



## Fragile Soul Support Group Facilitator Guide

### Preliminary Work

Meet with your Women's Ministries leader and your pastor to receive approval to begin a support group for victims of domestic violence in your area. Determine who your lead team will be to help you with this ministry, and gather them for intensive prayer over the next several weeks.

Have each of your team leaders read the online unit, "Fragile Soul," at [equipwomen.ag.org](http://equipwomen.ag.org). They will each need to create a free account to access the information they need.

### Search

Search and gather all the important local and state contacts for domestic violence victims. Look for women's shelters, law enforcement numbers, and domestic violence outreach organizations. If possible, schedule meetings with each of them. Become familiar with the **National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE.**

### Promote

Create a flyer with the dual purpose of promoting your support group and providing important numbers for women who may not be able to attend a group session. Add your contact information. Place it in the women's restrooms of your church, and in local public locations whenever possible. Ask for the group to be promoted through Sunday announcements and on your church's website. Don't add the meeting's location, but use the phrase, "Call this number for more information." This will help protect the safety of your participants.

### Equipment/Supplies

Gather the equipment and supplies you will need, or ask for donations. You will want to provide a Bible for each participant who does not have one. Provide folders, pens and notepads for each participant as well.

### Co-Facilitators

Choose a co-facilitator to assist you with attendance, collecting and distributing handouts, to help prepare snacks, to help you pray, and follow up with the participants. Delegate these activities to more than one assistant when possible. »»

## Snacks

If possible, have available snacks and bottles of water available at each meeting. Participants may come straight from work or a busy day. Take time at the end of each meeting to converse with them while they eat.

## Interviews/Screening

Interview each participant to screen their needs and to get to know them. Assess their needs; the first question to ask them is if they are safe. Assess the risk for their participation in the groups, if they are married, single, have kids, etc. Some of them might not be ready for a support group but would be ready for individual therapy/counseling sessions. Refer them to professionals, depending on each individual need. If they need practical items like food, housing, or help with finances, refer them to a local agency, whether food pantry, housing authority, or local charity.

## Security

Let your church's security team know the dates and times for your meetings, and explain to them the nature of the meetings. Make sure that at least one security guard will be on duty in your building during support group sessions.

## Child Care

Join forces with your church's youth ministry or discipleship area to provide child care while you run the support groups. (Most of the participants have school age kids and it will be impossible for them to participate without child care).

## Forms

Take these forms to each meeting or session:

1. Attendance sheet
2. Confidentiality Statement
3. Referral form
4. Screening/Interview form

## Opening Session

1. Welcome each participant.
2. Distribute the Participation Form (Allow time for them to complete this form).
3. Explain and distribute the Confidentiality Form. (Allow time for them to complete this form as well.)
4. Establish support group guidelines.  
Ask participants for their input. Give some examples: be on time, respect others' opinions. Use at least five of the suggestions. (Print these to hand out in future meetings or post them in your meeting room.)
5. Make announcements about future meetings.

## Follow-Up Sessions

Here are suggested topics for follow-up sessions with your participants:

### Session 2: What is Domestic Violence? Power and Control

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verse:** 2 Timothy 3:1-5

**Objective:** Define domestic violence, give statistics, learn about power and control; end with group discussion and prayer.

### Session 3: Equality

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verses:** Malachi 2:15; Acts 26:20; 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:28

**Objective:** Discuss the Domestic Violence Cycle and why people abuse others.

### Session 4: “Am I in an Abusive Relationship?” and Safety Plan

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verses:** Romans 12:9,14,17,19

**Objective:** Learn how to identify an abusive relationship; help the participants to prepare a safety plan.

### Session 5: My True Identity in Christ

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verse:** Concordances to look up Scriptures about who we are in Christ.

**Objective:** Discuss self-esteem and finding our true identity in Christ.

### Session 6: The Power of Forgiveness/It’s Not Your Fault

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verses:** Matthew 6:14-15, Luke 17:3-4, Ephesians 1:7, 4:31-32, Colossians 3:13

**Objective:** Discuss that the abuse wasn’t the participant’s fault, and how to be free in the name of Jesus. Teach the participants that they can forgive themselves and forgive those who hurt them.

### Session 7: Safety and Self-Defense Class

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verses:** Mathew 6:14-15, Luke 17:3-4, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 4:31-32, Colossians 3:13

**Objective:** Invite a self-defense expert to teach the participants how to reduce the risk of exposure to violence, and to defend themselves in an attack.

### Session 8: Closing Gathering

Open with a group prayer and a worship song.

**Bible Verses:** Mathew 6:14-15, Luke 17:3-4, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 4:31-32, Colossians 3:13

**Objective:** Celebrate that the participants have finished all the sessions, and have received tools and knowledge that they can now apply to their daily life. These tools should help them go through the process of deciding what is best for their situation. Tell them they are beautiful and important to God and His Kingdom. Consider meeting in a restaurant or in a fellowship hall of your church; provide a meal.