



Session 9

Aims and Objectives

- Deepen understanding of the effects of a domestic abuser has on children.
- Recognise the seven steps of a break up, both in a relationship with an abuser and with someone who is not abusive.
- Explore some ideas for dealing with child contact.
- Identify the different roles children might play to cope with an abuser.
- Consider how women modify our bodies in order to be acceptable to society and/or to men.

Resources

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

- Laminated emoji options
- Own My Story (1pp).
- Pens, pencils, pencil crayons, felt tips, stickers.
- Flipchart and pens.
- Tables to work on.
- AV Equipment.
- Internet access for the Own My Life e-Hub.
- Own My Choices Traffic Light Laminates and pens.
- Flip chart paper from Session 1 The Island exercise.
- Blu Tack.
- Copy of Reflective Evaluation (from WoManual page 83) with session preparation completed.
- If possible, it would be good to have a children's worker present during this session.

Session Plan

1. Own My Self (15 mins)
 - a. If a children's worker is able to be present for this session, introduce her to the group and explain that she is there because the session includes talking about the impact of abuse on children.



- b. As participants arrive give them time to make a drink and collect their **Own My Story journal**.
- c. Begin the session by discussing in pairs “My favourite type of clothing”.
- d. Ask participants to feedback to the group. As they feedback, invite each person to say one thing they’ve been thankful for over the past week.

2. Own My Mind (15 mins)

- a. Stick **the Island exercise flipchart paper** to a wall near the flipchart.
- b. Recap the Island exercise from Session 1 with the group.
- c. Explain that we’re now going to add an extra section to our story about the woman.
- d. When she is on the island, the King gets her pregnant, draw a pregnant stomach on the woman.
- e. Invite participants to discuss for 3 minutes how she might be affected living on the island whilst pregnant. Then ask them to offer suggestions. Write these on the flipchart. The answers could include:
 - Lonely.
 - Lacking support (no family or friends).

- Reduced/no access to medical care.
 - Scared.
 - Forced to have a termination.
 - Not allowed a termination.
 - Lack of healthy food.
 - No control of the finances.
 - Can't get the things the baby needs.
 - No control.
 - Nobody to give her TLC; cut her toe nails, massage her back etc.
 - May still have sex demanded of her.
 - Subjected to physical violence (worried about the baby).
 - Can't read/learn about her pregnancy.
 - No antenatal classes.
 - No choice in the birth plan.
- f. Invite participants to give suggestions of how the woman's unborn baby may be affected by being on the island. Write down their answers that could include:
 - May not survive or may be injured as a result of the king's violence.
 - May not get the nutrients needed.
 - May not have any developmental issues recognised due to limited medical care.
 - Doesn't have a quiet and calm environment to grow in.



g. Explain that the woman gives birth on the island to twins. She has a boy and a girl. Drawing stick children on the flipchart, invite the group to name the children. Ask the group to give suggestions of how these new-born babies and their mother may experience the island. Write down their ideas that could include:

- Not allowed to breastfeed or forced to breastfeed.
- No peace and quiet.
- No support for the woman.
- No wider family.
- No visitors.
- All responsibility on the woman.
- Might be prevented from caring for or even touching her child.
- Twins unable to bond properly with their mother.
- Routine difficult to establish.
- May not have the right equipment that they need.
- Woman may become depressed and is isolated.
- No co-parenting support.
- She isn't allowed to choose the children's names.
- Children not stimulated as the king is causing their mum to be overwhelmed with everything.
- Not being allowed to cuddle the children.
- The king may insist that the boy has to man up and learn to self soothe.

h. Explain that the children are now nine years old. How will they experience the island now? Will it be different for the boy than the girl? Write down their answers that could include:

- Not getting to school.
- They know the king is in charge.
- They may devalue and be negative about their mother.
- They may have behavioural issues from the king undermining their mother's authority.
- They may not have the equipment or healthy food that they need.
- The boy may be encouraged to be aggressive and unkind.
- The girl may be encouraged to be passive.
- They haven't had all their needs met up until this point.
- Not wanting to leave their mother for fear of what the king may do.
- Becoming one of the king's spies, telling him what their mother is doing.
- Feeling superior to others on the island, but inside feeling bad and isolated.
- Struggle to make friends.
- Feel unsafe.
- Constantly on edge not knowing what the king will do next.
- Feeling they have to keep all the bad stuff secret.
- The king may have physically hurt them.
- Issues with eating and food.
- Special occasions (birthdays, Christmas etc.) will often be ruined by the king.
- Not getting enough sleep or rest.



- i. Explain that the children are now 15. How will they experience the island? Write down their answers that could include:
- The boy may have become just like the king, and the king will reward him for this (he may instead hate the king and resist his abuse).
 - Both children may feel worthless and alone.
 - Both children may seek to protect their mother in defiance of the king.
 - They may begin using coping strategies like self-harm, drugs or alcohol.
 - This will be what they've always known, it will be normal to them.
 - They won't know who they can trust.
 - They may join the island resistance.
- j. Explain that we're now going to imagine that the woman and her children are rescued from the island at different times and see how different it will be for them at each point.
- k. Explain that the children and their mother are rescued when the twins are 12, how will their life be different if they leave the island then? Write down their answers that could include:
- They might be able to get support and counselling on the mainland.
 - They'll learn that their experience growing up wasn't normal.
 - They can build a healthier relationship with their mother.
 - They might feel hugely alienated and like they don't fit on the mainland.
 - They might begin to feel safe enough to act out and be naughty.
 - Their mother can show that she loves them.
 - They can connect with their wider family.
 - They can talk about what the king did to them.
 - They will be safer.
- l. Explain that the children and their mother are rescued when the children are 6, how will their life be different if they leave the island then? Write down their answers that could include:
- Everything that is the case for the 12 year olds.
 - They will have most of their childhood left to recover and move on.
 - They will adjust to the mainland quicker.
 - They have six more years without the king ruling their life.
 - They can focus on things like their education and building friendships
 - The island can be de-normalised quicker.
- m. Explain that the woman is rescued when she is 7 months pregnant, how will hers and her children's life be different if they leave the island then? Write down their answers that could include:
- She can create a totally different life for herself and her children.
 - The king will not control the children.



- The children will be able to have relationships with their wider family (on their mother's side).
- The woman will have had less exposure to the king's abuse.
- Ask whether the group can identify their experiences with the island exercise.

3. Own My Body (15 mins)

- a. Play video: **9a The Power Threat Meaning Framework**.
- b. Ask the group to discuss in groups of 2-3 whether they recognise any of the video for their own lives.
- c. Turn to Own My Story **page 119 – 120**.
- d. Complete the Power Threat Meaning Framework Exercise.

4. Break (15 mins)

5. Own My Choices (15 mins)

- a. Ask for 3 volunteers.
- b. Give each volunteer a **White Board Pen** and a set of **Traffic Light Laminates**:

- Volunteer 1: Road
- Volunteer 2: Red Light
- Volunteer 3: Green Light

c. Read the following:

- Enid left her fiancé Earl after he was violent and controlling. Although Enid had custody of their son Percy, who is four, Earl has contact every other weekend, starting at 6pm on Friday. Each Friday night, Earl arrives 30 minutes early and sits outside beeping his horn and revving his engine. Percy becomes extremely anxious and their Friday dinnertime is almost always ruined by Earl's intimidating behaviour. During contact Earl constantly undermines Enid's rules for Percy's behaviour and frequently makes unkind comments about Enid to Percy.

d. Ask for suggestions of actions Enid could take: Volunteer 1 writes these on the Road Laminates and places them on the floor.

e. Ask for suggestions of obstacles Earl might use to sabotage Enid's actions: Volunteer 2 writes these on the Red Light Laminates and places them in front of the written on Road Laminates.

f. Ask for suggestions as to how Enid could keep moving forward: Volunteer 3 writes these on the Green Light Laminates and places them in front of the written on Red Light Laminates.

g. This exercise will show the group that:

- Child contact can be used by an ex-partner to control and abuse us and our children.



- Moving forward might require us to put boundaries in place (e.g. not being at home until after contact is due).
- If we have children, we need to have proactive and honest conversations with them about child contact and how/why the other parent is being unkind or inconsistent.

6. Own My Relationships (15 mins)

- a. Turn to Own My Story **page 122**.
- b. Do the Children's Roles Quiz Part 1
- c. Explain that all children use different coping strategies for dealing with what is being done around them or to them, these include the difference roles they may take on.
- d. Turn to Own My Story **page 123**.
- e. Talk the group through the different roles.
- f. Invite them to do the Children's Roles Quiz 2 on Own My Story **page 124**.
- g. Take a few moments for people to reflect on their thoughts and then invite participants to feedback.

7. Own My World (15 mins)

- a. Play Video: **9b Body Modification**
- b. Turn to Own My Story **page 125** and complete the questions.
- c. In pairs, invite participants to discuss their thoughts and feed them back.
- d. NB. The idea that we modify ourselves because we are conditioned to is very counter cultural and may be met with significant hostility by the group. Make space for disagreement and if necessary, encourage participants to agree to disagree with one another and the video.

8. Own My Feelings (10 mins)

- a. Turn to Own My Story **pages 178 - 179**.
- b. Invite participants to identify their feelings and sensations, and make notes.

9. Final thoughts (5 mins)

- a. Invite participants to stand in a circle.
- b. Ask everyone to pause for a moment and think of between one word and one sentence to sum up their thoughts about the session.



- c. Share your word/sentence and then go around the circle with each participant sharing their word/sentence. People can pass if they'd rather not.
- d. Explain what the following week will focus on. Warn the group that next week there will be some content about sexual violence.
- e. Remind participants of the email address they can contact you on during the week.
- f. Invite participants to put one of the laminated emoji options in the evaluation box before they leave.
- g. After participants have left finish completing your copy of the Reflective Evaluation on WoManual page 83.