

Session 1

Aims and Objectives

- Getting to know each other.
- Establishing the group rules.
- Enabling the group to understand the Own My Life course.
- Familiarisation with the Own My Story journal.
- Gain a basic understanding about what abuse is.
- Begin to recognise the ways the society impact how we view ourselves.

Resources

- Own My Life playlists for when participants arrive.
- Tea, coffee, milk, sugar, sweetener, juice, biscuits, fruit.
- Tissues.
- Evaluation resources:
 - Evaluation box
 - Laminated emoji options
- Own My Story (1pp).
- Pens, pencils, pencil crayons, felt tips, stickers.
- Flipchart and pens.
- AV Equipment.



- Internet access for the Own My Life e-Hub.
- Pre-course evaluation forms.
- Blu Tack.
- Tables to work on.
- Copy of Reflective Evaluation (from WoManual page 83) with session preparation completed.

Session Plan

1. Introduction (10 mins)
 - a. Introduce yourself to the group.
 - b. Explain the purpose of the course:
 - To educate and empower women who have been subjected to abuse to regain ownership of their own lives.
 - c. Explain self-efficacy to the group:
 - Self-esteem is all about how a person emotionally evaluates their worth.
 - However, how we feel about ourselves won't necessarily enable us to flourish. How brilliant we think we are is not the thing that will help us to make changes in our life.
 - It's not primarily self-esteem that we need, it's self-efficacy.
 - Self-efficacy is defined as having confidence in your ability to exert control over your own motivation, behaviour, and social environment.



- If we've been in a relationship with someone who treats us badly, all of their actions are designed to destroy our self-efficacy.
 - The Own My Life course is all about self-efficacy. Everything we talk about and do in the course is to help participants build confidence in their ability to exert control over their motivations, behaviour and social environment.
- d. Ask pairs to introduce themselves.
- e. Feedback to the rest of the group.
- f. Explain the evaluation process to the group:
- Each week that participants will be invited to place a **laminated emoji option** into the **evaluation box** about the statement on the box insert as they leave the session.
 - Explain that this enables the organisation to ensure the content is as good as possible for the current group and for future groups.
2. Own The Group (15 mins)
- a. What should the group "rules" be?
- b. Ask pairs to discuss and feedback their thoughts.
- c. Write their ideas up on the **flipchart**.
- d. Ensure the following things are included:
- Confidentiality (including limitations regarding safeguarding).
 - What will happen if there is a safeguarding issue.
 - The importance of emotional safety.
- Encouraging participants to take responsibility for their own processing.
 - The importance of physical safety: Does their partner know where they are? What procedures are in place to keep participants safe from abusive partners in the building where the course is taking place?
 - Viewing each other as having positive intentions.
 - This includes learning to agree to disagree with others.
 - Positive relationships are built on understanding and not agreement.
 - Honouring the experiences of others.
 - Mindful communications; we might have to be wise about how long we talk for.
 - Cultivating presence; it's fine if someone needs to leave the room or take a call, but remaining present for the course would really help them and the group.
 - Facilitator intervention; the group will be led by participant needs, but in order to get through all the content, there may be need for the facilitator to move on.
 - Each participant is the expert on her own experience.
- e. Explain bilateral movement to the group:
- When we have been traumatised, our right and left brain won't always work together like they should, that can leave us feeling sluggish or unable to motivate ourselves to move.
 - Research has found that if we do movements with our body that require our left and right sides to work together, this can help us recover.



- Things like running, knitting, and drumming are all activities that can help.
 - If you feel yourself becoming more traumatised during the group, one of the things that may help is to either use your hands to rhythmically tap your knees or tap your feet rhythmically one after another.
 - This may prevent the trauma shutting your brain down.
 - More generally taking up activities like knitting or drumming can help.
 - If you're physically able to, the Couch to 5k running challenge (you can get a phone app for it) can hugely improve your mental and physical health. Cycling, swimming or dancing round your living room can also help.
- f. Stick the rules on the wall with Blu Tack. They need to be kept safe and stuck on the wall for each session of the group.
3. Own My Story (15 mins)
- g. Hand out the **Own My Story** journals.
 - h. Give time for participants to read through the introduction and fill in their details.
 - i. Explain:
 - The purpose of the journal
 - Ethical storage of the information.
 - About the Own My Life course extra content on the website: www.ownmylifecourse.org/extras and give the password.

- j. Ask everyone to fill in the **Start of Course evaluation form**:
 - Explain how the data will be used.
 - For all those who struggle with reading, offer to read the evaluation form out in a smaller group.
4. Break (15 mins)
- k. Invite participants to continue looking through the Own My Story journals.
5. The Island (30 mins)
- a. Draw a picture of a woman on the **flipchart**.
 - b. Ask the group to name her.
 - c. Explain that the woman wanted to go on last minute holiday, she went to the travel agents and was told about an amazing island that had wonderful weather and was really cheap to visit. She booked a two week holiday and the following week she flew out to the island.
 - d. On the flipchart draw a large island around the woman.
 - e. Explain that the woman arrived at her hotel on the island and was told she needed to hand over her passport. The woman had a wonderful two weeks on the island. She had so much fun. She even became friends with the king who owned the island. It was an exciting holiday romance.



- f. On the flipchart draw the king. Ask the group to name him.
- g. On the day the woman was supposed to leave, the king surprised her in her hotel. He explained how much he loved her and asked her if she wanted to stay on the island as his queen. The woman was quite nervous but really excited. She agreed to stay for a few more weeks and wait to see how things progressed.
- h. After a few days the woman realised there was something very wrong with the island; the king was an evil dictator who controlled everything on the island.
- i. In groups of 3-4, discuss all the things the dictator would control. Give them 5 minutes to do this.
- j. Ask the groups to feedback, as they list things, draw the things they say in the island.
- k. Included in the answers should be:
- Schools.
 - Transport.
 - Shops.
 - Who is allowed on the island.
 - Who is allowed off the island.
 - Food.
 - Supermarkets.
 - What media can be watched/read.
 - Social activities.
 - Healthcare.
- l. Emergency services.
- l. Job centre.
- l. Water supply.
- l. Reproduction rights.
- l. Law.
- l. Religion.
- l. Knowledge.
- l. Who has power.
- l. Housing.
- l. Communication.
- l. Internet.
- l. Clothing.
- m. Explain that the woman was so horrified by what she had discovered, that she confronted the king. He responded by locking her in the palace with his many wives. The woman was devastated.
- n. In groups of 3-4 discuss the ways the woman would be affected by living on the island. Give them 5 minutes to do this.
- o. Ask the groups to feedback, as they list things, write their suggestions around the island.
- p. In groups of 3-4 discuss the ways the woman could resist the king and his power.
- q. Ask the groups to feedback, as they list things, write their suggestions (in a different colour) around the island.



q. Included in the answers should be:

- Accept his behaviour but think angry thoughts in her head.
- Fight back.
- Begin a resistance movement with the king's wives.
- Make a plan of how to escape.
- Make the best of her situation and try hard to pretend it's a fairy tale.
- Kill the king.
- Kill herself.

r. Explain that the woman manages to get a message in a bottle into the sea surrounding the island.

s. On the flipchart, draw a bottle.

t. Explain that the woman waits for someone to help her. Eventually a boat arrives with a group of heroic women who have come to help her leave the island.

u. On the flipchart, draw a boat next to the island.

v. The woman is so thankful. She manages to escape from the island in the middle of the night.

w. In groups of 3-4 ask the groups to discuss how the woman may act/feel once she's off the island.

x. Ask the groups to feedback, as they list things, write their suggestions (in a different colour) around the island.

y. Included in the answers should be:

- Continue to behave as if she was on the island.
 - Feel extremely traumatised.
 - Feel that the island is more normal than the mainland.
 - Totally untrusting of the world.
 - Become reckless/destructive.
 - Ask whether the group identify any of the story of the woman with their own story and invite participants to discuss.
- z. N.B. Save the flipchart paper from this exercise for Session 9. WoManual page 60.

6. Own My World (15 mins)

- a. Own My Story **page 11**.
- b. In groups discuss the statement:
 - "Societal messages; television programmes, songs, films, books, laws and history can have enormous impact on our views of ourselves, our relationships and the world around us."
- c. Feedback on participants' thoughts.
- d. Play Video: **1a Evolution**.
- e. Discuss: How does the media representation of women affect us?

7. Own My Feelings (10 mins)



- a. Explain that:
 - What we are experiencing can be so confusing and consuming that we never stop to consider how we feel. This part of every session is about everyone having the chance to define their feelings and have space to make notes and record their journey.
 - There is a difference between emotions and physical sensations. Checking in with how we are physically experiencing our emotions can help us make sense of what's going on and help us to become more grounded.
 - Participants can choose how much to engage with this section, and if it doesn't work for them, they can instead make notes or read through the week's materials.
- b. Turn to Own My Story **pages 162 - 163**.
- c. Invite participants to identify their feelings and make notes.

8. Final thoughts (5 mins)

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