



engage

Core Engagement

Section 4: Core Engagement Activities

Overview:

This section provides four strategies to support self-management of behaviour. They do not mean you will never argue or feel overwhelmed by anger and other emotions. They are there to stop things escalating to abuse or violence toward someone you love and care about. We have all said or done things we regret to people we care about. These techniques are there to try and slow down or stop things before we reach that point

The following mindset will increase chances of your success in changing your behaviour:

- 1) Accept that you are personal responsibility for your emotions and behaviour
 - Other people do not 'make' us feel things or 'make' us do things. They might have influence over us, but ultimately you need to embrace that you are responsible for managing your emotions and behaviour.
 - This is actually good news! If we put other people in charge of our decisions and behaviour then we are not really in control of our lives. If you are in charge of your emotions, you can master them instead of letting them master you. If you are in charge of our behaviour or decisions, no one can make you do something you don't want to do. You are in charge of yourself.
 - But remember- with the power over your behaviour and your emotions comes the responsibility for them. There is no blaming others or saying 'I just lost it'. It is not easy to master control over your emotions- it will take time and effort. But it is worth it if you can stop yourself harming others and having all the negative consequences that come with harmful behaviour.
- 2) Acknowledge your past behaviour that has been abusive or violent
 - Own it. If you have done things in the past that you know were wrong or go against your own moral code than accept that they were YOUR errors. Let go of your excuses- own it- and make it right.
 - Seek pathways to repair- don't just promise not to do it again. If you misstep- shout, swear, smash something in anger- stop yourself, remove yourself and apologise when you go back.
 - Accepting responsibility makes you a better person- not a weak one. Weak people try to evade responsibility and make excuses for their bad behaviour. Strong people own it and seek to make it right.
- 3) Apply these skills to your own circumstances and relationship
 - It is often easy to see where others are going wrong for other people, but much harder to turn that lens on ourselves and our own lives.
 - Be your own advisor- think, what would this person I trust and admire (e.g. your mum, your grandfather, your best mate) think if they saw how I am handling this?
 - Believe that you can make things better- one day at a time, one decision at a time. Good relationships take effort- don't give up.

Core Engagement Activities

Exercises	Session	Date
1) Safety Net Strategies	De-escalation strategies for removing yourself from conflict situations to avoid violence or abuse	
2) Storyboard Analysis	In-depth discussion of specific incident of abusive behaviour and the thoughts, feelings, behaviour, beliefs, intentions, and consequences surrounding it	
3) Taking Responsibility	Discussion about the process of accepting responsibility and the difficult task of moving past denials and justifications toward genuine future change	
4) Effects of Domestic Abuse	Review and discussion of how domestic abuse impacts partners, children, and you in the long-term and how this can focus your commitment to change	

When you should stop this workbook and seek further help:

You should stop these sessions if:

- 1) You are struggling to accept responsibility for change (go to the Denial Focus sessions instead)
- 2) You aren't prepared to apply these skills to your own situation (go to the Denial Focus sessions instead)
- 3) You are concerned that doing and thinking about this work is escalating your behaviour or levels of risk to yourself, your partner, or your children;
- 4) The work brings up unresolved trauma or crisis issues that make it difficult to cope and need more focused support (e.g. substance misuse, mental health, bereavement, previous physical/sexual abuse, etc.).

If any of the above issues arises, stop completing the workbook and seek support from your key worker or contact the confidential Respect phone support line: [0808 802 4040](tel:08088024040) <http://respect.uk.net/>

Session 1: Safety Net Strategies

Background

The purpose of this module is to get you to start recognise your own 'anger' cues.

The strategies advised in this module are 'SAFETY NET' strategies- in other words they PREVENT situations from escalating but they are not long term solutions to resolving conflict in your relationship. Ultimately, you will need to talk it out. But this can stop things becoming abusive or violent.

Key Learning Points:

1. To teach you the TIME OUT skill which can help you remove yourself from situations that you know are heading toward abuse or violence
2. To help you identify their own personal signals (mental, physical, emotional) that let you know you need a TIME OUT.
3. To look at how you can realistically apply TIME OUT to your own relationships in a way that will work for you.
4. To avoid those pitfalls and temptations to abuse or misuse TIME OUT.
5. To make a commitment to not using violence within your household.

Introduction

Each individual person will have their own pathway that has led to violence and abuse becoming part of their relationship. You will have different triggers, different issues, and complex relationships with your partner.

The purpose of this session is to assist you in figuring out what your individual pattern looks like so you can take charge of it and avoid it re-emerging in your relationship or in future relationships.

However, that is going to take time! So, we start in this module with strategies that ANYONE can use- regardless of the situation- to stop abuse or violence happening again in your relationship- STARTING NOW.

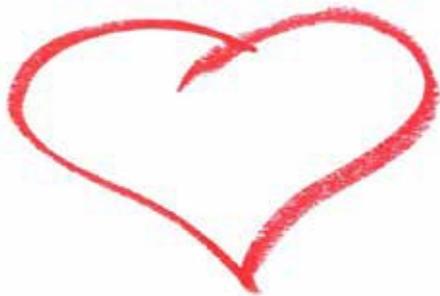
CORE Engagement Exercises:

Worksheet 1.1 – Anger Signals

1) Think of at least 3 things that you and your partner argue about or that have caused arguments



What did you do when you argued? (e.g. shouted)



How did you feel when you argued? (e.g. upset, frustrated)



What were you thinking when you argued?

(what was the voice in your head saying- 'how dare you! You're asking for it...')

EXERCISE 1.2: Time Out - How It Works

TIME OUT is the ultimate fail safe to avoid things escalating to violence in your relationship. It is an agreed strategy to calm things down and remove you from the situation until you can manage it better.

There are a number of key elements that need to be followed to use TIME OUT appropriately. Because of this, it often feels false- and it IS.

It is a constructed response to stop conflict escalating- it is not what you would normally do and it is probably not what you will feel like doing

- BUT THAT IS THE POINT.

The bottom line of TIME OUT is- IF YOU AREN'T THERE, YOU CAN'T MAKE IT WORSE.

With this in mind- remember the most important thing when you feel your anger rising is to remove yourself from the situation- even if it doesn't go exactly to plan.

Time Out – The 5 R's

Time Out has five key steps which we call- the **5 R's**.

1. RECOGNISE

Recognize your own warning signs that you are becoming stressed, controlling, aggressive, or angry.

This might be inward signs like negative self-talk about your partner or children (your internal voice muttering things like 'they are driving me mad- I'm going to lock them all in their rooms in a minute if they don't stop'; or 'why does she do that, she knows it drives me crazy, she's trying to wind me up on purpose').

It could be more physical signs like feeling your heart race or chest tighten or outward signs like clenching your teeth or fists more tightly.

We know when we are stressed- our body sets off a physical and psychological chain reaction that rolls forward like a freight train. It requires a conscious and deliberate effort to stop it.

So when you feel emotions building up- take preventative action- don't just let it roll forward to the place it always leads- often shouting, abuse, or violence. If you knew that a certain road always led to you getting trapped in a great big muddy swamp, why would you keep driving down it over and over? Stop yourself and turn away from the conflict.

2. REFEREE

Referee yourself by blowing the whistle on what is happening. You will need a deliberate word or phrase that calls time on the interaction or on the direction your thoughts are heading- the obvious one is to call **Time Out** but people use all sorts of phrases that have some personal significance or meaning for them. Parents and children often agree something comedic like 'banana' or 'jelly babies' as their word! The most important thing is that it shouldn't be a swear word or anything aggressive or threatening.

It is also important that everyone knows what the word means when someone uses it. It means that whatever the discussion, argument, situation- the person who uses the word needs a break to calm down. It is very hard to allow someone to walk away during the middle of an argument- be it your partner or especially your child- but it is an emotionally mature and brave thing to do to recognize when things need to calm down and take a step back. So if someone uses the codeword- EVERYBODY needs to respect it and back off for 20 minutes to an hour to let things calm down.

3. REMOVE

Step 3 is to remove yourself from the situation as much as you are able. Now obviously the current circumstances make that even more challenging. So you need to think carefully about this and plan ahead. It's no good trying to enact this strategy when you are already in the thick of a heated argument.

Each person should have a 'place of retreat'- somewhere that they can go to calm down and be guaranteed that they won't be disturbed, interrupted or bothered by anyone for a period of time.

This could be a place at home where you can lock yourself away for a period of time such as the bathroom or garage. It might be somewhere a bit out of the way of everyone such the shed at the bottom of the garden, the box room or even the under-stairs cupboard. However, if you're

like most people, many of these spaces aren't in a state where you'd like to spend 3 full minutes, let alone 20 minutes to an hour of your time!

You may need to invest a bit of time creating a 'chill-out zone' somewhere in the home that people can use to take themselves away when they need a bit of space. One of the mums we were working with turned her under-stairs cupboard into a calm oasis, complete with cosy armchair, fairy lights, and a stash of her favorite magazines.

When someone takes a Time Out, it is important that the people around them DO NOT FOLLOW. If you follow because you think the person is trying to avoid the conversation or because you are struggling to walk away yourself, you are likely to continue the escalation of the conflict. We see this with partners but even more often with parents and children. The child says they need a time out and the parent cannot accept giving them the time to calm down and carries on the conversation.

For it to work, and to effectively calm things, you need to treat it with respect and back off when someone asks for a break. Recognizing and managing your emotions is something to be commended and encouraged- not punished.

It does not mean letting the other person off the hook or avoiding the conversation-but it should not be returned to until you are both calm.

4. RELAX & REFLECT

Step one is to find a way to relax once you have left the conflict situation. Be careful of activities that increase your anger or fuel negative thinking (e.g. punching things, using drugs or alcohol).

It is a good idea to do something physical to burn away the chemical cocktail your body has produced- like star jumps, press ups, running or walking if possible. Do this for 2-10 minutes to try and burn through the initial physiological reaction the body has to anger.

Once you are feeling a bit more calm, engage in some activity that relaxes you. You can try breathing exercises, stretching, reading, listening to music, playing a game on your phone- but try to distract your brain for 10-15 minutes from the argument you just left. Giving your brain this break allows it to reset and grab your emotions by the reins again so you can think more rationally about the issue.

Finally, when you feel calm, take some time to reflect on the issue you had. What is it that you wanted out of the discussion? If it is to frighten your partner or children into doing what you want- is that something you want? Think about it in these three simple steps: 1) What is it I want to happen? 2) What could I do instead to get my views across? 3) Is it worth the consequences of scaring my partner and children into doing what I want?

5. RETURN

Now it is time to go back to the situation. Decide- when you return are you going to try to resolve the issue by discussing it again or are you going to just release it by letting it go?

Sometimes, we look back on a situation and think 'what were we even arguing about?' If that is the case, apologise and accept that your emotions just got the better of you. It is ok to feel stressed and it is normal to sometimes lose a handle on our emotions. The important thing is that you recognize it, accept it and move on.

If the issue is more significant and you need to talk it out, try to follow these basic ABC's of communication:

Accept and listen to the other person's point of view.

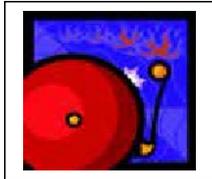
Be clear and direct about the problem.

Come to a compromise if you can that respects each person's wishes.

CORE Engagement Exercises:

WORKSHEET 1.2: Time Out - How It Works (print me)

Time Out: Remember the 5 R's



Recognise: Name three of your body's cues that you are about to lose it



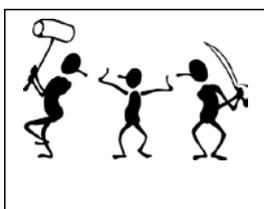
Referee: What words could you use to say to your partner you need a **TIME OUT**



Remove: Where could you go for at least 20 minutes to an hour that is safe?



Relax: How could you *Calm down and chill out*?



Ring and Return: What do you think will happen when you return to the situation? Resolve (work it out) or Release (let it go) or Repeat (starts all over again)

Time Out Steps: Reminder (print me)

Step 1: Recognise you are angry

- Determine what your own personal warning signs are that you are starting to lose control. These might be how you are feeling (shaky, breathless, upset) or how you are behaving (shouting, swearing, glaring).

Step 2: Referee

- Declare a TIME OUT. Practice how you will actually say- 'I need a TIME OUT'- being able to say 'I have to go calm down- I can't keep talking about this right now, I need a TIME OUT'. Try to ask for a TIME OUT before you reach a point of anger where you don't feel in control- telling someone 'Leave me the f... alone is not an appropriate way to 'declare a time out'.

Step 3: Remove Yourself from the Situation

- If you are not there, you can't kick off. You need to find a place that you can go that will help you calm down. Try and have several options- what will you do if you can't go to the first place? (have some backups for different places and times of day) What can you do if someone won't let you leave?

• Step 4: Relax- First Extinguish The Fire

- If you go and punch something or swear or shout- you will continue to feel wound up
- Burn the fire out with something PHYSICAL but NOT VIOLENT- push-ups/ press-ups/ go for a run or a stress ball/ doodle pad

STEP 4 (PART 2): Relax and Distract (30 min)

- Do something that chills you out and calms you down
- Try to take your mind off whatever made you angry
- If you start obsessing on what made you angry, purposefully try and distract your brain from it again for the full 30 min.

STEP 5: Revisit - Resolve or Release

- After you are completely calmed down, think about whatever it was that made you angry in the first place.
- Are you still angry? (remember, ANGER is fine- it is VIOLENCE that is not OK)
- Can you do anything to resolve the problem? (e.g. apologise, explain your feelings, ask for help, etc.)
- If you can't resolve it, can you let it go? Can you move on without hanging on to it?

PART 2: Misuse of Time Out

A critical aspect of TIME OUT is realistically thinking through how you will apply it in the heat of the moment. It is a constructed interruption- it will not feel natural. To prepare yourself to actually use it, you need to think of hurdles or obstacles that may get in the way of you using it appropriately.

In each of the following scenarios, TIME OUT is misused or used incorrectly. After each one, identify how TIME OUT was misused and any of the steps that were forgotten or ignored.

Scenario 1: GET OUT OF ARGUMENT FREE CARD

Owen gets a phone call from his best mate asking him to come down to the pub, but he has just made plans to stay in and watch a film with Jess.

Owen picks a fight with Jess by complaining about the state of the house and having to put the kids to bed. Once Jess gets upset, Owen says he is having a 'f*%^ing TIME OUT' and that he is going down the pub and will be back later.

Scenario 2: PASSING THE BUCK

Owen is watching tele when Jess gets home from work. She starts going through the post and starts swearing and mumbling under her breath. 'What's your f*%^ing problem?' Owen says. 'You, you're my f*%^ing problem!', she snaps. 'You never sort out any of the bills- I'm going to get two late penalties on these card payments because you can't be bothered to open an envelope you lazy sod!'

Owen rolls his eyes and keeps focused on the tele. He says, 'God Jess, just shut the f*%^ up!' 'You know what, I think you need to take a TIME OUT! Yeah, definitely- get out and go calm down- come in swearing at me.'

Scenario 3: BREAKING THE NON-VIOLENCE CODE

Owen and Jess are arguing about how much he is out drinking with his mates every week. It is costing them a fortune and she feels abandoned to get on with looking after the kids all the time. As the argument builds, Owen (appropriately) says he is getting too annoyed- he needs to have a TIME OUT. He turns to leave and Jess moves in front of him and blocks the door. 'Get out of my way' he says. When she won't move, he grabs her arms and pulls her away from the door and goes out.

Discussion:

Each of these scenarios show an example of how TIME OUT is being misused.

In scenario 1- Get out of Argument Free Card

Owen uses Time Out to manipulate the situation so that he can go out to the pub. He didn't really need a Time Out to calm down. Instead he provoked an argument so that he could use the technique to do what he wants. The problem with this is that his partner will begin to doubt when he says he needs a Time Out if that is really true or if it is just a way to avoid the discussion or get out of the house.

Additional problems are that he swears when he tells Jess he needs the Time Out which could be seen as aggressive. He also does not say when he will be back, and he does not go to a safe place of retreat to calm down- instead he goes drinking with a mate. Jess may be worried about what state he will be in when he returns and whether the argument will start all over again.

In scenario 2- Passing the Buck

In this scenario, Jess is annoyed and does seem to be spoiling for an argument. However, even if that is true, Owen cannot just tell her to have a Time Out. Time Out is not to be used on someone else- it is an opportunity for YOU to walk away from a situation and calm down. Owen can say he needs a Time Out, but he cannot give one to Jess. And again, the swearing may be seen as aggressive and escalating the argument.

In scenario 3- Breaking the non-violence code

Owen has done everything correctly in this scenario- until the very end. When Jess won't play by the rules, what can he do? This is why it is so important to have TIME OUT agreed and discussed before you need to use it in the heat of an argument. But even if the other person won't play by the rules, you cannot break them yourself. Owen needs to adapt and try to leave a different way or even lock himself in the toilet if he has to. He cannot put hands on Jess to move her as this could rapidly escalate, as well as being classed as assault.

You should discuss TIME OUT with your partner and give them a copy of the TIME OUT handout. But your partner does not need to support or agree to using TIME OUT for you to still use it to avoid an argument escalating.

Session 2: Storyboard Analysis

Background

Storyboards are a critical part of building up your ability to see where a situation went wrong and improve your self-awareness so you can manage things better or differently in the future.

The next exercise will give you an opportunity to break down an incident that has happened in your relationship where things didn't turn out how you wanted them to.

Key Learning Points

1. For you to reflect on a particular incident between you and the person you have the most conflict with in your household;
2. For you to consider your own personal triggers and pattern of violence or abuse that has developed the way you handle conflict;
3. For you to start to think about whether what you intend with your behaviour is actually what you get in the end- do you get the outcome you want.

EXERCISE 3.1- Storyboards

We are going to ask you to generate a storyboard. To do this you will need to divide a piece of paper into six panels. Across the six panels, you will be asked to 'draw out' an incident that occurred between you and someone in your household. It can be the most recent incident or the one you think back on as the 'worst'- but it should be something significant.

Block a sheet of paper into six blocks. Start with the top two panels which will show what led up to the incident (what happened before). You can use stick figures, important props (e.g. dogs, weapons, houses, vehicles), speech bubbles, and thought bubbles. Next, use the middle panels to show what happened during the incident. Pay particular attention to what thoughts and feelings go along with the behaviour in the panels. Finally, complete the final two panels with what happened after the incident- where did things end up.

If you do not want to draw the incident out with figures, you can complete the TFB worksheet instead.

Session 2: Storyboard Analysis

Consider if you can add any of the following to your storyboard:

- 1) Thought balloons- what were you thinking at various points in the story? What do you think other people involved might have been thinking? Insert these as thought balloons.
- 2) Feeling hearts- what were they feeling at various points in the story? What might other people have been feeling? Insert these as hearts with the emotion written inside.
- 3) Beliefs- what beliefs might have been driving the behaviour in the story?
Write these on the back of the storyboard.
- 4) Intentions - what did you want to happen? What did you want the end panel to look like, rather than what it did look like?
- 5) Consequences- what were the consequences of what happened? You can circle these on the storyboard or write them in.

Storyboard Example:

You could use the example below or watch a one of the following video clips and analyse it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5Y1X9D1e2Q>- Celebrity Big Brother (playfight?)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCArC1LjA_8- Coronation Street (Child/Parent argument)

Consider the following story and examine the storyboard example in the materials

My partner Chelsea is very emotional. She often flies off the handle at me over nothing. Since we have had the children she doesn't work because she is looking after them. She thinks that now our youngest is 4 she should go back to work but I don't see the point.

I make more than enough money for us to live on. She doesn't need a job- I'm not against women working- but our kids are still young- I don't want them going to some stranger or coming home to an empty house.

Anyway, we had a big row about her going back to work again. She'd gone to an interview without even telling me and they had offered her the job. I told her there was no way she was taking it.

I left the house and went for a drive in my truck. I stopped and got some cans and just sat on the ridge above our house thinking about it.

When I went back in, she wouldn't speak to me. We were supposed to be meeting some of my work colleagues for dinner but she hadn't even started getting ready. We started rowing again about going out.

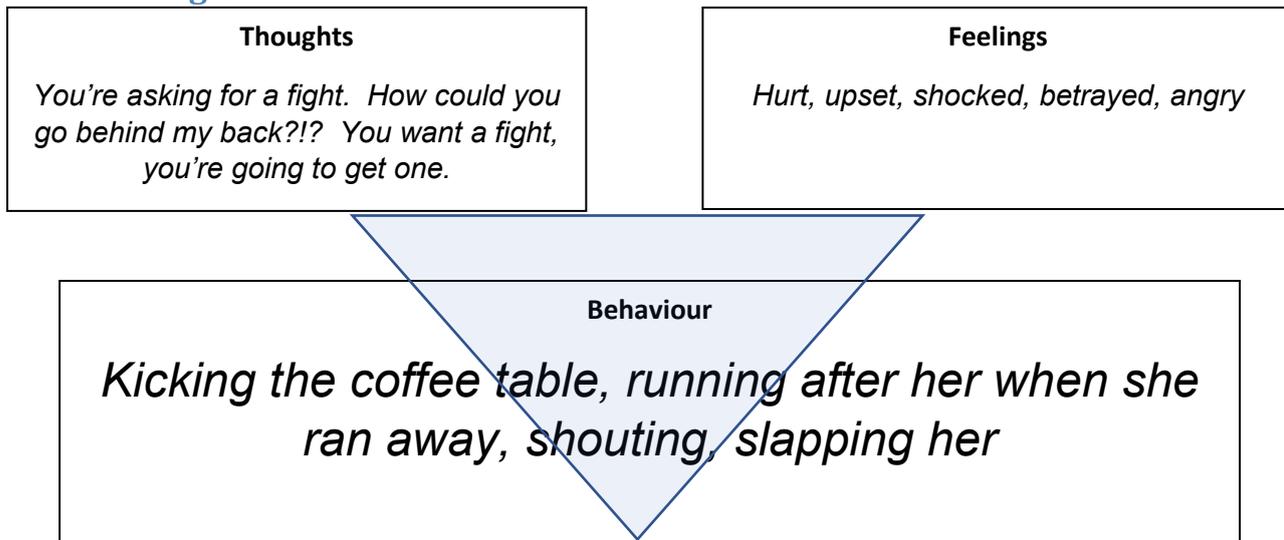
I kicked the coffee table and it has a glass middle that shattered. She threw a whisky tumbler at me, which missed of course. But it made me so mad- I grabbed her arms and pushed her against the stairs and I slapped her a couple of times.

Then I left and went to the pub on my own.

Follow Up Questions:

- 1) Where were the children when this was happening? (on the stairs)
- 2) Why did you get the alcohol? Do you often drink when you are upset or have a row with Chelsea?
- 3) How do you think she felt when the coffee table smashed?
- 4) What did you think while you were sat in your truck on the ridge?
- 5) How do you think what happened affected the children?

CBT triangle



Intention: What do you want the outcome to be?

To hurt her back for hurting me, to show her that I was upset, to let her know how angry I was

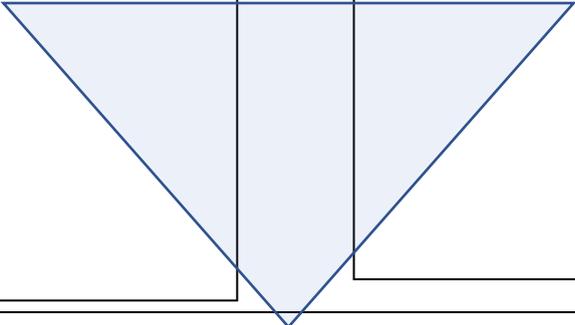
Consequence: What outcome do you think is most likely by your actions?

She feels more upset. I look like the bad guy. She's scared of me and so are the kids. They were at the top of the stairs. Seeing them is what stopped me.

Change: If it is not the outcome you want, how can you change it? What thoughts and feelings go with the outcome you want? What behaviours?

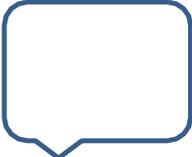
I could have just waited until I calmed down and then explained to her how I felt. I would have had to just tell my workmates she was ill and leave it to talk about in the morning. I should have thought, its not worth it with the kids in the house.

Worksheet 2.1- CBT triangle

<p>Thoughts</p>	<p>Feelings</p>
	
<p>Behaviour</p>	
<p>Intention: What do you want the outcome to be?</p>	
<p>Consequence: What outcome do you think is most likely by your actions?</p>	
<p>Change: If it is not the outcome you want, how can you change it? What thoughts and feelings go with the outcome you want? What behaviours?</p>	

Worksheet 2.2: Storyboard Analysis

Use speech bubbles for dialogue/ hearts for how you or partner were feeling/ thought bubbles for thoughts

<p>Before</p> 	
<p>During</p> 	 
<p>After</p> 	

Session 3: Taking Responsibility

Background

This module emphasises the role of choice over how we behave. It is meant to build on your storyboard by focusing on how you chose to behave, and how you could behave differently in the future.

Admitting that our behaviour that is negative or cruel is actually our responsibility can be very difficult to accept. Instead, we tend to bury these choices under denial, justifications, and minimisations. We all do this- it is part of human nature and it requires effort and mental fortitude to hold yourself accountable.

The focus of this session is to identify and recognise ways in which you attempt to deny ('it was an accident'; 'it just happened'), justify ('she hit me first; I was drunk), or minimise ('I've never hit her'; 'it was only a slap') your behaviour toward your partner, children, or parent.

This will not be easy and this session is likely to test your motivation. Just remember, it is not about 'judgement'- it is about accepting past mistakes so you can change how you behave in the future.

Introduction

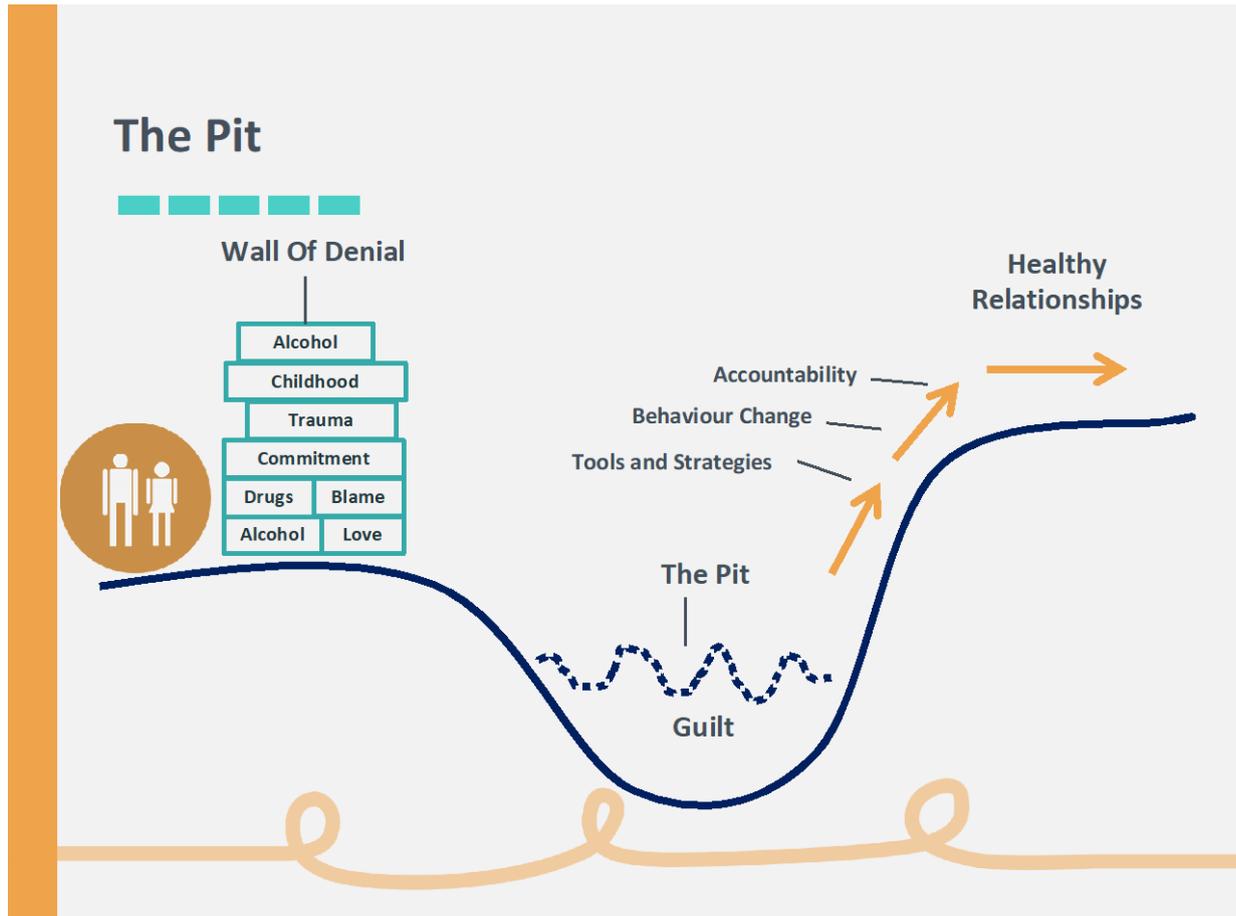
One of the key components of behavioural change is accepting responsibility for your actions. Once we accept that we are in charge of how we decide to behave, we can be in much greater control of our behaviour. If we try and make excuses for why our behaviour isn't our fault- it means there is nothing you can do to change it- quite a worrying and powerless position to be in.

Key Learning Points

1. To explain the process of accepting responsibility and explore some of the negative emotions that often go along with it.
2. To give examples of denial strategies and discuss your own use of denial strategies in the past to avoid responsibility.
3. To demonstrate that by blaming someone or something else, you deny your personal responsibility and you give up your ability to change.
4. To think about how you could change your thinking, accept responsibility, and change your behaviour in the future.

Exercise 3.1- The Pit

Part 1



- i. Any time something goes wrong we tend to go through this process. Think of an example, such as speeding.
- ii. So if I am caught speeding what am I likely to say about it?
- iii. Excuses: it was only 5 miles over the speed limit, I was trying to get around a tractor, space is more important than speed.- all the reasons why it isn't my fault. This is my 'Wall of Denial'.
- iv. What will happen the next time I'm running late? Maybe the same thing- because, hey, it wasn't my fault I was speeding! What could I do? Nothing will change.
- v. If I instead get over the 'Wall of excuses and denial' then I fall in the Pit- I have to say, 'I chose to speed and that could have injured somebody and is against the law- it's my fault, I deserve the points.' - which doesn't feel very nice. It feels much nicer over the other side of that wall, where it wasn't my fault.
- vi. But if I can get through the pit, and decide, 'OK, it was my fault- I should try and be on time- from now on, I'm going to set the alarm on my phone for 20 minutes before I have to leave for somewhere, so I am on time and don't have to speed!' Some of these tactics might fail but I might find one that really works for me!
- vii. RESULT- positive change, get to ultimately feel good about myself but it is hard work and I might still fail sometimes and slip into old bad habits.....

Part 2: Recognising Denial Strategies

The first step to climbing out the other side of the PIT is to be able to recognise and breakdown your own wall of denial. Imagine you are assessing someone for a behavioural change programme. Your job is to identify all of the denial hurdles they have to accepting responsibility for their behaviour. Listen to the following accounts:

(You can either read out the accounts or you can listen to the audio clips with your key worker)

Or you can show the interview from the clip used in the previous session and discuss:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=big+brother+interview+with+daley&docid=608043192658038082&mid=084005E2D4B48EFCFC6D084005E2D4B48EFCFC6D&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

Account A: Minimisation

'I'm not really a violent person- I don't know what I'm doing here. I'm not some kind of wife-beater- it only happed the one time. Basically, I just accidentally shoved into her on my way past and she tripped and fell over and landed on some stuff in the hallway (the baby's pram and some boxes and stuff) which bruised her side and gave her a little cut on her face. She bruises really easy, but the police acted like I'd done it on purpose and like I'd nearly murdered her

or something. She's not really bothered about it- she dropped the charges, but they want to carry on 'cause I marked her. It's not like she's scared of me. The kids have never seen any arguing between us- they were upstairs when this happened. They are fine- but social services are acting like I'm some kind of violent b&^%*\$d and like I've traumatised the kids for life. Bunch of rubbish if you ask me.'

Follow up Questions:

What excuses make up this character's Wall of Denial?

Why do you think he might be minimising what happened? What's in it

for him to play it down? Do you recognise any of these sorts of excuses

from your own accounts/ storyboards?

Account B: Partner –Blaming

'I'm not the one who should be doing this group. She should be the one sat here. I've never been violent in any other relationship- but her last partner was violent to her. It's obviously something about her! I was trying to get away from her but she just kept going on and on and on at me- I told her to shut it but she wouldn't listen. She was being abusive to me- calling me thick and a needle- *&%^ - I mean come on! Now she's got exactly what she wants- a hold over me legally, and something to use against me over custody of the children. I think she threw herself on the stuff in the hall on purpose- probably planned the whole thing out- best prat-faller in three counties!'

Follow up Questions:

What excuses make up this character's Wall of Denial?

Why do you think he might be blaming his partner for what happened?

Do you recognise any of these sorts of excuses from your own accounts/ storyboards?

Account C: Straight Talking

'I don't know why this keeps happening but I want it to stop. We row all the time and these days it just gets worse and worse. It started with us shoving each other around- I've knocked her head against the wall a couple of times. I've grabbed her arms and left red marks. This last time I shoved her really hard in the hallway- she went flying and tripped over some shoes and fell into the baby's pram and some boxes. I just felt sick- she had a cut on her head from the pram I guess and she was all bruised. I feel so low about it. I've sworn to her it'll never happen again, but she doesn't believe me. Why should she? I've said it before.It's ruining my relationship- she's scared of me now and so are the kids if I'm truthful- they disappear upstairs as soon as we start fighting.'

Follow up Questions:

Where is this character on the PIT?

How do you think he is feeling about himself?

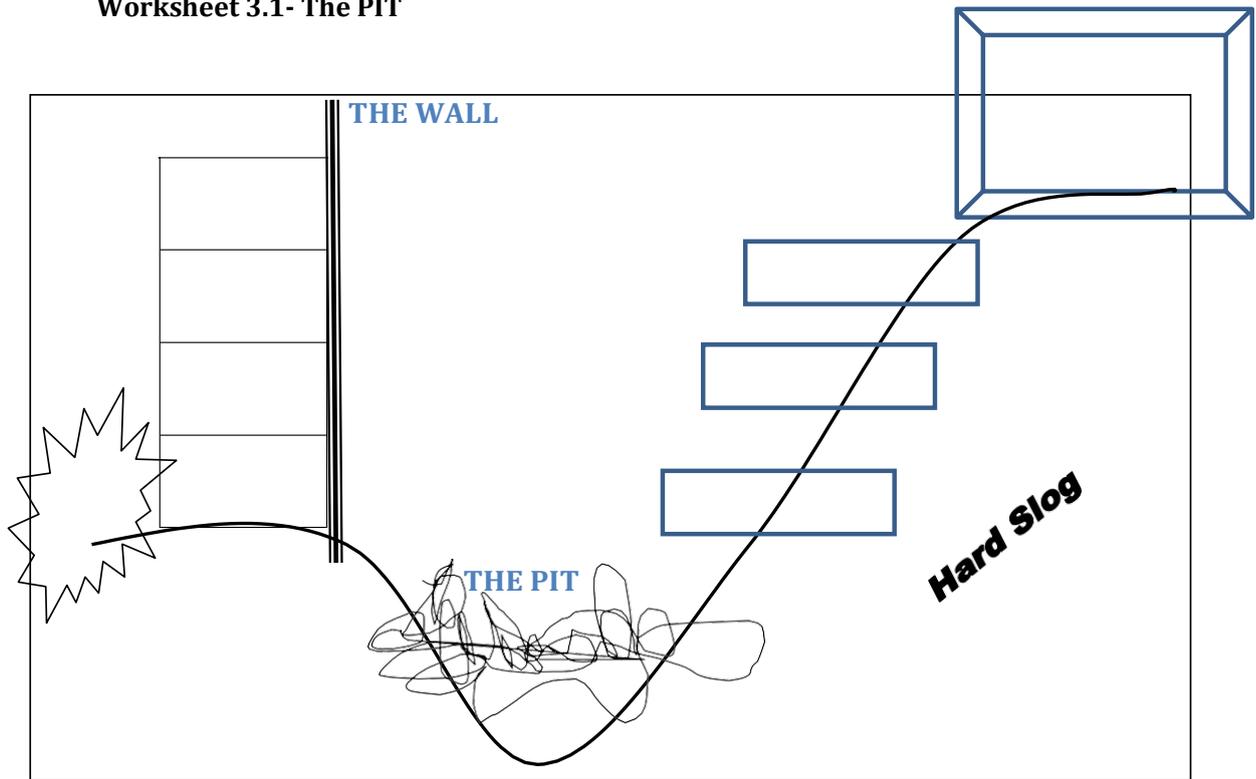
How tempted do you think he would be to latch onto some of A and B's excuses? How can he move out the other side of the PIT?

Part 3: Pit Stop

1. Look back at your own storyboard account.
2. What behaviour do you most regret? Put this in the explosion symbol behind the wall.
3. What excuses and justifications could you identify about what happened between you and your partner? Put these in your wall.
4. Which of these excuses can you let go of? Put a cross next to the ones you think you say to make yourself feel better about what happened.
5. What steps have you taken to repair the damage caused or to behave differently? Put these examples (if any) in the uphill boxes. (If participant cannot identify any, you can place skills like Time Out, putting the children's needs first, staying calm, etc.)
6. What do you want at the end of all this? What is at the top of the climb? (It is important to discuss here that if it is 'things back the way they were' that is not necessarily positive or if it is 'my relationship or my kids back' there are no guarantees that that is what will be at the top of the hill- what is there is change/ confidence/ self-esteem and more positive relationships in the future)
7. So after this discussion where would you place yourself on the PIT and why?

Session 3: Taking Responsibility

Worksheet 3.1- The PIT



Part 3: PIT STOP

1. Look back at your own storyboard account.
2. What behaviour do you most regret? Put this in the explosion symbol behind the wall.
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Session 4: Effects of Domestic Abuse

Background

This session focuses on the 'consequences' of domestic abuse.

Introduction

In the last session, we focused on the denial strategies you may have used in the past to try and protect yourself from how negative it feels to accept responsibility for being abusive or violent. The bottom line is that using violence or abuse is a choice- but that is good news- it means you can choose differently.

But in order to do that, you need to recognise- 'what is in it for you'?

Violence and abuse have a payoff- otherwise you wouldn't use them. They also have penalties. The key to choosing differently is for you to be able to measure up the payoff vs. the penalty.

Key Learning Points

- 1) For you to consider how violence and abuse has affected your relationship with your partner and children.
- 2) For you to increase your empathy for the impact of violence and abuse on your partners and children.
- 3) For you to weight up the consequences and commit to choosing non-violent ways to deal with conflict in the future

Session 4: The Effects of Domestic Abuse

Awareness of the impact of Domestic Abuse

Exercise 4.1- Consequences Review- Decision-Balance

Think about the consequences that the behaviour in the previous scenario discussed had for the person being abusive and others.

- 1) Complete the first worksheet in relation to the person using violence to solve the problem. Be sure to include the positive consequences of using violence and then list the negatives.
 - It is critical to acknowledge that there ARE positives to using violence. Otherwise, people would not choose to use it. However, the point is to demonstrate that these positives are short-lived, and carry an overwhelming amount of negatives along with them.
- 2) Now complete the second half of the 'In the Balance' worksheet in relation to if the person had used a non-violent/ non-abusive solution to the problem. Again they should list the positive and negative consequences of this decision.
- 3) These two sections should then be compared; paying particular attention to the differences between the amount of negatives and positives.
- 4) If you have more positives than negatives for the pro-violence solution-
 - DO NOT try and squeeze more positives out- instead examine the STRENGTH or IMPACT of the negatives (i.e. prison, criminal record, personal injury, harm family)
 - How much did it actually 'cost' or matter to the person? Give it a score out of 10 where 1 equals don't care at all and 10 equals this is very important
- 5) If you still think that the violent or abusive solution is the best- think if this fits with your own moral code.
 - Nobody can force you 'not to be violent'; you have to decide for yourself. As long as you understand and accept all the consequences such a decision may bring for you and everyone close to you.
 - If you do choose violence to solve problems, than it is exactly that-YOUR choice- and there will be no excuses.

In the Balance:



Negatives of how you chose to deal with the problem

Positives of how you chose to deal with the problem

Negatives of choosing the non-abusive solution

Positives of choosing the non-abusive solution

Session 4: The Effects of Domestic Abuse

Something I would like to apologise to my partner for:

Three ways I can show respect for my partner:

1.

2.

3.

Two ways I think arguments may have affected the children:

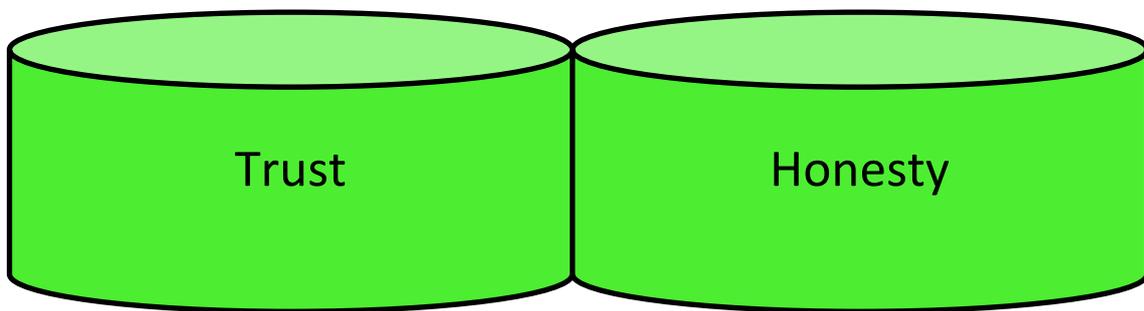
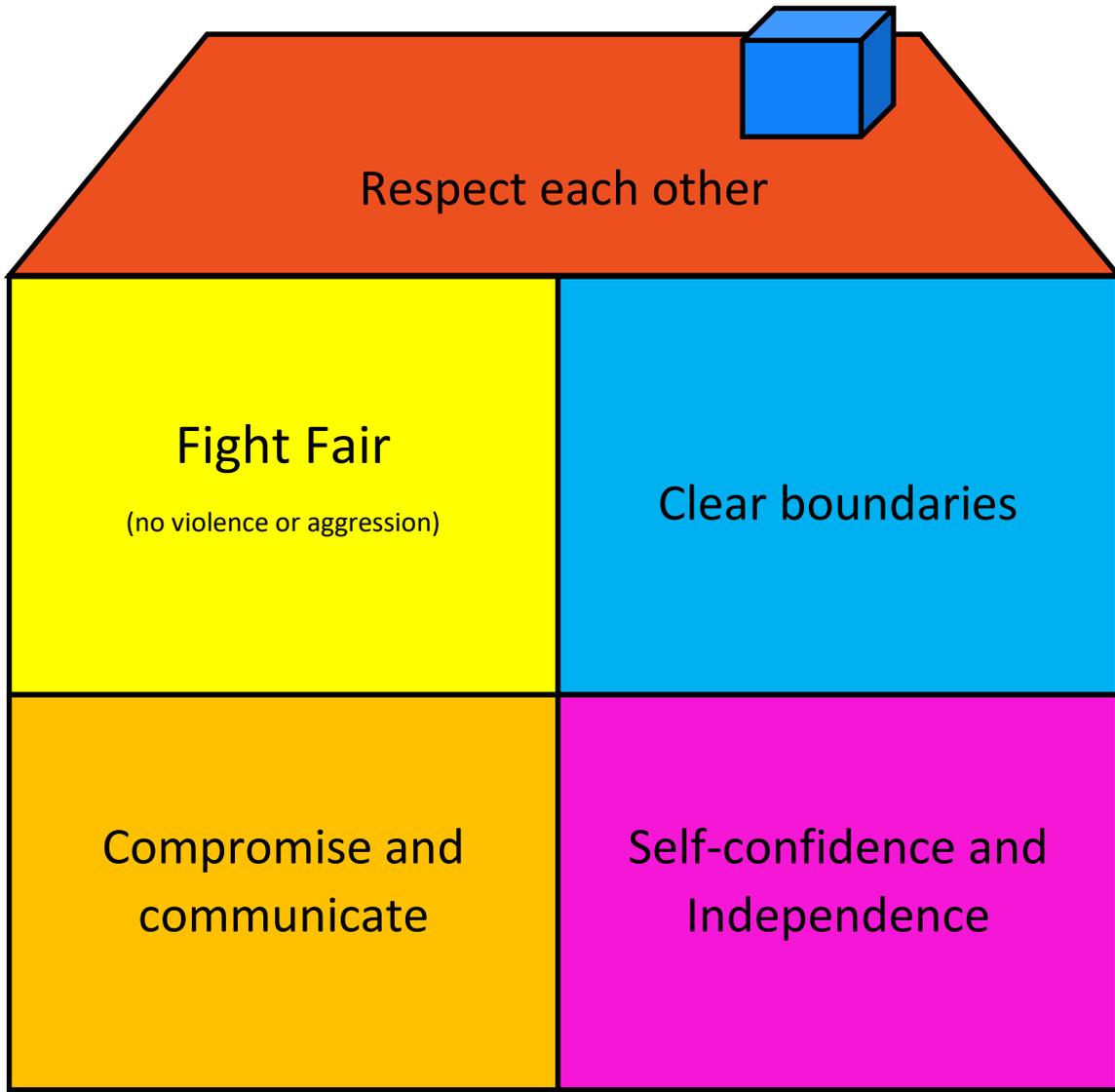
1.

2.

Two ways I can put the children first if my partner and I are arguing

1.

2.



HEALTHY HOUSE

Our House Rules

- ✓ If I swear at someone, I will apologise.
- ✓ If I shout at someone, I will apologise.
- ✓ If I get in somebody's personal space I will apologise.
- ✓ If I say something I know I shouldn't have, I will apologise.
- ✓ I will let the other person have a break to calm down if they ask for it.
- ✓ I will ask for a break to calm down if I need it.
- ✓ I will never try to frighten somebody to win an argument.
- ✓ I will vent my anger in a way that doesn't hurt anybody (including me) or smash anything, or ruin anything in our house.
- ✓ I will NEVER, EVER hit another person in this house- this is my home, this is my family- I will give them RESPECT AND LOVE.

