

40 Relationships, disclosure, confrontation and forgiveness



If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, these four exercises and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on pages 146-152. These four exercises assume you have completed exercise sheet **1 Starting an activity journal**.

Identifying comfortable relationships

Make a list in your journal of all the people in your life and rate how comfortable you are around them on a scale of one to five, with one being not very comfortable and five very comfortable. You can also ask yourself how safe you feel with them and how much you trust them? To what extent do they listen to you? To what degree do they respect your needs and feelings? Reflect on this list and decide who you would like to have a better relationship with and how you can rebuild this.

Exploring disclosure

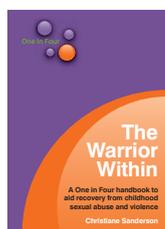
Disclosure can be anxiety provoking and disappointing. To help you decide to disclose you need to explore your hopes and fears around disclosure and check how realistic they are. You might find that some are unrealistic, or outside your control, and need to be revised. Or you might need to let go of any unrealistic expectations, or replace them with more realistic ones. It is also important to check your readiness to disclose. If you do not feel ready to disclose yet, you can continue to work towards this and decide to do this at a later date.

Preparing for confrontation

To prepare yourself for confrontation it is important to ask yourself the following questions: How can I make sure that I am safe? What do I hope to achieve in confronting? What are my expectations? What do I want to say? What is the best way of saying this – letter, telephone or face to face? When is the best time for me to confront? Where is the best place for the confrontation? What is the worst thing that can happen? How will I manage this? From this you can generate a plan of action, which you can check out and rehearse with a trusted friend. Remember the more you practice the confrontation the better you will be prepared.

Deciding whether to forgive

Set some time aside to reflect on what forgiveness means to you. Write down your thoughts in your journal and discuss these with a trusted friend. Next ask yourself what your hopes and fears are around forgiving your abuser(s). How might you benefit from forgiveness? How would not forgiving hinder your recovery? You also need to consider the full range of your feelings towards the abuser(s). Do you have any empathy for him or her? Do you see any redeeming qualities in him or her? Do you still have loving feelings? Do you still yearn for a healthy relationship? Can you forgive some things and not others? Answering these questions will help you to be clearer about whether to forgive or not.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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