

WOMENS CIRCLE



Relationships

10 SESSION ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR WOMEN'S CIRCLES

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Week Seven Theme: **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Through activity and discussion, women will begin to explore what a healthy and an unhealthy relationship looks like, and will work to understand how imbalances and misuses of power and control can negatively affect their intimate relationships.

ACTIVITY

- Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships Activity
- Guided Discussion
- Power and Control Wheel Activity
- Journaling

MATERIALS

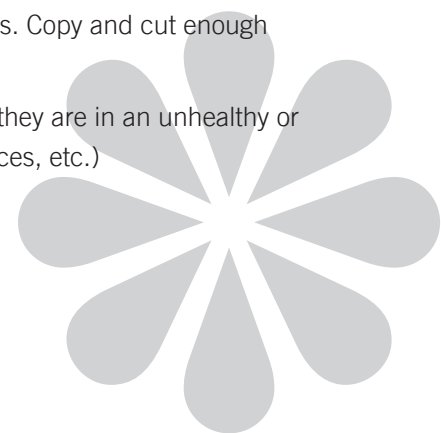
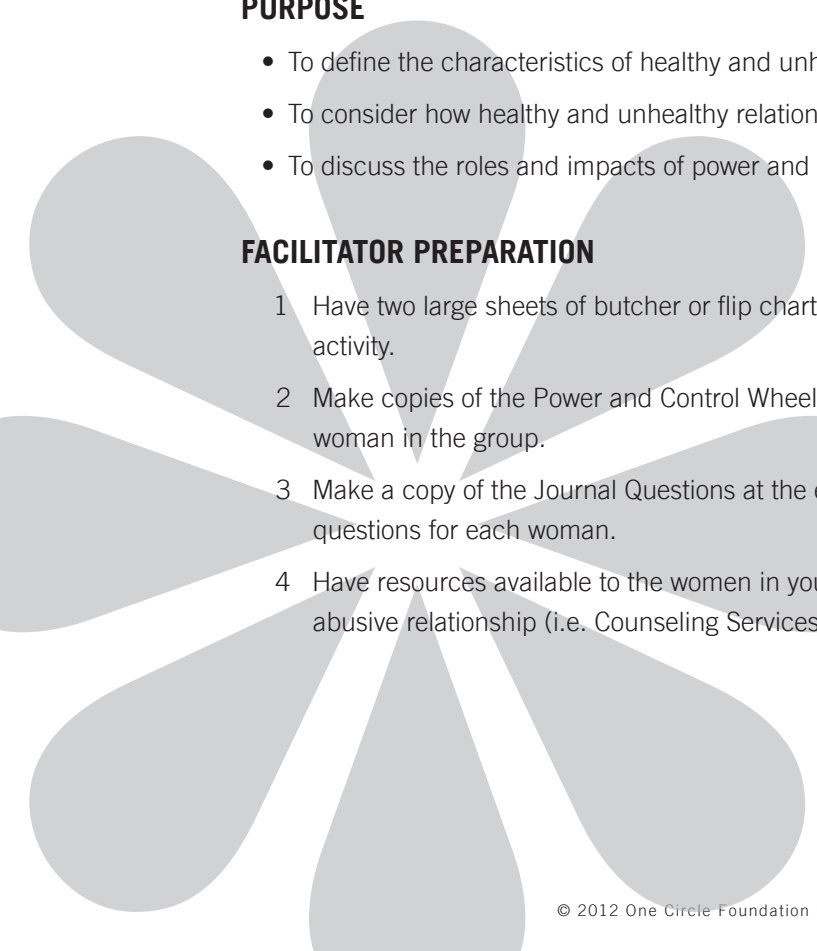
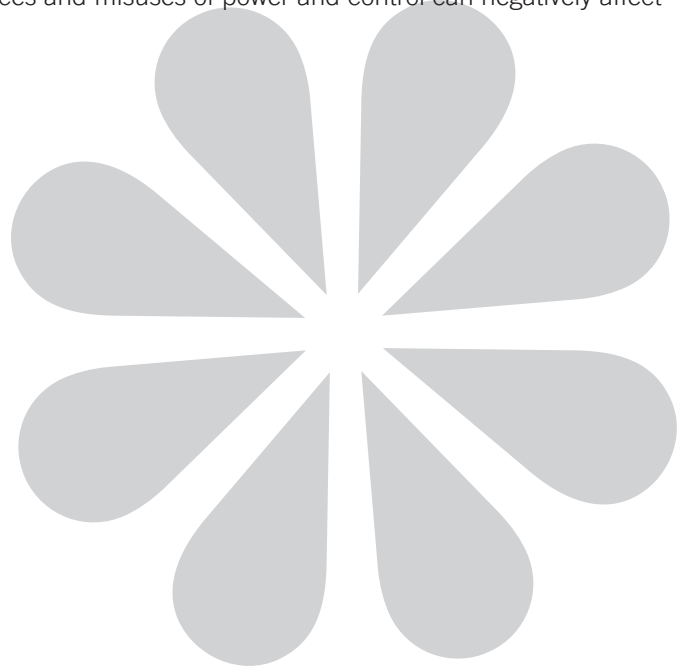
- Butcher Paper or Flip chart Paper
- 2 Sets of Markers
- Power and Control Wheel #1
- Power and Control Wheel #2
- Journals
- Journal Questions

PURPOSE

- To define the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- To consider how healthy and unhealthy relationships exist in women's lives
- To discuss the roles and impacts of power and control in intimate relationships

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- 1 Have two large sheets of butcher or flip chart paper ready for the Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships activity.
- 2 Make copies of the Power and Control Wheel #1 and the Power and Control Wheel #2 – one for each woman in the group.
- 3 Make a copy of the Journal Questions at the end of this unit and cut into strips. Copy and cut enough questions for each woman.
- 4 Have resources available to the women in your group should they reveal that they are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship (i.e. Counseling Services, Women's Shelters, Social Services, etc.)





Week Seven



OPENING RITUAL

Do the same opening ritual each time.



THEME INTRODUCTION

Introduce the theme of the week, “Healthy Relationships.”



CHECK-IN

Go around the circle and have each woman “check-in” as to what is going on in her life.



ACTIVITY 1

Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships

- 1 Tell the women that this activity is intended to help them define the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- 2 Divide the women into two groups.
- 3 Give each group one large sheet of butcher or flip chart paper and a set of markers.
- 4 Assign one group the task of defining the characteristics of *healthy relationships*. Assign the other group the task of defining the characteristics of *unhealthy relationships*.
- 5 Before they begin, say:
 - When you reflect on the type of relationship you are being asked to define, what feelings do you experience?
 - What words would you use to describe the type of relationship you are being asked to define?
 - Are there any examples of events/phrases that help describe the type of relationship you are being asked to define?
- 6 Tell the women to write on their paper anything they think is a characteristic of the type of relationship their group is being asked to define.
- 7 After 5 minutes, ask the groups to switch their papers and add any other characteristics that they think might help define that type of relationship.



SHARING OF ACTIVITY

- 1 Bring the women back together in the circle and ask:
 - What did you learn about unhealthy relationships because of this activity? What did you learn about healthy relationships?
 - Was there anything that surprised you?
 - Think about the relationships you have that fall into these categories. Where on your relationship circle do the “unhealthy relationships” fall? Why do you think that is?



Week Seven

- Where on your relationship circle do the “healthy relationships” fall? Why do you think that is?



ACTIVITY 2

Discussion: Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships

Introductory Remarks: *(To be made by the facilitator to begin the discussion)*

- Intimate relationships can be very rewarding and life-affirming
- Intimate relationships can also be dangerous and have negative impacts on the individuals involved
- It’s hard to find someone today who isn’t aware of someone who is in an unhealthy or controlling relationship
- Feelings about being a part of one of these relationships can be incredibly challenging and painful
- Feelings about watching someone struggle in one of these relationships can also be very confusing
- Being aware of the dynamics of an unhealthy relationship can help us take care of ourselves and others when these situations arise.

Introduce the objectives of the discussion to the group. Try to make it natural and informal – feel free to use your own words. Objectives:

- 1 To define the characteristics of unhealthy and healthy relationships
- 2 To explore the behaviors that coincide with power and control being exhibited in an intimate relationship and how they affect those involved
- 3 To discuss how women can protect themselves and gain support if they are in an unhealthy relationship and work to stay out of unhealthy relationships

Shape Discussion:

(Ask questions relating to Objective #1)

- 1 Describe some of the characteristics we have learned about healthy and unhealthy relationships and how they are different. What should a healthy relationship feel like? How can relationships change from healthy to unhealthy?

(Listen and reflect.)

Note to Facilitator: After discussing Objective #1, prepare to do Activity 3 by using the following transition statement. Say:
“Before we talk more about unhealthy relationships, we need to be able to identify what types of behaviors really define power and control in an unhealthy relationship. This next activity will help us to do that.”



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ACTIVITY 3

Power and Control Wheel

- Introduce the activity by discussing with the women the role of power and control in relationships. Explain to the women that relationships of this sort are difficult and that this activity may be hard for some in the group based on their experiences. If at any time, someone needs a break, or needs to talk further, be prepared for this and consider using the talking piece.
- Give each woman a copy of the Power and Control Wheel #1. Ask them to find a comfortable space in the room where they can work silently on this activity.
- Invite the women to review the wheel, and fill in examples next to each “pie piece” by using words, phrases, or sentences that further describes the word listed on the wheel.
- Once the women have completed their wheel, bring them back together and thank them for their participation. Hand out a copy of the Power and Control Wheel #2 to each woman in the group.

(Continue with questions relating to Objective #2)

- 2 What types of behaviors define a relationship where one individual is in a position of power over the other? Were you surprised by any of the words that were used to define power and control in some of the areas of the pie? Why do partners exhibit these behaviors to women they care about? How do partners “justify” not treating women with respect? What types of things do women say to justify these types of behaviors in their own relationships? Why do some women “put up with” abuse, the exerting of power and control? What beliefs or conditions prevent women from standing up for themselves? How does it feel to witness or be a part of an unhealthy relationship? How does an unhealthy relationship affect other areas of your life (i.e. school, other friendships, jobs, family)?

(Listen and reflect.)

(Continue with questions relating to Objective #3)

- 3 What are some ways that you can support others who may be in unhealthy relationships? What are ways that women can be strong and safe, and protect themselves from unhealthy relationships? What can you do to take care of yourself when you experience misuse of power and control in your relationships? What kind of support would you need if you are in an unhealthy relationship? What are some steps that you can take to get out of an unhealthy relationship? What can you do to work towards staying out of unhealthy relationships?



Week Seven

Summarize

Take time to summarize all of the key points that were made and the discussion as a whole. The facilitator can summarize or the participants can. Tell them what THEY said.



ACTIVITY 4

(Optional) Journaling in Group

Depending on how the women react during the previous discussion and on your time, determine whether you might want to add this optional journaling time to allow for some quiet reflection and healing time for the women. If so, proceed with instructions below:

- 1 Once the discussion is concluded, ask the women to journal for a few minutes on how they would personally define healthy and unhealthy relationships. Some questions they might consider are:
 - How do I define a healthy relationship?
 - How do I define an unhealthy relationship?
 - If I have unhealthy relationships in my life, what could I do to remove them from my life or change them?
 - Do I need help with any of my unhealthy relationships? Who can I ask for help?
- 2 After the women are finished journaling, go around the circle using the talking piece and have each participant answer the following question:
 - Name the one most important thing you will take from this discussion and use in an intimate relationship during the next week.



JOURNALING

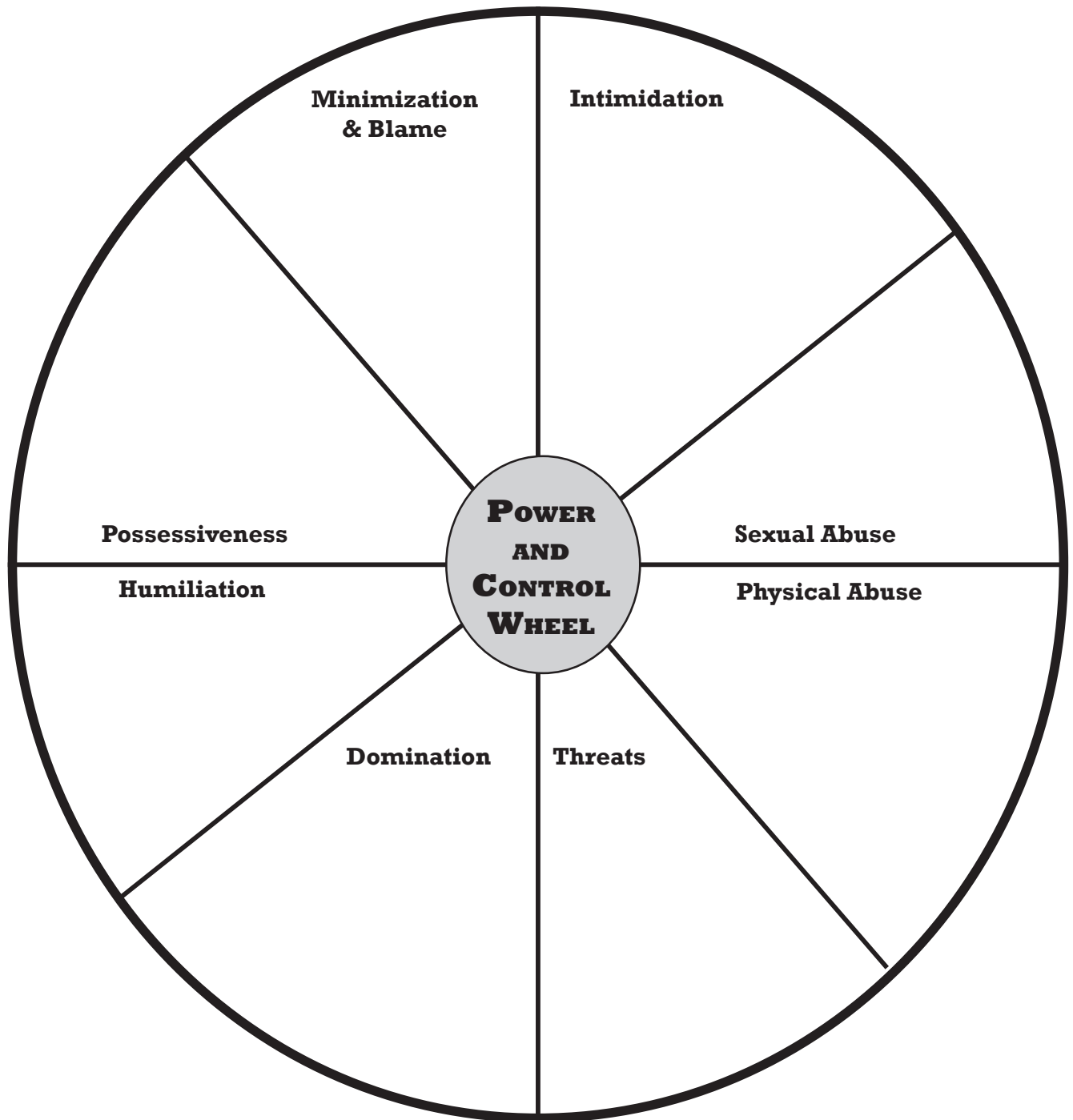
- 1 Handout the journaling questions for Week 7. The take home journaling questions for Week 7 are:
 - Is there any person, including myself, in my relationship circle that is an unhealthy relationship?
 - What resources can I seek out to help me with this relationship?
- 2 Remind the women to bring their journals to circle with them next week.



CLOSING RITUAL

Bring the women together for your closing ritual.

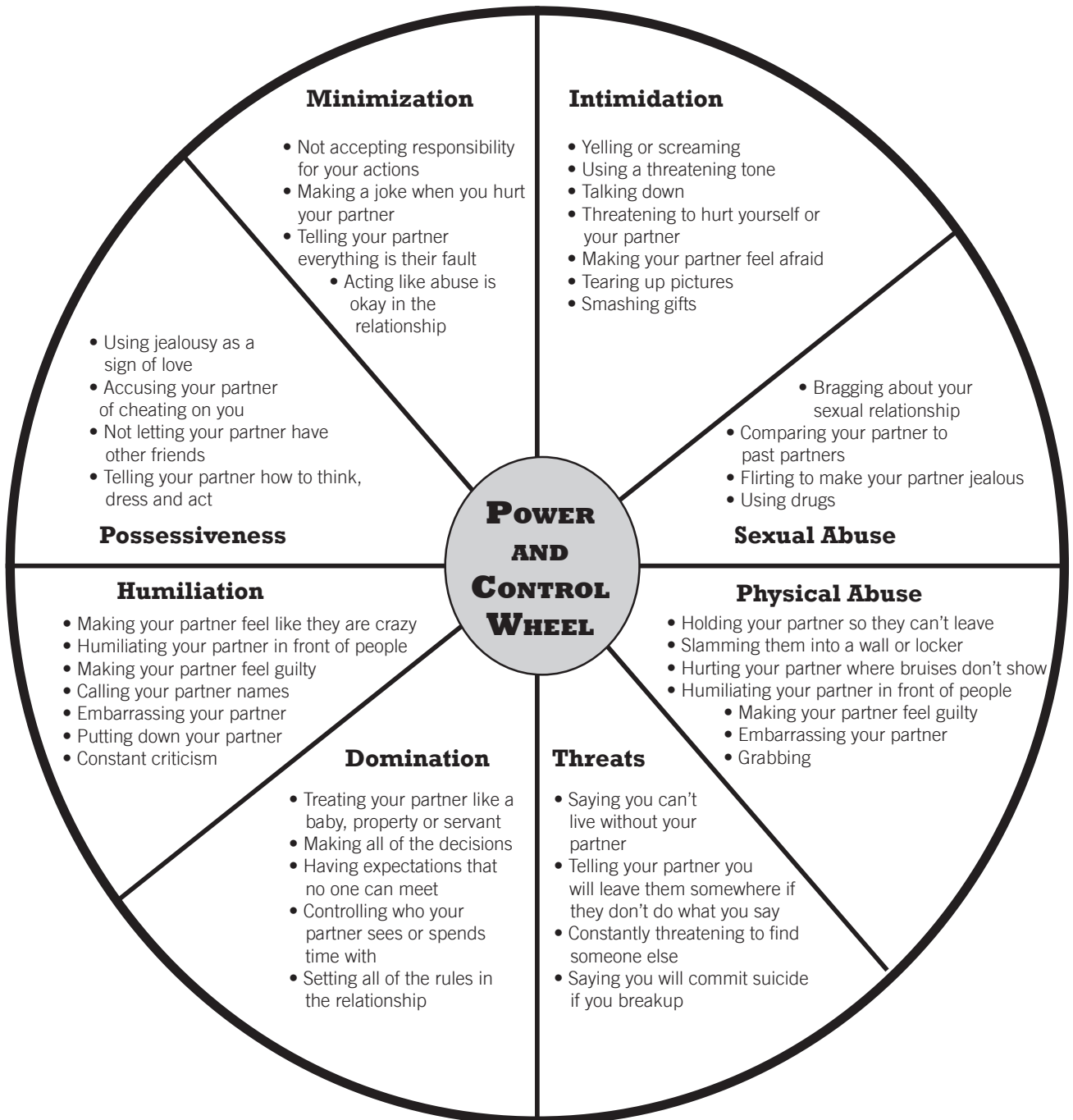
Power and Control Wheel #1



Power and Control Wheel #2

POWER & CONTROL In Intimate Relationships

When one person in a relationship repeatedly scares, hurts, or puts down the other person, it is abuse. The Power & Control Wheel lists examples of each form of abuse. Remember, abuse is much more than slapping or grabbing someone.



A relationship full of control
is really out of control



Week Seven Journaling Questions

CUT INTO STRIPS – ONE FOR EACH WOMAN

Week Seven Journaling Questions

Theme: Healthy Relationships

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