

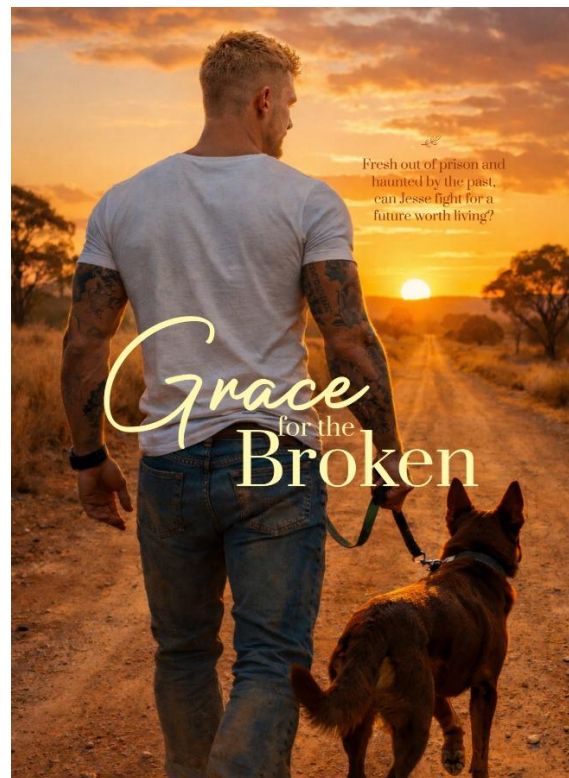
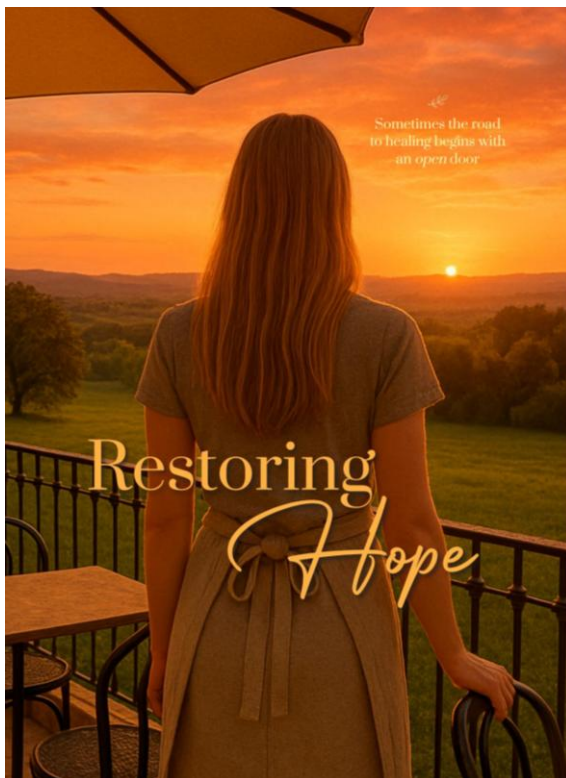
# HEALTHY MEN

## HELPING MEN

### TO GROW SAFER RELATIONSHIPS

## PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

### USING SCENARIOS FROM



GREG AND PHILIPPA CLEALL

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**Restoring Hope** © 2025 Philippa Cleall

**Grace for the Broken** © Philippa Cleall - Due for publication August 2026

The extracted scenarios from *Restoring Hope* and *Grace for the Broken* are a work of fiction inspired by themes, stories, and ideas. While they may reference or draw from real events, figures, or sacred texts, the characters, interpretations, and events depicted are fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is purely coincidental.

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.

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## Introduction

This discussion guide is written for men to facilitate with men who care about the safety and wellbeing of women and children, but who may feel unsure about how to help, where they fit, or what meaningful action looks like when it comes to domestic and family violence.

Many men do not see themselves as violent or abusive yet still feel unsettled by the prevalence of domestic violence in our communities. They love their wives, daughters, sisters, friends, and partners. But when harm happens close to home, within families, workplaces, churches, community or friendship groups, uncertainty often takes over. Is this really my place to intervene? What if I get it wrong? What if I make things worse?

This guide exists to help address that gap.

The discussions in this guide are anchored in selected scenes from *Restoring Hope* and *Grace for the Broken* for a deliberate reason. A story creates a shared reference point that allows men to engage honestly with complex and confronting realities without placing pressure on anyone to disclose personal experiences or identify real people or situations. Using realistic fictional narratives helps keep conversations grounded, focused, and emotionally safe, while protecting anonymity and dignity for everyone in the room. The scenes allow participants to explore behaviour, silence, responsibility, and impact at a slight remove. Close enough to feel real, but far enough to prevent conversations from becoming personal, accusatory, or unsafe.

As the guide progresses, the scenes open space for reflection on the ways domestic violence is misunderstood, minimised, or overlooked, and how well-intentioned men can sometimes remain silent or unsure when action is needed. The initial session focuses on men who want to help but don't yet know how. They explore why stepping in can feel risky, how loyalty and discomfort can override safety, and what it means to believe women without turning ourselves into judges or investigators.

Then, sessions introduce a narrative of a group of men attending a behaviour change program, not to invite self-confession, but to deepen understanding of the domestic violence cycle and the patterns that sustain harm. Through this, participants are invited to recognise that domestic violence is not limited to physical acts, but often involves intimidation, coercion, emotional abuse, and control. These are behaviours that thrive in silence and denial. The focus remains on understanding, not diagnosing, awareness, not accusation.

The final session shifts attention toward action. Participants are encouraged to consider how safe men can actively step up by challenging unsafe attitudes, responding appropriately to disclosures, supporting accountability, and helping to shape communities where truth, responsibility, and protection matter more than comfort or reputation.

This guide is not about shaming men, nor is it about rescuing or fixing others. It is about men having the courage to listen carefully, reflect honestly, and recognise the influence men already carry. Change begins when safe men choose to be more than bystanders and understand that their voices, responses, and silence all matter.

That is where this journey begins.

## **Structure of Sessions**

The following material is designed to be facilitated over 4 sessions. This can be condensed or extended as needed for different group environments.

The intention is for the guide to be used in the following way:

### **Session 1 –**

1.1 – Becoming Men Who Want to Help

1.2 – Invitations To Do the Work

### **Session 2 –**

2.1 – Motivations

2.2 – Men Owning Their Own Mirror

### **Session 3 –**

3.1 – Through Their Partner's Eyes

3.2 – Listening To Truth

### **Session 4 –**

4.1 – Women Who Harm

4.2 – Stepping Up to Help

## **1.1 - BECOMING MEN WHO WANT TO HELP**

**Session Goal:** For men to recognise the importance of becoming part of the solution to reduce and stop domestic violence.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Often safe men are concerned when they hear statistics e.g. one in three women are exposed to domestic violence (DV) in their lifetime\*. Why then, aren't more men motivated to ask, how can I be part of the solution to reducing DV?
2. What fears or beliefs can stop men from stepping in to help when they witness disrespectful behaviour towards women?
3. Dave states that men were not given greater physical strength to control or intimidate women, but instead to protect them. What beliefs about power or entitlement result in some men wanting to control women rather than to protect them?
4. Do you think that men who perpetrate domestic violence consider the impact on their children when they are violent or controlling at home?

\* World Health Organisation, 2024

## **1.2 - INVITATIONS TO DO THE WORK**

**Session Goal:** To consider what accountability requires, why change is resisted, and how motivation to change can grow.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What makes taking responsibility for harmful behaviour harder than feeling regret?
2. Alek asked, will attending a men's behaviour change group help people forget his harm. Can men be motivated to change even if their partner never forgets what happened?
3. Do you think it is likely that these men's relationships will be fixed by them attending the Behaviour Change group?
4. What real change do you think would be required of a man like Evan to become safe?

## **2.1 - MOTIVATIONS**

**Session Goal:** To identify personal reasons to change and to understand controlling behaviours.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What different motivations for attending the group do you hear in these men and how might these motivations affect their willingness to change?

2. Why might some men want to scare their partner? Or 'put them in their place'?

3. What needs or fears do men sometimes try to manage through being manipulative or controlling?

4. What gets in the way of some men pausing and reflecting before reacting with anger?

## **2.2 – MEN OWNING THEIR OWN MIRROR**

**Session Goal:** To recognise how denial protects behaviour, and how ownership opens the door for change.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. In this group session, what shifts do you notice in how the men talk about themselves and their behaviour?
2. How does making excuses protect men from having to face truth about themselves?
3. What do you imagine it would feel like to say, 'I chose to do this,' without blaming anyone else?
4. Which moment in this scene likely felt most confronting to these men? Why?

### **3.1 - THROUGH THEIR PARTNER'S EYES**

**Session Goal:** To build empathy by seeing behaviour through a partner's experience and recognising the impact of fear.

#### **Reflection Questions**

1. Why is it hard for men who are abusive to put themselves in the shoes of their partner?
2. How could stopping to consider a partner's fear or feelings change a man's choices in moments of anger?
3. If you are a parent, how do you want your children to remember you? How does the way you treat your partner support that?
4. What does owning harmful behaviour require a man to give up?

## **3.2 - LISTENING TO TRUTH**

**Session Goal:** To listen to survivor truth without defensiveness and understand why accountability matters for safety.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What part of this survivor's story affected you most in 'listening' to it?
2. How does the difference between guilt and shame show up in the men's reactions during this session?
3. What do you think Evan was trying to escape by leaving — and what would staying have required of him?
4. What are some ways these men could take responsibility for the harm they've caused?

## **4.1 – WOMEN WHO HARM**

**Session Goal:** To understand that women can harm others in relationships too. This happens primarily through the use of harsh or degrading words. Appropriate boundaries, not intimidation or control, are the most effective way of addressing women who are harmful.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. This scene is about a daughter Ruby who starts standing up to her mother because she has decided she wants to be treated with respect. Why do people in relationships sometimes let disrespect continue?
2. If an adult grew up as a child in a household where disrespect was modelled by one or both parents, what impact might this have on their future relationships?
3. What are some healthy ways that men can establish boundaries if they are being disrespected by their wife or partner?
4. When do healthy boundaries overstep the mark and slip into more dangerous attitudes and behaviour about power and control?

## **4.2 – STEPPING UP TO HELP**

**Session Goal:** To discuss ways men can help to support vulnerable women, and to encourage men to change who are struggling with controlling behaviours.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Why do you think that Luke wanted to suggest that Steve and Mike ‘had gone soft’?
2. How do you feel about respectfully calling someone out on being controlling or disrespectful to his partner or another woman if you see this?
3. How common do you think it is for men in circles around you to be in relationships that model—equally sharing decisions, listening to their partner’s thoughts and ideas, and always speaking to them respectfully?
4. How have your views on the problem of domestic violence in our society changed as a result of these sessions?
5. What is one small step you could take this week towards helping other men become safe, and who could you tell about this to keep you accountable?