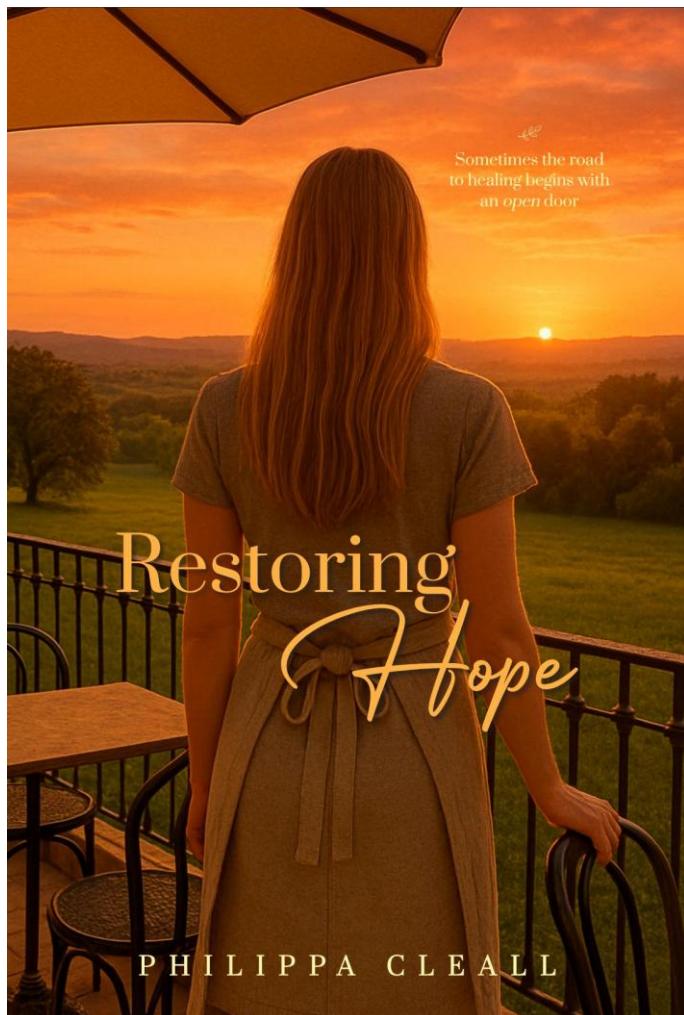


HEALING WITH HOPE

*A Practical Guide to help
Women Recovering from Domestic Violence*



Participant's Guide

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Healing with Hope – Introduction

Purpose

This guide is designed to help women recovering from domestic violence by allowing them to talk through relevant story excerpts, discussion questions, and journaling prompts with a trusted support person. This guide provides trauma-informed material to ensure that sessions are safe, supportive, and empowering.

The Material

1. Story Reflection:

- Relevant excerpts from the novel *Restoring Hope* have been included in the *Facilitator's Guide* for you to share experiences of someone who has walked through domestic violence without needing to expose any individual's real-life story.

2. Discussion Questions:

- Provide an opportunity for you to engage with relevant questions at your own pace.
- Allow you to skip a question if you don't feel comfortable or do not think it is relevant to you.

3. Journaling / Reflection:

- These allow space for your private thoughts and reflections.
- There is no need to share journal reflections unless you want to.

Optional Faith Reflection

- Each session has one optional faith linked question or reflection. You do not need to engage with this if it is not something you feel comfortable about.
- The support person you are working through this guide with should be sensitive to your individual beliefs and never pressure participation.

Healing with Hope

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Week 1: You are Worthy of Care

Objective: To recognise your intrinsic value and self-worth; validate experiences and feelings.

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Adapted from Chapter 14 in Restoring Hope – The Women's Support Circle

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Did the narrative from the *Women's Support Circle* resonate with you?

2. Have you ever been told or made to feel you were 'too much' or 'not enough'?

3. If you could give yourself a new name or label that reflects your strength, what would it be?

4. What does it feel like to hear you are not defined by shame, fear, or past harm?

5. How can others around you support your healing journey?

Optional Faith Reflection:

Journaling/Reflection Prompts:

- “What would safe love and care look like for me?”

- “What inner qualities or strengths have helped me survive and move forward?”

Action / Next Step:

Closing Affirmation:

You are not your past. You are resilient and worthy of care and respect. Be gentle with yourself today.

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Week 2: Forgiveness and Wisdom

Objective: To explore forgiveness as a tool for healing while emphasising boundaries and self-protection.

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Adapted from Chapter 23 in Restoring Hope

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What have you been taught about forgiveness? Did it include safety and boundaries?
2. How does releasing anger without restoring a harmful relationship feel?
3. “Forgiveness is not the same as trust.” How does this resonate with you?
4. In the passage we read, Hanna said, “Forgiveness without wisdom can become another kind of harm.” What does this mean to you?
5. Has anyone ever pressured you to forgive quickly? How did that feel?
6. How can you protect yourself while still working through feelings of anger or hurt?

Optional Faith Reflection:

Journaling/Reflection Prompts:

- “What forgiveness am I struggling with because I don’t feel safe or ready?”

- “Where in my life do I need to hold firm boundaries?”

Action / Next Step:

Closing Affirmation:

You are allowed to protect yourself and still work toward healing. Forgiveness can be something you give yourself, not just others.

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Week 3: Understanding the Lingering Impact of Abuse

Objective: To recognise long-term effects of abuse, validate trauma responses, and explore resilience.

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Adapted from Chapter 3 in Restoring Hope

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What parts of Hope's story resonate with your experience?

2. How do you notice lingering effects of past abuse in your life?

3. Why does healing take time and rarely follow a straight path?

4. How can you move forward with wisdom rather than trying to erase the past?

5. What practices help you feel grounded and safe?

6. How can you give yourself permission to rest and recover without guilt?

Optional Faith Reflection:

Journaling/Reflection Prompts:

- “What burdens or fears do I need to put down?”

- “What would rest or peace look like for me this week?”

Action / Next Step:

Closing Affirmation:

Your responses to past abuse are valid. You are healing, and every small step is a sign of courage.

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Week 4: Moving Towards Hope – When Healing is Messy

Objective: To normalise the ups and downs of healing, encourage patience and self-compassion, and maintain hope.

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Adapted from Chapter 25 in Restoring Hope

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What does a “non-linear” healing journey feel like to you?

2. How do you maintain hope and patience during difficult times?

3. Why reject the idea of “quick fixes”?

4. What helps you feel supported during challenges?

5. How can setbacks be part of the process rather than signs of failure?

6. How can friends or support networks encourage ongoing healing?

Optional Faith Reflection:

Journaling/Reflection Prompts:

- “What parts of my healing journey feel hard right now?”

- “What hope can I hold onto when I feel discouraged?”

Action / Next Step:

Closing Affirmation:

Healing is your journey. Progress may be slow, setbacks may happen, but each step is courageous. You are moving forward.

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Week 5: Healthy Boundaries — Protecting Yourself from Further Harm

Objective: To understand boundaries as essential tools for self-care and safety.

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Adapted from Chapter 28 in Restoring Hope

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What does a 'boundary' mean to you?

2. How do boundaries protect emotional and physical well-being?

3. How can forgiveness and boundaries work together?

4. What boundaries might you need to stay safe and healthy?

5. How can setting boundaries be an act of self-compassion?

6. What fears come up when thinking about boundaries?

7. Who can support you in maintaining healthy boundaries?

Optional Faith Reflection:

Journaling/Reflection Prompts:

- “Where do I need to set or strengthen boundaries?”
- “How can I hold both wisdom and care in my relationships?”

Action / Next Step:

Closing Affirmation:

- Setting boundaries is courage and self-respect. Each time you protect your space, you honour your healing.

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Week 6: Ongoing Healing in the Journey Ahead

Objective: To reflect on how you have grown in understandings about your self-worth and resilience over the past five weeks.

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Adapted from Chapter 32 in Restoring Hope

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What future outcome would you like to experience that would give you peace?

2. What challenges or obstacles might be in the way?

3. During the past few weeks, what self-care activities have you found most beneficial?

4. What safe relationships or friendships do you consider to be a gift in your life?

5. Have you noticed any ways that you are more resilient now than before?

Optional Faith Reflection:

Journaling/Reflection Prompts:

- List the relationships in your life that are encouraging and affirming.
- Write down three self-care activities that you will prioritise weekly or fortnightly.

Action / Next Step:

Closing Affirmation:

- You are a person of value and worth. Choose future relationships that honour this truth.

Healing with Hope – Optional Faith Session

A Practical Guide for One-on-One or Small Group Support to help Women Recovering from Domestic Violence.



Week 7: Rebuilding Faith After Abuse

Objective: To recognise that it can be very damaging to a woman's personal faith when she has been abused while part of a faith community.

Relevant Bible Passages

- **Luke 7:11-15** – Jesus' compassion on a widow
- **Luke 7:36-50** – Jesus forgives and restores the woman at the Pharisee's house
- **John 4:7-30** – Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well
- **John 8:1-11** – Jesus protects the woman caught in adultery

Story Reflection (In Facilitator's Guide)

Excerpt from Chapter 27 in Restoring Hope

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. How do the stories of Jesus' interactions with women in the Bible challenge or encourage you?
2. In what ways does Jesus' compassion differ from the experiences many women face in abusive relationships or some church communities?
3. What do you think could be helpful in rebuilding faith after trauma?
4. How can a church community become a place of safety and compassion?

Journaling Prompt (Optional)

- “What questions do I want to ask God as a result of my suffering?”
- “What part of my faith journey feels raw or still needs healing?”

Prayer

Resources for Support

It is **very important** that women who are at risk of danger from domestic violence contact local police authorities or appropriate support organisations in their country. Some of these contact details for Australia, the US, and Europe are listed below. Please chat to a trusted friend to identify support organisations who provide domestic violence trauma-informed counselling and practical support in your region.

Australian National Support & Crisis Services

Emergency – 000 (Police for immediate danger)

- *1800RESPECT (National Support Line)* – 24/7 confidential counselling, information, referrals for anyone impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence.
 - *1800737732 (24/7)*
 - *SMS 0458737732*
- *Full Stop Australia* – One of Australia's leading response and recovery services providing trauma-informed counselling and support nationwide.
 - *1800385578 (24/7)*
- *Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS)* – Culturally safe, trauma-informed support for women (and children) from diverse backgrounds who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence.
 - <https://www.iwss.org.au>

United States

Emergency – 911 (Police for immediate danger)

- *The National Domestic Violence Hotline* – 24/7 hotline (1-800-799-7233), online chat and tailored safety planning and support.

European Support

Emergency – 112 (Police for immediate danger)

- *EU Victim Support Helpline* – (116 006), referral to country specific local specialist support services.

One long-term solution to reducing domestic violence harm for women and children involves safe men supporting women in their lives and communities by understanding the domestic violence cycle behaviours more clearly and by helping to challenge harm that they see in their social circles.

A discussion guide resource for men to use in relevant support groups will be available in July 2026. Details about this will be available from www.philippacleall.com

HEALTHY MEN

HELPING MEN

TO GROW SAFER RELATIONSHIPS

A DISCUSSION GUIDE
USING SCENARIOS FROM

