

SIKH FAMILY CENTER'S SEHJ SERIES, WORKSHOP 2 FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

A WORKSHOP ON
COMMUNICATION, SELF
AWARENESS & RELATIONSHIPS





ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended for those who wish to facilitate Sikh Family Center's Sejh Series Workshop 2 on Communication, Self-Awareness, and Relationships. It incorporates conversation, exploration and activism. Please note, this workshop is designed for youth aged 16 and above.

Note: For those curious about Sejh Series Workshop 1, it is available here:

<https://sikhfamilycenter.org/sejh-series/>

Each workshop is free-standing; they are not sequential, so you can host Workshop 2 without first completing workshop 1.

The workshop in its entirety is designed to take 75-90 minutes.

Sikh Family Center is a national nonprofit organization in the U.S. that promotes community well-being with a particular focus on gender justice. We provide trauma-centered resources for victim-survivors of violence while working to change the social and cultural conditions that allow gendered violence to occur in the first place. Our training, outreach, and advocacy are grounded in cultural tradition, grassroots power, and intergenerational healing.

www.sikhfamilycenter.org

Email: contact@sikhfamilycenter.org

Sikh Family Center National Helpline

866.SFC.SEWA | 866.732.7392

Free | Private | Punjabi + English | Non-Emergency



VISION FOR SEHJ SERIES

Given the prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual assault in our society, this workshop has been designed with the intention of trauma-centered education and violence prevention. This workshop is an attempt to develop better awareness and communication skills to establish healthy habits in our relationships.

This workshop does not seek to forward any one statement on the Sikh position on premarital sexual activity, nor does it aim to negate the diverse positions held by individual families on this subject. Rather, it addresses the reality that several Sikh young adults find themselves with questions and in situations that are not adequately addressed in our current community conversations.

This workshop hopes to encourage dominant individuals to become more self-aware as much as it hopes to empower less dominant voices to speak up and express their feelings. This workshop does not focus on sexual health or pregnancy prevention.

Violence is a learned behavior that is rooted in social and cultural practices. With this foundational understanding in mind, this workshop has been designed to be culturally relevant. We have included room for discussion about how our socialization as Punjabi individuals impacts our engagement in platonic, romantic, and sexual relationships. We have been careful to recognize that such socialization has cultural, not religious origins. We encourage you to bring in personal experience, as appropriate, and to tie in Sikh principles that emphasize respect for consent and personal boundaries, while being cognizant of how their behavior may affect others.

WORKSHOP AT A GLANCE

Workshop Sections	Key Topics	Activity	Approx. Time
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why This Workshop is Needed • Objectives • Note About Gender • Group Agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Icebreaker 	10 min
Healthy Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a healthy relationship? • Key Takeaway • Cultivating Self-Awareness • Radical Self-Love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Discussion 	10 min
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Styles • Read Between the Lines • Mastering Assertive Communication • Communication in the Punjabi-Sikh community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Choice Poll • Group Discussion 	20 min
The Dynamics of Culture and Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Power & Control • Balance Power Dynamics in Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group discussion in breakout rooms 	30 min
Expressions of Masculinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Man Box • Healthy Masculinity • Gurbani reflection • Key Takeaway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Discussion 	15 min
Conclusion/Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share key takeaways • Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Discussion 	5min



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FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

We recommend that two people work as co-facilitators for this workshop. However, past workshops have been successfully completed by solo facilitators as well! Our workshop is ready to you to coordinate, facilitate and review with or without Sikh Family Center support. Sikh Family Center provides ongoing support to individuals as they read through and consider their role as facilitators for this workshop. You may contact a Sikh Family Center team member in advance, to prepare for reactions, questions, and ideas. Email us at contact@sikhfamilycenter.org.

Mandated Reporting

Mandated reporters are people required by law to report suspected or known instances of abuse.

If you are a mandated reporter due to your job, please state so *before* continuing with the presentation. As a mandated reporter, you must share any information you have regarding an incident of abuse with the University Title IX Coordinator.

- The incident(s) of abuse may include: sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, discrimination based on sex/gender (including sexual orientation and gender identity), and related retaliation.
- The University can respond appropriately and provide needed resources and supportive measures.
- It is the victim-survivor's choice whether to report the incident to law enforcement.
- Confidential Resources are not required to report incidents.

About Accessibility

Ensure that the meeting space is accessible. Do not assume people's hearing, sight, or mobility within the context of the space. It's a good idea to have people check in about their accessibility needs before convening the space, and during the opening introductions.

FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Tips for In-Person Workshop

1. Have participants register in advance for the workshop to better prepare the venue, accommodate accessibility needs, and plan activities and group discussions accordingly.
2. Take particular care in selecting a venue for the workshop. A room with enough space for participants to break out into smaller groups is preferable. Participants should sit in a semi-circle or horseshoe shape, preferably at tables, facing one another.
3. Designate extra seating in the back of the room for latecomers and encourage participants to move closer to the front. Proceed with the discussion, and when there is a natural break, welcome the latecomer into the room. Introduce yourself and briefly explain that this workshop adheres to a few key group agreements: confidentiality, curiosity, and respect. Ask the latecomer to introduce themselves and share their gender pronouns. Then, continue the discussion.
5. Know what materials you will need ahead of time: projector, white board markers, hand outs, adequate seating for participants etc.

Tips for Using a Virtual Platform

1. Strongly encourage participants to use the video feature via Zoom platform, to build community and rapport. It is important to be able to see facial expressions and body language, allowing participants and facilitators to “read the room” and react accordingly.
2. At the same time, the workshops must be accessible to all, as well as sensitive to the many stresses and even traumas folks are juggling. Video is optional; require only a 2-minute facial check in at the beginning so as to ensure safety of participants.
3. Inform participants of the technical features you will be using to make the most of the interactive session; ask them to “test” them while waiting for the session to begin. E.g. chat box, raise hands, mute/unmute.
4. Be sure to learn the features of Zoom/tech platform in advance – e.g. how to mute everyone, how to make a poll, how to create breakout rooms.
5. For more meaningful discussion and easily manageable breakout rooms, allow 5-7 people per breakout room. Feel free to contact us if you are concerned your group is too big.

Note: Zoom automatically splits participants into separate sessions; the number of participants per room is based on the total number of participants in the meeting.

Sikh Family Center can help answer questions about how to set up necessary features for this workshop on Zoom.

FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Resources & Safety

Consider the following tips and techniques *prior* to facilitating the workshop either in-person or on a virtual platform.

Practice Grounding Techniques Exercises.

Refer to page 8 of this guide for two techniques: *Calm Down Power and Guided Imagery*

Have a list of some resources accessible at the beginning of the workshop.

- Sikh Family Center National Helpline
 - 866.732.7392 | www.sikhfamilycenter.org
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
 - 1.800.799.SAFE (7233) | www.thehotline.org
- Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center
 - www.stalkingawareness.org
- Suicide Prevention Hotline | 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - 988 | <https://988lifeline.org/>
- Rape/ Sexual Assault: Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)
 - 1.800.656.HOPE | www.rainn.org
- Tech Safety
 - www.techsafety.org/

Foster a brave and safe space recognizing that safety is never guaranteed 100% and there will always be some discomfort, exercising autonomy.

Note:

For the virtual session: Add resources in the chat box.

For the in-person session: Write resources on the white board/chalk board.

Important Reminders: Triggers & Being Sensitive

At the start of the session, state that you recognize this is a meaningful topic for people to discuss and that you are sensitive to the fact that it may be triggering for some. Ask participants to please be considerate when choosing their words and to avoid providing overly detailed descriptions. Remind participants that this is part of our guideline for respecting one another.

FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Resources & Safety

Ways to support a participant in distress

Consider what to do if a participant is in distress and needs immediate support, regardless of what was pre-planned for the session.

What to do: There will be times when the facilitator may need to ask for help. This may include the aid of a co-facilitator.

If there is no co-facilitator, see if the larger group can have a small self-guided break or create breakout groups, and use this time to talk to the person who needs some support. Then, direct this person to the resources and contact numbers you have saved. While doing so, convey the golden rules: You are not alone; you have options; and I see and believe that this is a really challenging time and topic for you (other options below).

During the virtual session: Ask the participant privately in the chat if they need support; offer them space to share in a personal break out room.

When speaking with the participant remember to:

- Remain calm.
 - Be mindful of everyone's struggle, avoid asking "Why?"
 - Try "How come?" or "Do you want to share more?"
 - "Why" can be aggressive, judgmental, and generally comes off too strong. It may provoke defensiveness.
- Listen intentionally and reflectively.
 - Try: "It sounds like..." or "You are wondering if..." or "I hear you saying..."
 - While the participant is talking, use active listening by nodding, "uh huh", "mm hmm".
 - After the participant has finished talking, try repeating back key words and phrases that they said. This not only serves to summarize their thoughts, but also helps clarify both your and the group's understanding of their thoughts (reflective listening).
- Avoid giving advice.
- Ask open-ended questions.
 - Try: "Can you describe...?" or "Explain..." or "What are your thoughts on?"
 - Closed-ended questions force dialogue to stop and pause. Open-ended questions will help you facilitate a dialogue and allow you to obtain nuanced comments and stories from participants.
- Offer them the choice to return to the workshop or leave.
- Share appropriate resources.

FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Resources & Safety

If a participant discloses they may be experiencing unsafe/unhealthy relationship dynamics:

- Remind them it is not their fault.
- Validate their experiences and feelings.
 - Try: “Thank you for sharing and trusting us with that reflection/experience” or “That’s probably very powerful to hear for others who have gone through similar experiences.”
 - People might be bold about what they choose to share. Don’t back away if it is uncomfortable!
 - Be mindful of your facial expressions; they can communicate a lot. If you have an involuntary reaction like 'Oh gosh!' explain that it's your own internal processing, and not a judgment on what the person shared.
- Encourage them to discuss a plan for care and safety with someone they trust such as a trained advocate.
- Share appropriate resources.
- You may not have all the answers, but here are some examples of what you might say:
 - “I appreciate you trusting me and sharing this, even though it looks like it is making you sad to talk about it.”
 - “I may not have much knowledge about that, but I do know of some resources and options that could be helpful.”
 - “I want to be able to listen and support you, but I want to be honest that I do not have the space to...”

FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Resources & Safety

2 minute Grounding Techniques to bring yourself and the group to the present

Grounding techniques often use senses (focusing on things you can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell).

Option 1: Calm Down Power to get centered in your body.

Ask participants to put the palms of their hands together with their fingers on one hand touching the wrist of the opposite hand. Push the heels of their palms together. Straighten their back. Feel where their feet are. Take a slow deep breath and let it out again slowly and quietly.

(adapted from <https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/emotional-safety-skills-for-all-ages/>)

Option 2: Using guided imagery to help you relax.

Ask participants to close their eyes and visualize a specific calming image or peaceful scene. It could be a place during a specific time, with specific people. Try to make the experience as vivid as possible, incorporating all of their senses into the imagery.

(adapted from https://wgac.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/05/EmotionalSafetyPlan_updated.pdf)

Identify what you need for yourself as a facilitator.

For example, what coping skills and self-care activities do you find helpful?

Coping strategies are the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions we use to help us manage and reduce stress. Some coping skills are active (addressing the stress), while others are avoidant (trying to ignore the issue for a while).

- Try to get enough sleep, hydrate, and find your own grounded place before preparing and presenting on this material. How you approach them--calm, clear, confident--will help inform how others approach these topics, ideas and calls to action. A lot more is *caught* rather than *taught*!

Follow up with Sikh Family Center to debrief about the session.

Get in touch to schedule a time with a staff member via email: contact@sikhfamilycenter.org.

- Use this time to share:
 - Feedback about the content presented in the workshop.
 - Challenges or concerns during, and/or after the workshop you may need support addressing.

FACILITATION TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Handling Disruptive Behavior

Because of the nature of the topics addressed by these activities, it is possible that some participants may be disruptive (e.g. use inappropriate humor) to rally others not to participate. The aim of the below 'Call Out' Strategies is not to encourage the development of destructive emotions (i.e. shame, guilt) but rather to strategically engage participants in critical self-reflection and eventually to call them in. The hope is for individuals to reflect on why they act the way they act, and why they believe what they believe.

Call out behavior.

- "I noticed you made a joke when we started talking about..."
- "I noticed you made a gesture about ... can you tell me more about why you chose to make that gesture?"
- "I am not doing this to pick on you, but to understand more about what is going on for you."
- "Could I invite you to share what you are feeling? Our external expressions might affect our community, and those here. But I don't want to assume what you are feeling internally, would you care to share?"

Use personal narrative.

Bring in personal narrative when appropriate to model vulnerability.

Don't know how to answer a question?

Ask the audience for their opinions to buy yourself time as you gather your thoughts!

Note: Different people have different trauma-reactions. Some people, when triggered, may adopt traditionally "disruptive" behaviors. Try your best to assume positive intentions. But one person's reactions should never hurt another participant: that's the line you are walking!

INTRODUCTION

Note: If you are a mandated reporter due to your job, please state so *before* continuing with the presentation. **Review page 6 of this guide for details.**

Slide 1: Sikh Family Center's Sehj Series

Introduce yourself and the workshop:

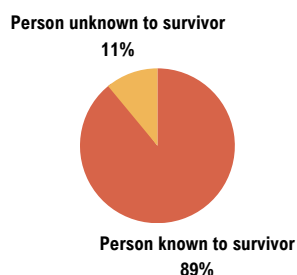
This workshop creates space for dialogue and education around communication, relationships, and boundaries. The goal is to leave here knowing and recognizing the signs of healthy versus unhealthy relationships, in order to help you strengthen your current relationships and build new ones.

Slide 2: Why This Workshop is Needed

Teen and youth dating violence is very prevalent. Dating violence can take place in person, online, or through technology. Statistics show that one in three girls in the U.S. is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence. Source: loveisrespect.org

In a survey completed by Sikh Family Center from 2017-19 (n=500), a national needs assessment confirmed that 1 in 4 Sikh women and 1 in 10 Sikh men report facing family violence at some point in their lives.

Other statistics from Sikh Family Center needs assessment indicate: 9 in 10 victims of sexual violence report being harmed by someone they know.



About Sikh Family Center:

Sikh Family Center is a national nonprofit organization in the U.S. that promotes community well-being with a particular focus on gender justice. We provide trauma-centered resources for victim-survivors of violence while working to change the social and cultural conditions that allow gendered violence to occur in the first place. Our training, outreach, and advocacy are grounded in cultural tradition, grassroots power, and intergenerational healing.

Slide 3: Hearing From Sikh Teens & Youth

Sikh Family Center conducted a qualitative anonymous survey of Sikh teens & youth. We asked what they would tell adults in their life about teen/youth dating violence (including emotional, physical, verbal, psychological, cyber abuse).

Read some of the responses from the survey, which highlight youth experiences and provide space for them to share their wisdom and messages with adults.

INTRODUCTION

Slide 4: Group Agreements

Only read out the agreements. You can paraphrase: Confidentiality; Curiosity; and Respect are at the core!

1. Consider what is shared here stays here; what is learned here LEAVES here.

- If anyone shares a personal anecdote, don't go around sharing. But definitely take the lessons you've learned here out in the world. There's no guarantee or assumption that your friends, family, etc have had access to the same knowledge you might have.

2. Respect different experiences; recognize your privileges.

- It's important to remember we all come with different experiences and identities. We should all feel comfortable saying what we are feeling, but we should also recognize what we think and feel is a product of our specific experiences. E.g. How I feel about a particular issue might be totally different if I were a different gender.

3. Maintain an inclusive space.

- Use language that is familiar to everyone in the room. Define any new language or words that might not be so well known, such as gender identity, queer, etc to ensure our discussion remains accessible and inclusive.

4. No expectations, no assumptions.

- If you leave, it could be because you feel a certain way, or because you have some place else to be. You are here by your own choice. We hope you participate, but it's not expected.
- Do what you need to do to take care of yourself during this workshop.

5. Assume best intentions.

- If someone says something you do not agree with, do not assume that they are sexist or racist or meant to be harmful.
- This is meant to be a learning environment. If you have a question that may not be so "PC/Politically Correct", ask it! We will do our part to assume best intentions when you do.

Slide 5: Objectives

This workshop is an attempt to develop better awareness and communication skills to establish healthy habits in our relationships.

The specific objectives for this workshop include:

1. Build an appreciation of what healthy relationships entail.
2. Cultivate self-awareness and understand our personal style of communication.
3. Consider the role of culture and power in relationships.
4. Develop an understanding of healthy masculinity.

INTRODUCTION

Slide 6: Gender Pronouns

Use appropriate gender pronouns, words that function in place of a name. You can't always know what someone's pronouns are just by looking at them. Asking and correctly using someone's pronouns is one of the basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity.

- A "gender pronoun" is the pronoun that a person chooses to use for themselves. Gender pronouns specifically refer to people that you are talking about: she/her/hers; he/him/his; they/them; theirs
- Gender neutral choices may be: they or ze (pronounced "zee")

Continue the workshop by introducing yourself with your pronouns and asking participants to do the same, if they would like. For example, "My name is _____, and my pronouns are she/her/hers."

Important tip: Perhaps note how in fact, in Punjabi, we regularly and automatically use the singular "they" (gender-neutral pronoun "Unhaan") as a mark of respect...

Slide 7: Ice Breaker

Objective: This activity hopes to set the stage of the workshop by acknowledging the diversity of experiences and values in the room.

Instructions (under 10 participants)

1. Ask for a volunteer to go first, and choose a question to ask them.
2. Then, ask the volunteer to choose a question and another participant to ask it to.
3. Continue until everyone has answered.

Instructions (If you have over 10 participants; to manage time and maintain interest):

1. Explain activity to participants and ask up to 1 person to use the hand-raise function if they would like to participate.
2. Ask a participant with their hand raised one of the questions.
3. Then, that participant chooses the next person with their hand raised to ask a question, and so on.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Slide 8: Healthy Relationships

Briefly reference key words on slide: Healthy relationships entail support, partnership, trust, autonomy, intimacy, and communication.

Slide 9: What Makes a Healthy Relationship?

Briefly go through each component:

- Respect: Learning about the other person and valuing what's important to them, maintaining boundaries.
- Trust: Trust is earned over time and it can be lost with a broken promise.
- Honesty: It is the "Real Me" that your partner wants to get to know.
- Communication: *How* we show our respect, trust, and honesty. Communication is about listening and sharing thoughts and feelings.

Slide 10: Key Takeaway

Communication is at the heart of forming our interpersonal relationships.

- It allows us to test and be tested by those we are/aspire to be in relationships with.

Our ability to communicate clearly and honestly is enhanced by the depth of our self-awareness.

- Cultivating self-awareness and acceptance helps build a strong foundation for robust relationships.

Slide 11: Cultivating Self Awareness

ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਘਰ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

prabh abinaasee ghar mehi paaeiaa ||

I have found the Immortal Almighty within the home of my own self. (M5, Ang 97)

Gurbani consistently instructs us to cultivate a truer version of ourselves, to do the internal work to address our trauma, hardships, and the barriers that stand in the way of our personal and professional goals.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Slide 12: Radical Self-Love

“When we can see ourselves as we truly are and accept ourselves, we build the necessary foundation for self love.” - bell hooks (American scholar and activist)

This ties in nicely with the Gurbani tukk. One can attain a deeper connection to Akal Purakh, through the work done to develop a deeper understanding of one's true self.

Self-criticism vs. Self-confidence

Research suggests that we are usually harder on ourselves than we are on others. There is a misplaced belief that self-criticism will motivate us to succeed. However, beating up on ourselves often makes an unpleasant situation or setback even more stressful.

Self-confidence is cultivated by the willingness to take steps towards your goals, even when you might be anxious, or the outcome is uncertain.

Harvard Business Review:
Research suggests that when we see ourselves clearly, we are more confident and more creative. We make sounder decisions, build stronger relationships, and communicate more effectively. We're less likely to lie, cheat, and steal.

(<https://hbr.org/2018/01/what-self-awareness-really-is-and-how-to-cultivate-it>)

COMMUNICATION

Slide 13: Communication

Briefly reference key words on slide: Communication involves several processes: speaking, listening and writing, as well as perception and non-verbal communication.

Slide 14: Poll - How do you prefer to keep in touch?

This is a brief poll designed to get participants talking about types of communication.

Instructions for in-person setting:

On the white board tally up how many prefer each option. Find the trends and talk about how the group agrees on which types are most relevant.

Tools: White board, dry erase marker

Instructions for virtual setting:

Create a multiple choice poll question. Set up this example as a *multiple choice* poll, where the participants can select all that apply.

Ask participants to complete the poll based on which they might feel comfortable using. Share the results and open for discussion before moving on to the explanation.

Discussion Questions:

How do these methods help communication?
e.g. Makes communication easier; quick; convenient; expressive.

How do these methods make being understood more challenging?
e.g. Mixed messages; hard to understand tone in text versus over the phone vs. in person

How do you prefer to keep in touch?

- Text Messaging
- Phone calls
- Video calls/FaceTime
- Social media (i.e. Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, FB)
- Face to Face
- Other?

Note: The polling feature for meetings allows you to create single choice or multiple choice polling questions. You will be able to launch the poll during your meeting and gather the responses from participants.

Poll questions should be set up before starting the Zoom meeting. Polls can be conducted anonymously.

COMMUNICATION

Slide 15: Communication Styles

Refer to Handout in Appendix: Communication Styles

Instructions: Ask volunteers to read each communication style or begin reading out examples of each. E.g. Passive style: “Fine, whatever.” “Whatever you want.”

Note: Inform participants that there are self reflection questions available as a handout.

Instructions for virtual setting: share a link for the handout in chat for participants to download/access.

Our cultural understanding of the world and everything in it affects our style of communication. It influences the words we speak, as well as our behavior. It is often said within the community there are distinct differences between Punjabi-Sikhs who come from the *pindh* or the *sherh*, from Punjab versus Delhi or Calcutta, from *Amrika* or *Eng-LAND*. There are slight variations in how Punjabi is spoken according to region, whether from the *Doaba* region or the *Majha* or *Malwa* regions. Can you imagine how oversimplifications and assumptions among Punjabi-Sikhs would affect communication?

We dress, look, communicate, and express ourselves in a variety of ways. When we communicate with others, we might come across to others as assertive but nice, way too nice or trying too hard, or just plain aggressive.

There are different styles of communication, such as passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive. Note that all of us use these communication styles and it depends on the circumstances surrounding the interaction.

COMMUNICATION

Slide 16: Name That Styles!

Communication is about not only the verbal aspects but also other factors, such as non-verbal communication and context.

Instructions: Have participants read out the various expressions displayed and discuss which expressions belong to each communication style.

Discuss how one expression may belong to more than one communication style – it depends on how the expression is read aloud and what body language accompanies it. For example, “I’m okay with whatever you want to do” can sound passive-aggressive based on tone and body language.

Note: There is no right/wrong answer to these. Communication is as much about the verbal as it is about other factors, such as non-verbal communication and/or context.

- *“I’m disappointed we missed the movie because I really wanted to see it. Next time, let’s choose a time that works for your schedule.”*
- *“I need for you to do...”*
- *“You’re always late and never think of anyone but yourself!”*
- *“Thanks for thinking of me, but I’m going to say no this time.”*
- *“It’s fine, I didn’t wanna see the movie that much anyway.”*
- *“Duffa ho!”*
- *The silent treatment.*
- *“Raundey kyo payo?”*
- *“I need for you to do...”*

Slide 17: Read Between the Lines

Indeed, communication is about more than the words said – it’s also about who, what, when, where and how.

- Context – the environment, the setting in which the communication takes place; may also refer to something that was written or spoken about just before the conversation.
- Tone of Voice – the way a person is speaking to other people.
- Neurodivergence – people who are neurodivergent (where a person communicates and experiences the world differently from most people due to neurological differences) often communicate differently.
- Body Language – the ways in which people communicate nonverbally through conscious and unconscious gestures and movements (i.e. crossing your arms may indicate you are feeling unsafe or insecure).

COMMUNICATION

Slide 18: Mastering Self-Awareness

Assertive communication is *most likely* to lead to respectful and longer-term relationships, so this is the style to cultivate for most situations.

- Passive and aggressive communication styles may work better on some occasions. For example, if you fear that you will be harmed, passive communication may help defuse the situation, while aggressive communication might prevent the problem from getting worse.

Assertive communication is clear, consistent, and courteous.

- Clear – communicate in a straightforward way that directly states your thoughts and feelings without dressing up your language.
- Consistent – what you say today reflects what you said yesterday, rather than changing daily without explanation.
- Courteous -you respect your listener and communicate in a manner that doesn't pass judgment on them or presume ill-intent.

Slide 19: What does assertive communication look like in the Punjabi-Sikh community?

Assertive communication might be confused with aggressive communication (demanding, loud talking/shouting, *masculine*) and perhaps the communicator may not clearly state what they want – they may couch what they are saying in metaphor, or other obscuring language.

This makes assertive communication a tough skill to master because it requires a great deal of self-control. After all, emotions are what make us human, and they can get the best of us, especially when we're communicating about something that we feel strongly about.

How is it different for men/male-identifying versus women/female-identifying people?

Ask participants to share examples:

- Easier for men/male identifying folks to state their opinion or refuse an unreasonable request.
- Women/female identifying folks are able to listen to others with the intention.
- Men/male identifying folks are seen as proactive when they make things happen, rather than reacting or responding to the words and actions of others.

Intense emotions can lead to unhealthy interactions with others if left unmanaged. Practicing mindfulness, which is a way to maintain awareness of the present moment, can help us master the assertive style of communication.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way to maintain awareness of the present moment, including our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the surrounding environment, through a gentle and nurturing lens. Examples include meditation, simran, paath, and swimming.

COMMUNICATION

Slide 20: Assertive or Aggressive? How gender bias shapes communication?

This section discusses how gender bias shapes communication. There is both conscious and unconscious gender bias against assertive women, and it exists in both men and women.

“Being diplomatically assertive doesn't mean backing down. It means you know how to present what you believe in a way that others will hear, understand and hopefully, align with your thinking. When enough of us model this behavior, the name-calling might stop, or not. But at least leading change will be easier.” (Reynolds, 2010)

Gender and assertive communication

- Women are seen as aggressive even if they might be assertive
- Women are seen as “Western” or “American” rather than Punjabi as a way to discredit/dismiss them
- Or seen as rude, impolite, improper.
 - Don't speak first, listen!
 - Don't disagree all the time.
- Punjabi is a gendered language. We can respectfully address both genders calling attention to the gender of the person we're speaking to.

**BREAK! Time to get some movement, a drink of water, a snack.
Reconvene in 5 minutes.**

CULTURE AND POWER

Slide 21: The Dynamics of Culture And Power

Briefly introduce the next section: we will discuss how culture, power and relationships intersect.

Slide 22: What do we learn about relationships and intimacy from our families? The Punjabi-Sikh community?

Relationships exist on a spectrum, and it can sometimes be challenging to determine if a behavior transitions from healthy to unhealthy (or even abusive). Relationships also vary depending on the community and cultural context in which you are living.

Instructions: talk as a group about how our families do or do not discuss issues surrounding relationships - like intimacy, respect, communication, affection.

Key Point: What do we learn from talking and, more importantly, not talking about relationships? We often take our cues from the unspoken ways in which our families interact, showing affection or approval/disapproval. By voicing things aloud and reflecting on what we are absorbing, we can become more conscious about the actions, behaviors, and attitudes we adopt.

Slide 23: Understanding Power and Control Wheel

Our different identities contribute to the type and amount of power that we hold in a relationship. Let's take a moment to consider how power and control dynamics can manifest in a relationship. Ask participants to provide examples.

Note: Refer to the complete Power and Control wheel in the Appendix for examples. What are some of the warning signs of abuse in an unhealthy relationship?

Warning signs of abuse can include:

- Checking your phone, email, or social media accounts without your permission.
- Putting you down frequently, especially in front of others.
- Isolating you from friends or family (physically, financially, or emotionally).
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity.
- Explosive outbursts, temper, or mood swings.
- Any form of physical harm.
- Possessiveness or controlling behavior.
- Pressuring you or forcing you to have sex.

Culturally specific forms of abuse:

- **Pressure** – Forcing to tell relatives/parents about intimate relationship if he/she doesn't do what they say
- **Minimize/Deny/Blame** – Using substance abuse (alcohol) as an excuse for violent behavior
- **Using social status** – Using “caste” to degrade you
- **Threats** – Threatening suicide if you leave the relationship – often glorified in media
- **Threats** – Use of intimate photos to blackmail or pressure them to do something they are uncomfortable with

Note: Sikh Family Center is leading the effort to create the first ever Punjabi Sikh Power & Control Wheel, a critical resource for our community and domestic violence support providers.

CULTURE AND POWER

Slide 24: Power & Control Discussion

Disclaimer [Read aloud in full]: The following hypotheticals refer to sexual and other forms of intimate partner violence. While they deliberately avoid any graphic descriptions, it is perfectly normal for some small detail that is innocuous for one person, to trigger or distress another. Please refer to the resources shared at the beginning—and available in the handout—should you feel the need to reach out for support. Remember, participation is fully voluntary. If, for any reason, you would rather take a break now for 10 mins, that is fine too.

Sexual assault can happen to anyone and be perpetrated by anyone. The following scenarios can work in tandem with the Power and Control Wheel to help us talk about the various aspects of sexual assault.

Instructions: Assess for time (consider scenario 3 optional). Discuss the different scenarios and evaluate how the Power and Control Wheel can help us unpack what happened. Have a volunteer read out the scenario, slowly. Give the participants time to process it.

In person setting: Work in a group of 2 or 3 to dissect the scenario. Pay attention to group dynamics to ensure participants look comfortable working together. After 2-3 minutes, discuss as a group, go to the next slide and discuss the breakdown questions together.

In virtual setting: Set up breakout rooms based on the number of participants. Allow for co-facilitators in/out of rooms as to ensure participants look comfortable working together. After 2-3 minutes, discuss as a group, go to the next slide and discuss the breakdown questions together.

CULTURE AND POWER

Slides 25-27: Scenario A: The Benevolent Kaur

Scenario A: During Kaur's second semester at college they feel pressured to meet with a classmate alone. They* don't know who gave their number away, but the classmate's persistent phone and 20 text messages in the past two days were getting intense. The messages read: "I can't believe you don't trust me we are the only two Sikhs in this dorm, we naturally should be friends. You think you are too good for me?" Kaur tells a senior they met through the Sikh Student Association about it and doesn't want to hurt the other person's feelings.

*Kaur identifies with the pronoun *they*.

Be kind in this scenario, by making a conscious effort to recognize that each soul/spirit is invaluable, priceless. It is important to treat all souls/spirits – both yours and those of others – with the utmost respect and dignity.

The "Golden Rule" – treat others how you want to be treated. The "Platinum Rule" is "treat others how they want to be treated" – remember that not everyone wants to be treated in the same manner. To follow this rule, you have to figure out how they want to be treated and to do that, you have to ask.

Breakdown questions:

- What you think Kaur might be feeling?
 - Scared; guilty; confused; fearful; mistreated; insecure; vulnerable; there are safety concerns as this person may be stalking her.
- What do you think Kaur should do?
 - Respond to the text messages or ignore them.
 - Kaur should establish clear boundaries with the classmate and respond with a firm message stating that they are not comfortable with meeting and/or engaging further with them.
 - Talk to a trained counselor about the experience
 - This can help in forming a plan for physical and emotional safety. For example, safety planning can help her consider what to do, such as avoiding being alone in the dorm if Kaur suspects the classmate might show up unexpectedly, or what can help her cope with stress.
 - Document what is happening, if it persists, in case she considers reporting incident/s to campus safety.
 - Ask a friend for support and comfort.
- What should the senior do?
 - Respect Kaur's wishes, but gently guide them to seek help.
 - Keep information private, Kaur has shared with them because there is some level of trust.
 - Acknowledge there is nothing wrong with setting boundaries with others.
 - Ask if it's okay for you to check in with Kaur.
 - Talk to Kaur gently and privately, explaining that they do not have to go through this alone. There are resources available that can help Kaur process what happened, take action, and move forward.
- What resources can the senior share with Kaur?
 - The following slide points to a number of useful resources.
 - Point out that University/school resources may/may not be confidential – going to school counselor isn't the same as calling a crisis line.
 - They may need to report to other authorities. They have a right to ask about any limits to their privacy or confidentiality policies.

CULTURE AND POWER

Slide 28-29: Scenario B: The Tough Singh

Scenario B: Singh and Kaur are good friends. On the surface, in front of friends, He acts tough, but when Kaur starts talking about family, his demeanor shifts. The truth is, he has been working to save money so his mom and siblings can leave their father. For the time being, things are not that bad—ever since warning his father that he would call the police. He worries a lot when he is away from home, though his mom says everything's okay. He has seen what his father can do, especially after a drink.

Breakdown questions:

- What do we know about Singh? Does he fit into our image of what a 'man' is?
 - Is it uncomfortable discussing what he is feeling.
 - He is under a lot stress; worried for his mom and siblings.
 - He has been exposed to violence in his home.
 - Point out different types of abuse:
 - Some times we focus on just the physical abuse, but fail to recognize coercive control, emotional abuse, or other non-physical forms of violence.
- What role does alcohol play in family violence?
 - It's a myth that alcohol or other forms of substance use cause family/domestic violence. They can, however, escalate regular arguments or conflicts (turning verbal arguments into physical confrontations) because one's decision-making and temperament are impaired, leading to an elevation of aggressive or abusive behaviors towards others.
 - Alcohol is often used as an excuse for violent behavior.
- What can you do to support Singh?
 - Give him space, he clearly doesn't want to share, don't pry for them to tell you just because you need to know.
 - He is under lot of stress – ask what helps him cope; offer to share ideas on what might help de-stress.
 - Let him know you are there for them.
 - Listen actively, validate their feelings, and connect them with appropriate resources for physical/emotional safety.
 - Share resources so he is aware of options.
- What assumptions/biases get in the way of supporting others?
 - He acts tough so he should be fine; inherently resilient. He is able to handle it. Singhs should be strong, stoic, and not show vulnerability or emotions.
 - This way of thinking prevents them from seeking help or expressing their feelings in the first place.
 - "Seeking help is a sign of weakness."
 - When violence is normalized in community, we tend to minimize or overlook the impact that being exposed to violence in the home has on youth folks.
 - Some might think there aren't resources available in the community or they don't have options.

CULTURE AND POWER

Slide 30-31: Scenario C: Testing The Limits (Optional)

Scenario C: Kaur and Singh are dating. On several occasions they are physically intimate, but within limits set by Kaur. One night, when they are being intimate within their mutually agreed upon boundaries, Singh begins to cross them. Kaur expresses concern, but Singh is encouraging, saying, “It will be okay just this once.” Kaur replies, “We shouldn’t do this,” but continues. Kaur says, “This is a bad idea.” and begins to cry, but embraces Singh.

Breakdown questions:

- What does this scenario tell us about personal boundaries?
 - People create boundaries so they feel safe and comfortable. People create boundaries based on their past experiences as well as present realities and dreams for the future.
 - Having *and* setting boundaries are two different things. We convey boundaries through verbal and non-verbal communication.
 - In reality, it can be a challenge to speak up in an uncomfortable or compromising situation.
- Was consent given?
 - Consent is freely given and can be withdrawn at any time. You can withdraw at any point if you feel uncomfortable. It is important to clearly communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. The best way to ensure both parties are comfortable with any sexual activity is to talk about it. You have the right to express what you want and how you feel.
- What should Kaur and Singh do?
 - They should stop immediately.
 - When both parties have a minute to take a breath, they should talk about what happened. They should establish again what the boundaries are and how to proceed from here.

Slide 32: How do you balance power dynamics in a relationship?

Facilitate an open discussion, field any questions participants may have.

Possible responses to question: ‘How do you balance power dynamics in a relationship?’

- Listen to each other.
- Create space to discuss emotions, reactions, worries.
- Take responsibility for your actions, behaviors.

CULTURE AND POWER

Slide 33: Survivor Healing

The Survivor Healing Wheel developed by Daya Houston can be a tool to discuss nurturing experiences from before the abuse started, or gain perspective into healthy relationships concurrent with lifetime abuse.

Instructions: Go over some spokes of the wheel to highlight the challenges survivors of violence may experience as a result of abuse.

Reminder: Healthy relationships are characterized by kindness, strong communication, healthy boundaries, shared values, intimacy, vulnerability, and respect. They involve respect – the respect of each person’s autonomy, body, and ability to make decisions about their own life. Other key components are trust and honesty. Being able to believe what a partner or loved one says and being believed without question is part of trusting people in our life. There should be equality in relationships and a mutual decision-making process.

PAUSE.

Take a Short break for water, stretching.

Reconvene in 2 minutes.

EXPRESSIONS OF MASCULINITY

Slide 34: Expressions of Masculinity

The next topic for discussion is to unpack our understanding of masculinity.

What is masculinity?

Masculinity is about how we understand the qualities or appearances associated with being a man or male-identifying individual.

Slide 35: Where do men learn the “rules” of what it means to be a man?

The Man Box

Men learn the “rules” of what it means to be a man, or to “man up”, starting from childhood. In the Man Box, men are expected to be strong, successful, powerful, dominating, fearless, in control, and emotionless. Women, on the other hand, are viewed as objects, as the property of men, and as having less value than men.

The teachings of the Man Box contribute to the persistence of violence against women, girls, and those most marginalized. Finally, conforming to the Man Box perpetuates a heterosexist norm that devalues all those who don’t conform to a gender binary.

Various kinds of name calling, bullying, and even sexual assault are used to enforce these societal expectations around masculinity. This forces men to either go along with the stereotypical male roles, even if they don’t agree with them, or, push back against these “rules”.

Instructions: Have participants brainstorm what they think it means to be a man. E.g. Strong, leader, brave, athletic, protectors, the breadwinner

In person setting: Jot these ideas down on a board.
Tools: white board, dry erase marker

In Virtual setting: Share ideas in the chat box.

Ask participants: Where did they learn these rules?

- E.g. Dad, gym teacher, older brother or cousin, famous sports player like LeBron James, famous actor, Will Smith.
- E.g. Maybe someone from our cultural ancestry, like *Sant Bindranwale*, or *Guru Gobind Singh Ji*.

Resources:
acalltomen.org
Paul Kivel

EXPRESSIONS OF MASCULINITY

Slide 36: How to Break Open the Man Box

Read the following ways to break open the Man Box:

- Be open to self expression, and try not to judge others too quickly.
- Address disrespect by calling people out/in.
- Make space for compassion and sensitivity.
- Share how you feel and invite others to share too.
- Ask for help when you are struggling; Check in with friends that look like they are struggling.
- Think critically about the images and messages we receive everyday about masculinity. Ask yourself if what you see/hear is healthy or not?

Slide 37: Healthy Masculinity is about respecting and valuing oneself by striving to live authentically.

Healthy Masculinity is about respecting and valuing oneself by striving to live authentically. Breaking out of the Man Box allows male-identified people to become healthier and help build and sustain more equitable communities.

Centering your mental health and emotional needs as a masculine person can feel like the direct opposite of what we've been taught. But doing so is vital for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity, or sexuality.

EXPRESSIONS OF MASCULINITY

Slide 38: Reflection

Read aloud the Gurbani tukk below.

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥
man too(n) jot saroop hai aapanaa mool pachhaan ||
O my mind, you are the embodiment of the Divine Light, recognize your own origin.

ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੁ ॥
man har jee terai naal hai gurmatee ra(n)g maan ||
O my mind, Akal Purakh is with you; through the Guru's Teachings, enjoy It's Love.

SGGS, Raag Asa M3, Ang 45

Explanation: By recognizing our root origin, which is to say our Divinely inspired origin, a person can then see they possess the light and love of Waheguru. Recognizing this root origin helps a person to see their life's true purpose lies in their Oneness with Akal Purakh.

This understanding coincides with the earlier Gurbani tukk we discussed which reminds us to look within – *Prabh abinasee ghar mehi paiaa* – to see that deepening our self understanding and awareness brings us closer to the One. It reminds us that our true purpose in this life is to connect and recognize that root origin which is Oneness.

Slide 39-40:Key Takeaway

Returning to healthy relationships, let's think about how communication, power, our understandings of masculinity, and self-awareness help us to understand relationships, with ourselves and others, in a deeper way.

1. Healthy relationships entail respect, trust, honesty and communication, among other things.
2. Assertive communication is most likely to lead to respectful and longer-term relationships, so that's the style to strive for in most situations.
3. Developing Self-Awareness helps us to better understand what we need.
4. Sharing power in a relationship involves trust, communication and vulnerability.
5. Meaningful culture change can be achieved by: cultivating a healthy, respectful manhood; valuing and respecting women, girls, LGBTQ, and nonbinary people; and, prioritizing mental health and emotional well being.

EXPRESSIONS OF MASCULINITY

Slide 41: Conclusion & Evaluation

Ask participants to complete the evaluation and share what they liked/disliked about the workshop, what needs changing, and what was an important takeaway from the workshop.

<https://bit.ly/3jfA6ej>



Slide 42: Resources

Leave this slide up as you end the workshop. Read from the slide: Privacy is not Confidentiality! Especially when your participants include current students, make sure to point out both the availability and potential limitations of their school/college resources for victim-survivors of violence. Otherwise, there may be situations where a survivor is painfully surprised that a resource that claimed to respect privacy has also initiated a formal investigation or other proceeding by the school/university.

Explain that their school may have employees (like a Title IX coordinator or a crisis advocate) who will keep information shared private, but still be obligated by law to report it to other authorities.

Remind participants that it is best to ask any resource person very explicitly and clearly whether a resource is confidential or not.

It is perhaps safest to approach a non school, non-university confidential resource to assess needs and options.

A large orange circle is partially visible on the left side of the page, with its right edge cut off.

APPENDIX

COMMUNICATION STYLES

	What is it?	Body language cues	Examples
Passive <i>I lose/You win</i>	Passive communicators defer to others for decision making to avoid tension or conflict.	Make the body smaller, crossed arms, avoid eye contact, or look down/away, quiet.	“Fine, whatever.” “Whatever you want.”
Aggressive <i>I win/You lose</i>	Aggressive communicators prioritize the person’s own feelings, needs and ideas at the expense of others.	Make the body larger, glaring eye contact, eye rolling, finger pointing, loud.	“This is what we’re doing.” “Get over it!”
Passive-Aggressive <i>I lose/You lose</i>	Does not take responsibility for their actions or feelings; Feels entitled to have it their way; Resentful of people’s demands and power; Fear of being controlled	Similar to passive communication style.	Passive statements and body language followed by giving the “silent treatment”; spreading rumors; sabotaging another person’s efforts
Assertive <i>I win/You win</i>	Assertive communication allows a person to express their beliefs, feelings, opinions, and thoughts in an open, respectful manner that does not violate the rights of others.	Easy eye contact, straight or relaxed body posture, relaxed gestures.	“I” statements “I feel... when you... and I need for you to do...”

COMMUNICATION STYLES

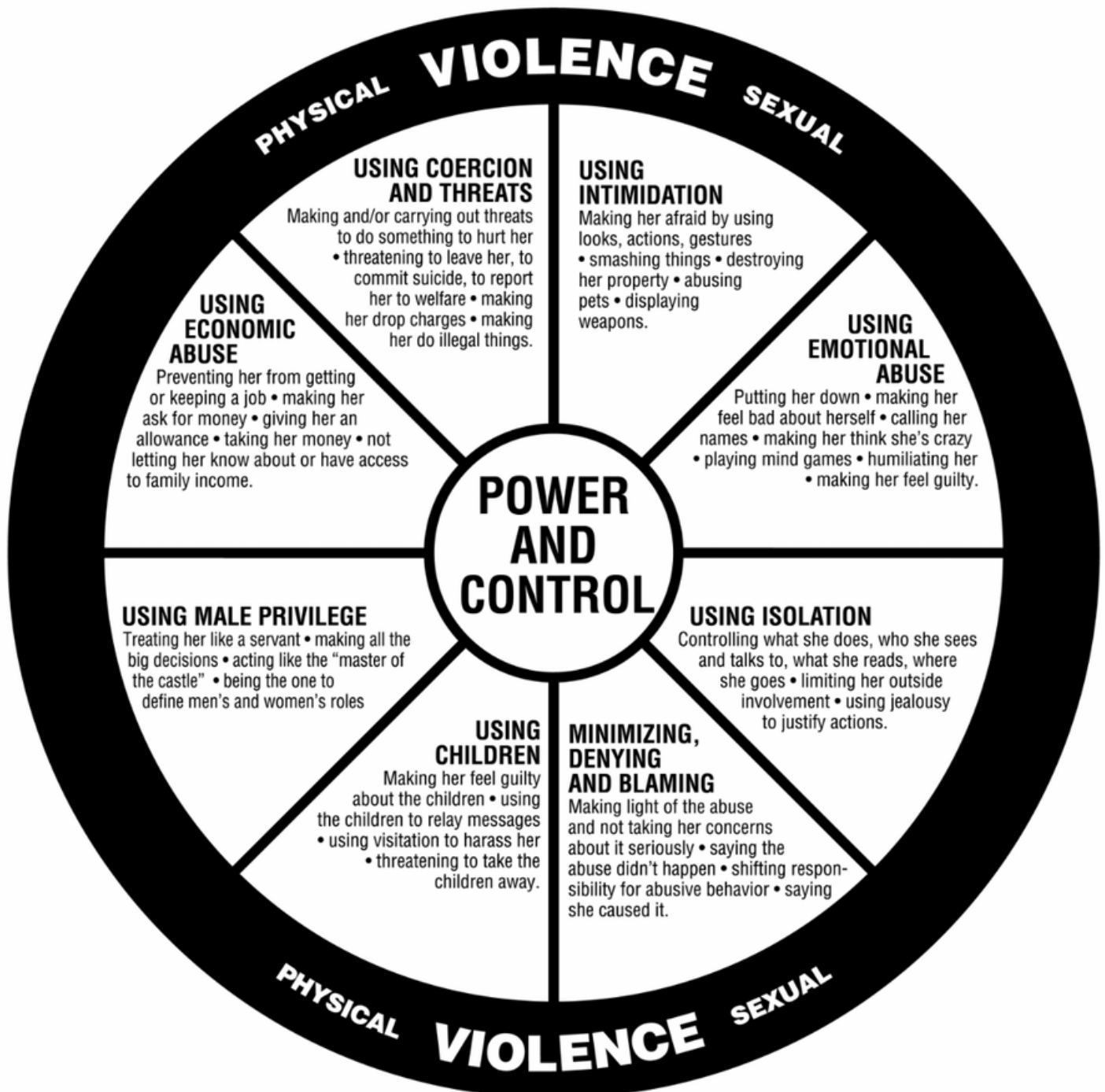
Self Reflection Exercise

Take a few minutes to write in your journal.



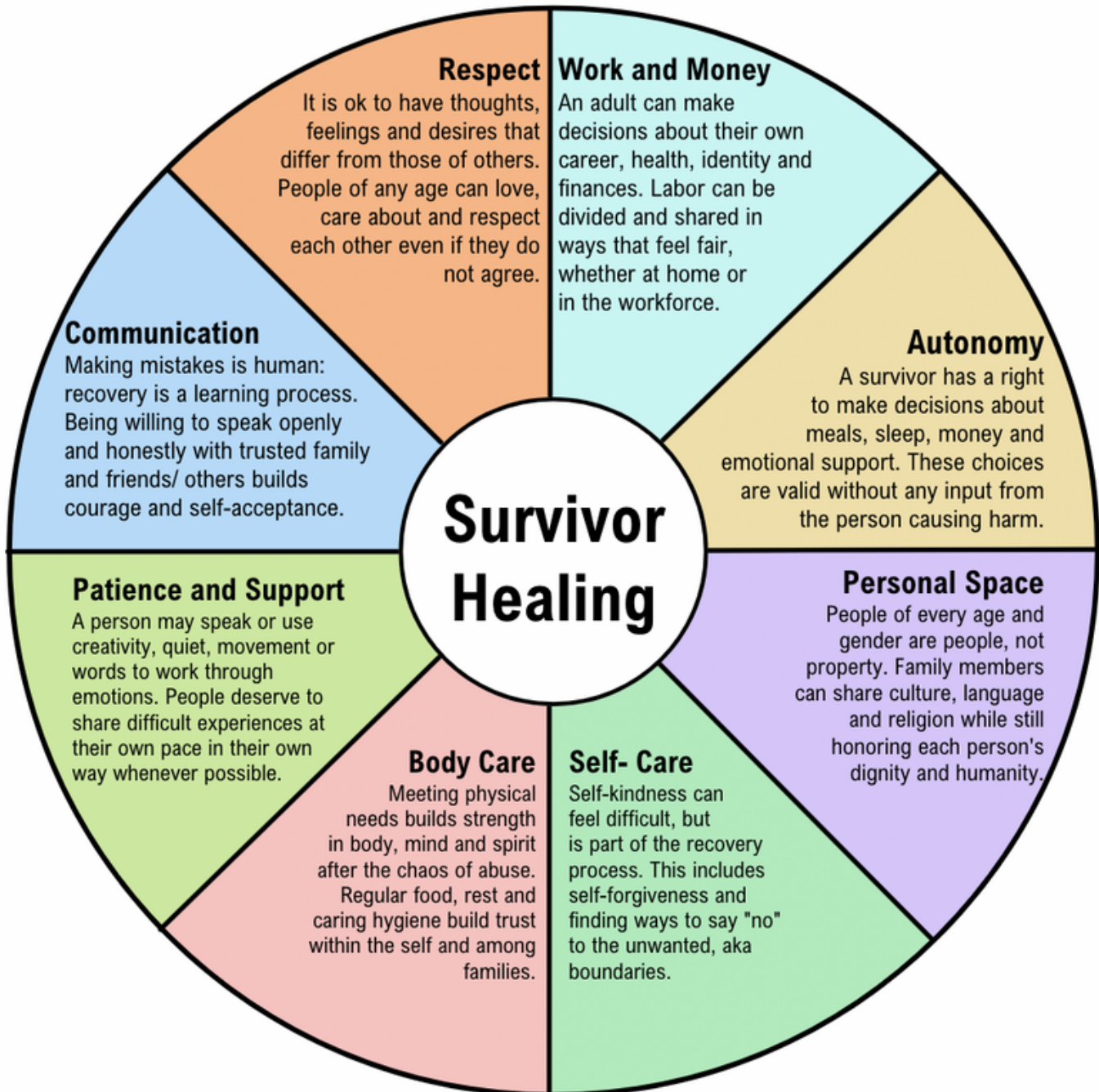
- **How do you communicate when you are upset?**
- **How important is communication to you? How will you navigate similar and different communication styles between you and the person(s)?**

POWER & CONTROL WHEEL



Source: www.theduluthmodel.org

SURVIVOR HEALING WHEEL



Adapted from Daya Houston's Survivor Healing Wheel

THANK YOU



SIKH FAMILY CENTER NATIONAL HELPLINE

866.SFC.SEWA | 866.732.7392

FREE | PRIVATE | PUNJABI + ENGLISH | NON-EMERGENCY

