

## **BEGIN THE MEETING WITH:**

(Leaders of the meetings rotate as the group sees fit and allows multiple people to read the different sections during the meeting. The meeting style can read this format and pick a topic for sharing or can read part and study from a specific book over a time period – the choice is the group and what they find the best for their needs)

**Will you join me in a moment of silence, followed by the “Serenity Prayer”?**

**“God, grant me the serenity,  
to Accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
and Wisdom to know the difference.”**

**Please take a moment to silence cell phones and all smart devices!**

**Our group shares the reading of the meeting format... you may read, comment or “Pass” if you like.**

**Let’s remember “Attitudes” by Charles Swindoll**

**"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our Attitudes."**

## WELCOME

**We welcome you to the BeSAFE 12step Program. We hope you find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy. We who live, or have lived, with the problem of coercive control and all its abuses understand, as perhaps few others can. We, too, were confused, scared and exhausted. In BeSAFE, we discover that no situation is really hopeless, and we can distinguish real danger from manipulated fear, and that it is possible for us to find understanding, learn tools, and regain control over ourselves and our lives, no matter if the coercive control abuser is in our lives or not.**

**We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. We can turn learn to trust our program, other survivors and find real services that helps us make the decisions that are right for our lives. So much depends on our own ATTITUDES, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective and make real decisions that are good for our lives, we find that the twisted lies lose their power to dominate our thoughts and our lives, causing so much damage and destruction.**

**The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the BeSAFE ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with coercive control abuse is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become scared, paranoid, upset and unreasonable without knowing it.**

**The BeSAFE program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous & similar to Al-Anon), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives along with slogans, inspirations and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among Survivors and Advocates along with daily reading of AA, Al-Anon and other inspired literature makes us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.**

**BeSAFE is an anonymous fellowship. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and survivor-to-survivor, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in BeSAFE.**

**Here in the groups, when we speak, we say our first name, "Hello, I am Debbie." Everyone responds with a greeting of "Hello, Debbie!" Then we continue speaking. We only use our first names to protect our anonymity. (In small groups, go around and introduce each member. In large groups, introduce and respond before you share.)**

## **BURNING DESIRE**

Does anyone have a burning desire? **FIRST** is to BeSAFE. If you have an emergency and safety is an issue, speak to the group. **NEXT**, please share burning desire that needs to release from your thoughts and feelings, and then let it go to the group. BeSAFE, and know the group supports you.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Our meetings last for approximately one and a half hours. During this time, we come together for mutual help. We come to learn how to live the BeSAFE 12step Program. If our meeting extends beyond the time you can stay, or it's okay to quietly leave. If something **TRIGGERS** you, motion you need a moment and quietly leave the room. If you need help, ask a Survivor or Advocate to go with you. Return when you feel better, or please come to the next meeting.

**THIS GROUP CONSCIENCE** request that all present refrain from gossip, dominance, and discussion of religion, politics, treatment centers, self-help programs, counseling, and the use or mention of material other than what we bring to this program. Please remember that in BeSAFE, we keep the focus on us, and not one who uses coercive controls to manipulate us. Remember to speak about your experience, and how it affects you personally.

**THE GOAL** is to realize that someone has come into our lives, and we have been manipulated and lied to for personal gain, and the cost has hurt us. The focus turned to them, what they want and feel. In BeSAFE, we are restoring **THE FOCUS TO US**, and the will for our own life outside the influence of coercive controls. What we have come to believe and know is not real. Our upset and fear are based on lies and manipulation of that coercive control. First thing first, is to BeSAFE. Then, these groups are here to help us come to terms with ourselves, understand our feelings, restore the sense of self by seeing once again what is **TRUE AND REAL**, and to regain our own power over our lives. We can make choices to live what is best in any situation.

We thank you for your cooperation in our group effort to stick to positive and empowering principles, and no longer be trapped in that dark, isolated place where we felt helpless. We are strong, good people and can remove the malignant fears and thoughts from our minds to be free from the entrapment.

**Are there any Newcomers?** (If not skip the New Comer's Welcome)

## NEW COMER'S WELCOME

As a newcomer you may feel that you are here to STOP the coercive control... that your presence here may teach you how to stop his or her coercive control, abuse or domestic violence. THE TRUTH IS, you are here because of the abuser and not for the abuser. You will soon learn that you did not cause the coercive controller to abuse, you cannot control the domestic violence, nor can you cure the malignant personality that uses coercive control. You are here for yourself. This is your program. It is your recovery from the life altering effects of the coercive control and abuse of the malignant personality.

## PLEASE CONSIDER

- Your loved one or friend has a personality that cannot change.
- The first step is “We are powerless over coercive control – that our lives had become unmanageable.” We believe that is what brought us here.
- Try at least six meetings before deciding whether BeSAFE is for you. Please ask the group for more information and to answer any questions you have.
- Don't expect too much too soon. It took a long time to need these meetings.
- Keep an OPEN mind. Take what you like from the meetings, and leave the rest.
- Everything said at a meeting is confidential.
- We will protect your anonymity, so please protect ours. This is for all our safety.
- We have found the following enables us to work the program:
  - Read as much as you can about malignant personalities, coercive controls and narcissistic or psychopathic abuses: psychological, emotional, financial, etc.
  - Go to meetings, and work the BeSAFE 12step Program & AA/Al-Anon materials.
  - Sign up for the phone list, and call people when you need support.
  - Ask for an Advocate, and build trusting relationships with the Family Alliance Networks Trauma Informed professionals, agencies and organizations.
- BeSAFE is a spiritual program, not a religious one. We use the term Higher Power. For many this is God, of their understanding. This might not be for you. The goal is to understand there is something more than us, and that connects us to everything.
- During the meeting, please feel free to share, or PASS, and just listen.
- At the end of the meeting, we share hugs. You may choose to accept them, or not.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to talk with someone after the meeting or call later to find out more information.

**BeSAFE will work for you if you allow it to. It's as effective as you make it. It's the safe place, the right place to be. Keep coming back. It works, if you work it.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Some of us go out for after-meeting fellowship, food and sharing.
- Everyone is welcome to join us.
- Are there any other announcements?
- Please share any helpful upcoming local, community events that would be of interest to the group for their wellbeing, support, recovery and empowerment

## PREAMBLE TO THE BESAFE 12STEPS

The BeSAFE 12step Program is a fellowship of relatives and friends of a malignant personality that uses coercive control. Here we share our experience, strength, and hope in order to solve our common problems. We believe that the abuse, which is disempowering by its nature, is a family complicated family dynamic that begins the cycle of abuse. With changed attitudes and support, we can aid recovery to find empowerment, breaking the cycle of abuse.

BeSAFE is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. BeSAFE is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

BeSAFE has but one purpose: to help families that have been trapped by coercive control understand how that abuse has affected us emotionally, psychologically, socially and financially. During the abuse, the focus shifted to the abuser's will and actions, causing us to be disempowered.

BeSAFE helps identify this disempowerment, and over times shifts the focus back to us, and the best interest of ourselves and our lives in healthy relations to others. This is our personal power restored, we call empowerment. This is the God given choice to live our best life. We achieve this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to those experience coercive control, and by giving understanding and maintaining a safe, empowered relationships or choosing not to be in a relationship, due to the unhealthy dynamics that harms us and our families.

## THE BESAFE 12STEP PROGRAM

Because of their proven power and worth, AA's Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by BeSAFE. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of goodwill, of any religious faith, or of none. NOTE the power of the very words!

1. We admitted we were powerless over COERCIVE CONTROL – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, of our understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure ourselves, them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *of our understanding*, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("AAWS"). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only - use of A.A.'s Steps or an adapted version in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, or use in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.*

## THE BESAFE 12TRADITIONS (read one each month ie. Jan #1)

These guidelines are means of promoting harmony and growth in all BeSAFE groups, Family Alliance Networks and in the worldwide fellowship of Global Family Alliance, as a whole. Our group experience suggests that our unity depends upon our adherence to these Traditions.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority — a loving God that is expressed through the group conscience. Our Advocates are but trusted servants— they do not govern.
3. The relatives or friends of coercive control, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves BeSAFE Family, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem with coercive control in a relative, friend or someone in our life.
4. Each group ought to be autonomous, except in matters affecting another BeSAFE Group, the Family Alliance Networks or Global Family Alliance, as a whole.
5. Each BeSAFE Group has but one purpose: to help survivors of coercive control to be empowered in their own lives. We do this by practicing the BeSAFE 12steps *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding the coercive control of the malignant personality, and by welcoming and giving comfort to Survivors of coercive control to become empowered.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with groups in our community supporting others facing their own concerns.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. BeSAFE 12step work ought to remain forever non-professional, peer to peer as survivors seeking to restore the power taken. Our Family Alliance Networks may employ Survivor Advocates, that have faced coercive control, been successfully empowered and through additional training is Trauma Informed to help connect Survivors with Trauma Informed supportive agencies, organizations and professional and coach Survivors in a transition to empowerment.



9. **Our groups, as such, ought never to be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. The BeSAFE groups will be connected to Family Alliance Networks to allow for resources, training and support. Groups are organic and autonomous to serve their community.**
10. **The BeSAFE Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**
11. **Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all BeSAFE members.**
12. **Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.**

### MEETING TOPIC & SHARING

**Each meeting we pick a Topic to share – a burning desire or something that stands out.**

**Then we take turns sharing our experience, strength, and hope.**

**Feel free to share, or you may “Pass”, if you like.**

**Please remember to just listen that each of us may share, without interruption or feedback (Cross-Talk).**

#### **Who has the Topic for the Meeting?**

(Someone may have signed up for the meeting/topic, been asked to Lead or otherwise it's open to anyone that wishes to bring a topic to the meeting.)

The topic might be a study on an idea or concept, or might be a sharing of an idea and the personal experience. Know the group and realize the importance of time to allow everyone that wants to speak the time to speak. Sharing should be a couple minutes allowing everyone to share before sharing again. Respect those that do not want to share. It works better when you let people step up when they are ready to speak, not make them go in order as called upon. Remember how it was when you came into the meeting, reach out to find ways to include newcomers in the meeting, when they are ready.



## BeSAFE 12step PROMISES

1. If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.
2. We are going to know a new FREEDOM and a NEW HAPPINESS.
3. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
4. We will comprehend the word SERENITY, and we will know PEACE.
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. That feeling of being trapped, hopeless, useless and unable to change our lives will disappear.
7. We will detach from the victimization, the disempowerment, and gain interest in our own life and our personal empowerment.
8. The fear, the pain, the anxiety and the upset will slip away.
9. Our whole ATTITUDE and OUTLOOK upon life will change.
10. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.
11. We will intuitively know how to HANDLE SITUATIONS which used to upset and overwhelm us.
12. We will suddenly realize that GOD IS DOING FOR US, what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant PROMISES? **WE THINK NOT.**

They are BEING FULFILLED among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize, if WE WORK FOR THEM.

## HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided, you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with coercive control abusers—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find God now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. **WE ASKED FOR GOD'S PROTECTION AND CARE WITH COMPLETE ABANDON.** Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over coercive control—that our lives had become unmanageable.**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, of our understanding.**

## MEETING CLOSING

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you like and leave the rest. The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you'll discover that though you may not like all of us, you'll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else; but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in closing with the LORDS' Prayer? Whose Father?



**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thing is the kingdom, And the power, and the glory, forever. Amen**