

Review this guide for helpful tips on how to maintain, improve, or encourage healthy well-being after experiencing trauma.

Tools for Wellbeing

Empowerment Toolkit

Victim Issues Coordinating Committee

Victim Issues Coordinating Committee

The Victim Issues Coordinating Committee of Leeds and Grenville is a collaboration of service providers committed to enhancing our community response to violence.

The Victim Issues Coordinating Committee (VICC) will facilitate the expansion, coordination and delivery of victim services in Leeds and Grenville Counties and will work to ensure that victim services in our area are accountable and responsive to the needs of the community we serve. The committee will work to develop a plan for early intervention and public education on issues related to violence prevention.

For more information on VICC please visit our website, www.victiminfo.com. You can also follow us on Facebook & Twitter.



Brockville Women's Memorial

"This memorial is dedicated to all the women and girls for whom violence is a daily reality, to those who have died as a result of violence, and all the women and men who work to end it"

Located on Blockhouse Island, Brockville Ontario.



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Self-Care

Self-Care: Self-care is care that is provided for you, by you. It is the process of spending time practicing activities that nurture you and help meet your needs.

Helpful Information: When dealing with stress, trauma, and/or crisis, it is important that you remember to care for yourself. By using self-care activities, you can take action and help yourself regulate your responses and feelings.

Some helpful self-care strategies include:

- Give yourself permission to feel good and do things that make you feel good. You deserve it!
- Engage in activities that are meaningful to you such as, walking, enjoying nature, reading inspirational material, pampering yourself, engaging in exercise and sports, writing in a journal, prayer, listening to good music, enjoying activities that make you laugh.
- Get lots of rest. If you're having trouble sleeping, practice sleep hygiene (pg.5).
- Practice stress reduction techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or visualization.
- Structure your time and develop a routine.
- Talk-it-out
- Give yourself permission to focus on something outside of you, your stress, trauma, or crisis.
Everyone needs a break!

When developing a self-care plan consider all areas of your life. You should have a plan to practice self-care in these areas: physical, psychological, relationships, emotional, spiritual, and workplace/professional. Finally, consider how balanced your life is. Strive to create a balance between work, family, relationships, play and rest through self-care.

Resources

Local Support:

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca
Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca

Other Information:

Self-Care Wheel: Pg. 4

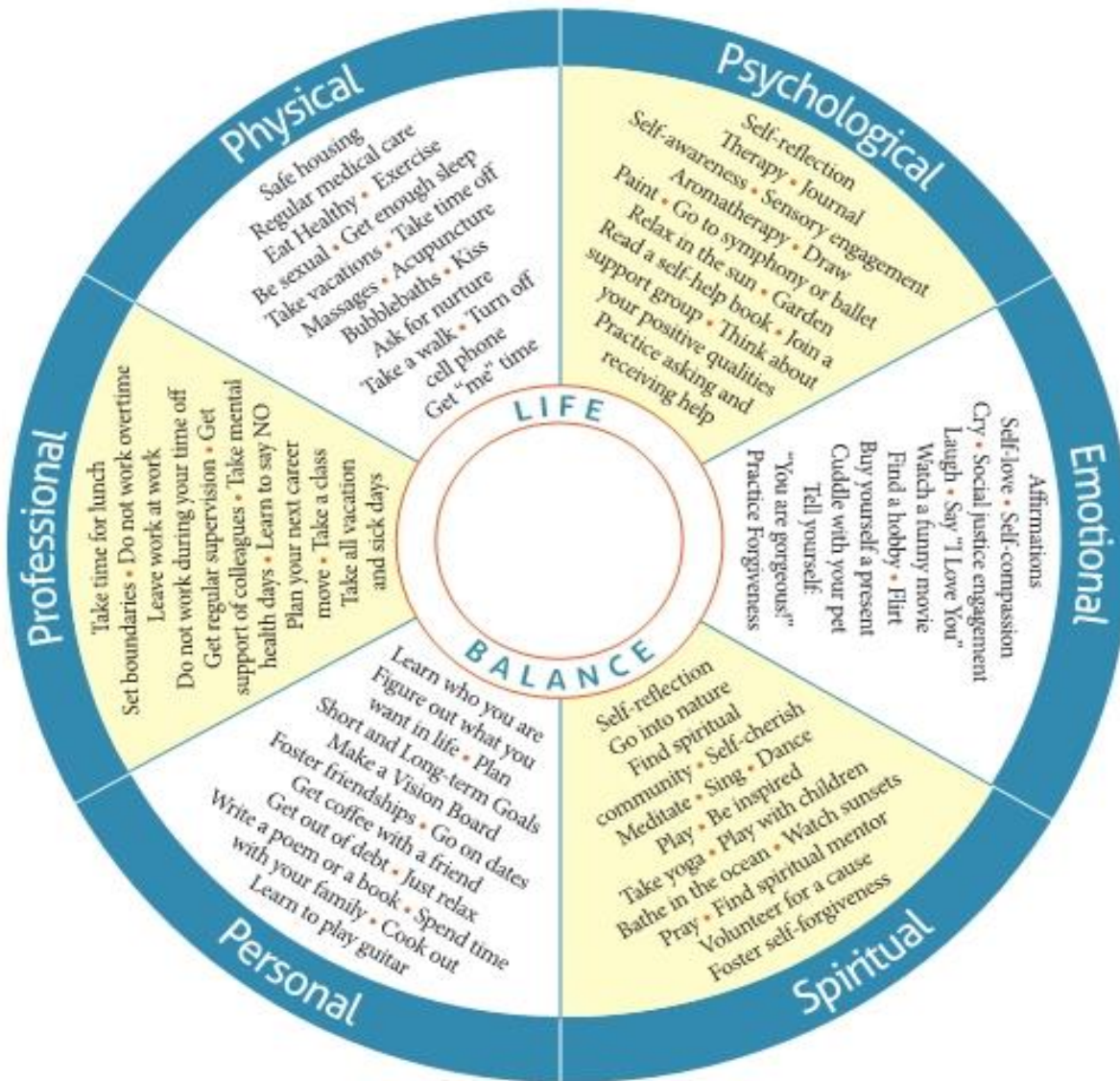
Self-Care for Women: <http://www.fgwrc.ca/uploads/ck/files/Resources/Factsheets/FactSheetSelfCare.pdf>

The Self-Compassion Project: <https://theselfcompassionproject.com/2013/06/03/80-self-care-ideas/>

Developing a Self-Care Plan: <http://au.professionals.reachout.com/developing-a-self-care-plan>



SELF-CARE WHEEL



This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013).
Dedicated to all trauma professionals worldwide.

www.OlgaPhoenix.com



Sleep Hygiene

Sleep Hygiene: Sleep hygiene is the use of practices and habits that help promote a restful night's sleep.

Useful Information:

- Develop and follow a consistent sleep schedule even on the weekends. This means going to bed and waking up at the same time every day.
- Avoid napping longer than 10 minutes throughout the day.
- Turn off any lights, keep the room quiet, and find a comfortable cool temperature.
- Do not use your bed for activities like eating.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and other chemicals that interfere with sleep.
- Eliminate screen time at least 30 minutes before bed.
- Establish a soothing pre-sleep routine.
 - Enjoy relaxing activities before bed – reading a book, practicing relaxation exercises.
 - Avoid stressful or stimulating activities - doing work or discussing emotional issues.

If you are having trouble sleeping because you are anxious or ruminating:

- Try the 9-0 meditation practice: breathe in deeply and breathe out slowly, saying in your mind the number 9. On the next breath out say 8; then 7; and so on until 0. Then start over, but this time with the number 8. Continue until you fall asleep.
- Reassure yourself that worries in the middle of the night are just “middle-of-the-night thinking” and that in the morning you will feel differently.
- Listen to public radio on a low tone.
- Get out of bed and go to another room to read a book. As you begin to get sleepy, go back to bed.

Resources

Local Support:

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca

Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca

Other Information:

Sleep Hygiene Tips: <https://www.sleepassociation.org/patients-general-public/insomnia/sleep-hygiene-tips/>

Getting a Good Night's Sleep: <https://www.anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/SleepHygiene.pdf>



Flashbacks

Flashback: A Flashback is a reliving of some or all of a traumatizing event as though it is happening now. Flashbacks can involve images, smells, sounds, tastes, emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations.

Helpful Information: A flashback can feel like the traumatic experience is still happening or happening all over again. They can occur without warning or can be triggered by something. Due to the realness of flashbacks you may feel as though you are going through the traumatic event again.

- For flashbacks to be dampened or eliminated you must first become aware of what a flashback is and that you are experiencing them. This means recognizing you are not reliving the event but rather recalling a memory.

Ideas for managing a flashback:

- Name the experience as a flashback – “This is a memory”
- Use language that categorizes the flashback as a memory – “I was attacked rather than I am being attacked”
- Use senses to ground yourself in your current environment.
 - Name what you see, hear, feel, smell, etc.
 - Rub your hands together.
 - Touch the chair you are sitting in.
 - Pick up and touch items near you.
 - Wiggle your toes.
 - Push your heels into the floor.
 - Name the date, month, year, and season.
 - Name five things in the room.
 - Call a support person

Resources

Local Support:

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca

Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca

Victim Services: 1-800-939-7682 | www.vslg.ca

Assault Women’s Helpline: 1-800-863-0511 | www.awhl.org

Mental Health Crisis Line: 1-866-281-2911

Other Information:

Flashbacks: <http://trauma-recovery.ca/impact-effects-of-trauma/flashbacks/>



Triggers

Trigger: A trigger is any person, place, or thing that causes you distress by reminding you of or subconsciously connecting you to an aspect of your trauma. Unlike flashbacks, you may not feel like you are reliving the event but instead experience physical, emotional, and social symptoms telling you something is not right.

Helpful Information:

- You may or may not realize you have experienced a trigger. Sometimes you have to retrace your history with an object, person, place, smell, etc. to see if it is tied to a negative experience in your life.
- Some symptoms of triggers include:
 - Sudden or unexplained bouts of crying, anger, etc.
 - Fear.
 - Paranoia.
 - Anxiety and/or panic attacks.
 - Sudden physical symptoms like nausea or fatigue.
 - Irritability, intrusive thoughts, being easily startled, hyper-vigilance.
 - Use of unhealthy coping mechanisms you used during or after the trauma.

It can be helpful to develop a trigger action plan. This requires beginning to list all of your triggers and write down corresponding self-care or grounding strategies that will help you overcome the emotional distress you're experiencing.

For example:

Trigger	Action Plan
e.g. Driving past the location where the traumatic event took place.	e.g. Practice deep breathing. Say soothing statements to myself as I drive by. Remind myself I am safe. When I am finally done driving, I will engage in my self-care activity of going for a long walk.

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Assault Women's Helpline: 1-800-863-0511 | www.awhl.org
Mental Health Crisis Line: 1-866-281-2911

Other Information:

Triggers & Grounding: <http://www.mosaicminds.org/grounding-techniques/>



Grounding

Grounding: Grounding is the use of strategies to detach or distract from emotional pain. They should allow you to gain control over your feelings, anchor you to the present, and regaining emotional balance. You should use grounding when you are faced with triggers, flashbacks, dissociating, having substance cravings, or when your emotional pain is overwhelming.

Helpful Information:

- Grounding can be done at any time in any place without anyone noticing.
- Keep your eyes open and scan the room to stay in the present.
- No talking about negative feelings or journaling – you want to distract from these feelings instead of getting in touch with them.
- Focus on the present, not the past or future.
- You should practice these skills often so they will be strong when you need them.
- There are different types of grounding exercises for mental, physical, and soothing grounding. Here are some examples:
 - Mental: Describe your physical environment in detail, play a categories game, count backwards, use humour.
 - Physical: Run cool or warm water over your hands, grab or rub your chair lightly, touch various objects around you, jump up and down.
 - Soothing: Say kind statements to yourself, think of your favourites, listen to your favourite music, look at your favourite art, remember a safe place.

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Victim Services: 1-800-939-7682 | www.vslg.ca

Assault Women's Helpline: 1-800-863-0511 | www.awhl.org

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Other Information:

Triggers & Grounding: <http://www.mosaicminds.org/grounding-techniques/>



Healthy Relationships & Unhealthy/Abusive Relationships

Healthy Relationships: Building strong and healthy relationships is an important part of everyone's life. Healthy relationships are relationships that are built on a foundation of equality and include qualities like good communication, respect, trust, support, honesty, accountability, shared responsibility, negotiation, and non-threatening behavior. In romantic relationships, it is also important to have economic partnership, respectful intimate relations, and shared parenting (if you have kids).

Other things to consider:

- The relationship with self is the most important relationship in our lives. Do you love, respect, and accept yourself for who you are? Ask yourself, how can you improve this relationship?
- Healthy relationships always include boundaries. Ask yourself, do the people in your life accept and respect the boundaries you have?

Unhealthy Relationships/Abusive: Unhealthy relationships involve the use of power and control of one partner over another. This includes but is not limited to using emotional abuse, using economic abuse, isolating a partner, and using intimidation. Unhealthy relationships can cause emotional, physical, social, financial, and spiritual harm.

In the early stages of an abusive relationship, you may not think the unhealthy behaviours are important. However, possessiveness, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, pulling hair, pushing or other negative abusive behaviors are — at their root — exertions of power and control.

Remember that abuse is always a choice and you deserve to be respected. There is no excuse for abuse of any kind.

Resources

Local Support:

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca

Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca:

Girls Inc: <http://www.girlsinc-uppercanada.org/> | (613) 345-3295:

Victim Services: 1-800-939-7682 | www.vslg.ca:

Police: Brockville Police: 613-342-0127 | www.brockvillepolice.com | Gananoque Police: 613-382-4422 | www.Gananoquepolicervices.com | O.P.P: 1-888-310-1122

Other Information:

Equality Wheel: Pg. 10

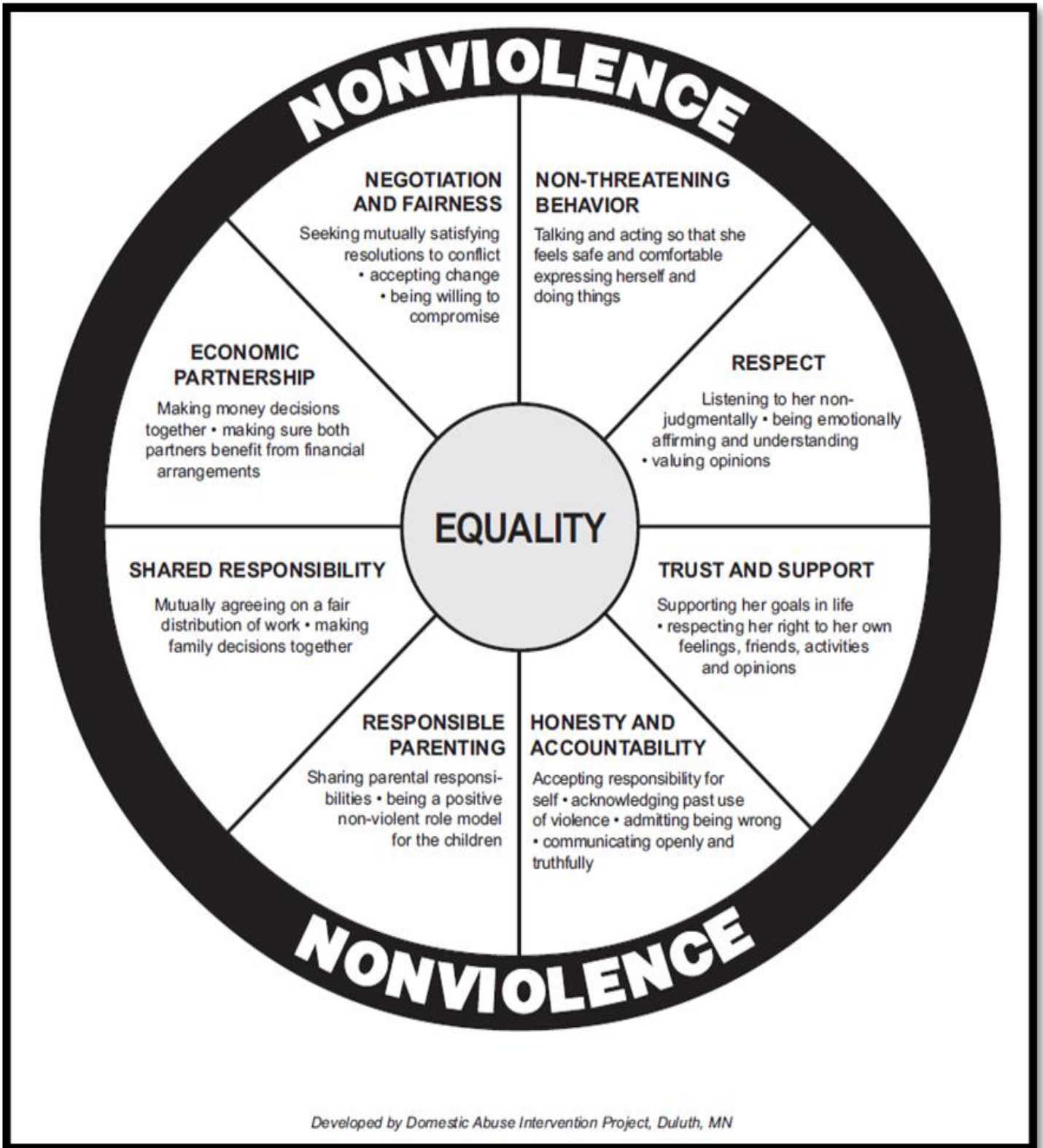
Power & Control Wheel: Pg. 11

Love is respect: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/healthy-relationships/>



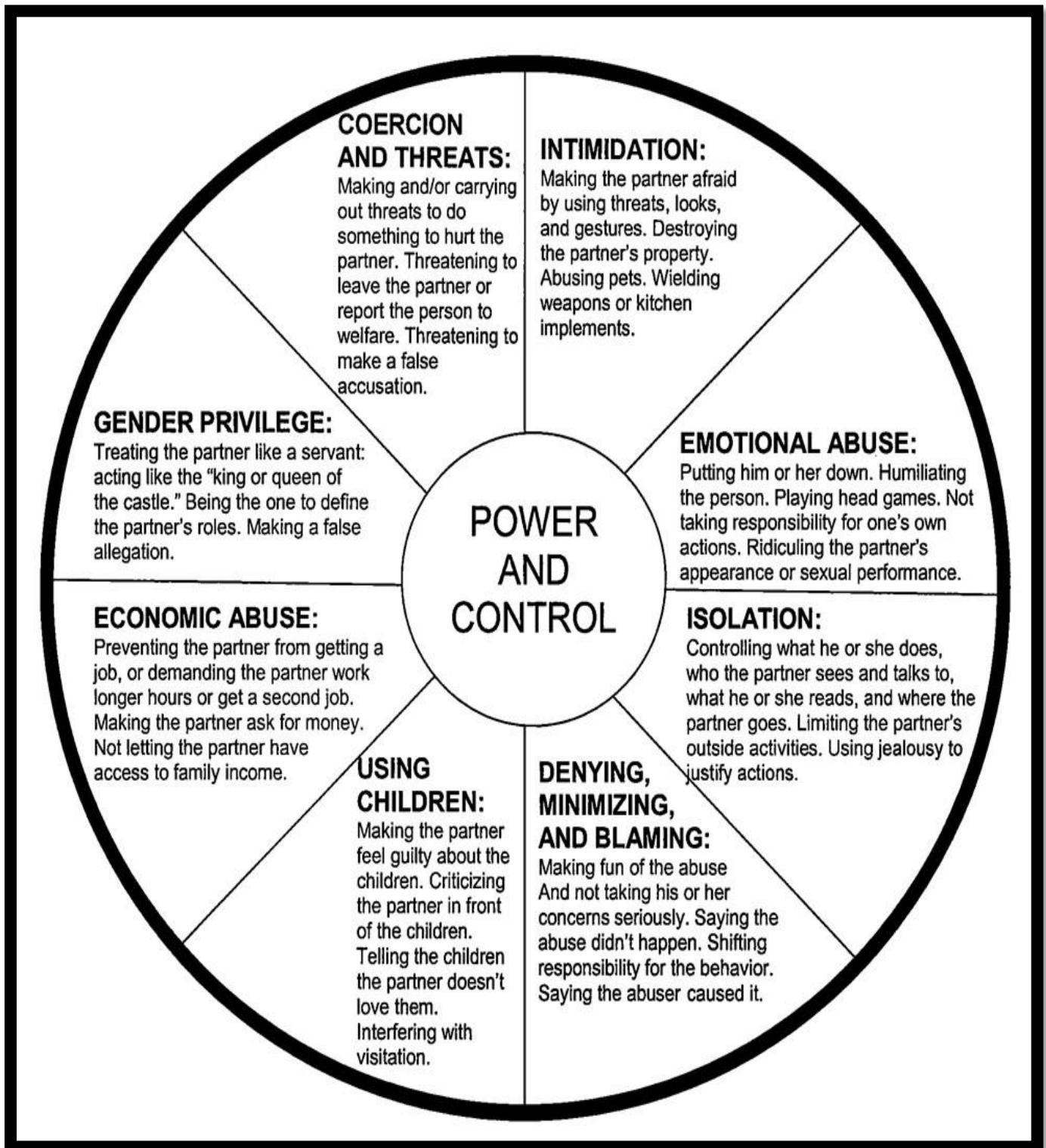
Equality Wheel

Healthy Relationship



Power & Control Wheel

Unhealthy/Abusive Relationship



Boundaries

Boundaries: A boundary is like an invisible line around you. It is what separates you from other people in a healthy and safe way. It is a line between what you are comfortable with and what you are uncomfortable with, what is acceptable to you and what is unacceptable to you. By setting strong and healthy boundaries you can take care of your physical and emotional well-being.

Healthy boundaries are flexible and adaptable. For example, you might want to open up your boundaries to let people you trust closer to you. You might share more information with them, or be physically closer. But with people you don't know as well or people you distrust, you will probably keep your boundaries closed more tightly by not getting too personal.

Many people struggle to set healthy and strong boundaries. Here are some tips:

- **Name your limits:** First you must figure out where you stand. Figure out your emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental limits. Consider what you can tolerate and accept and what makes you uncomfortable or stressed. Those feelings will help you identify your limits.
- **Tune into your feelings:** Listen to your feelings. Odds are if you are feeling resentment and discomfort you are probably letting your boundaries go.
- **Be direct:** You may need to be very direct about your boundaries with some people. Hold firm.
- **Give yourself permission:** Boundaries are a sign of self-respect so give yourself permission to set boundaries and work to preserve them.
- **Make self-care a priority:** Give yourself permission to put yourself first.
- **Seek Support:** Setting boundaries can be difficult. You can gain support from others by practicing with them or holding each other accountable.
- **Be assertive:** In a respectful way, you have the right to communicate your boundaries. Use clear and direct language when setting boundaries.
- **Start small:** If you know boundaries are difficult for you then begin by taking small steps.
- **Practice your assertiveness skills** (pg. 13).

Resources

Local Supports:

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca
Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca

Other Information:

What are my Personal Boundaries? How do I get some? <https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-are-personal-boundaries-how-do-i-get-some/>



Assertiveness

Assertiveness: Assertiveness is the ability to communicate needs, feelings, opinions, and thoughts in a direct, honest, and respectful way. It involves standing up for oneself in a manner that does not offend others or deny the rights of others. Being assertive means you will gain more control over your life and ensure others will not take advantage of you.

Assertive people are flexible; they are clear about what they want and can compromise when necessary. They can say both yes and no to different situations and determine what is best for them. Those who struggle with assertiveness often feel obligated to say yes even when they don't want to or when they are not sure how to say no.

Strategies to becoming more assertive:

- Be aware of non-verbal language: You want to use direct eye contact, keep your head up, shoulders back, hands relaxed.
- Be aware of para-verbal language: Keep your tone of voice calm and even while still being loud enough to be heard.
- Decide on your needs, wants feelings, opinions before speaking. This will help you be clear and firm with your response.
- Don't defend yourself or make excuses: You have the right to say no. Although you may feel obligated to explain yourself, you don't have too. By making an excuse you may also give the person an opportunity to find a way around the barrier rather than just accept your "no."
- Strengthen your position: People may not accept your "no" right away, especially if they are not used to hearing it from you. Be ready for them to push again and respond just as strong or stronger.
- Accept the consequences: The person may be upset with you or not like hearing your refusal. Recognize this while also understanding it is better to respect your needs and wants than to make everyone around you happy.
- You also have the right to make requests. Be clear on what you would like and don't apologize for asking.
- Use "I" statement: An I-Statement is a way of taking responsibility for your emotions, needs, and wants. I-Statements involve you explaining your feelings and needs instead of blaming another person. This typically will result in the person being less defensive and being open to communication. You should be clear and direct, describe how the behavior/situation makes you feel, and what you would like instead. e.g. "I am feeling overwhelmed, I would appreciate help" Instead of "You never help."

Resources

Local Support:

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca

Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca

Other Information:

Assert Yourself: http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/infopax.cfm?Info_ID=51



Criminal Court

Criminal Court: The criminal justice process begins when an offence is committed. When the crime is reported, the police then usually handle the investigation up to the laying of charges. Once a suspect is apprehended, an *information* is laid (charges are laid) and the prosecution of the *accused* may be undertaken by the Crown. Once criminal charges are laid, the accused may be held in custody until his/her first court appearance. The police have the discretion to release an accused prior to their first court appearance, generally when the offence is relatively minor and if they do not believe that there is a threat to public safety. The first appearance in court is usually a few hours after having been charged. It is at this *hearing* that a judge will decide whether to release the accused on *bail*

Helpful Information: The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (2015) provides victims with the *right to Information, Protection, Participation and Restitution*. With respect to Information, it is important to note that victims must request information about their case, such as: a) Status and outcome of the investigation; and b) Progress and outcome of proceedings. With respect to Participation, victims' views are to be considered and victims also have the right to present a victim impact statement.

- Every victim has the right to convey their views about decisions to be made by appropriate authorities in the criminal justice system that affect the victim's rights under the Act and to have those views considered.
- Every victim has the right to present a victim impact statement to the appropriate authorities in the criminal justice system and to have it considered.

Some victims will be called as witnesses in the case against the accused. The *Crown Attorney/Prosecutor* (all provinces) or Public Prosecution Service of Canada (all territories) represents the State in criminal matters.

Crown counsel is not and can never function as the victim's lawyer. Although the Crown appears to be representing the interests of the victim, the Crown is the lawyer for the Queen and the government during the trial. In Canadian criminal cases, the harm is perceived to have been committed against the State. Therefore, cases are referred to as Regina v. Smith (or R. v. Smith), Regina being the Queen in Latin. The Crown is truly representing the society, of which you are a part. It is generally not necessary for victims to hire a lawyer during the trial as they rarely have a legal role in the court process.

Resources

Local Support:

Victim Witness Assistance Program: 1-888-216-2191

Victim Services of Leeds and Grenville 1-800-939-7682 or 613-925-0155 | www.vslg.ca

Crown Attorney Office 613-345-3092

Lanark Leeds and Grenville Legal Clinic 1-800-597-4529

Probation and Parole Services 613-345-3061

Other Information:

Ministry of Attorney General www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca



Family Court

Family Court: You have a family law matter if you're faced with issues concerning:

- Separation
- Divorce
- Children, including the time they spend with each parent
- Dividing family property between you and your spouse
- Determining who will live in the family home
- Support for you, your partner or your children after your relationship ends
- Adoption and
- Child protection (Children's Aid Society matters).

Helpful Information: Whether you are legally married, you and your children have certain rights in Ontario under the law. In family court, it may be best to have a family lawyer to represent you, although you can choose to represent yourself or do some of the work yourself. But you oversee your case, and your lawyer takes direction from you. Generally, each person in a family case must be given the opportunity to receive and respond to the other's requests from the court and the information that is provided in support of the request. The other person or party in your case must be provided with a copy of any document that you provide to the court. This requirement ensures that the other person will have the opportunity to respond and tell their side of the story. If you do not want the other party in your case (your ex-partner) to know where you live, you do not have to put this information on your court documents. You can give another address at which you can receive documentation (for example, a family member or friend).

Resources

Local Support:

Family Court Support: www.vslg.ca | 613-925-0155

Legal Aid Advice Counsel is available at the Brockville Court House on Tuesdays between 2pm and 4pm and on Thursdays between 9am and 11am.

Family & Children Services Crisis Line: 1-800-481-7834

Other Information:

Family Responsibility Office: 1-800-267-4330 (TTY 1-866-545-0083). www.ontario.ca/FRO

Legal Aid Ontario's toll-free number at 1-800-668-8258 (TTY 1-866-641-8867). www.legalaid.on.ca

The Lawyer Referral Service: 1-800-268-8326

Upper Law Society of Canada www.lsuc.on.ca



Internet Safety

Internet Safety: The internet and social media is creating a world that is more open and connected. This enables people to share the most important parts of their lives with friends, families, and communities. However, there are dangers online and technology can be used by abusers, fraudsters, stalkers, and unhealthy people to spam, troll, harass, or steal from you. There are ways to help control your safety and privacy in an online environment.

Please see below for a list of basic steps you can take to minimize your risk on experiencing online dangers. There is no guarantee, but some preventative measures one can take are:

- Choose a screen name that has no identifying features. This means avoiding things like you age, name, gender, address, town, nickname.
- Create a separate email for recreational online use that is not tied to your work or personal email addresses.
- Choose a complicated password and change it frequently.
- Set privacy settings as restrictive as possible.
- Protect your privacy by not sharing or talking about your day-to-day activities.
- Never agree to meet someone you've met online. If you are meeting for the means of purchasing, local police stations offer video surveillance trading posts.
- Always log out of personal accounts when you are on public computers or using unsecured internet connections.

If you are being cyberstalked or abused

- Report the abuse to the police and your Internet Service Provider immediately.
- DO NOT delete original messages. Save all harassing/unwanted messages. This is helpful for reporting. Take screen shots of any harassing behaviors that can't be saved.
- Consider changing you're your email address. Consider deleting your social media accounts and creating new ones if you need them.
- Connect with your local domestic violence service provider to discuss creating a safety plan.

Resources

Local Support:

Police: Brockville Police: 613-342-0127 | www.brockvillepolice.com | Gananoque Police: 613-382-4422 | www.gananoquepoliceservices.com | O.P.P: 1-888-310-1122

Assault Response & Care Centre: 1-800-567-7415 | www.arc-c.ca

Interval House: 1-800-267-4409 | www.lgih.ca

Victim Services of Leeds & Grenville: 1-800-939-7682 / www.vslg.ca

Other Information:

Tips for survivors of abuse: <http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/src/nnedv-privacy-and-safety-on-fb.pdf>

Victims of Crime information & Links: <https://crcvc.ca/en/>



Important Local Numbers

Addiction Services	1-866-499-8445
Assault Response & Care Centre	1-800-567-7415
Assaulted Women's Helpline (24/7)	1-866-863-0511
Children's Mental Health	1-800-809-2494
Crown Attorney	613-345-3092
Developmental Support Services	1-866-544-5614
Distress Line (Lanark, Leeds & Grenville)	1-800-465-4442
Family & Children's Service (24/7)	1-855-667-2726
Fem'aide (24/7)	1-877-336-2433
Food Banks	Brockville 613-342-0605
.....	Athens 613-924-7030
.....	Cardinal 613-657-1967
.....	Prescott 613-925-2444
.....	Gananoque 613-382-4434
Health Action Line (Public Health)	1-800-660-5853
HIV/AIDS Regional Service	1-800-565-2209
Interval House (Women's Shelter 24/7)	1-800-267-4409
KIDS Help Phone (24/7)	1-800-668-6868
Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville Addictions & Mental Health	1-866-499-8445
Legal Aid (to apply)	1-800-668-8258
Legal Clinic (Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville)	1-800-597-4529
LGBT – PLFAG	1-888-530-6777
Mental Health Crisis Line	1-866-281-2911



Mobile #SAFE (#7233).....	TTY 1-866-863-7868
Ontario Disability Support.....	Brockville 613-345-1200
.....	Gananoque 1-519-537-5579
Ontario Early Years.....	1-800-267-9252
Ontario Works.....	1-866-878-9588
Poison Information.....	1-800-268-9017
Police	Brockville 613-345-5649
.....	Gananoque 613-382-4422
.....	O.P.P 1-888-310-1122
Rose Garden Family Support Centre	613-345-6007
Salvation Army	Brockville 613-342-5211
.....	Gananoque 613-382-3105
.....	Prescott 613-925-2350
.....	Kemptville 613-258-3583
Telehealth Ontario	1-866-797-0000
United Counties Housing	1-800-267-8146
Victim Services.....	1-800-939-7682
Victim Support Line (24/7).....	1-888-579-2888
Victim Witness Assistance Program	1-888-216-2191
Youth Shelter (Connect Youth)	613-918-0173

