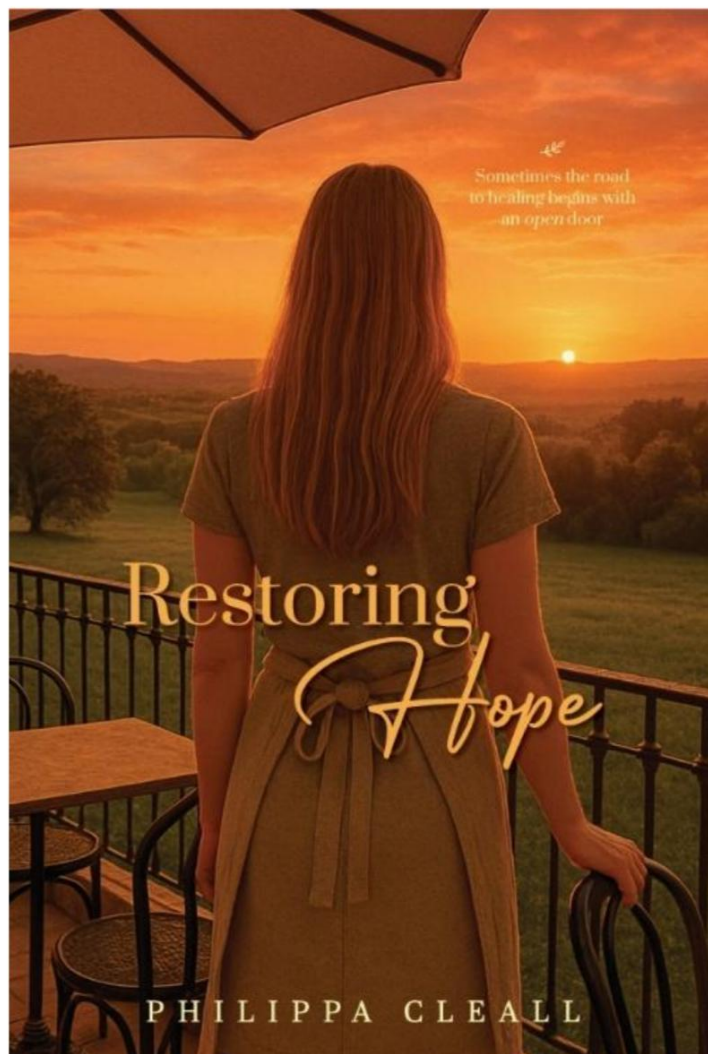


HEALING WITH HOPE

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



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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This guide is provided for educational purposes only. The contents are not professional advice. Facilitators should refer to 1800RESPECT or specialist services for support with any domestic and family violence concerns. Volunteer protection applies (NSW Civil Liability Act s64). No participant data will be centrally held. Facilitators to maintain their own group records.

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Healing with Hope – Facilitator Guide Information

Purpose

This guide is designed to help facilitators lead one-on-one or small-group sessions with women recovering from domestic violence. It provides practical tips, trauma-informed guidance, and strategies to ensure sessions are safe, supportive, and empowering.

Before the Session

1. Prepare the Space:

- Choose a quiet, private, and comfortable location.
- Ensure participants have access to water, tissues, and a place to write if journaling.

2. Know Your Material:

- Familiarise yourself with the story excerpts, discussion questions, and journaling prompts.
- Decide whether to include optional faith-based reflections, depending on participant preference.

3. Understand Trauma-Informed Principles:

- Safety: Ensure emotional and physical safety for participants.
- Choice & Empowerment: Let participants control the pace and depth of sharing.
- Trust & Transparency: Explain the session's structure and goals clearly.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Be aware of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

During the Session

1. Check-In:

- Ask how the participant is feeling and acknowledge their current emotional state.
- Use gentle prompts to guide sharing without pressure.

2. Story Reflection:

- Read or summarise the excerpts from Restoring Hope.
- Invite participants to relate to the characters' experiences and emotions.

3. Discussion Questions:

- Choose the most relevant prompts for the participant's pace and comfort level.
- Encourage reflection, not judgment.

4. Journaling / Reflection:

- Allow space for writing, drawing, or private thoughts.
- Emphasise that participants do not need to share their journal reflections unless they want to.

5. Action / Next Step:

- Collaboratively identify one small, achievable action for the participant to practice before the next session.

6. Closing Affirmation:

- Reinforce resilience, courage, and hope.
- Validate the participant's efforts and progress.

Managing Difficult Moments

Triggers / Emotional Distress:

- Pause the session and provide space.
- Encourage grounding techniques: deep breathing, naming surroundings, or taking a short break.

Crisis Situations:

- Have local support services, hotlines, or emergency contacts ready.
- Know when to pause the session and refer to professional help.

Boundaries:

- Maintain professional boundaries; avoid sharing personal experiences unless therapeutically appropriate.
- Respect the participant's right to limit discussion of certain topics.

Optional Faith Reflection

- Only introduce these if the participant indicates comfort or interest.
- Be sensitive to individual beliefs and never pressure participation.
- Encourage reflection that is empowering and aligns with the participant's values.

Tips for Facilitators

- Listen more than you speak.
- Acknowledge and normalise emotions without trying to "fix" them.
- Encourage empowerment, autonomy, and self-compassion.
- If supporting a participant one-on-one, it can sometimes be helpful to record some of their comments or responses in pencil for later discussion. Ask for consent prior to doing so. Communicate clearly that any notes you take will be destroyed after sessions are completed.

Guidelines of Safe Trauma-informed Group Facilitation

A guide for safe facilitation of a group of participants who have experienced the trauma of domestic violence can be found at:

www.philippacleall.com

Summary for Support Professionals

Purpose:

Healing with Hope is a six-session discussion guide designed to support women who have experienced domestic violence in rebuilding their lives, self-worth, and resilience. It is intended for one-on-one use in settings such as chaplaincy court support, pastoral care, or mentoring. In relevant community or faith settings, it might be appropriate to use with small groups. The guide emphasises emotional safety, empowerment, and practical strategies for coping and recovery. This guide **does not** replace professional counselling or legal advice that is needed by some women who have experienced domestic violence.

Core Objectives

1. **Validate experiences and emotions:** To acknowledge the long-term impact of abuse and normalise trauma responses.
2. **Encourage self-worth and resilience:** Helping women recognise their intrinsic value, inner strengths, and courage.
3. **Promote safe coping strategies:** Exploring healthy boundaries, self-care, and practical steps for emotional and physical safety.
4. **Facilitate reflection and empowerment:** Providing structured prompts for discussion, journaling, and practical action.
5. **Maintain flexibility for spiritual support:** Optional faith-based reflections are included for participants who find strength or hope in spirituality, but the core content is fully secular and accessible to women from any or no faith background.

Structure:

Each session follows a consistent format to make it easy for support workers to guide:

- **Check-in:** Brief emotional and practical update
- **Theme Introduction:** Overview of session focus
- **Story Reflection:** Realistic narrative adapted from the novel *Restoring Hope* is included to prompt identification and reflection
- **Discussion Questions:** Open-ended prompts to explore feelings, experiences, and choices
- **Optional Faith Reflection:** Suggested for participants who are comfortable with spiritual engagement

- **Journaling/Reflection Prompts:** Encourages personal processing and insight
- **Action / Next Step:** A small, achievable task to reinforce learning and autonomy
- **Closing Affirmation:** Reinforces courage, self-respect, and hope

Session Topics:

1. **You Are Worthy of Care** – Recognising intrinsic value and safe relational experiences.
2. **Forgiveness and Wisdom** – Understanding forgiveness while maintaining healthy boundaries.
3. **Understanding the Lingering Impact of Abuse** – Exploring trauma effects and strategies for healing.
4. **Moving Towards Hope – When Healing is Messy** – Normalising setbacks and cultivating resilience.
5. **Healthy Boundaries — Protecting Yourself from Further Harm** – Setting limits for safety, self-respect, and empowerment.
6. **Ongoing Healing** – Final session to reflect on progress and discuss supports available ahead in the journey of healing.
7. **Rebuilding Faith After Abuse** (Optional Session) – Exploring difficulties for women who have experienced abuse while being a member of a faith community.

Intended Use:

- For voluntary or professional work in one-on-one support sessions with survivors of domestic violence.
- Can be used in court chaplaincy, advocacy meetings, mentoring, faith or community support settings
- Provides a structured, trauma-informed approach for conversations about healing, safety, and empowerment.
- Supports women in identifying practical coping strategies, building self-confidence, and fostering hope for the future.

Key Principles:

- Trauma-informed: Sensitive to triggers and non-judgmental.
- Empowering: Focused on autonomy, safety, and personal growth.
- Flexible: Adaptable to participants' comfort level with faith-based discussions optional.
- Strength-based: Highlights resilience, courage, and hope rather than pathology or shame.

Outcome Goals:

- Participants develop increased self-awareness and self-compassion.
- Participants learn to recognise and assert personal boundaries.
- Participants gain practical tools to navigate setbacks and cultivate hope.
- Participants feel supported in building safe, healthy relationships in the future.

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.

Check-in questions

- “How are you feeling about beginning this support program together?”
- “Is there anything heavy on your mind today that you would like to chat about before starting?”

Theme Introduction:

When someone has been hurt, especially by someone who should have protected them, it’s normal to doubt your worth. Today, we explore your value, your dignity, and what it feels like to be treated with care.

Story Reflection

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

Eve began, her voice calm and steady.

“Some of you know each other. Some are new. But tonight, this is our space. There’s no pressure. No need to perform or pretend. You can just ... be.”

“If you’ve ever been called too much, too loud, too weak ... hear this: You are valuable.”

One woman whispered, “My ex called me ‘damaged goods.’ He said no one would want me.”

Eve leaned forward gently. “What name do you think those who love you would be whispering to you now?”

“... *Wanted*,” she said.

Another said, “I kept calling myself a fool. But I’m learning I was brave. I didn’t fail; I survived.”

Eve nodded. “You are not your shame. You are not your scars. You are brave.”

Discussion & Reflection Questions

(Be mindful that not all of the following questions might be relevant to the women you are supporting)

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:

- In the Bible, Jesus says in Luke 12:7,

"Even the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

What does it mean to you that the God who has created the whole world sees you as valuable?

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:

- Identify one small act of self-care this week (e.g. journaling, walk, connecting with a supportive person).
-

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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