

Networks and collective empowerment

Tool 23. My personal network

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To assess the consequences of isolation and the feeling generated by the loss of social support.
- ✓ To reflect on the importance of a broad social network.
- ✓ To facilitate strategies to start and / or expand the network.
- ✓ To inform about resources, services, networks and alternatives of support and exchange.

STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

1. What is a network?

In this activity, participants are accompanied in the assessment of the need to have a social network and the consequences of the isolation that often goes together with the experience of IPV.

Participants are invited to brainstorm on what a network is. To do this, the facilitator gives women a ball of wool. Each time a woman talks, she gets the ball, so that a wool network is created between the participants.

The facilitator writes the ideas that come up on the blackboard or flipchart, and adds other ideas, if they do not come up. She stresses the importance of having a social network of support against the isolation that is often associated to IPV. Participants reflect on the consequences of the isolation and the feeling generated by the loss of social support.

The physical metaphor created by the wool forming a network allows visualising the importance of networks, as well as the fact that networks can be re-made.

2. Drawing your network

Women are asked to draw their own support network on a paper board. The facilitator leaves enough time for this personal exercise and then participants are invited to share results with the group.

- How is your network?
- How did you feel drawing your network?
- Would you have drawn a different network at another time in your life?
- Do you want to draw a different network for your future?

Think of...

- family
- neighbours
- relatives
- schoolmates groups of common interests
- individuals I met on holiday
- members of women's group
- colleagues (former colleagues)
- teachers (former teachers)

• ...

3. Let's expand our network

This activity has the aim of encouraging women to generate strategies to expand their social network.

Participants are invited to brainstorm on the question: "How can you expand your network?". First, they think individually and write their ideas on coloured cards/paper boards. Next they share them with the group and cards are pasted on a large paper board or mural on the wall. Then the whole group comments on the ideas.

If the following ideas do not come up, the facilitator may add them:

General ideas:

- Obtaining occasional support from services/organisations on specific issues
- Expanding social relationships
- Finding alternative ways to relate and/or live
- Breaking isolation
- Meeting people in different contexts
- Activating

More specific ideas:

- Enrolling in courses or going to talks and workshops.
- Participating in an association (brainstorming on different kinds of associations and what associations they know)
- Meeting people in spaces where we move (work, school, children, park...)
- Meeting new people through the contacts I already have
- Joining friendship groups (Internet, magazines...)
- Neighbours
- Family

Next each woman writes on a paper 5 ideas on how to expand her own network. Participants are invited to share the ideas with the rest of the group.

TIME AND RESOURCES

TIME	1,5 hours
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES	Blackboard or flipchart, ball of wool, brown paper for a mural, paper boards, markers, pens



Tool 24. Networking for job opportunities¹

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To explore how current and planned expanded networks could be used for networking for job opportunities
- ✓ To train the competences of planning and decision-making

STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

1. Networking for job opportunities

The facilitator explains:

Of course we need support whenever we have a big goal. And it's important that we get the right kind of support that provides us energy, focus, and optimism. It's not hard to find people who think the job market is bad, the economy is terrible, or your situation is impossible. You don't have to think in the same way. It's not that they're wrong, they may have some facts and reasons for what they believe.

You want to focus on what's positive. For every company that's doing poorly, there's one starting or growing. If you are a survivor that is looking for a new job or fresh start there are many opportunities to do so. People get new jobs and make fresh starts every day. Your situation is unique, and you will get what you're looking for. And you'll get it faster with safe and positive people supporting you.

A fairly significant number of job openings are filled through acquaintances and personal contacts. We need to know how to be informed about them. In other words, we need to know how to develop a network of information and support in my effort to secure a job as well as how to approach the employer to succeed in getting a personal interview.

Networking is not only an acceptable and effective way to find work but can also be applied to all situations of our daily lives because:

- It makes it easier to access information
- Creates opportunities for exchanges
- Leads to new relationships, new opportunities
- Broadens the horizons, both professional and personal
- Helps achieve goals and expectations
- Meets basic need for contacts
- Improves my personal and professional life
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Then the facilitator gives them 10 mins to think of the work they did in the tool "My personal network" (current network and plans to expand their network) and think which job opportunities may arise from that and how they could use them.

¹Partly adapted from Step D / Tool 3: Networking (Source: ERGANI / Women's Centre of Karditsa)

They may use table on the handout to see what job contacts they have in their network and where there are gaps. The facilitator asks them to include people and organizations that provide them with the following kinds of support:

- Job Search
- Moral and Emotional Support
- Networking Connections
- Brainstorming Ideas

2. Tips to expand professional contacts

The facilitator explains:

The aim of communication/contact with members of the network is first to be informed about possible job openings or possible professional organizations. I need to prepare and have the following in mind:

- Remind them of who I am and where we met
- Explain the reason why I had this contact without letting the person I am talking try to imagine what I am asking from him.
- Point out why I contacted him. (Due to your position, you are aware of the labour market, you work in the sector I am interested in so you may have heard of a job opening, etc.)
- Briefly present myself and my qualifications.
- Be specific about the way they could help me (direct me to acquaintances that could help me, mention their name as a source of recommendation etc.)
- Politely ask about when you could contact him again.

TIME AND RESOURCES

TIME	2 hours
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES	Paper, pens



Handout 1. Networking for job opportunities

Name of Person or Organization	Type of Support they Provide	Ways to Use their support	Ways to Thank Them

Tool 25. Women's networks and mentoring

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To get to know women's organisations and survivors that may act as role models
- ✓ Promote the support among the participants, beyond the group, posing different alternatives of continuity.
- ✓ To recognize and value group members.

STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

1. Visit or talk

The facilitator organises a visit to a women's organisation or a talk by a representative of an organisation or a survivor who is personally and economically empowered.

The facilitator promotes discussion and fosters the establishment of links for further participation in the organisation or the creation of mentoring relationships.

1. The future of the group

This activity allows participants to evaluate and decide if they want to give continuity to the trainees' group.

The facilitator distributes small paper boards and women write individually if they want to continue sharing things with the other women in the group in the future (for example, specific things they would like to do with some participants or the whole group).

They hand over the cards anonymously. Next the facilitator reads them and comments:

- Have there been any ideas already to keep in touch?
- What could they be?
- How could you do it?
- Would you be willing and ready to do it?

The facilitator may suggest both face-to-face and online contact, e.g. Facebook groups, WhatsApp groups.

TIME AND RESOURCES

TIME	2 hours (1 st part), 30 minutes (2 nd part)
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES	Paper boards