day. They may go home still tense and ready to explode. Physical exercise helps with this kind of stress – so they might, for example, be able to organise an informal football session for half-an-hour before going home. (But they should explain to their partner when they start arriving late!)

Ask the group to brainstorm on danger situations. Where? When? What behaviours can they change so that they avoid the danger zones, or, if that is not possible, make them less dangerous? Write the responses on the big sheet of paper on the wall.

Each man can write a few such strategies in their Plan for Personal Change if it is right for them.

### **Activity 4.6. Check-out (15 min.)**

- Briefly revisit the main points learnt in the session, and invite any last questions.
- Check with the participants how they are, and what they are feeling.
- Remind them that the material is challenging, and may stir up emotions for them. To deal with that, it might be very helpful for them to talk things over with a trusted friend (or with their pair in the group). Writing their feelings down could also help.

## **Homework**

- Each man should discuss Time-Out with his partner, using the Handout.
- He should practice using Time-Out several times a day to form a habit.
- He should look at his Plan for Personal Change and write down (or mentally record) at least one thing that he wants to change, as well as the *specific* steps he will take to change it. This will be a way to avoid the Danger Zone.

## Handout 5: Time-Out Procedure

- 'Time-Out' means leaving any given situation to calm down.
- The man must explain this strategy to his partner before he uses it.
- Time-Out means leaving the entire vicinity, not just the immediate vicinity. In other words, you leave the premises.
- Time-Out must be taken for a set period, usually one hour.
- During the Time-Out the man should not think about the issue that triggered his anger. He should use any method available to distract himself.
- During the Time-Out, brisk physical activity is encouraged – walking or wood chopping, for example.
- For safety's sake, a man should not drive a vehicle or operate machinery during Time-Out.
- To maintain personal control, the man must not use alcohol or psychoactive drugs.
- When a man decides to take a Time-Out he should say so to his partner or make a T sign.
- A Time-Out is for the *man's* self-control only. The man's partner does not have to stop talking or do anything else – it is not to be used as another way to control her.
- After he successfully completes a Time-Out, the man should return to the situation and – if his partner is willing – attempt again to resolve the conflict. It is important that he respect her right not to resume the discussion, if she does not wish to.

## Session 5. Family Background

### Preparation

Have copies of Handout 6: “Family Background”, one for each participant.  
(See [page 32](#))

### Activity 5.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Go round the group, checking whether participants had successes with Time-Out. Then, check with their Plan for Personal Change. What did they learn about themselves this week? How do they feel?

### Activity 5.2. Understanding your Family Background (60 min. + 10 min. break)

Give out a copy of Handout 6: “Family Background” to each participant and then go through it, reading out the questions, explaining them and asking for feedback.

Allow the group enough time to read and think. Then explain that:

- you will be asking each of them in turn to tell his story.
- this session is about helping you make connections between your past experiences and your present behaviour.

Ask each man in turn to tell his story – he uses his answers to the handout questions as the basis of his story about the family (or families) in which he grew up.

Ask: “What do you see in your own violent behaviour now that connects with your own childhood experiences?”

Each man is allotted about five minutes to share.

N.B. **Break half-way through** – for 10 minutes.

When every man has had his turn, make the following points to the group:

- that any negative feelings they are experiencing, or their reactions to being abused, are just like those their partners might feel.
- that what the men felt as children, witnessing their father’s violence, is what their own children feel when they are violent or frightening or intimidating.
- that the men need to watch carefully over the next couple of weeks for cues to anger and arousal that have been stirred up by this session on their family background.
- that their past experiences of violence do not excuse their own current violence. But they can better understand how their dad’s abuse led to their own abusive behaviour – that is leading to their sons’ and daughters’ behaviour...

Help the group to listen and be positive, rather than question or judge.

*Interrupt* if anyone justifies the abusive behaviour in their family of origin, including physical ‘disciplining’ (which is often defended by participants as ‘necessary’ in teaching children)

*Interrupt* if anyone says it is disloyal to question their parents’ methods – it is *not* disloyal. The parents probably did the best they knew how.

### **Activity 5.3. Checking on the “Seven Flies on the Wall” (30 min.)**

The Facilitator asks participants to get out their copy of Handout 2: “Seven Flies on the Wall” and reminds them that abusive behaviour does not ‘just happen’. Rather:

- it is fed by abusive beliefs and intentions (fly 2),
- it is supported by denial, blame and excuses (fly 4),
- it affects others (fly 5),
- it is possible to choose a non-abusive alternative (fly 7 – our favourite fly).

The group will now use the “Seven Flies on the Wall” to analyse an abusive or violent incident:

- A participant is asked to volunteer to describe a recent incident.
- As he starts to describe it, start to **Role-play** the incident described, by yourself playing the partner and asking the participant to speak and act directly to you.
- Have the group analyse the Role-play, using the seven flies.

### **Activity 5.4. Check-out (5 min.)**

Remind the participants that this has been a difficult session, not just in telling of hard things from our childhood, but also listening to similar things from other men.

### **Homework**

- Each man should find another clean copy of the handout “Seven Flies on the Wall” and think about a time when he was abusive or violent. Work through the seven flies, making notes.
- Each man should look at his Personal Plan for change and how he can translate plans into action.

## Handout 6: Family Background

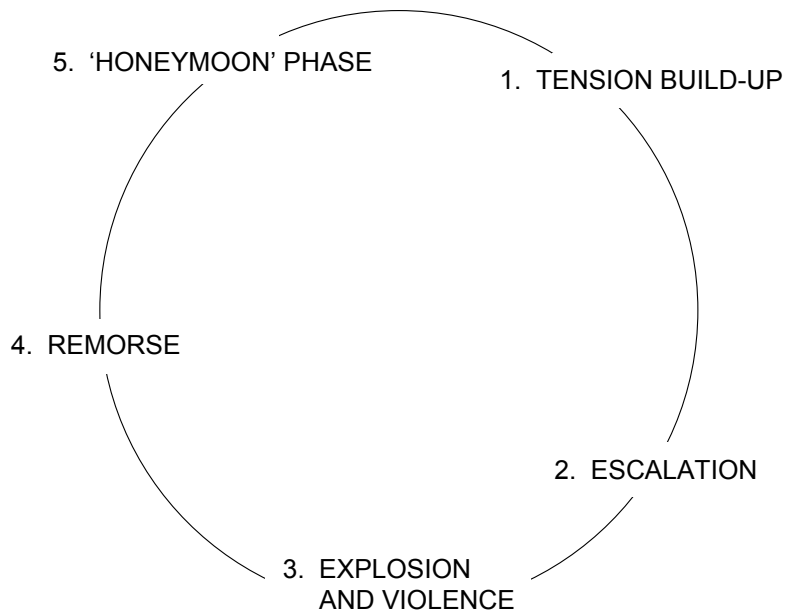
1. How were emotions expressed in your family?
2. As a child, what was the one phrase you remember hearing most often from your parents?
3. How were you praised? Criticised?
4. How is your present behaviour affected by your family of origin? What emotions, thoughts and behaviours come from growing up in that family?
5. In what way are you similar to your dad? In what ways are you similar to your mum?
6. How did individuals in your family handle anger?
7. How did they solve conflicts?
8. What methods of discipline were used?
9. How did you react to the discipline?
10. How did individuals in your family express love and affection?
11. Think about the way children were treated in your family of origin - and the way you now treat your children. What is the same? What is different?



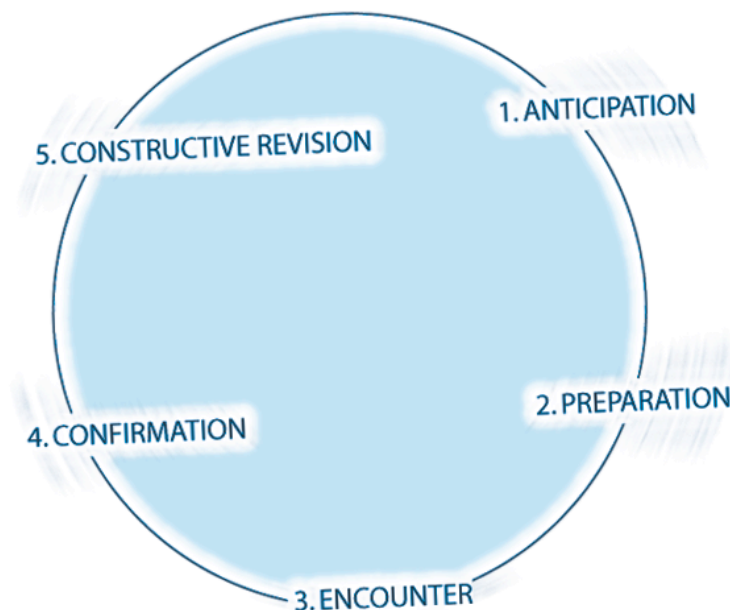
## Session 6. The Cycle of Abuse & Violence – and how to Modify it

### Preparation

- Have a big drawing of the Cycle of Abuse (as below) up on the wall.



- Have prepared a second drawing, of the Experience Cycle (as below).



### **Activity 6.1. Check-in (10 min.)**

- Ask the participants if anything happened in the Session last week that was particularly relevant to their situation. Focus on the men's reflections about family background, and how it impacted or affected their week. To bring this out you can ask things like: "How did the week go?" "What did you learn about yourself this week?"
- Review the homework.

### **Activity 6.2. Cycle of Abuse & Violence (20 min.)**

- Point out the Cycle of Abuse drawn big on a sheet of paper on the wall.
- Ask the men to imagine a 'very bad' day in the life of a man who hits his female partner.
- The group suggests a series of stressful events that happen to the man during his day. The concept of 'tension build-up' is explained.
- The facilitator explains 'escalation' – when the man is beginning to feel out of control. This may happen after different lengths of time, though the outcome is the same. The group decides when it will happen for this man.
- The explosion and its physical violence is discussed
- Explain how the next stage follows on: remorse (which includes justification, minimisation, guilt). This stage includes
- Then explain the final 'honeymoon' stage: here the man tries to make his partner O.K. with what has happened – for example with promises, acting helpless or threats. The group discusses this and tries to give examples from their own lives. What was the nicest thing they did for their woman after they had hurt her?

### **Activity 6.3. Modifying the cycle (30 min.)**

- Point out that if we learn from past experience we can avoid being abusive again in a similar situation. The cycle can be broken.
- Pin up the Cycle of Experience chart.
- Take an example of an abusive incident that has been discussed before by the group and go through it, discussing how it could have been changed.

Introduce the following helpful concepts:

#### **Anticipating the encounter:**

Can you predict that an incident will happen? Sometimes a man will go home tired and angry and looking for a fight – has anyone in the group ever done that? So before this man starts home, what choices would be possible?

#### **Preparing for the encounter:**

How much do you prepare for what you anticipate? For example, talking to your wife in your head before doing it for real?

#### **Being clear about the context of the encounter:**

- Describe what actually happened, who was there, what was done, by whom and the context.

- Was your anticipation confirmed? Did things go as the man expected? Was his prediction confirmed or not? If so, how?
- How did he react to this? What did he do?

**Constructive revision – rethinking the encounter:**

On reflection, what can each man learn to stay non-abusive? Does he worry about what others might say or think? How can he change what he expects for next time? Can he change the way he sees himself? How? What choices does the group think he has? What are the pros and cons of those choices? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being in a similar situation in the future?

This cycle can help us to learn from our experience – learn what may be helpful in the future – avoid being abusive – anticipate situations – make the necessary preparations. One preparation is being in this group, learning non-violent and respectful alternatives.

**Break (10 min.)**

**Activity 6.4. Rewriting the Event (30 min.)**

Participants work in pairs. Using the Cycle of Abuse diagram, each participant goes over a past violent incident of their own to see what changes they could make from the beginning of a similar incident – changes in their behaviour so that the end-point is not violent.

**Activity 6.5. Check-out (5 min.)**

Remind the participants that this has been a difficult session, not just in telling of hard things, but also listening to similar things from other men.

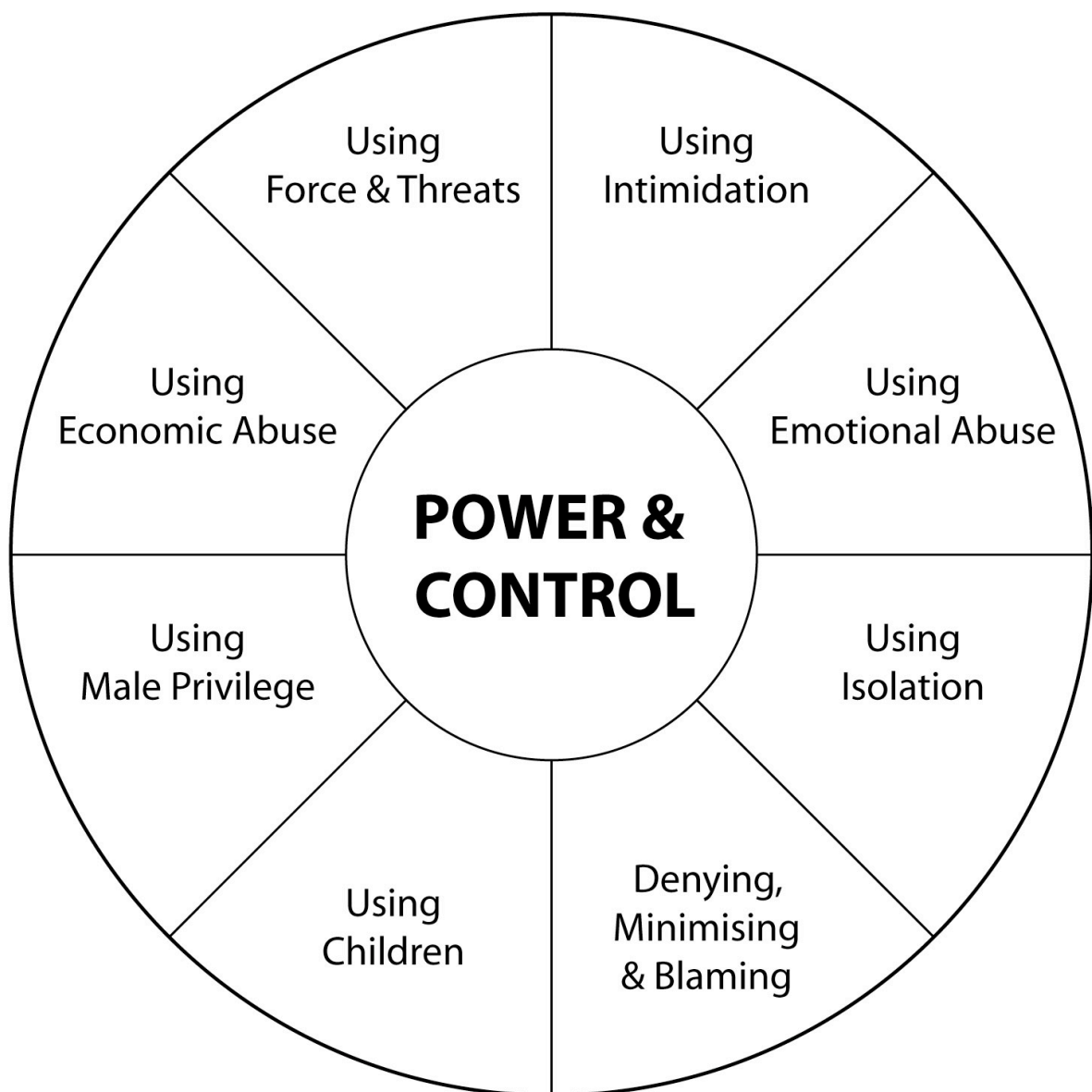
**Homework**

- Using the Cycle of Abuse concept, identify your own behaviours leading up to, and during, an abusive situation.
- Using the Cycle of Experience concept, modify your behaviour in at least one situation during the week – showing to yourself and others that you have changed.

## Session 7. Power & Control

### Preparation

- If possible, have a woman ready to come in and illuminate the discussion. She should be someone with experience of abusive and violent behaviour in her own life. She must be able to explain the effects on her and her close family including children. If she does not talk easily she could answer questions from the facilitator.
- Have several big sheets of paper stuck up on the wall. On one of them, draw the diagram below. It has most of the same titles as in Handout 1: “Types of Violence & Abuse”. (Keep this diagram afterwards for the following week’s session).



### **Activity 7.1. Check-in (10 min.)**

Revisit the last session and ask whether during the week the men learnt anything more about their own Cycle of Violence. Were they able to modify any of their own behaviour? Go around the group. Check how each participant feels.

### **Activity 7.2. Power and Control (30 min.)**

Ask participants to look again at Handout 1: “Types of Violence & Abuse”. Give a brief overview of how men use different methods of power and control and how these different methods strengthen each other. For example, discuss how isolating partners makes other methods easier.

- Refer to the diagram on the wall.
- Illustrate with examples that the men provide (or have provided in the past).
- Draw connections between the various forms of abuse and get further connections from the participants.
- Using examples, look at the immediate impact, and the long-term consequences of various types of abuse on women and children.
- Look at the ongoing effect of one form of abuse and coercion leading to another.
- Use specific examples from women’s lives.

Make sure that the session remains grounded in the actual reality of women and children who suffer abuse – use examples from the men’s previous stories.

### **Activity 7.3. Female Speaker (15 min.)**

At this point, you could have a woman come in as a guest speaker. She should if possible link the Types of Violence & Abuse and make clear the impact on women and children.

### **Break (10 min.)**

### **Activity 7.4. Who brought money to your marriage? (15 min.)**

Ask participants about marriage in their culture.

- Who brings in the money – the man’s family or the woman’s family?
- If the woman’s family brings the money, do they then own the man?
- If the man brings money or goods, does he then own the woman?
- In this culture, does the money sometimes cause trouble?
- How does all this affect the way each man values or de-values his wife?

### **Activity 7.5. Sayings and proverbs (20 min.)**

Tell the group that in England there was a saying: “A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be” – but it is not often heard these days.

- Ask the participants, what are the sayings and proverbs about men and women in *their* culture? Write them up on one of the sheets of paper on the wall.
- What do these proverbs say about the way men and women are seen these days?
- Do they give a true picture? Do the participants see their wives in the same way?

### **Activity 7.6. Check-out (5 min.)**

- Briefly revisit the main points learnt in the session, and invite any last questions.
- Check with the participants how they are, and what they are feeling.

### **Homework**

- Each participant should note two examples of how they used power and control tactics in their abusive relationship and two examples of where they are doing better.

## Session 8. Sexual Abuse

### Preparation

- Put up on the wall the big “Power & Control” diagram that you used in the previous session.
- Have ready two A4-sized sheets, one saying “Sexual Abuse” and the other saying “Respect”.

### Activity 8.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Ask the participants:

- What happened in the group last week that was particularly relevant to your situation?
- What did you learn about yourself during this week?
- How did the homework go – were they all able to note two examples of how they used power and control tactics in their abusive relationship and two examples of where they are doing better?

### Activity 8.2. What is Sexual Abuse? (35 min.)

Lead a discussion that brings out the follow points:

- What is the difference between sex and intimacy? Who can give an example?
- Can any participant give examples of inappropriate sexual behaviour - and why it is abuse?
- Sex can be involved in physical, emotional and psychological abuse; it can be part of the power and control behaviours directed at one's partner. Who can give an example?
- Jealousy and men's sense of 'ownership' can be related to sexual abuse. Examples?
- When men are verbally abusive they may use sexual terms. Men can use language to treat women as sexual objects, in a way that makes it easier for them to be sexually abusive – the words help in treating her like a 'thing' rather than as a person. Who has an example?
- Men may use sexual humour to degrade their partners. Who has an example?
- Men often ignore their partner's feelings in a sexual context. They may insist, manipulate, coerce, or force their partners to have sex with them. They may insist on certain sexual acts that their partner would not have otherwise chosen to do. Who can give an example?
- What is marital rape? Do any of the men deny it exists? Why? No should mean no.
- Is there a connection between sexually abusive behaviour as an adult and having been a victim of abuse as a child.
- Look at the diagram on the wall used in the previous session – when the group related sexual abuse to the other forms of abuse.

### **Activity 8.3. Changing the Relationships between Women and Men (10 min.)**

Ask the following questions:

- How can the men change their attitudes about sex – and move towards intimacy and respect?
- What do they see as the positives and negatives of sexual relationships?
- How can they stop treating women as sex objects or things?
- Are men insecure and scared of relating and being intimate (both with women and with other men)?
- Is it that men feel vulnerable and unwilling to take risks in a relationship and so try to control it?
- Relationships with partners have a physical, sexual, and emotional part. How do these connect?

### **Break (15 min.)**

### **Activity 8.4. Action Methods on Sexual Abuse & Related Matters (30 min.)**

- Ask the participants to line up side by side along one wall according to their height (tallest to shortest) letting them negotiate with each other about where their position is. . Next, ask the participants to range themselves by age, and then, thirdly by how fit and healthy they see themselves, with not fit at one end and very fit at the one.
- Next, remind them that men get sexually assaulted as well as women. Ask them how they might feel if they were sexually threatened or abused or assaulted. Get the men to rate themselves on a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) according to how a) angry, b) anxious, c) afraid, d) enraged, e) guilty, f) responsible etc. they feel. Allow the men to deal with and rate each of their emotions and give them a chance to talk about why they have rated themselves where on the scale. If there is time, also give them a chance to articulate other emotions they might feel and rate themselves on those also.
- Ask the participants to sit again and invite any questions or reactions to the exercise.
- Ask participants to think of a particular occasion when they wanted sex but their partner did not seem interested. Their male acquaintances –what would they tell them is their right?
- Ask a participant to say what he thinks of his rights a) to have sex at will, b) to be jealous, c) to be intimate.
- Is his attitude influenced by the way it had been in his family of origin?
- Ask the next participant to say what *his partner* might think of his rights to sex at will, jealousy and intimacy.



- On the wall, near the left corner, stick up a paper saying “Sexual Abuse” and near the right corner a paper saying “Respect”. Explain that these papers represent the two end points of a continuum. Ask the participants to stand where they think they belong. Then ask them to stand where their partners would put them.
- Is there is a gap between the participant’s viewpoint and his partner’s viewpoint? Why is this? What do they feel when they experience this gap? How do they think it can it be closed? What do they need to do?

### **Activity 8.5. Check-out (5 min.)**

Congratulate the participants on making it through a difficult session, as they looked at their own sexual behaviour. They should take care in the coming week to keep control if strong feelings come up. Remind them of confidentiality – how they all agreed that what is said in the course room stays in the course room.

### **Homework**

- Think of an occasion when you were sexually abusive and analyse it according to the “Seven Flies on the Wall”.
- Look at your Plan for Personal Change and see whether it could be added to in the sexual area.

## Session 9. Conflict Resolution using Constructive Alternatives

### Preparation

- Have a big sheet of paper stuck on the wall.

### Activity 9.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Go around the group and ask how people are feeling.

- What did they learn about themselves this last week?
- Did anyone have problems related to sexual feelings or behaviour?
- How did it go with the Homework assignments?

### Activity 9.2. Re-writing the Script (60 min.)

Ask each participant to choose a specific example of his abusive behaviour that he has already thought about using the “Seven Flies on the Wall” analysis.

Then invite one of the participants to relate his example to the group, in the following way:

- Ask him to work backwards from the actual violence, and identify the cues and warning signs that he ignored. Use the analogy of road signs and what happens when we ignore them, or signs that a storm is coming that will cause a flood and destruction.
- Ask him to identify the exact point at which the build-up of tension meant that abuse and violence was bound to happen.
- What were the irrational thoughts (‘stinking thinking’) he used to justify his abuse?

Both the facilitators and the participant should agree on:

- The steps in the behaviour chain that led to the violent incident.
- The point at which the abuse or violence could have been prevented if the man had heeded his cues or warning signs. This point is identified as the ‘Stopping Point’.

Once agreed on, the facilitators writes the participant’s behaviour chain on a sheet of paper stuck on the wall. The participant is then asked to go through the behaviour chain and relate it again in the first person and in the present tense. For example: “I am walking in the door at home. I see my daughter on the floor...” Ask the participant to interrupt his description, saying “Stop”, when he gets to the Stopping Point that he has just identified. He then re-writes the script for the incident, this time remaining non-abusive.

Each participant should go through this process in the class if there is enough time.

### Break (10 min.)

### **Activity 9.3. Role-play: Stepping into the Other Role (15 min.)**

Back in Session 3 each participant found another role he could play, and wrote the core elements of his new role on a small piece of paper.

- Put two chairs half-facing each other and ask a participant to sit on one while the facilitator sits on the other. The participant acts in his new role. What would he like to ask his wife, or tell or offer her?

### **Activity 9.4. Respectful Conflict Resolution (15 min.)**

The facilitators point out to the participants that they have started using a whole toolbox of skills that will get them back into control of their lives and enable them to resolve conflicts. But they will need to keep practicing and noting what works best in what situation, just as a tradesman uses the right tool for the right job and practices his skills:

- They should look clearly at any problem at hand and stop emotion from creeping in.
- They should say politely how they feel.
- They should stand in their partner's shoes and consider honestly how the world is for her.
- They should look for practical solutions.
- They need to find solutions that both sides can be happy with – so there are no 'losers'.
- They should keep away from stressful and dangerous situations.
- They should remind themselves of the chain of events that for them have led to abusive behaviour, and their Stopping Point. They *can* stop.
- They can use strategies like 'Time-Out'.

### **Activity 9.5. Check-out (5 min.)**

Tell the participants that they have already come a long way in managing their problem and they can practice their new skills during the week.

### **Homework**

- During the week, watch out for signs that an abusive episode might be starting – and stop it.
- Review your Personal Plan for Change.

## Session 10. How to be a “Man”

### Activity 10.1. Check-in (10 min.)

- Go around the group. Ask the participants how they feel.
- Remind the group of the subjects covered in the last session.
- Ask each of them about the homework.

### Activity 10.2. Discussion: How Men learn to be “Men” (30 min.)

The facilitator introduces the topic and asks for contributions and examples of the ways the participants learnt How To Be a “Man”:

- Did they grow up hearing the proverbs and sayings discussed in Session 7?
- Did they hear people saying “Men always...” or “Men never...”?
- Did they watch the behaviour of men and women in their family of origin?
- How else did the socialisation process take place when they were children?
  - at school
  - by older males
  - by role models
  - through books and videos

Now they are adults, what is the pressure they feel to Be a Man? Does the influence come from the men they work with, the men they spend time with in the evenings?

- Suggest that there are a heap of ideas about “Men” and “Women” but nobody is a perfect fit. Refer to yourself with an example of how you do not fit the idea of “a real man”.
- Ask each participant one way in which he is different from “Men” in general.
- What does this culture think are male and female qualities? Is it women or men who are: tough – weak – hardworking – soft – silent – nagging? Brainstorm for other qualities.

Can the group change their point of view on these qualities? If they take ‘tough’ a bit further, doesn’t it become ‘inflexible’? Take ‘soft’ a bit further and doesn’t it become ‘thoughtful’?

- Elicit examples from the men’s opinion and experience.
- Ask the participants to imagine what it would be like to grow up as a female in this culture – with restricted opportunities, a lack of safety, and what else?

Remind the group that this session started with what a society thinks – which does not mean that the society is right. There are qualities that society values – and there are qualities that should be valued more. It is not just about the differences between women and men. It is about valuing the differences. ‘Difference’ is OK – ‘Devalued’ is not OK.

- Many men are scared of women. Why? Do they think women “trap you into marriage”, “tie you down”? Are women the ‘Unknown’ and therefore threatening? Do men think that women try to control men? And what else do they think?

Remind the group that some men think of each woman as only being one thing. They see some as “Sex On Legs”. Others are “Wonderful Mothers” or “Virginal Girls” who could be married. But no individual woman is only one thing – she is a complicated person, just like any man in the group.

### **Activity 10.3. Role-play (15 min.)**

A man talks about his wife as if she is very stupid and useless. He tells demeaning jokes about women... another man confronts him in a non-aggressive way. Discuss the role-play with the group.

### **Break (15 min.)**

### **Activity 10.4. Discussion: Being the Man in the Family (40 min.)**

Remind the participants of the examples they have given of how they learned to be a man from their family of origin. Then ask:

- How, currently, in their own family, do they act to “Be a Man”?
- What are their sons now learning? Their daughters? What kind of men will their daughters start looking for once they are sixteen?
- For example, when was the last time at home that they admitted they were wrong, and apologised?
- Have men grown up with unfair and unreal expectations – like they always have to ‘win’ so can’t admit failure?
- Do we also put a similar burden on our own children, to always ‘win’?
- Could we start to give an example of being human, and it being OK to sometimes make mistakes?

### **Activity 10.5. Check-out (5 min.)**

Remind the participants that this has been a difficult session, not just in telling of hard things from our childhood, but also listening to similar things from other men.

### **Homework**

- Write three things that you learnt growing up that gave you a sense of what a male is, and how he behaves.
- Review your Personal Plan for Change.

## Session 11. Fatherhood and Separation Issues

### Preparation

- On separate A4 sheets of papers write the scripts for Activity 11.3:

*I feel safe with my dad...*

*good times...*

*fair...*

*looks after mum...*

*listens to me...*

*feels competent...*

*happy...*

*hopeful...*

*able to do things...*

*...I feel scared with my dad*

*...bad times*

*...unfair*

*...hurts mum*

*...isn't interested in me*

*...feels like an idiot*

*...sad*

*...despairing*

*...frustrated*

### Activity 11.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Go around the Group.

- Does everyone feel OK?
- How did the Homework go? Did anyone have particular problems?

### Activity 11.2. Father-child Relationships (30 min.)

Get the group to brainstorm on:

- The best times they have shared with their children – what their child felt at those times, and why.
- What they have done well, and what they have done not so well.
- Ideas for improving their relationship with their children.

Each participant chooses one of his own children to think about:

- What does it feel like to stand in that child's shoes?
- What would that child say to their father, about him and his behaviour, if they were sitting here right now?

### Activity 11.3. Action Method (15 min.)

Ask the men to keep imagining that each are in the shoes of one of their own children. Then on the far left of the wall fix the notice *I feel safe with my dad...* and on the far right *...I feel scared with my dad*. Where would their child stand? Let the men stand in the spots that indicate their own child's feelings.

Then do the same for the other notices: *good times...* on the left and *...bad times* on the right, etc. With each pair of notices that go up on the wall, invite the men to comment, to question, to say what they feel.

They have looked at the way their own child might be feeling. Now they look at the way they felt growing up. The facilitator pins up “I feel safe with my dad” – “I feel scared of my dad”. He then asks the men stand somewhere along the wall between the two alternatives, rating how they themselves felt growing up, and to do this for each pairs of papers.

Their own children – them as children – how different? How similar? Have the men in the group reproduced their own childhood for their kids? Is this O.K. or do things have to change?

The exercises will bring out what the men feel about their own abilities as fathers.

## **Break (10 min.)**

### **Activity 11.4. Role-play: Stepping into the other Role (15 min.)**

Ask the participants to see themselves going into the new role they have developed for themselves. Then put two chairs half-facing each other and ask a participant to sit on one while you sit on the other and act the part of a named child. The participant is acting in his new other role. What would he like to ask his child, or tell or offer him or her?

### **Activity 11.5. Coping with Separation (30 min.)**

The facilitator tells the group how life contains a series of separations: from womb, from school friends, from parents, from family – but that each individual can survive these.

- Can they talk with friends about how they feel about separations?
- Are they looking after their health so that they can cope better with tough experiences like separation? (daily exercise, not too much alcohol/other drugs...).
- Can they keep a journal, either by writing or talking into an audiotape, about their reactions to tough experiences like separation? This will help them find peace with the past and help them learn from experience.
- Can they take care not to involve the children in their problems?

### **Activity 11.6. Check-out (5 min.)**

- Briefly revisit the main points learnt in the session, and invite any last questions.
- Check with the participants how they are, and what they are feeling.
- Remind them that the material is challenging, and may stir up emotions for them. One way that might help them deal with that is by talking about it with a trusted friend, with their pair in the group, and also by writing.

## **Homework**

- List three things that you do well as a father.
- List three things that you learnt tonight that might help you be a better father.
- List three strategies that you have learnt to help you cope with separation and loss.

## Session 12. Peer Evaluation

### Activity 12.1. Check-in (10 min.)

Go around the group.

- How was their week? How did things go with their children?
- What did they learn about yourself this last week? Did they complete the Homework successfully?

### Activity 12.2. Peer Evaluation (60 min.)

The facilitator sets the scene by giving feedback to the man on his far left, in front of the rest of the group. (It is important that this is done face to face, and using the man's name, speaking directly to him, rather than speaking about him to the group). The facilitator says what he thinks about these questions:

- What was positive about this man's participation in the group and what gains do you think he has made?
- What have you learnt from him as a result of being in the group with him?
- In what areas do you think he might have trouble or difficulty – what areas or issues should he work hardest on?
- Name at least one thing about him that you like or admire.

The next person in the group then gives the same man feedback about these questions – and so on until everyone has given him feedback in the same way.

Next it is the turn of the participant who has just been given feedback, to give feedback on the questions to the man on his left – followed in turn by the rest of the group.

Carry on in the same way until everyone has given feedback to everyone else.

#### Notes on the process:

It is important to keep the feedback to the point and succinct. Each person's feedback on an individual should normally take no more than one minute, in order to ensure covering all the participants and avoid people getting distracted.

It is not a time for men to discuss or question the feedback they are being given, but to listen to it and take it in.

You can remind the participants that this is a precious opportunity to both hear and say honest things to each other in the context of helping one another continue to make progress in remaining non-abusive.

### Break (25 min.)

Each man brings a plate of food, or some fruit or a packet of biscuits etc. to share with others during the break

### Activity 12.3. Where do you go from here? (25 min.)

Make it clear to the participants that the next three months will not be easy. They will need good support:



- Remind the participants that there will be three meetings over the next months. Give times and dates and emphasise that these meetings are very important.
- Point out that the group can continue to meet regularly, organising itself – for six months, a year, or longer as needed. Encourage them to keep in contact with each other.
- Stress the need to keep practicing the personal strategies for change which they have learnt over the past weeks.
- And to keep in mind what is at stake!
- They need to use their energy to keep challenging abusive beliefs and behaviour, not to feel sorry for themselves.

## **Homework**

- Record the feedback that you received tonight, especially those bits that have most meaning for you.
- Revisit handouts and materials.
- Attend the three further sessions.

### ***Remember:***

- One of the most helpful ways for a man to stay on track and not return to abusive behaviour is for him to join a network of men; these men would recognise that men's violence against women has to stop and are committed to bring that about. A committed man can volunteer to work as a group facilitator. However, he and the experienced facilitator have to be very vigilant that he does not collude with participants about their abuse, nor slip back into abusive attitudes himself.
- This group programme is designed to be part of a more wide-ranging strategy; this has to address the structural inequalities in society that support and prolong men's power and control and men's violence against women. The strategy must include community education, training of workers and police; lastly a collaboration with women's support services that makes the men's programme accountable.