



Empowerment Star™

The Outcomes Star for women who have experienced domestic abuse

safety

accommodation

support
networks

Not for use
Sample information only

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Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk

or 020 7272 8765

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Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to enquire about buying a licence and training.

Licences are also available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages.

The Outcomes Star™

This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of the Outcomes Star over its long evolution and we would like to thank all the clients, workers, managers, funders, academics and commissioners who have generously given their time and expertise.

The original commission for an outcome measurement system came from St Mungo's, with financial support from the London Housing Foundation, and Triangle recognises their vital roles in the development of the Outcomes Star. We would also like to acknowledge Kate Graham's important contribution to the development of the suite of Stars, both as a founding partner of Triangle and as co-author of the original Outcomes Star (now called the Outcomes Star for Homelessness).

We would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to this version of the Star:

- Eaves Housing who initiated and commissioned this version of the Outcomes Star and their services who collaborated in the development and piloting
- London Councils who provided the funding for the work to go ahead
- Bromley Women's Aid and Latin American Women's Resource Centre who participated with Eaves in the development and piloting of the Empowerment Star
- Asha Women's Centre (Worcester) and Hestia (London) who helped to pilot the Empowerment Star.

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Welcome to the Empowerment Star™

We want to help you create a life in which you are safe, independent and empowered to make the choices that are right for you – and for your children, if you have them.

The Empowerment Star helps us focus on what needs to change for you to do that

It looks at nine areas in which you might need support now or in the future:

1. Safety
2. Accommodation
3. Support networks
4. Legal issues
5. Health and well-being
6. Money
7. Children
8. Work and learning
9. Empowerment and self-esteem

Rebuilding a life free from abuse takes time

The abuse and other difficulties you have experienced can have a big impact on your life and affect how you feel about yourself. It takes time to make the changes you need to make to be safe and rebuild your confidence. But with patience, determination and support, it can be done. The Empowerment Star helps you on your journey to a life free from abuse by breaking it down into steps.

Your Journey to Independence and Choice

At the beginning of the journey you are **not ready for help**. You are experiencing abuse but you don't feel able to do anything to change the situation. You maybe too afraid to get help or find it hard to see a way forward – or you may not think you deserve any better.

The first big step is to begin **accepting help** with your situation. Change may seem impossible and it is frightening to step into the unknown, but you can't bear the situation any longer and do what is necessary to make yourself safe. At this point you may not have a picture of how life could be and your confidence may be very low so you need others to take the initiative to help you change things.

The next step is to start **believing** that things can be different for you and that you don't deserve or have to put up with any abuse. You start to think about how you want your life to be in the future and begin to take small steps in that direction. At this stage, some of your plans may be unrealistic and you may need help from workers to have positive but realistic expectations.

The next step is actively **learning and rebuilding** an abuse-free life and doing what you need to do to create a positive future. This involves reflecting on the abusive relationship and learning lessons, building new skills and

rediscovering old ones, improving your confidence, and taking practical steps to rebuild your life. It is often a time of trial and error as you try new things, do things on your own for the first time and learn what choices are right for you. It takes time to rebuild your life, things don't always fall into place and this can be disappointing or frustrating at times, so you need support through the ups and downs.

Finally you achieve **independence and choice**. You have created a new life in which you are safe, independent and empowered to make the choices that are right for you (and your children, if you have them), and you feel able to maintain this new life without support from a specialist service such as ours.

A summary of this Journey to Independence and Choice is shown on the next page.

How to complete the Empowerment Star™

For each of the nine areas there is a description of the steps on the Journey to Independence and Choice in that area of your life. There are both summary steps and more detailed descriptions.

To complete the Star, look at each of the nine scales one by one and talk them over with your keyworker. Together you can agree where you are in each area. Then mark the number on the Star Chart and connect the points to create a picture of the areas of your life that are working well and the areas that are causing difficulties.

This picture will help you and your worker to agree on what to focus on in the next few weeks and months to ensure your safety now and in the future.

Recognising external factors

The Empowerment Star focuses primarily on the things that you and your worker can do to support your safety, independence and choice. However, it is important to also recognise factors which affect you but are not your responsibility or within your control, in particular the behaviour of the person abusing you. Other external factors may include lack of access to suitable housing or work and/or attitudes within society. Using the Star may help clarify these areas and also help empower you by focusing on the areas where you are able to make changes and where support could help.

Continuing your journey

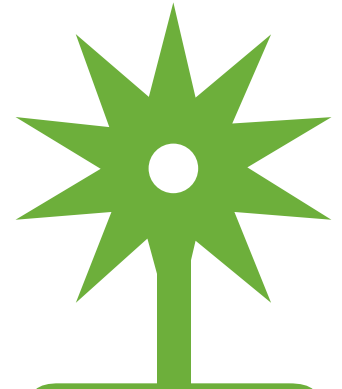
You and your worker will come back to the Star at regular intervals. You can look at the steps again, agree where you are and create a new shape on your Empowerment Star. You may not start at the first step and you may move back as well as forward as you work to build a positive future, but people can usually place themselves somewhere on the journey.

Over time this will help you build a picture of how things are changing for you. This can help you see things in a new way – to put the ups and downs into context.

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The Journey to Independence and Choice



Independence and choice 10

I am safe and empowered and I no longer need the service for support

9

Learning and rebuilding 8

I am learning new skills and doing what is needed to build a new life

7

Believing 6

I am thinking about how I want my life to be and taking small steps towards it

5

6

Accepting help 4

I can't bear this situation and I'm going along with help to change things

3

Not ready for help 1

I don't want to talk about it

1

2

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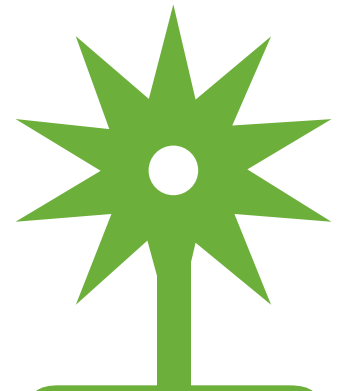
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1 Safety

- *Addressing immediate risks*
- *Appropriate boundaries*
- *Understanding control and abuse*

Where are you on your journey?

Staying safe means taking practical steps to deal with any immediate risks and learning how to make safe choices in the future. This includes understanding and recognising power, control and abuse in any relationship so that you are able to pick up danger signs, maintain appropriate boundaries with others and keep yourself safe.



I recognise risks and keep myself safe without support from the service

10
Independence & choice

I am learning how to stay safe but need support from the service at times

8
Learning & rebuilding

I am safe right now but I don't yet know how to make safe choices

5 Believing 6

This can't go on any longer – I need to be safe

4
Accepting help

I am not safe but I'm stuck in this situation

1 Not ready for help 2

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1 Safety (detail)

9 - 10 Independence & choice

I recognise risks and keep myself safe without support from the service

- You have strategies in place to keep yourself safe both at home and in your community
- You understand how power and control operate in relationships and can recognise danger signs
- You have appropriate boundaries that you are able to maintain
- You are able to seek help if you ever need it again in the future
- At 9 it helps to have occasional support from the service but by 10 you are able to keep yourself safe without a specialist service

7 - 8 Learning & rebuilding

I am learning how to stay safe but need support from the service at times

- You are learning how to recognise attempts to gain power and control over you and how to keep appropriate boundaries but you sometimes find this hard so need ongoing support to make safe choices
- You may be exploring safe contact with the person who abused you if they are willing to accept help with their behaviour. If you have decided to continue living with the abuser then they have changed their behaviour and are getting the help they need
- You are more settled in the decisions you have made to keep yourself safe and by 8 are mostly safe and unlikely to return to an abusive situation

5 - 6 Believing

I am safe right now but I don't yet know how to make safe choices

- You are away from immediate risk, either in a place of safety or there is an injunction preventing the person who has abused you from entering your home, or they are getting help with their behaviour and you and others feel it is safe to stay
- You may sometimes have doubts about leaving and consider returning to the abusive situation, and you don't know how to stay safe in the future
- By 6 you are taking practical steps to stay safe, for instance putting a safety plan in place and taking the steps you need to keep yourself safe in the future

3 - 4 Accepting help

This can't go on any longer – I need to be safe

- You recognise that you are in a situation of abuse and it is not acceptable for you and your children, if you have any
- You are accepting help from friends or professionals. Depending on your situation, this might mean getting an injunction against the person abusing you, going to a refuge or seeking other help
- You look to friends or professionals to do things for you and by 4 are consistently going along with the support they provide

1 - 2 Not ready for help

I am not safe but I'm stuck in this situation

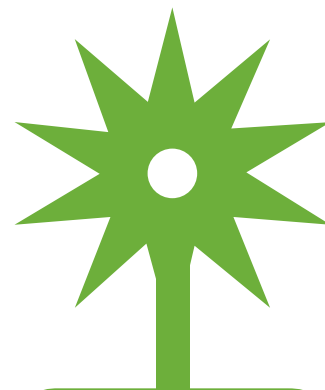
- You are experiencing physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse but aren't doing anything to change your situation and you turn away help that is offered
- This may be for one or more of a number of reasons including:
 - You do not know how to keep safe
 - You are too afraid to act, perhaps the abuser has threatened to harm you if you leave them
 - You don't feel you have better options
 - You blame yourself for the abuse
 - It is not acceptable in your culture to leave or question a relationship
- By 2 you have moments of wanting help to change the situation but these are fleeting and if help is offered you do not accept it

2 Accommodation

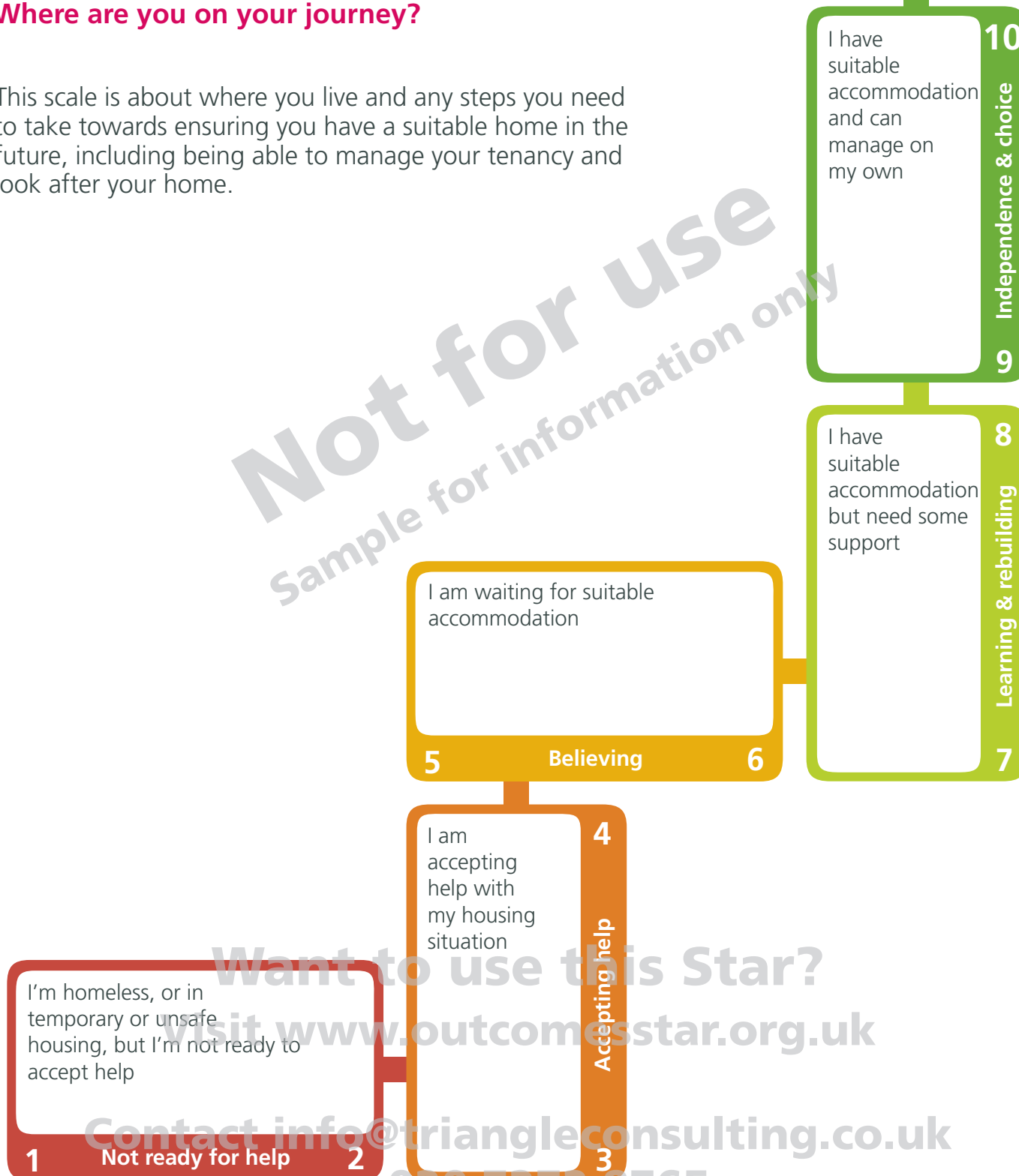
- Finding a place to live
- Maintaining a tenancy

Where are you on your journey?

This scale is about where you live and any steps you need to take towards ensuring you have a suitable home in the future, including being able to manage your tenancy and look after your home.



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2 Accommodation (detail)

9 - 10 Independence & choice

I have suitable accommodation and can manage on my own

- You are living in suitable accommodation, this may be your home from before the abuse or new accommodation
- You can manage your tenancy and find new accommodation when necessary –with occasional support at 9 and independently by 10

7 - 8 Learning & rebuilding

I have suitable accommodation but need some support

- Your housing is suitable and you are learning how to manage the tenancy or mortgage at 7 and able to do so with some support by 8
- If you need to move, for example because your tenancy came to an end, you need support to do this

5 - 6 Believing

I am waiting for suitable accommodation

- You have done what you can to secure new accommodation and are waiting to see what comes up. At 6 you make regular calls to check on progress and/or visit possible properties
- You have a reasonable understanding of what is available and your expectations are realistic
- If you have been waiting for some time, you may be feeling quite frustrated but by 6 you are doing things to build your new life rather than waiting for someone else to sort out your housing

3 - 4 Accepting help

I am accepting help with my housing situation

- You are in a refuge or other temporary accommodation and you are taking action to find suitable accommodation with the support of workers
- There may be a big difference between what you want and what is available and you may be reluctant to accept workers' advice and the information they give you
- At 3 you may still be considering your options for housing, such as whether to stay in the same area or move away. By 4 you have made those choices and are taking action. Depending on your circumstances and options, this may involve an application to the local authority, looking for private rented accommodation or making your home safe to return to

1 - 2 Not ready for help

I'm homeless, or in temporary or unsafe housing, but I'm not ready to accept help

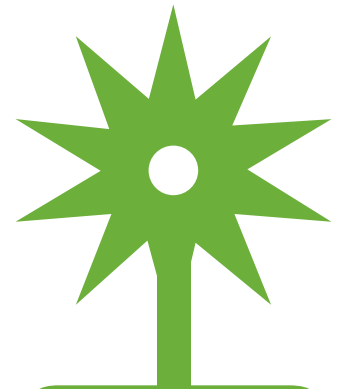
- You are living in temporary accommodation, such as a refuge or B&B, or you are on the streets or sleeping on a friend's sofa, and you have not taken any action to find new housing yet
- Perhaps you want to return to the person who abused you, or they are threatening you to return and you are scared of what they might do
- If you are living at home, your home is not a safe place for you and you are experiencing physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse
- Maybe you have a mental health issue, drug use or drinking which make it harder for you to take action or maybe you just feel hopeless
- By 2 you occasionally think about looking for new accommodation but only fleetingly

3 Support networks

- Local groups or services
- Friends
- Family
- Asking for help, when you need it

Where are you on your journey?

This scale is about having people around and getting support. It may include your family, existing or new friends or local groups or services. It is about having the social networks and support that are right for you and being able to ask for and receive help and encouragement when you need it.



I have the support and people in my life that I need and want

10 Independence & choice

I am developing a good support network of family and/or friends

8 Learning & rebuilding

I have someone I trust and want to build my support network

5 Believing 6

I want support but I'm not sure who to turn to

4 Accepting help

I have no one I trust to help me

1 Not ready for help 2

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Support networks (detail)

9 - 10 Independence & choice

I have the support and people in my life that I need and want

- You have enough friends, social contact and support
- You are able to engage with people positively and appropriately
- Either you are accepted and supported by family and neighbours, or you have accepted the limitations of these relationships and learnt to manage them at a distance
- At 9 you need occasional support from workers in this area but by 10 you are independent of the service

7 - 8 Learning & rebuilding

I am developing a good support network of family and/or friends

- You are feeling more confident, able to trust people, ask for help appropriately when needed and to build more of a support network
- By 8 you have some helpful friendships and/or other social networks but you still need ongoing support in this area so that you don't go back to less helpful people when you feel lonely or withdraw when your confidence is low

5 - 6 Believing

I have someone I trust and want to build my support network

- You trust and rely on at least one of the workers you are in contact with
- You are spending at least some time with people who support you to make the changes you need to stay safe
- You may be leaving behind unhelpful friendships or breaking ties with family where this is necessary for your safety. This may be difficult and leave you feeling more alone
- By 6 you are actively taking steps to find new positive friendships

3 - 4 Accepting help

I want support but I'm not sure who to turn to

- You want people around you who will help you but you don't know who to turn to or how to ask for help
- At 3 you will sometimes accept support when it is offered, or occasionally open up to a professional, friend, or if you are in a refuge, to someone else there
- By 4 you are quite consistently accepting support
- You probably still feel isolated or alone and don't really trust anyone

1 - 2 Not ready for help

I have no one I trust to help me

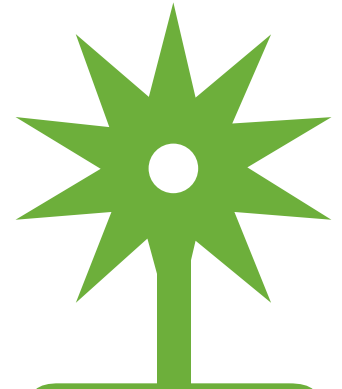
- You have no support from friends or family and this situation is not changing
- You may be isolated. Perhaps the person abusing you has cut you off from social contact or you have withdrawn due to fear, depression or you are experiencing feelings of shame about your situation – or there may be other reasons
- Or the people around you are not supportive. Perhaps your family are telling you to stay in the abusive situation or you have friends who are involved in drugs, heavy drinking or other behaviour that helps maintain the situation
- By 2 you have times when you want support but, if you have contact with a domestic violence service, you do not trust the workers and if help is offered by them or by friends you do not accept it

4 Legal issues

- *Divorce*
- *Injunctions*
- *Children*
- *Immigration*
- *Offending*

Where are you on your journey?

Legal issues could include injunctions or other legal action against the person who has abused you, divorce, issues related to children or connected with past or present offending. If you are not a UK national there may be issues around immigration and knowing what rights you have to access services and protection. If you have no legal issues you need to address, place yourself at 10.



If I have legal issues, I can deal with them without help from the service

10

Independence & choice

9

I am learning to deal with legal issues for myself

8

Learning & rebuilding

7

I believe the law is on my side and I am taking legal action, with help

5

Believing

6

I'm accepting help with legal issues

4

Accepting help

I'm too scared to take legal action – it wouldn't help anyway

1

Not ready for help

2

3

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