



# LIVING IN THE PINK

## LIPS GROUP GUIDE

### LIVING IN THE PINK SUPPORT GROUP

This is your guide to starting a Living in the Pink Support Group. LIPS Groups support women healing from exploitative or abusive relationships.

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# LIPS GROUP

## Living in the Pink Support Group

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Women going through relationship challenges need support. Especially women who are in Loser, User, or Abuser relationships. Typical relationship advice doesn't work for these women, because they are not in typical relationships. They are in exploitative relationships. They have special circumstances and special considerations that are simply not addressed in typical marriage books, marriage retreats or couples counseling. Women breaking free from exploitative and abusive relationships should receive resources and support that help them deal with the toxic nature of their relationship.

### What does Living in the Pink Mean?

I discovered the term Living in the Pink when I was looking for a synonym for, "Emotionally Healthy." Apparently, health professionals use this term to describe someone who is thriving, living with vitality and vigor. I now use it to describe women who reclaim their lives by breaking free from toxic relationship patterns. When women Live in the Pink, they know their God-given value and they live according to it. They perform radical self-care, they show love toward others and they stand up for justice- especially in their own homes.

### What Do Living in the Pink Support Groups Do?

Women who are trying to break free from exploitative or abusive relationships need a lot of support and care. They need other women who believe them, who stand with them, and who will be their biggest cheerleaders when they accomplish hard things. LIPS Groups are designed to accept each woman without judgment and offer understanding and compassion.

### How can you get started?

Once you have 3-5 women who are interested in coming, set the date and time that works best. You can work through the blog posts I've selected here as a place to start. Work through one or two blog posts each group meeting, depending how much discussion is produced. I've broken them into categories of need. Women will be in different stages of realization and acceptance of their relationship condition. Some will be fully aware of the manipulation and abuse in their marriage, some will still be in some denial about just how bad it really is. Some will be divorced and remarried. That is ok. Women are ready at different times. The group's role is to provide a safe space to think and talk about these issues, and to offer resources and support.

## Blog Articles to Be Used in Group Meetings

### Emotional Abuse

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/emotional-abuse-16-signs-that-its-happening-to-you/>

### Understanding Anger in Men

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/understanding-anger-men/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/anger-really-hiding/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/setting-boundaries-with-angry-person/>

### Setting Boundaries with Narcissistic Husbands

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/a-sorry-that-sticks/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/what-if-he-doesnt-stop/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/awful-still-stay/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/steps-keep-safe/>

### Identifying the Kind of Person You're With

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/9-things-narcissists-say-make-you-feel-stupid/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/narcissist-fools-counselor/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/10-strategies-emotional-manipulators-use-get-their-way/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/cracking-secret-code-narcissists-sociopaths-psychological-manipulators-part-i/>

### How to Heal the Trauma and Move On

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/5-powerful-practice-heal-toxic-relationship/>

<http://www.michellehollomon.com/the-real-reason-we-are-attracted-to-bad-boys-narcissistic-users-and-sociopathic-abusers/>

## Tips for Group Success

### Eat Pray Love

**Offer food:** Seriously. Women in toxic relationships often neglect themselves in order to make sure everyone else's needs are met. Offering food lets women nourish themselves in a safe space.

**Safe and Confidential:** Women will need reminded that what they share will be kept private, and each person should agree to keep all information private and confidential. Above all, the group needs to be and feel like a safe place to be honest and real.

**Pray:** Each group can be started with a little prayer. I'm not even being cliché, weird, or hokey here. Even if you're not religious, praying is essential. Control, exploitation and manipulation is as much spiritual abuse as it is psychological and physical abuse. Women coming together and asking God for help is powerful in breaking free from an abuser's manipulation. This little ditty can be read out loud, so you don't have to feel weird making something up. 😊

*God, thank you for bringing us all here and helping us to see the truth of what is going on in our relationships. Help us to break the cycle of abuse and exploitation. Help us to know our value, to be strong, to be wise, and to be safe. Amen.*

**Blog Posts:** Once you Eat, Pray, then you can Love! This is the best part. You can read the selected blog post and discuss its contents. Once people feel safe sharing, you may want to remind the women that the group's role is not for solving problems or giving advice. Rather, the group's role is to listen, empathize and encourage each woman in their personal journey. Here are some questions to ask to get the discussion going.

- Have you had similar experiences? Would anyone be willing to share?
- What have you tried to change things, and has it worked?
- When did you first realize that your relationship wasn't just dysfunctional, it was actually destructive?
- What is the one thing that has been hardest for you to deal with this week?
- If you have kids, how is your relationship affecting them?
- Name one thing that you have done recently toward radical self-care? Professional help, medical appointment, reading a book, joining a yoga class, visiting a church, calling a friend.
- What is the one thing that you have done to find peace and strength?
- In what way are you proud of yourself this week?
- If you had to name your biggest fear, what would it be?
- If you had to name your biggest strength, what would it be?
- What can the group do to support you?
- What is your next step to Live in the Pink?
- What is one thing that you will do this week in order to feel strong and exercise radical self-care?

## How I Can Help

I will be offering confidential teleconferences in the near future if you find that you'd like more structure, professional support or direction. You can send me an email at [michelle@counselingtheeastside.com](mailto:michelle@counselingtheeastside.com) or call at 425-999-9470 if you'd like more information on this.

In order to offer HIPAA compliant confidentiality, teleconferencing with me will be charged. I am still working out how much that will be to keep it sustainable.

## You'll Be a Great Facilitator!

I believe in you! But if you're a bit nervous, here are some tips for Facilitation.

- Your goal is to help the group feel comfortable around one another, get the support they need, and leave with one action step. If you've done that, count it a success!
- You can start each session with a brief check-in or ice breaker to help women feel comfortable.
- You can manage group discussion by encouraging participation from all members of the group. Members who are comfortable talking in the group may have a tendency to dominate conversation if shyer members aren't encouraged to also participate. I've found that saying something like, "Sarah, we've heard a lot from you today, let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken up yet."
- You don't have to know all the answers. Referring hard questions to attorneys, doctors, therapists, pastors and community agencies is often the best next step. Compile a short list of trusted professionals in your area who have experience working with victims of domestic, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.
- Your role as the facilitator is to inspire a safe space for understanding. If a member seems defensive, combative, or judgmental, you may need to speak to that member privately about appropriate communication inside the group. Boundaries are essential to keep the communication helpful and safe.

*Living in the Pink Support Groups* will be a blessing to you as well. Thank you for being willing to take this mission on! The women in your world will find encouragement, affirmation and clarity because of the work you are doing. We all are blessed and lucky because of you.

Warmest Wishes,

Michelle Hollomon, LMHC