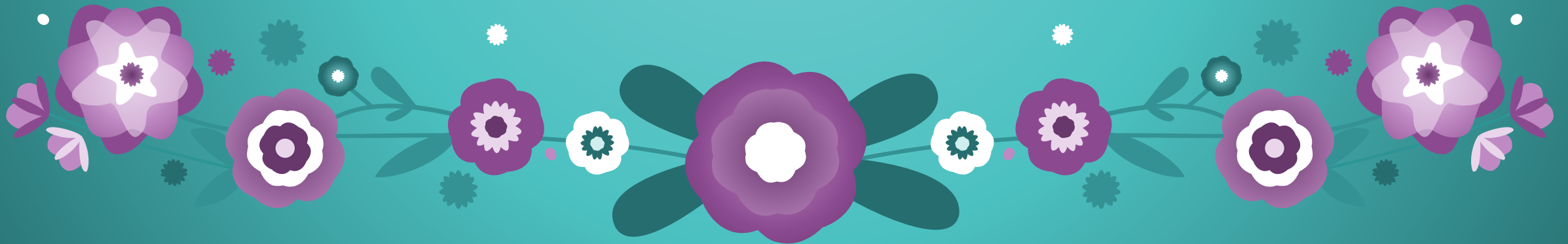


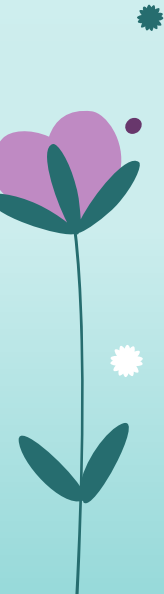
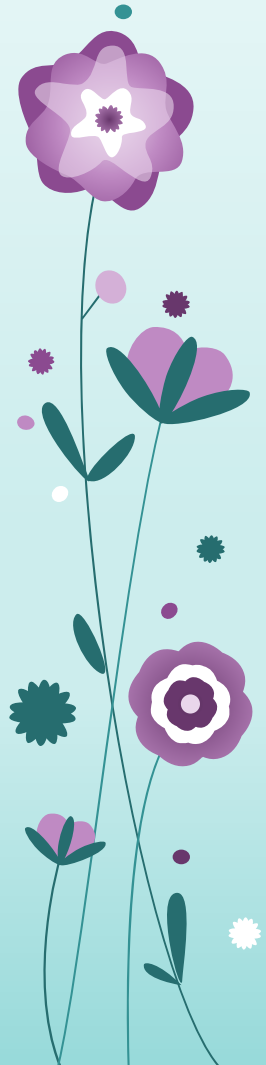
Session 12: Celebrating how far we've come and Moving forward

Objective	<p>Support Women in Celebrating Their Time Together & Saying Goodbye</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support women in feeling validated about the importance of celebrating their time together and having a sense of closure to the group ● Celebration personalised by women & supported by group facilitators ● Facilitators to lead symbolic closure activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"Affirmations / Celebrating Women's Strengths" Collage</i> ○ <i>"Taking Back My Life"</i> ○ <i>"Remembering the Value of our Connections..."</i>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coda pack: Rights and , Children's resource & Paper people <input type="checkbox"/> Picture and old magazines for cutting (Keep in mind representation). <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors and a a surface upon which to create the collage <input type="checkbox"/> Celebration takeaways (affirmation in a jar, etc, Certificates) <input type="checkbox"/> Camera and instant print (Optional) <input type="checkbox"/> Light/Candle (Optional)
Introduction	<p>Welcome to the group; remind about group agreements and support networks</p>
Check-in	<p>Group to choose how they want to check-in.</p>
Activities	<p><u>Exercise 1 - Positive Affirmations & Celebrating Women's Strengths Through Collage Art</u> Ask women to create a collage/drawing which represents their personal strengths. This can be on a card, on a journal or on a jar which they can then keep positive affirmations in.</p> <p><u>Exercise 2 - Taking Back My Life</u> Develop a to-do list of things to help them with their journey of self-care. (the manual also suggests a to-avoid list, which can also be done as long as it does not result in victim or self-blaming).</p> <p><u>Exercise 3 - What Makes Me Unique?</u> Women write their names on a piece of card which gets passed around the group for each person to write something they like/admire about each woman. They then have something special to keep and remind them of the group and of their personal unique qualities. Facilitators should also add to each one.</p> <p><u>Exercise 4 - Closure/ Saying Goodbye</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider a symbolic ending but be mindful of negative associations of ceremony or ritual for some women ● Remembering the value of connections ● Celebration certificates ● Cutting the paper people chain ● Candle ceremony
Children's group review	<p>Facilitators provide overview and answer question about the content of the children's group for this childrens session,</p>
Check out	<p>Share affirmation cards / use a relevant reading (some are given in the manual). Hand out info about support in the community. Closure - discuss paper people and, remember their support systems, send home certificates.</p>

Session 12: Celebrating How Far We've Come - Moving Forward

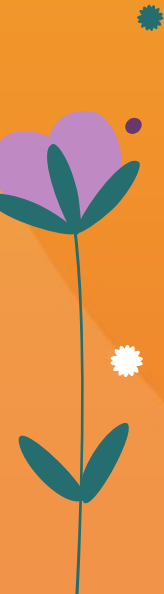
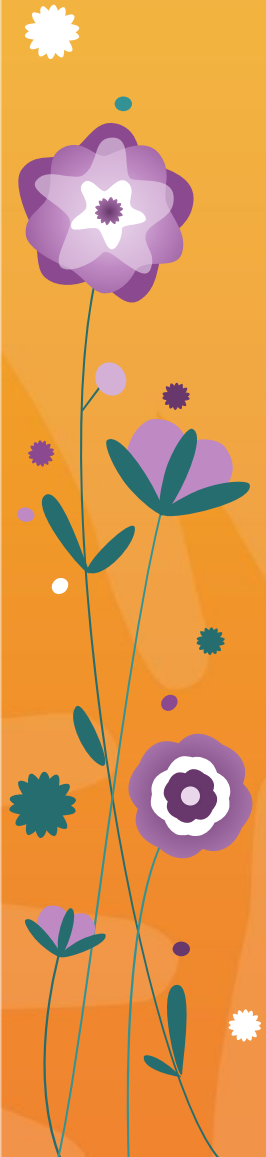


Session 12: Celebrating How Far We've Come - Moving Forward

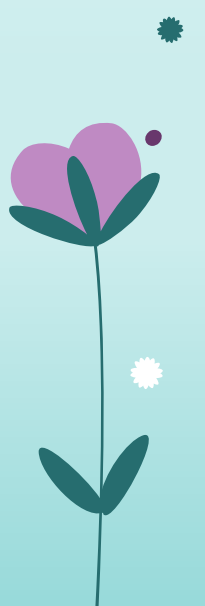
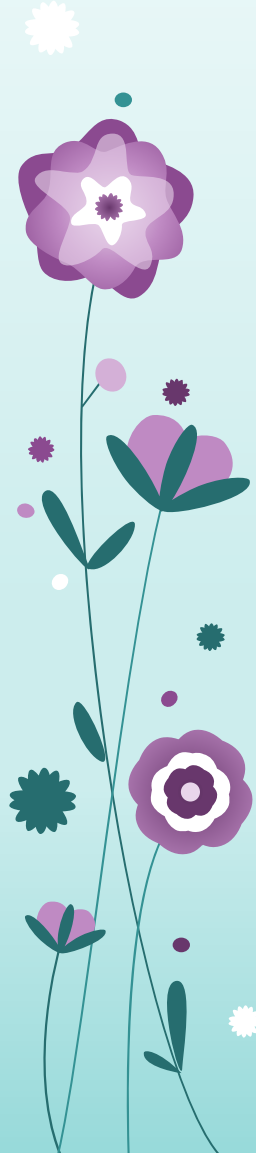


Check In

Decide if you want to check in
or not this week

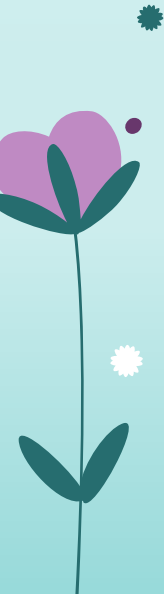
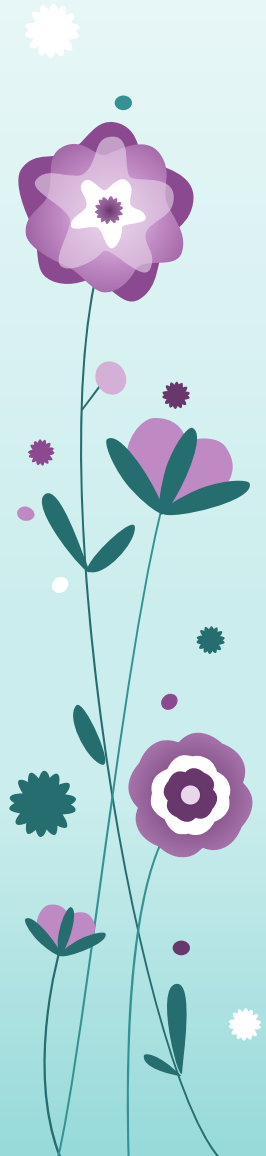


Positive Affirmations

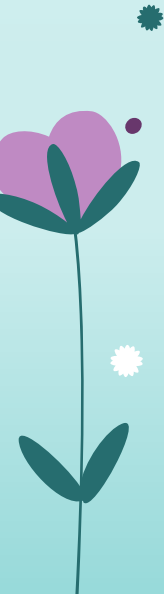
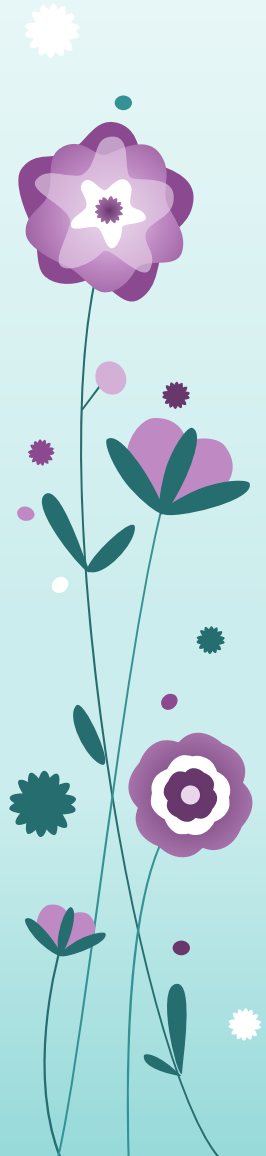


Taking Back My Life

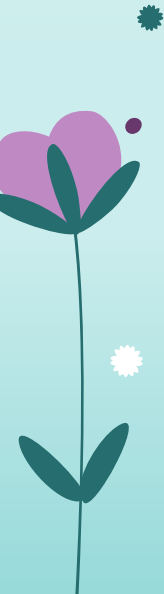
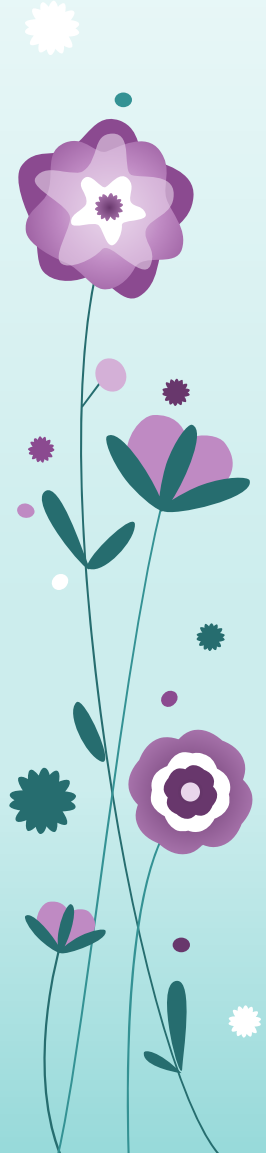
What do you feel you need to do, to continue on the positive journey of self-care and healing upon which you have now embarked?



What Makes Me Unique



Saying Goodbye



Session 12: Celebrating how far we've come and Moving forward

Rationale

To honour mothers' commitment to healing from the impact of violence against women, both for their children and themselves. To provide an opportunity for mothers to celebrate their time spent together, and to say goodbye.

Key Considerations

The final group session for mothers is to be personalised, meaningful, and representative of the particular members of each group. The final group celebration will be as unique as group members themselves, and planning for the final session should begin several weeks in advance.

The theme of the celebration should be determined by the mothers themselves during the planning process. In past groups, the celebration has frequently centred around a special meal in a variety of forms – a potluck lunch, an outdoor barbecue, a culturally diverse meal representative of group members, take out food (ordered in by group facilitators), and even pizza and ice cream cake parties, in the name of “thinking through the eyes of children!” In other groups, tea and dessert celebrations have been organised. In one group, mothers cooked a meal together, each contributing their own personal elements in doing so. A positive healthy experience of sharing food together can enhance the celebratory nature of the final group session; but the event must fit your group, setting and resources.

This session should emphasise the positive nature of endings. Many women have not experienced an ending in their lives that they see as productive, or positive. This topic should be discussed in earlier sessions, but emphasised this week. The overall structure and format of the session should be based on the needs of the group. Group facilitators should make assessments based on observation and feedback from the mothers as to how much time and emphasis to spend on each element of the last session. In some groups, mothers may prefer to focus primarily on the celebration, sharing a meal together, and saying goodbye. In other groups, a guided discussion of the concept of positive endings, validation of mothers's feelings as the group ends, and identifying strategies for self-care in saying goodbye and moving onward may be beneficial.

The primary role of the group facilitators during the final session is to support group members in truly feeling validated in taking the time to honour and celebrate the trust, energy, and commitment that they have invested throughout the group process. Providing mothers with ideas, suggestions, and support for planning and following through with a positive, fun and celebratory final group session is most important.

During the final group session, facilitators can initiate the overall structure and framework of the group, establishing a clear beginning and ending, while incorporating and enhancing the celebratory elements, including meaningful closure activities and exercises.

Happy Endings

All the powers work so that you should come to a bad ending, but our soul works for the opposite – that the ending should be good. Actually, the ending is always good.

- ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

Whether we recognize it or not, every ending is good. It is good because of what we have learned along the way. It is good because with each ending is a new beginning. It is good because it is as it should be.

Every ending is a happy ending.

(Engel, 1993)

Objective

- Support women in feeling validated about the importance of celebrating their time together and having a sense of closure to the group
- Celebration personalised by women & supported by group facilitators
- Facilitators to lead symbolic closure activities such as:
 - “Affirmations / Celebrating Women’s Strengths” Collage
 - “Taking Back My Life”
 - “Remembering the Value of our Connections...”

Resources

- Coda pack: Rights and , Children’s resource & Paper people
- Picture and old magazines for cutting (Keep in mind representation).
- Scissors and a a surface upon which to create the collage
- Celebration takeaways (affirmation in a jar, etc, Certificates)
- Camera and instant print (Optional)
- Light/Candle (Optional)
- Basic Need checklists

Welcome

- Provide a brief description of the theme and rationale for this session as it relates to both children and mothers, emphasising the power of positive endings.
- Discuss and confirm the plan for the celebration as it will unfold, including group facilitators’ plans to incorporate celebratory and symbolic closure activities.

Check-in

- Group members should decide if they would like to do a check in during this group or not. If so, the check in could be adapted and incorporated into an activity, or it could serve as the symbolic beginning of the celebration meal.
- Some groups may benefit from more structure at this point, given the potentially difficult emotions but others are simply ready to celebrate and enjoy sharing their last session together, and may prefer little to no structure.

Activities “Celebrating How Far We’ve Come – Moving Forward Towards Ongoing Healing ..”

Exercise 1 Positive Affirmations & Celebrating Women’s Strengths Through Collage Art., Posters, Journals, “Affirmations Jars”

The following exercise is powerful in its simplicity. The mothers often create beautiful and meaningful collages that can be kept as a reminder of the group.

1. Have supplies ready upon mothers’s arrival to the group. This activity is one that can be done in almost any setting, but using a workspace or table may be most convenient.
2. Spread magazines around, have enough scissors available, and containers to put all the bits and pieces of paper in for recycling, then join in with the mothers in making your own collage. This activity can be as brief or leisurely as desired. mothers have easily spent an entire group working on collages, and others have been completed in less than an hour. Some mothers choose to take their collage away “unfinished” – as it is something they felt would be enjoyable and valuable to take home and continue working on as a part of their self-care plan.
3. Decoupage collages once they are finished is optional, but provides the finishing touch that for some mothers transforms their work into a personal piece of art.

The exercise provides mothers with time to think about themselves as women and mothers and their positive accomplishments within the group. mothers are encouraged to enjoy the process of browsing through magazines looking for images that represent their personal strengths. Creativity is encouraged. Incorporating empowering, affirmative words or phrases, and adding personalised touches are what makes this exercise unique. It is not the outcome of the exercise, but the process that is most important. Some mothers will talk to each other as they look through the magazines, others prefer to reflect quietly. Upon completion, the mothers have a tangible and personal symbolic reminder of the group and their strengths.

Exercise 2

Taking Back My Life – Self Evaluation

A Personal “To Do” and “To Avoid” List

1. This provides another simple activity that can be adapted as an individual self-reflective exercise, done in pairs, or facilitated as a brainstorm with the whole group. Many mothers are familiar with the process of creating “to-do” lists for a wide variety of reasons
 - a. from organising work tasks to getting the children prepared for summer camp. At times, these lists can be practical and helpful. At other times, our “to- do” lists can be overly ambitious, unrealistic, and overwhelming, and may set us up to feel badly about what we have yet “to- do”, as opposed to what we might decide not to do. The simple goal of this activity is to encourage mothers to think about the concept of “Taking Back My Life.” What do mothers feel they need to do, to continue on the positive journey of self-care and healing upon which they have now embarked? mothers are encouraged to brainstorm a “to- do” list of those things that they can actively engage in doing to continue on this road.
2. The second part of this activity requires mothers to then think about the flip side. In keeping with the concept of “Taking Back My Life”, what do mothers need to “not do” – or AVOID, in order to stay safe, continue healing from the impact of abuse, and support their children in doing the same? Mothers are encouraged to think about this, and record their thoughts beside their “to-do” list, this in the form of a “to – avoid” list. This activity stimulates productive and valuable discussion. mothers take home the lists they have created – more useful tools and reminders of the group.

To do list	To avoid list
Stay connected with other women	Abusers
Go to another group	Getting isolated
Take care of myself every day	Unsupportive people
Get out of the house	‘Should-ing’ on myself
Recognise the ‘red flags’ of abuse	
Remember how far I’ve come!	

Exercise 3

What Makes Me Unique

The following is an exercise which was enhanced with the use of, *Being Ourselves Today from: The Woman's Book of Courage: Meditations For Empowerment & Peace Of Mind*, by Sue Patton Thoele.

This exercise is similar to the "Polaroid Pictures Exercise" children take part in during their groups.

1. Provide each woman with a sheet of paper and markers with which they add the heading "What Makes Me Unique."
 - a. When possible, purchase attractive, durable paper such as card stock, as mothers may desire and are encouraged to keep their page as a memento of the group and touchstone for the days ahead.
 - b. If mothers wish to do so, it may be fun to take a Polaroid picture as their children do, and glue it to the centre of the paper, however, assess mothers's comfort level carefully, and this should clearly be optional
2. Alternatively, mothers may simply write their name in the centre of the page. mothers then record examples of their own personal attributes that make them unique on their sheet of paper
3. If desired, after mothers have personalised their pages and jotted down their own personal feedback, they may choose to have other mothers add personal feedback related to their positive experience of taking part in the group together.

Promote a comfortable atmosphere where women are encouraged to confidently share with one another their personal examples and feedback about "What Makes Me Unique".

Being Ourselves Today

As we courageously work to become truly ourselves, each new day presents us with opportunities to unfold in the perfectly right way. A very wise woman once told me that “the future depends on a healed past and a well-lived present.”

We create a fulfilling future, and honour our present, by living this day in a manner that will enable us to look back tomorrow with pride. Each day we can learn, from whatever sources inspire us, to love ourselves just as we are – unfinished and still struggling – and to live with our families, co-workers, and friends as a kind and considerate equal. The talents, abilities, and idiosyncrasies we bring to this life are uniquely ours, and we are invited to share them with others in our own special way.

At the top of a sheet of paper write the heading, “What Makes Me Unique”. Then, writing as if you were your best friend, jot down several of you special attributes. For fun you might want to add a few quirks also. We are one of a kind. Our individuality is a precious gift – a gift too sacred to be thrown away. It is our right, privilege, and responsibility to be ourselves today.

Today, I have the courage to be uniquely myself.

I give thanks for the gifts that I, alone, have to share. I accept the past, enjoy the present, and look forward to the future.

(Patton Thoele, 1996)

Children's group review

Facilitators must be fully informed about the content of the children's group for this week, and variations utilised with preschoolers and adolescents.

- The concurrent themes for the children's weekly group session are reviewed, and the facilitator may share examples of the exercises and resources used with children of different ages, depending on the ages of the children of the mothers in the group.
- Ideas about age appropriate ways for mothers to connect with and engage their children in discussion about the outcome of their group, and how to best support children after and between their group sessions are highlighted.
- Mothers are provided with copies of handouts from children's group sessions.

Focus point

- While not directly matching the mothers' group activities, the children's group focuses on celebrating the time children have spent together, and feeling proud of all they have accomplished, shared, and learned – both individually and as a group.

Check out

Exercise 4- Remembering The Value Of Our Connections

Closing this final session in a symbolic way can be meaningful and provide a sense of positive termination. Carefully consider the implications of any symbolic “ceremony” for mothers. This would include maintaining a sense of ethnic and cultural diversity so as to ensure mutual understanding and inclusivity. Recognize the potential negative associations of ceremony or ritual for some mothers, with regards to past experiences of abuse. Personalising the plan for the group is again essential. Suggestions for closure exercises to incorporate into this final group session are as follows:

1. Celebration “Certificates”

- a. In the children’s groups, certificates of celebration are passed out to children upon the completion of the group. In keeping in the spirit of “thinking through the eyes of children”, similar certificates can also be provided to mothers. In doing so, mothers again are reminded of what is important from a child’s perspective: validating the commitment and time spent in the group. Group facilitators should have certificates filled out and Mothers take part in an informal ceremony of having the mothers pass out their certificates to one another.

2. Candle Ceremony

- a. As in some of the children’s groups, a symbolic candle ceremony can form part of the closure to the final group session. It is again important to be certain that all mothers are comfortable with candles burning during the group. At the beginning of the group session, light a candle.
- b. As the final closure to the group session, have the mothers gather around the candle. Ask the mothers to look at the flame and to enjoy its steady gleam as it flickers and sparkles. Ask the mothers to visualise their group as the steady glimmer of flame – then ask them to close their eyes. Can they still visualise the flame and its steady flicker, even with their eyes closed? Can they still imagine its sparkle, shine, and warmth? Ask the mothers to open their eyes. Just as they can still recall the candle, when the group ends the image, the essence, and the impact of the group will remain with them. Together, ask the group to blow out the candle – and our time together is complete!

3. Cutting The Paper People Chain

- a. As mothers leave the group, point out their “Paper People” which were joined at the beginning of the group process, and remain connected. Even if a few patches and pieces of sticky tape may have been required along the way, the connections remained strong and steadfast! Reiterate the power of connections, and the importance of mothers avoiding
- b. isolation as a significant factor in avoiding becoming drawn into abusive or unhealthy relationships in the future. Encourage mothers to continue with the development and maintenance of a personal support network as part of their plan for self-care, especially now that the group has come to an end. As mothers leave the group, have them cut away a section of the paper people, and take this with them as another memento of the group, and an important reminder of power and importance of connections.

CODA Pack

Nametags	
Agenda	
Refreshments	
flip chart and pens	
craft supplies including tape and string	
Post-its	
Paper and Pens including A3	
Affirmation cards	

Resources

Week	Resources	
12	Scissors and a surface to create the collage	
12	Camera and instant print (Optional)	
12	Light/Candle (Optional)	