

FACILITATOR HANDOUT: BLANKETED BY BLAME

Instructions:

Print two copies of this handout. Keep one copy for yourself. The other copy you will distribute amongst the volunteers for each of the 11 roles. For example, you will hand the volunteer "Friend- Anita" the sheet of paper that has Anita's instructions and script on it.

Assemble volunteers in a small group. Explain the instructions to the volunteers who will be performing this role play for the group.

Begin the role play. Have the volunteers each read their first statement and put a shawl on Maya.

Maya waits until all the shawls are on her and until the Facilitator asks: "Maya, why do you put up with all this? Why do you not just leave?"

As Maya, sitting under the shawl, you reply non-verbally by attempting to move, but you cannot get up because of the weight of the blankets.

The Facilitator will ask Maya: "How do you feel?"

Then, participants read the second non-blaming statement and take their shawl off Maya.

Next, wait until all the shawls are removed. The Facilitator then asks: "Maya, how do you feel now?"

Lead a group discussion after this activity.

MAYA - CENTRAL CHARACTER

Maya is thirty-five years old. She has been married for 10 years. She has two children ages seven and nine. Maya works in her host community at a garment factory sewing clothes for a big foreign company. Her husband, Lee, works for an automobile manufacturing factory. Soon after their younger child was born, Lee started beating her and eventually forcing her to have sex. This has continued for many years and has gotten worse. Lee's drinking has also gotten worse. One day when she had to stay late to sew clothes for a big order, the garment factory manager dropped her off at home. Lee saw them together and became jealous and very angry. He beat and raped her so badly that her arm got fractured, she had a big gash on her forehead, bruises everywhere, and a swollen black eye. Her children saw this and became very scared that something would happen to their mother. Maya could not take it anymore as she was afraid for her life and decided to take action. She approached her friends, family, a social worker in an NGO, a doctor, and the police.

BLAMING STATEMENT 1. Friend – Anita

Maya tells her closest friend, Anita, about the abuse.

Anita: “Are you telling me that wonderful husband of yours loses his temper and even hits you? I cannot believe that! He is always so kind and happy. You must have done something to make him angry.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 11. Friend – Anita

Anita: “I am so glad you told me about this. Breaking the silence is the first step. What he is doing is not acceptable. You do not deserve this. I will stand with you, Maya.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 2. Maya’s Mother – Grace

Maya calls her mother, Grace.

Grace: “Try harder Maya. You were always the most stubborn one of all your sisters. Their marriages are all fine. They always listen to their husbands. Why did you have to go and work at that factory of yours. You must have neglected your husband. That is why he must be angry.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 10. Maya’s Mother – Grace

Grace: “Maya, you have tried so hard and he did not. Your stubbornness is your strength. If I was in your shoes, I don’t know if I would have struggled for so long.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 3. Maya's Neighbor

The neighbors have heard her screams and sobs, and the police sirens.

Neighbor: "The walls are pretty thin, Maya. People in the building are talking. These late shifts at work must be so frustrating for your husband. The poor guy was telling me that he has to now cook dinner on Wednesdays and Thursdays."

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 9. Maya's Neighbor

Neighbor: "Maya, we can help out by watching the children when you have to work late. Let them come over to our apartment. We will cook their favorite noodles. When you come home, there will be some for you, too."

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 4. HIS (Lee's) Mother – Sandra

Maya's mother-in-law Sandra lives close-by, but she is often out-of-town visiting her other children.

Sandra: "Do not whine Maya. You are the one neglecting my son. Do you know how many times a day I must text him and make sure he is ok? You are always at that factory. Besides, who will believe you now? Do you remember those lies you told about my husband? That he tried to rape you."

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 8. HIS (Lee's) Mother – Sandra

Sandra: "I have worried for the longest time that Lee learned his abusive ways from his father. I will advise Lee that he must get help. And I am so sorry that I pretended not to notice that my husband was sexually harassing you."

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 5. Community Health Worker – Miriam

The community health worker has often heard Maya and Lee fighting when she visits their home to talk about health.

Miriam: “Maya, you should make peace with Lee. Is it good for your children to see the two of you fighting? Why don’t you just listen to him and not argue back. He is such a good man. He is always laughing and talking to everyone in this neighborhood.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 7. Community Health Worker – Miriam

Miriam: “Maya, you do not deserve to be treated this way. This is abuse and it is bad for your health and for the children’s health. I have heard about this NGO organized by women that helps women who face violence. Let me see if I can find out more and give you information. In the meantime, here are some pain killers. They will help with the pain you have in your arm.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 6. Priest/Religious Leader

In desperation, Maya confides in the priest/religious leader in her place of worship. She hopes that he will talk to Lee.

Priest: “Maya, marriage is not a contract you can walk away from because you don’t like the terms. It is a lifelong promise. If you pray harder, things will work out.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 8. HIS (Lee’s) Mother – Sandra

Priest: “I’m here to support you, Maya. I talked to Lee to remind him it is also his duty to be a caring spouse and father instead of terrifying you and the children. God does not condone a human beating another human.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 7. Child – Maya’s Daughter

Maya’s 7-year-old daughter hides under the blankets whenever the violence begins.

Daughter: “Mama, why don’t you cook better so Papa won’t get angry at you? Why can’t we leave here?”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 5. Child – Maya’s Daughter

Daughter: “Mama, Papa’s so mean to you, he’s scaring me. Why doesn’t he stop?”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 8. Police

The neighbors hear her screams and call the police. By the time the police come, Lee has left the house to go drinking with his friends.

Police: “Hey lady, why is there so much commotion? The neighbors are complaining. You should not fight so much with your husband. The poor man is always working hard to take care of his family. If you want to file a complaint, you can. But, let me tell you it is not our job to come between a husband and a wife. This is your private matter and you should sort it out within the family.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 4. Police

Police: “I have arrested your husband, Maya. We can keep him overnight. If you wish to file for a restraining order, you can do that and this will help you stay safe. We will drive by to check that you are ok tomorrow. For tonight, you and your children are safe, so rest easy.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 9. Social Worker

Maya's son brings home a brochure from school. Maya sees it is for an NGO that helps women and calls them. A social worker answers the call.

Social Worker: "We have many programs for women like you. Here is a number for a lawyer who can help you, if you agree to leave your husband. But if you do not leave your husband, it will be difficult to help you."

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 3. Social Worker

Social Worker: "I can give you some information about what options you have, Maya. But it is best not to make a big decision when you are in a crisis. Tell me, what would be most helpful to you right now and then we can discuss some options so that you can decide what you would like to do. How does this sound to you?"

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 10. Lawyer

The lawyer hears her story, asks a few questions, and then responds.

Lawyer: "These kinds of cases are very difficult. It will cost you a lot of money and time. Have you thought about your children? What will happen to them without their father? I will need some witness or someone else who can verify that you are telling the truth about your husband beating and forcing you to have sex. Besides, once you get married, you have legally agreed to have sex whenever he wants."

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 2. Lawyer

Lawyer: "No one deserves to be treated like this, Maya. While it is the case that the law does not recognize forced sex by your husband as a crime, physical abuse is recognized as a crime. You have several options. First, think about whether you want to file a temporary restraining order. This could give you some time to think about what you want to do and what is best for you and your children. I can help you in this process."

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)

BLAMING STATEMENT 11. Doctor

After two days, Maya’s arm still hurts, and she is unable to work. She goes to the local clinic. The doctor examines her and tells her there is a fracture.

Doctor: “Your X-ray shows you have a fracture. We will need to put your arm in a cast. It will heal in a few weeks. Did you say this happened because you fell down the stairs? Well, you need to be more careful next time. Now, do not cry. You can see I am very busy. There is no time for all this emotional stuff. Please go to the nurse. She will get your arm into the cast and then you can be on your way.”

(After reading the statement, step forward and cover Maya with a blanket)

EMPOWERING STATEMENT 1. Doctor

Doctor: “Maya, I can see from your X-ray that you have a fracture. I also see several bruises that are beginning to fade. Once we put your arm in a cast, it will heal in a few weeks. I can give you some pain medicine so that you are more comfortable. However, I am concerned about your health and I am wondering if everything is okay in your home. I see many women facing problems like you. They trust me to share more about what is happening in their lives. If you feel comfortable, you can do so as well. I will not tell anyone else. Has Lee done something to hurt you?”

(After reading the statement, step forward and remove the shawl/newspaper)
