



SEASONS OF CHANGE

*A Journal for Young Women who have
experienced child sexual assault.*

*A place for past reflections,
present wonderings and
future possibilities*

A Rosie's Place Publication 2006

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Thanks for your honesty, insight & thoughtfulness. You continue to inspire us with your courage and strength.

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What this Journal is about

Rosie's Place is a sexual assault counselling service based in the outer western suburbs of Sydney. Over the years we have met with many young women who have experienced childhood sexual assault. From these meetings, both individually and in groups, we have listened to the sharing of stories of the tremendous pain and struggle young women have endured because of the crime of sexual assault committed against them.

But also, because young women are so much more than their experiences of violence and abuse. We have been privileged to hear their stronger stories of courage and resilience and their ongoing resolve to regain a sense of personal justice and identity with their lives.

In developing ideas for this book we met with young women to both share their stories and reflect on the messages they believed were most important to convey to other young women. These conversations and writings were then translated into the format of a journal.

The young women who gave their knowledge and personal views so unselfishly were clear that this book would not become a catalogue of facts about sexual assault or prescriptions about what young women should be experiencing.

Rather, the most important factor to them was to provide a safe place where the reader could also become the co-author and artist of their journal. Each was clear that a journal would never really be finished, but rather would always be changing as they believed they had changed, and would continue to change, as they move into future lives of hope, possibilities and explorations.

The title of the journal, Seasons of Change, metaphorically reflects such a journey, a path of different shades and climates, but always entwined.

This book is dedicated to young women who time and time again set out along their own pathways of seasons that change, striving toward growth in their lives.

*If you are reading this journal it is likely that you have been sexually assaulted.
We are sorry that this has happened to you.
We created this journal as a means for you to express your thoughts and feelings
that are connected with the abuse.*

*Some young women have said they thought they did things or said things to de-
serve the abuse... **NO-ONE EVER** deserves to be sexually abused... **NEVER***

*It happens because the offender or person who sexually abuses young people is big-
ger or stronger than you are*

*People sometimes say that girls are sexually abused because of what they wear...
but that is never true*

Sexual assault happens because they used your trust to do what they wanted to

*Many young women ask why they were sexually assaulted... why did it happen
to them? They think that maybe it was something about them or something about
who they are that caused them to be abused. The offender often says and does
many things to trick a young person to believe it was their fault. These tricks are
simply ways to make the young person take responsibility for what the offender
has done.*

Tricks, lies and more lies.....

*Some of the tricks offenders may use so they can sexually assault you and to keep
the abuse a secret may be: treat you differently from others, not respect your pri-
vacy, (walking in while you are in the shower/getting dressed), ask you to do
things that involve physical contact. There are so many tactics they use to try to
keep the abuse and secrecy going. It is never your fault.*

*Guilt, shame, powerlessness, isolation, responsibility are some of the feelings that
may be associated with the abuse.*

Then He might say:

It's your fault

If you tell, bad things will happen

You enjoy it

Making it Your Own.....

The most valued aspect of this journal is that it belongs totally to you and the words, pictures and prose that you place in the pages. There are writings and ideas throughout the journal to share thoughts with you that may sound familiar but they can never replace those thoughts that are your own.

You are also encouraged to add to the dimensions of the journal with your own eye to detail and design.

- ◆ *Create pockets with envelopes, paper or material to keep your most precious items or thoughts*
- ◆ *Keepsakes such as photos, letters and cards, poems written by you or sent to you can also be a valuable addition to your journal*
- ◆ *Quotes or articles that hold an important message for you*
- ◆ *Signatures from important people in your life and perhaps a message from them about you*
- ◆ *Materials, ribbons, bookmarks, sequins, buttons, stickers etc can add colour or a reminder of something valuable to you*

Keep the journal in a safe place that feels safe for you and perhaps with other things in your life that only you can touch

And most of allremember that this journal is yours to own.



AUTUMN

*A time for shedding leaves.
Your time for shedding the fear, hurt & pain.*

*“The truth will set you free.
But first it will piss you off”.*

Gloria Steinem.



Once upon a time....

*Once upon a time there was a little girl
She lived in a house with her family
She was happy for a while
until something happened to her
And she asked why?
And no one answered.
Once there was a little girl
and that little girl was me.*

She Was Raped

*There was once a young girl
He pushed her hard against the wall
He made her feel so small
He striped her bare
He just didn't care
As he forced open her thighs
She wondered why no one could hear her cries
He took what control she had
She begged him to stop
She told him he was hurting her so bad
A careless grin came to his face
The he said "you've finally been put in your place"
He said she deserved it, and she had to pay
And if she told anyone
She wouldn't live to see another day
When he was finally finished
He said "now wasn't that fun"
But what does it matter, he's already won
He left her lying there so confused
Left her feeling so used
As she's lying on the ground
She thinks about her hidden secret
That must never be found
She wishes she could erase that night
She tried so hard to put up a fight
All of those thoughts running through her mind
All the pain he left behind
But he doesn't have to worry
Because she's too scared to tell
But for all the pain he caused
She hopes he burns in hell
I just wish people could see
That young girl is me.*

Rochelle

*This Young Girl is Me.....
What parts of your story would you write about.....*





I Wonder

*I wonder if you know how much you hurt me,
if you know how many times I wish this was a murder,
And how many times I died.*

*I don't want this pain and I'm sure you don't either,
But you know what you did so now you have to suffer,
just like me except I'm innocent didn't do anything to deserve this
it's just not fair I'm suffering for your mistakes.*

*The only way to deal with this pain is to cry,
I cry day and night,
because you hurt me.*

*Reflect on what it was like to write about your own
experiences of abuse...
Identify feelings in regards to the abuse, write it, draw it, speak it,
create it.....*



A master of disguise.

(Excerpt from Krystal's story-Finding Freedom.

An interview with a young woman. June 2002. Rosie's Place)

Sometimes he would be so much fun. I remember once making paper airplanes with him and flying them for hours. I felt very confused because sometimes he acted like a proper dad and did nice things. He made me my own fairy garden with a pond, ferns and fishes and tadpoles. I had a frog living in a special log that dad made for the pond.

And then he ran over my frog. I know it was deliberate.

I could never trust him. I was so frightened that if I ever told about what he was doing to me he would hurt me and mum really badly.

He just got meaner and frightened me more so that I wouldn't say anything. I remember him threatening once that if I told, he would rip my mum's intestines out, wrap them around her neck in a bow and give it to me as a birthday present. He also told me he would kill my family and would kill me.

I was so frightened that I knew I could never tell.

He always found ways to get me alone. He would do things like tip milk down the sink and send his wife off to the shops to get more. The shops were some distance away so he used to have plenty of time and then we could hear the car returning. Other times he would say that he was going to spend quality time with me and take me off for walks. He would take me down into the bush under a cliff where no one could see and assault me there.

I felt so bad for all those years. I thought nothing was ever going to make him stop. I felt like a rag doll that was being flung around by someone and I could do nothing about it.

Did you relate to any part of Krystal's story? If so, what? What were some tactics used in your experience?



He says and she says.

He says, "It's your fault this has happened."

And she says, "I'm to blame"

He says, "People will hate you"

And she says, "I feel such shame".

He says, "Your mother won't believe you"

And she says, "Mum will hate me"

He says, "Your mother knows about it"

And she says, "Why can't mum see?"

He says "You know you like it"

And she says, "Why does my body act like this?"

He says, "It's good you've got me"

And she says, "It's your trust that I miss".

He says, "This stays our secret"

And she says, "I can't tell"

He says, "It's so special"

And she says, "This is hell".

Shame on Who?
From an article by Maxine Joy

Some of the most commonly asked questions relating to Sexual Assault that may be frightening and confusing can include...

*Is It my fault?
Am I to blame?
Why did he do it?
Did I deserve it?
Why Me?*

In order to address responsibility issues that children carry with them in regards to sexual abuse it is helpful to consider a comparative list which highlights facts about the offender and facts about yourself. This should expose the power imbalances that make abuse possible and begin to help separate you from the belief that some how you were responsible for the abuse.

A comparative list would look like this:

YOU

- 1. How old are you*
- 2. Were you at school*
- 3. Were you smaller*
- 4. You must do what adults tell you to*
- 5. You think adults are always right*

OFFENDER

- 1. How old was he*
- 2. Did he have a job*
- 3. Was he bigger*
- 4. He can do what he wants*
- 5. He had been learning about right & wrong for a long time*

Create Your Own Comparative List

YOU

OFFENDER



Bird in a cage.

*Come here sweet thing
And sit beside me
I'll give you a cuddle
Just sit on my knee*

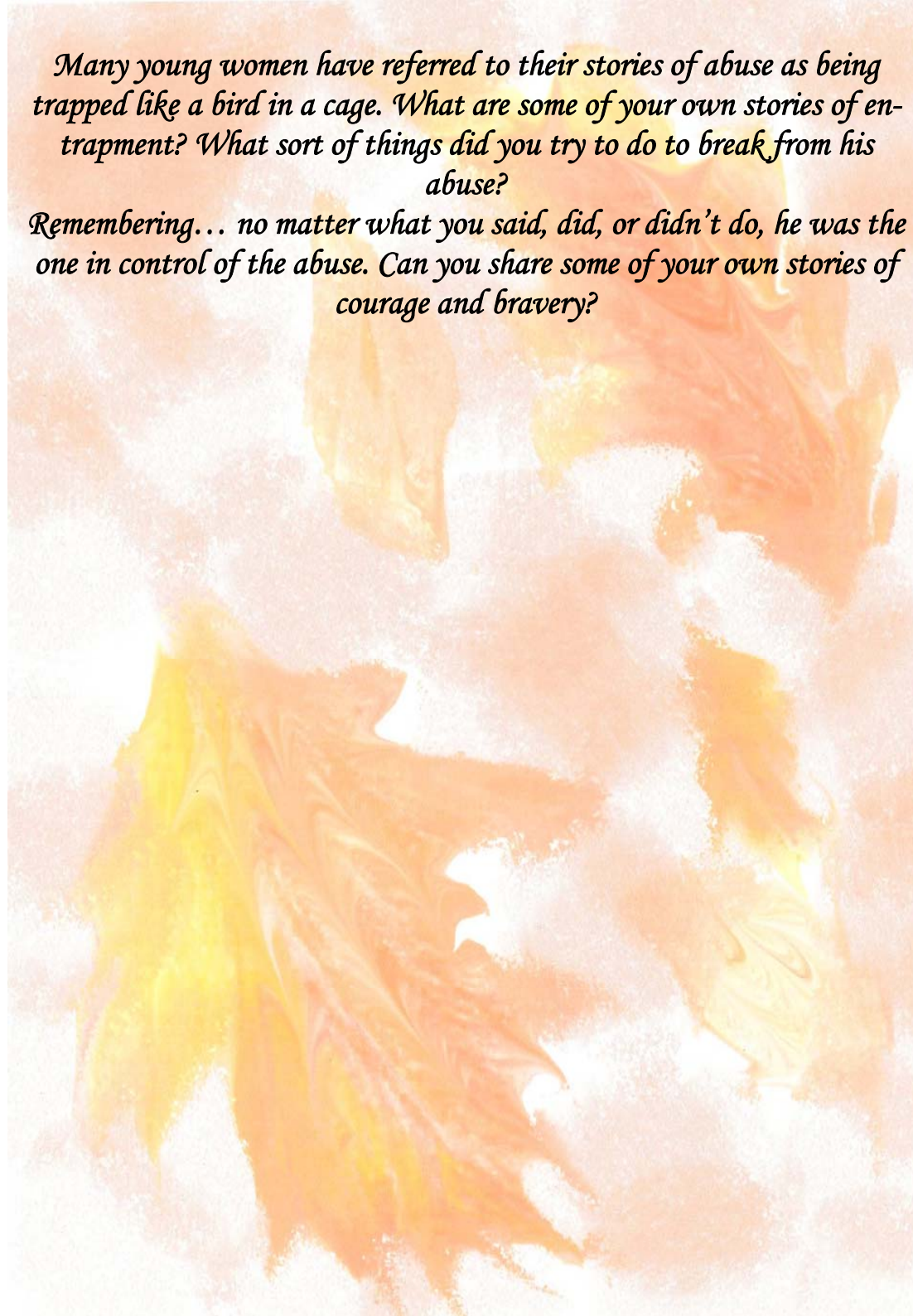
*You know that I love you
You know that it's right
To do what I tell you
And not put up a fight*

*Now don't look like that
And don't run away
If you want to cause trouble
I'll get your sister to play*

*That's better sweet thing
It's not such a price
And remember we must be
As quiet as mice .*

Many young women have referred to their stories of abuse as being trapped like a bird in a cage. What are some of your own stories of entrapment? What sort of things did you try to do to break from his abuse?

Remembering... no matter what you said, did, or didn't do, he was the one in control of the abuse. Can you share some of your own stories of courage and bravery?




The Secret

*If my secret got out
I don't think I could bare
The pain in their hearts
And the hurt in their stare
All these years of hiding
But the fact will remain
I've kept it too long
It would cause too much pain
How can I tell them?
What would they see?
Would they think I'm guilty?
Would they blame it on me?
Those years of my terror
Felt like pure hell
I don't want to hurt them
So how can I tell?
I feel like my soul
Is tearing away
Keeping this secret
Not daring to say
With my soul torn away
And my heart feeling broken
At least they can rest
If my words are not spoken.*

Sarah

How did keeping "the secret" affect your connection to other important people in your life?





Time for a break

Break the silence of never talking about it.

Break the guilt of thinking it has to be your fault.

Break the shame of thinking that people will look down on you.

Break the lies by looking for truthful information.

Break the excuses by trusting your feelings.

Break the loneliness of dealing with this on your own.

Break the isolation and find someone to tell.



*The secret is broken
You told / Someone discovered it?*

*What happened when the secret was broken?
How was the secret received:- was it helpful to tell, was it frightening
or was it unhelpful?*

*How did you break the silence of what has happened to you? Speak it,
Read it, Draw it. Break the sounds of silence.*



Culture

Culture is used as an inclusive term which includes all people from a multi-cultural society. It suggests a variety and richness of communities with diverse norms, beliefs, practises and values and may be based on culture, language, ethnicity or a combination of these.

It can also include a range of other dimensions of difference such as; gender, class, age and sexual orientation.

Coming forward and telling someone about sexual abuse is already extremely hard to do. When taking into account cultural differences, telling about the abuse becomes a different experience for many, if not all young women.

How was culture a part of your story and what ways did it help or get in the way when the abuse was discovered by your cultural network, and /or community?





WINTER

*“So long as little children are allowed to suffer, there is no true
love in this world”*

Isadora

Self-combustion.

When you don't tell the anger burns up inside you. You just want it to go away so you can get on with your life, but you just can't.

Just when you think you're getting somewhere, the nightmares start coming. Then you fall down again.

You think why has this happened to me?

You just can't tell because you feel certain that if you did no one would believe you or the person would pay you back,

Not telling will burn you up inside until you want to scream with the pain.

But just think how you would feel if you could get this out of your system.

I needed to tell....had to tell....

I would say to anyone who has gone through this just tell someone.

Amy

What young women have said about fear.

When fear is around:

*You feel that you are in a maze and can't get out
You do things that you don't want to do and you are stopped from doing things
you want to do*

You think things that you don't want to think about

*If someone has hurt you, normal things can bring fear back. Someone looks like
him, sounds like him, smells like him. Places you visit where you know he has been
become fearful places. Being in your room at night is no longer safe but a place
where fear will come instead.*

*You want to be with your friends but you feel different to them. When they are
talking about things you feel different to them. When they are standing out on the
street in a group, relaxed and laughing, you're looking around as fear is telling you
to stay alert*

You feel alone with no one to talk to even though you wish to be with people.

*Your body feels different to how it should feel You feel scared and your body
shakes or sweats or hurts in your stomach or you feel dizzy.*

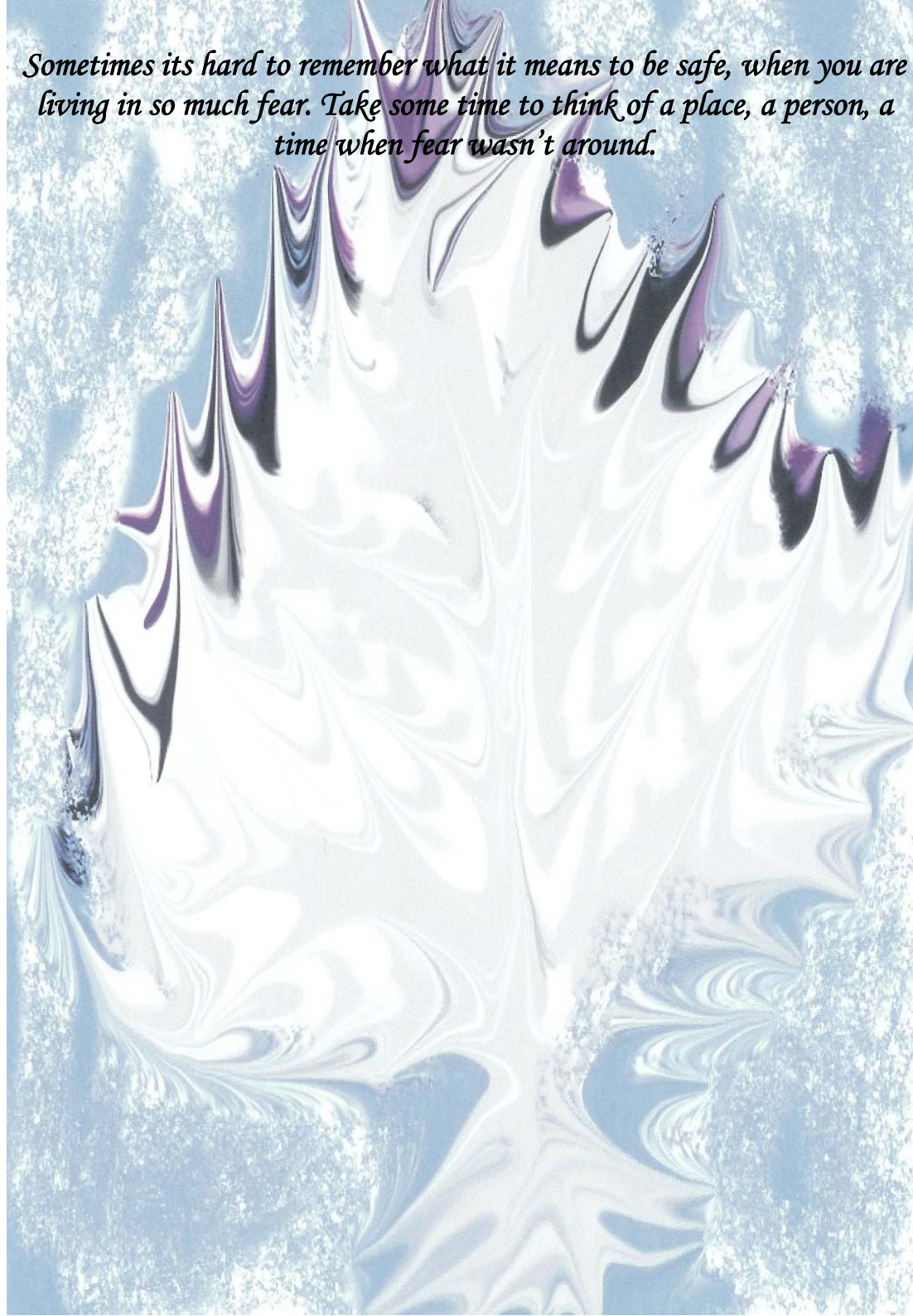
*It's sometimes hard to breathe and you can hear your heart beating so loudly that
you think it will explode.*

You feel moody and fight with everyone - your family, friends, even your dog.

You hate your life and the pain you feel.

You want to run away.

Sometimes its hard to remember what it means to be safe, when you are living in so much fear. Take some time to think of a place, a person, a time when fear wasn't around.



Get to know your fear and make some arrangement with it.

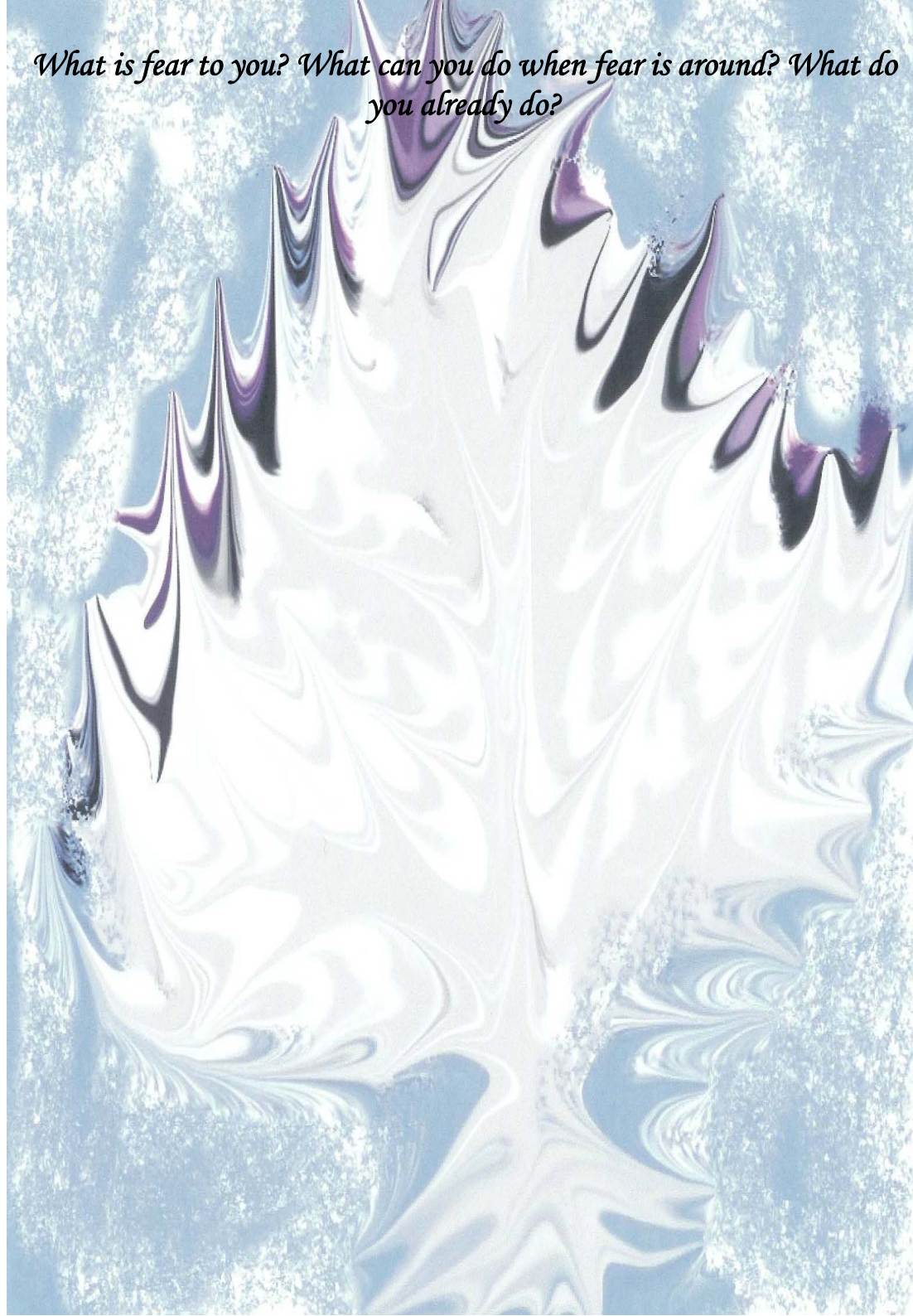
Once you can start to look at your fears, to talk about them and name what they are caused by you are starting to face those "monsters" that have been kept in the dark.

Even a young child knows that getting rid of a monster in the dark is to just turn the light on.

Reaching out a little at a time to your fears-taking a step toward standing up to them and then rewarding yourself for this step is a start. Small steps at a time can become quite a journey after a time.

If you talk about the fear and understand what it is trying to tell you then you can be given the power to make a decision to try and do something to change.

What is fear to you? What can you do when fear is around? What do you already do?



Flash Backs

*What am I feeling
What is happening in my body
How is this feeling affecting me
When did it start
What's it about
What to do about it.*

Flashbacks are intense memories where you can relive sensations and emotions felt during the abuse. They can be, and are often vivid and very frightening. They can bring back smells and pain in your body. You can feel the fear, the disgust and the hurt.

If you are having or have had flashbacks you are not being sexually assaulted..... it is a memory.

*Sometimes you may get clues that a flashback is coming.
Such as headaches, anxiety or panic or your body feeling tense.*

If you have a flashback::

Breathe

Go somewhere safe

Call someone

Hold something tangible /real

Don't fight it.

It will pass.....He isn't here with you.

Try and control the flashback and put it somewhere until you can share it with another person.

Nightmares

A nightmare is a very distressing dream which usually forces at least partial awakening. The dreamer may feel any number of disturbing emotions in a nightmare, such as anger, guilt, sadness or depression, but the most common feelings are fear and anxiety.

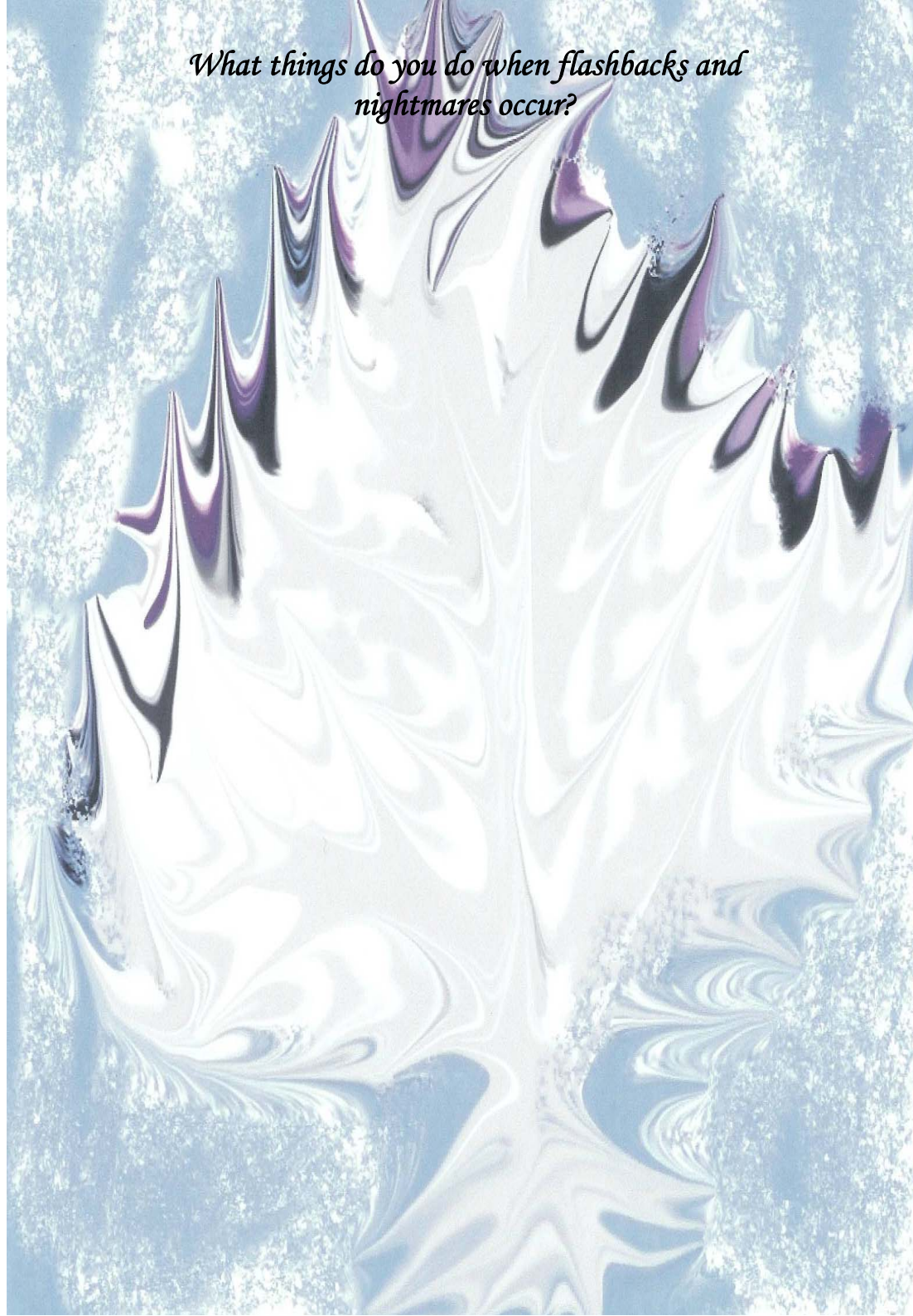
After experiencing trauma it is often hard to control your mind & body & to help yourself feel safe again. It is often most difficult at night & for many reasons your dreams may express the trauma that you suffered. You may wake with nightmares, feeling fearful, unsafe & re-traumatized.

If you do wake from a nightmare and your feeling nervous and afraid, here are some ways young women have said helped calm their nerves;

Coping Strategies:

- *When you first wake up & are lying paralysed with fear say to yourself:*
 1. *This is a nightmare*
 2. *It is not really happening*
 3. *The offender isn't here*
- *Re-orientate yourself to your immediate surroundings, remind yourself what year and day it is, where you are now, things that are different now from when you were traumatised or hurt.*
- *Get up put the light on, walk around, check doors etc.*
- *Find your hot water bottle or teddy bear*
- *Write the nightmare down in a book, shut the book & put it away in another part of the house, reminding yourself that you can leave its images there. Maybe take it to your next counseling session.*

What things do you do when flashbacks and nightmares occur?



Anxiety

Everyone feels some anxiety at some time during their life. It becomes a problem if you feel so anxious that it interferes with your normal day to day life. If you are feeling so anxious that it is impacting on your day to day life you may have an anxiety disorder. There are several types of anxiety disorders. An anxiety disorder causes a constant unpleasant feeling of tension, discomfort and apprehension, which can make it difficult to cope with daily life.

People who suffer from generalised anxiety disorder worry excessively about real life situations such as: finances, the health of family members, housework, being late for appointments & losing one's job. They experience persistent & excessive worry so great that they experience symptoms such as:

- *Fatigue*
- *Restlessness or edginess*
- *Impaired concentration*
- *Irritability*
- *Muscle tension*
- *Disturbed sleep*
- *Sweating*
- *Headaches*
- *Difficulty breathing*

While these symptoms can be part of normal anxiety, they tend to be worse & last longer in an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are very common with 1 in 10 people experiencing this illness some time in their life. Fortunately, most anxiety disorders are readily treatable with a combination of medication & counseling.

Other anxiety disorders include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which occurs in people who have been involved in a major trauma. It can develop long after the event.

Signs and Symptoms of PTSD include:

- *Depression & or anxiety*
- *Numbed feelings*
- *Intrusive memories or flashbacks re- experiencing the event*
- *Abuse of alcohol & other substances*
- *Feelings of guilt or shame*
- *Rage & anger*
- *Difficulty sleeping*

Panic Attacks

What is a Panic Attack?

A panic attack occurs when people become extremely anxious and stressed to the point where they have a sudden onset of panic for no rational reason. A panic attack can occur "out of the blue" or in response to encountering or thinking about a scary situation.

A panic attack consists of 4 or more of these symptoms:-

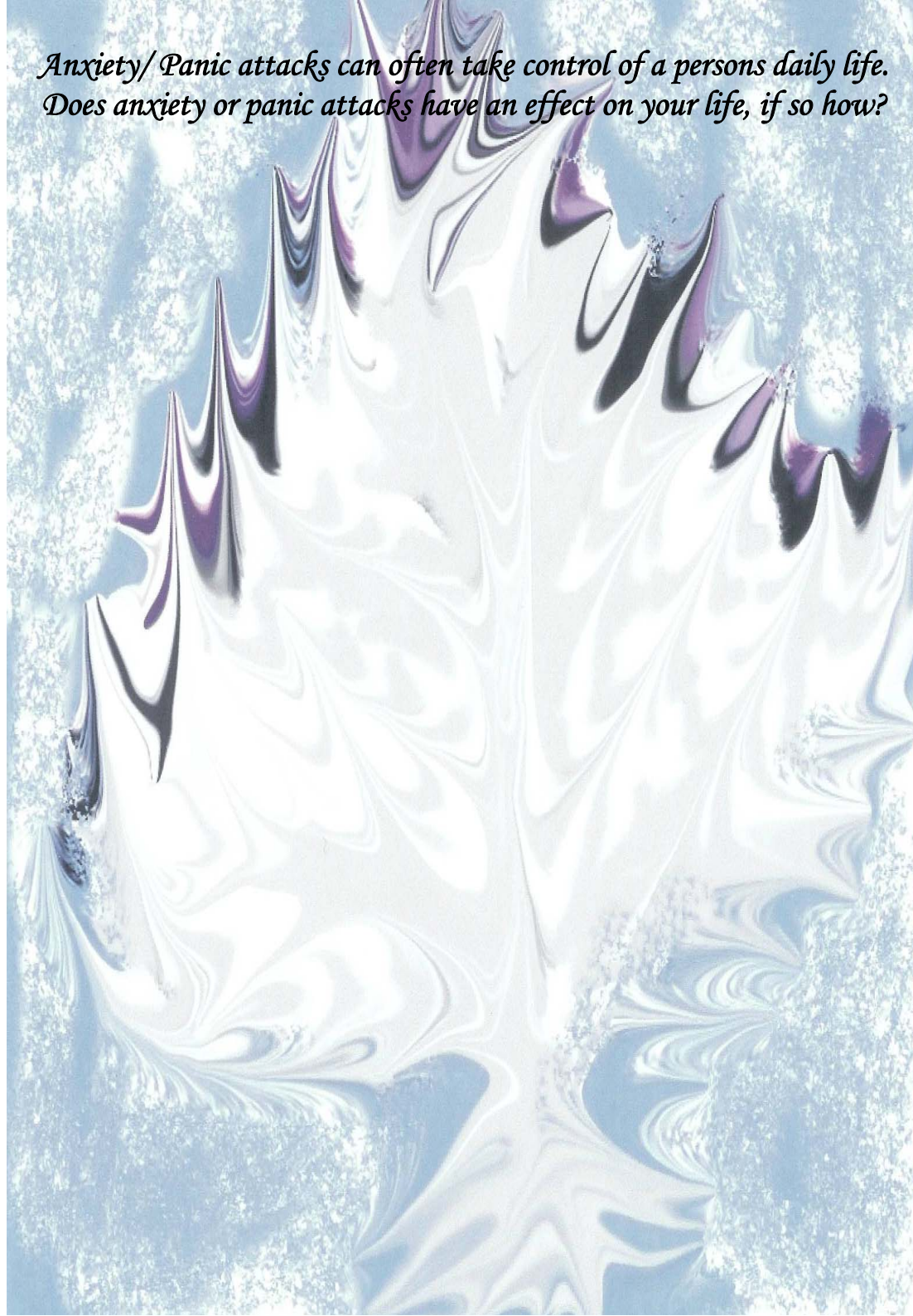
- Palpitations*
- Sweating*
- Trembling or shaking*
- Shortness of breath*
- Choking sensations*
- Chest pain or discomfort*
- Nausea*
- Dizziness*
- Feeling detached from oneself*
- Fear of losing control or dying*
- Numbness or tingling*
- Chills or hot flushes*

Psychological reactions can consist of: Confusion, intense apprehension, fears of going crazy or losing control, a desire to run away, fear of dying and feelings of unreality.

Coping Strategies for Panic Attacks:

- Relax your breathing*
- Do something that requires you to focus your attention e.g. read or cook*
- Practice muscle relaxation*
- Move around or do something physical to get rid of extra energy*
- Talk to someone nearby to help get your mind off your symptoms and anxious thoughts*
- Try and stop thinking the thoughts that make you feel worse*
- Repeat a positive statement to yourself e.g. 'I can handle this'*
- Allow time to pass. Much of the adrenalin will metabolise and be reabsorbed in 2 to 5 minutes. As soon as this happens you will begin to feel much better*

*Anxiety/ Panic attacks can often take control of a persons daily life.
Does anxiety or panic attacks have an effect on your life, if so how?*





What strategies do you or could you have in place if anxiety or panic attacks were present in your life?

Some examples include:

Breathing exercises

Speaking with someone i.e. Friend, counsellor

*30 Something
(It's not depression...It's just called stress'n)*

*You think the world is against you
You think that everything you do ends up a failure
You think that every time you put one foot forward you take two (or two hundred)
steps back,
You think friends are talking about you behind your back,
And your family just don't understand you.
You start out the day feeling sort of OK but by the end of the day you've lost the
plot.*

*People tell you that if you feel this way you must be depressed
No normal person would ever feel this way.
But just take notice of what could be a so-called normal day in the life of a so-
called normal person and tell me
Is it depression or normal stress'n.*

You wake up (OK so far)

And there it is... a new giant pimple looking back at you in the mirror (Stress 1)

School today and GREAT it's P.E. (Stress 2)

Even better it's personal fitness exercises in the gym with the boys (Stress 3)

*Breakfast looks good but, oh no, there it goes, spaghetti down the front of the shirt
(Stress 4)*

*Time for a quick wipe with a sponge, do the hair (who took my gel... Stress 5), pack
your lunch (peanut butter again. Stress 6)*

And then time to get the bus.

*Sorry try again—you missed the early bus so now you have to wait for the later
one with, those girls who sit at the back and giggle through their teeth (Stress 7)*

*Recess comes and there's been a break from stress as one of your teachers was away
so you have a whole period to chill out*

*You decide to shout yourself something nice to eat and, you guessed it, you're on
the line where the Year 7 boy is paying for his food with 5c pieces (Stress 8)*

Bell's gone and there's no more time to wait. (Stress 9)

*Just realised you need to go to the toilet and just what you don't need... no toilet
paper left on the roll. (Stress 10)*

*A quick fast forward through the day of further stresses of everything falling out
of your pencil case, including "those notes" to "you know who" (Stress 11), the
teacher who obviously was having a bad day also and decided to yell at everyone
wearing a spaghetti stained shirt for having a jumper on in the middle of a sum-
mer's day (Stress 12), the loser who sits behind you in maths and gets some sort of
weird thrill out of pulling your bra strap (Stress 13), gymnastics with the boys
(Stresses 14 & 15), the letter home to all parents about the school fees that haven't
been paid and need to be paid if students want to get their certificate (Stress 16),
the bus ride home again with the girls who giggle through their teeth (Stress 17)
and then... finally.....*

Home at last

No not over.

You get to your bed to have a moment of reflection of the day and the phone rings.

Your mum reminds you to get the washing in because it might rain and then you notice the sound of pelting raindrops (Stress 18)

The phone goes again and it's your friend Beth asking what you're wearing to Michelle's party. But you haven't been asked (Stress 19)

Get the clothes in the dryer, grab something to eat and perhaps some music will calm the nerves.

Not so lucky because your older brother has just turned up with his girlfriend and you know if you want to live that you have to stay locked in your room (Stress 20)

The phone rings again and it's Beth to say that she had a go at Michelle for not asking you to the party and now Michelle has told her that you said something about Beth to Michelle the other day about something that Beth had said to you a few months ago and that's why Michele didn't ask you to the party and now Beth's glad she didn't. Beth hangs up. (Stress 21).

Your mum gets home and has an attack about the washing and then says that you're being rude staying in your room when your brother has a friend over and should come out. (Stress 22)

So you come out and say hello and your brother gives you the death stare so you go into your room again. (Stress 23)

You're called out again by your mum and asked how was your day. You can't seem to find the words to say anything so you say "OK". She then decides it's time to have another long talk about your relationship with her and the fact that you don't talk and stay in your room too much (Stress 24).

You think it a wise move to go to your room and calm down a bit because by now the wires are really starting to shred. Then you realise that she's just said how much you stay in that room so you can't really go back in there (Stress 25) and you can't go into the room where your brother is (Stress 26) and it's raining outside (Stress 27) and you can't ring up Beth because she's not talking to you (Stress 28) so you do what every normal person does who has had a day like this... you let it go. (Stress 29)

Your mum tells you that as you can't get along with anyone in the house you had better go to your room. She's sure your mood swings are a sign of depression (30)

Stress Reducing Behaviours

*If you are feeling really overwhelmed, sad, nervous or forgotten
try some of these strategies to help manage your stress:*

Do some exercise or go for a walk

Practice relaxation; breathing exercises or relaxing each part of your body

Put on some relaxing gentle music

Ask for support

Eat nutritious food

Try not to have unrealistic goals and impossible deadlines

Talk slowly, listen more

What are some stress reducing behaviours that you practice when you're feeling stressed?



*In Plain Sight
Reducing Stress*

*Take a deep breath in and count slowly to six,
Repeat, but this time place your hands on your stomach and feel it pushing up
with air when you breathe.*

*Breathe in deeply one two three four.
Let the air out slowly and feel your stomach pull back in.
Repeat this a few more times.*

Shake out and tighten muscles

*Name a place that makes you feel relaxed,
Put yourself in a beautiful setting.*

What are you doing?

What's the weather like there?

How do you feel when you are there?

Why would you like to return?

Depression, What is it?

***Depression:** one in five people will experience depression at some time.
You often don't understand why you feel down or how to talk about how you feel.
Angry/irritable rather than sad. Becoming hostile, taking risks and pushing people away.
Drugs and alcohol can give a lift but don't get to the real cause of the feelings.*

Can't shake it off or get over it. How can you talk about something you can't write or understand? Its just there and can't be shaken.

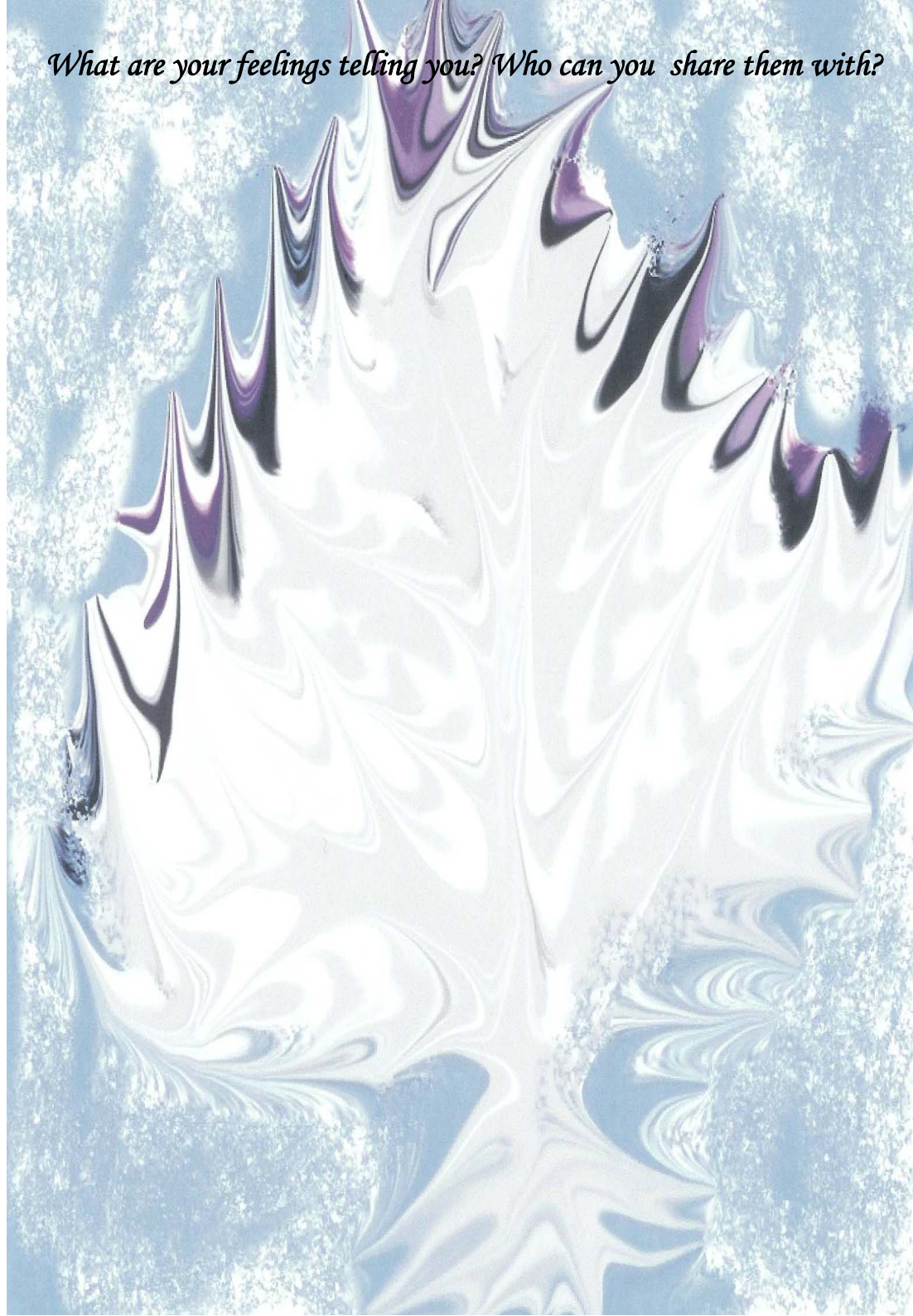
Effects

*Sadness/anger/frequent crying
Can't concentrate or think,
Feel guilty, worthless, hopeless, helpless
Lack of interest in friends, family or doing things usually done before
Lack of energy or enthusiasm or motivation-slowed down.
Restless, irritable, agitated
Changes in sleeping-can't sleep, or sleep more than usual.
Changes in eating-eating more or less
Thoughts of death, suicide or harming self.*

Strategies

*Need to talk to someone about feelings.
Try & make a list of three people you trust
Ask for help spend time with others especially friends
Exercise – release brain chemicals which lift spirits.
Refer to your journal for ways to relax
Write down thoughts or express in some way what you are thinking/feeling.*

What are your feelings telling you? Who can you share them with?





It's not that you ask why do you stop eating but why don't you stop starving?

I'd look in the mirror and I couldn't really see it. I couldn't actually see what I looked like. It sort of disappeared for me. I felt like the me was getting smaller, becoming invisible in a body that I wore like a suit of armour but it wasn't really mine. If I looked in the mirror I couldn't really see myself.

I had no control over anything and this was the last thing I had control over and it was saying even if I disappear at least I could control this. I hadn't eaten for so long that starving didn't let me know when I was hungry or how to eat properly. So I would eat and eat to try and fight what was happening and then throw up. I made myself throw up because I felt so uncomfortable and guilty for eating so much.

Eating Disorders

"How can something be called a disorder if it's the one thing you can have order over."

Nothing else matters except how much you've eaten. What you weigh and what to eat to keep that weight the same or get it even lower.

Focus on food to the point that nothing else matters.

The calorie count becomes more important than the breaths you breathe or the pump of your heart.

Research shows that girls from as young as six and eight can believe that their ideal weight should be less than what it is.

There can be a preoccupation with food, weight and appearance to the point where a person's health and relationships, study and all aspects of their life are affected.

Anorexia—worries about becoming fat/gaining weight—no matter how thin you become.

Bulimia—repeated bouts of binge eating and then compensating in ways such as dieting, over exercise, vomiting.

The Costs:

Constipation

Growth of hair over face and body

Can't think clearly

Menstrual problems

Sensitivity to cold

Tooth decay

Weakened bones

Kidney problems

Heart rhythm abnormalities

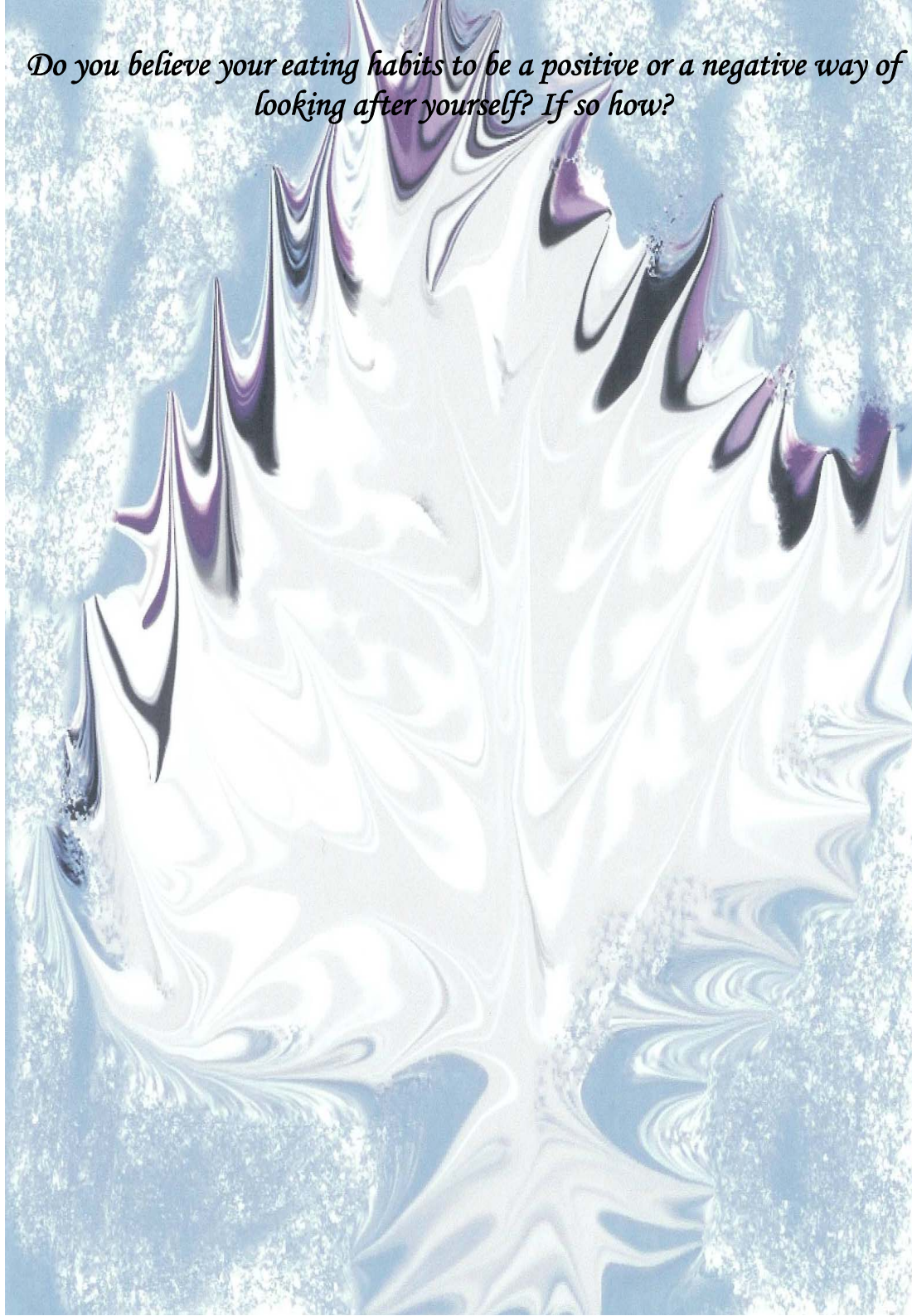
Ruptured stomach

Seizures.

Get help: family doctor.

Eating disorders support and information Line 02 9412 4499

Do you believe your eating habits to be a positive or a negative way of looking after yourself? If so how?



*How should we be?
Sizes 6, 8 & 10
Flawless skin, shiny hair
The right look for men?*

*Now "sexy" is good
But not "over the top"
Or you'll be called a "slut"
And what stares you will cop.*

*Try not to look "dumb"
But don't be too "smart"
An opinion is fine
But loud mouthed is a "tart".*

*Keep your voice nice and soft
And don't yell or fuss
Giggle nicely at those jokes*

*Wear what you like
But never dress like a "dag"
Keep makeup pure and simple
Or you'll be called a "slag"*

*Sports girls are "cool"
But "butch" isn't the look
Only "try hards" will learn
So don't bother with books*

*Talk easily with guys
Flirting can be a "prob"
Being shy has its moments
Too shy...you're a "snob".*

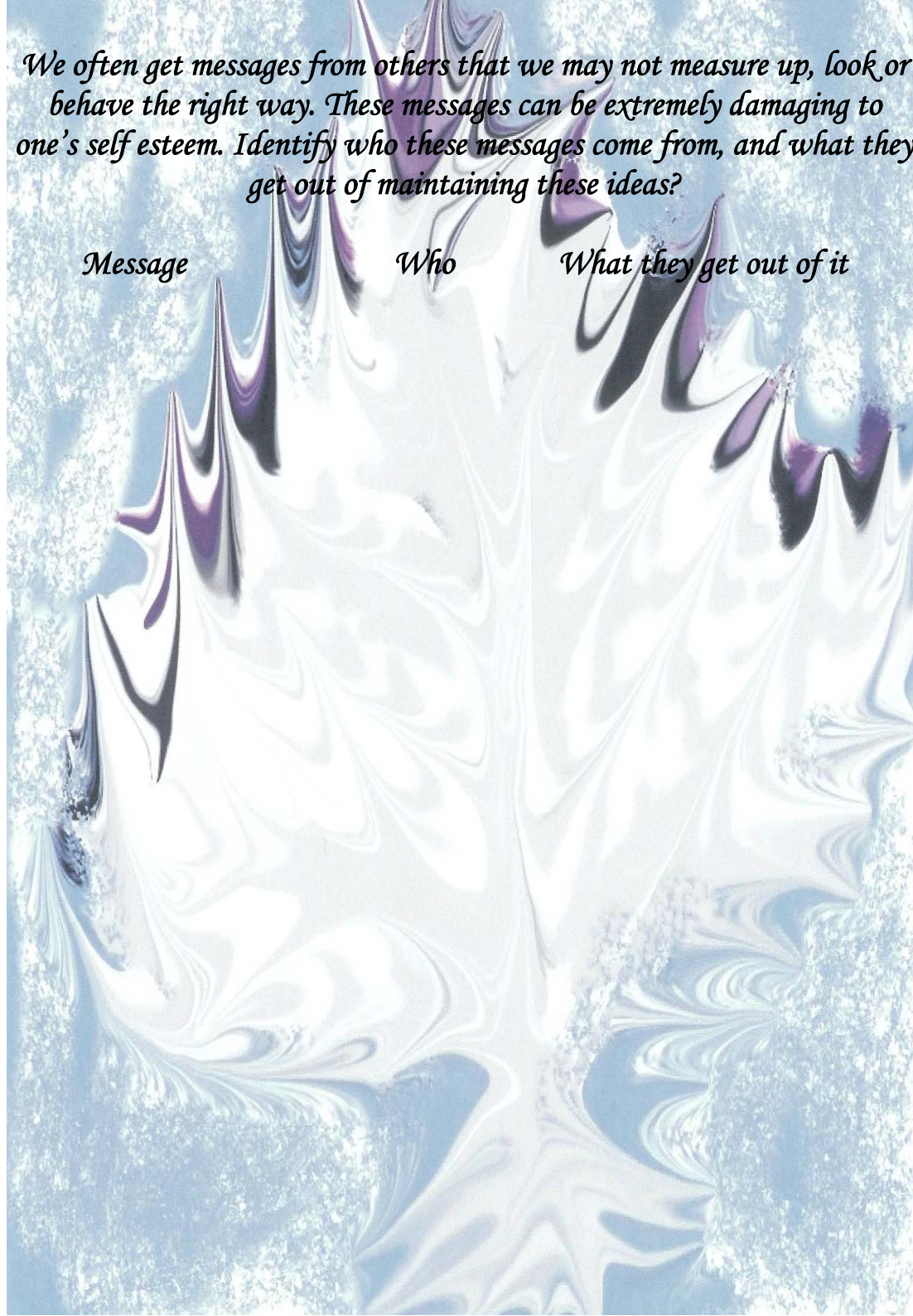
*So just keep it up girl
It's not such a cost
Or tell them to "shove it"
And be your own boss.*

We often get messages from others that we may not measure up, look or behave the right way. These messages can be extremely damaging to one's self esteem. Identify who these messages come from, and what they get out of maintaining these ideas?

Message

Who

What they get out of it



Mirrors

*I sit here by myself
And quietly cry
I hate myself so much
I wish I could die
I hate myself both
Outside and in
And being alive
Seems like a sin
Looking at the world
I see beauty and grace
Everything seems beautiful
Except for my face
I look in the mirror and I see that
Not only am I ugly
I am covered in fat
I hate who I am and
What I've become
I feel so stupid and ugly
So useless and dumb
We're alone in this world
I look and I see
Others got a better deal
Cause I'm stuck here with me
Nobody likes me
And I can see why
Most people hate me
And this isn't a lie.*

Myth or Reality?

People always tell me it's on the inside that counts.

Or so the story goes

But is it in the truth?

Who can really know?

One has the personality to die for

But is called as ugly as can be

Two looks like Cinderella

But her mind shriveled like a pea.

One is treated like a toad

Two's treated like a queen

And that's the reality people choose

When they choose to be mean

One can never be perfect

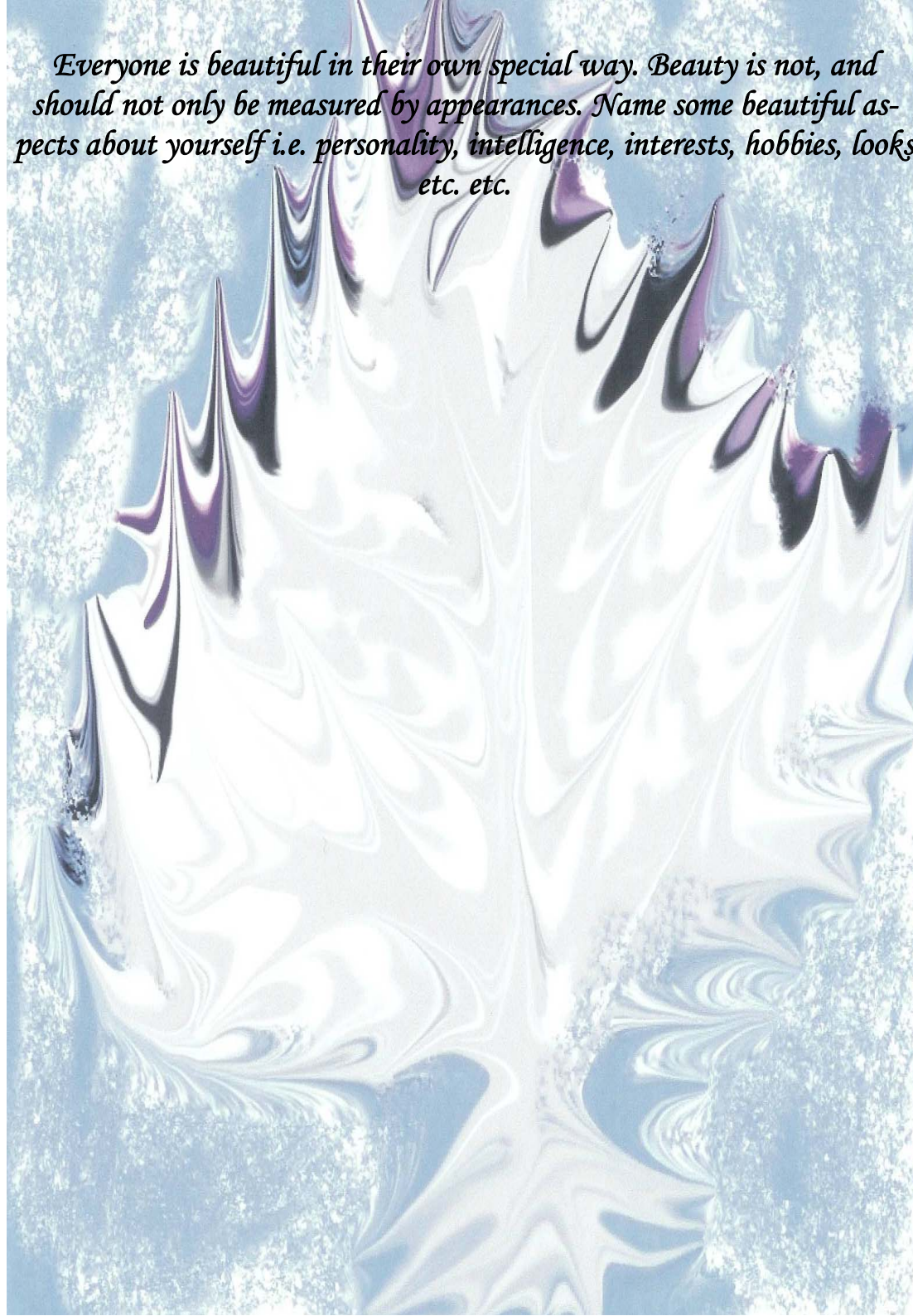
For it's on beauty that everything mounts

We live our lives for mirrors

But isn't it the inside, they say, that counts?

Jaimee

Everyone is beautiful in their own special way. Beauty is not, and should not only be measured by appearances. Name some beautiful aspects about yourself i.e. personality, intelligence, interests, hobbies, looks etc. etc.



Substance Abuse

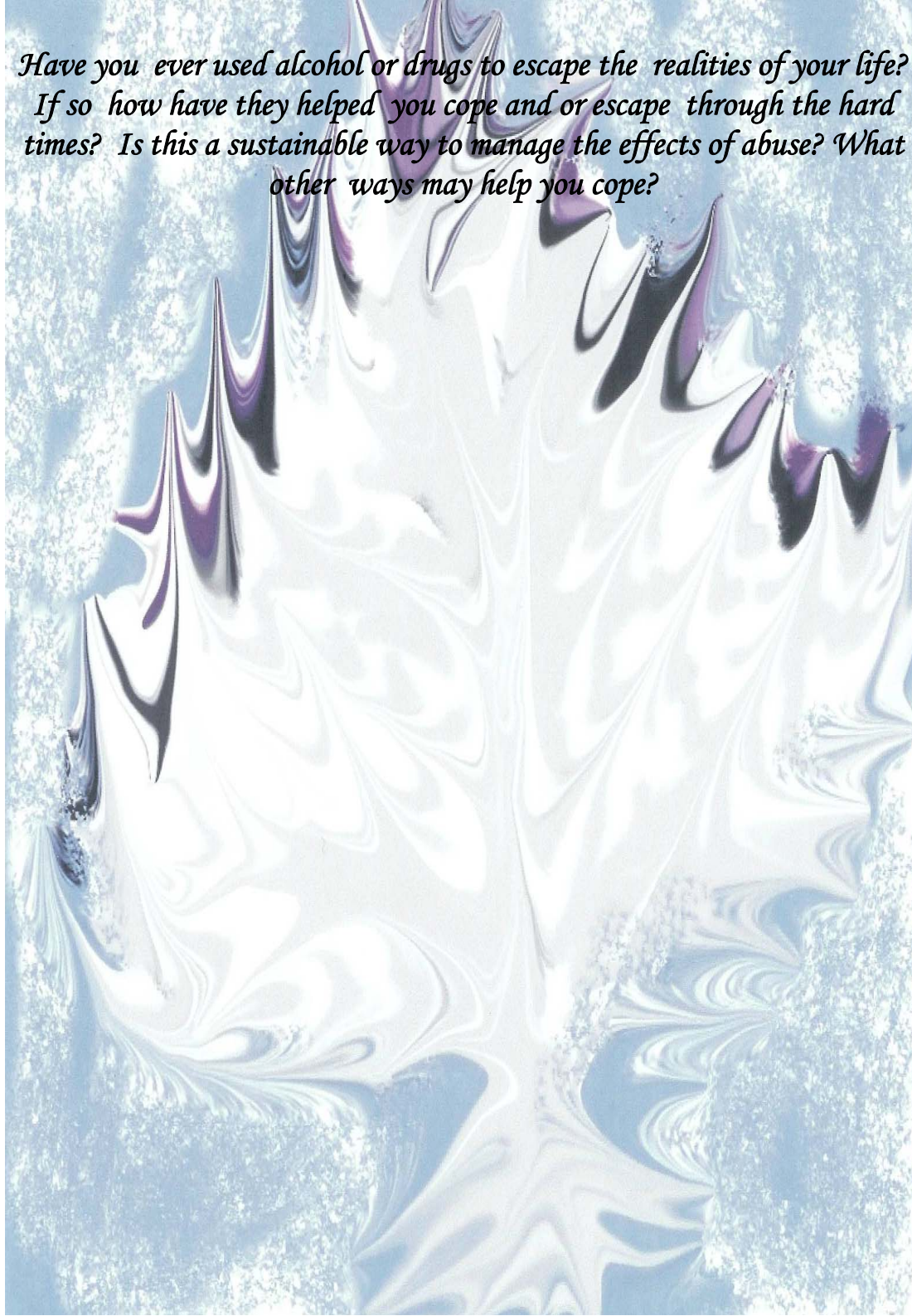
“One woman said: ‘I kept running from the feelings....and drugs and alcohol were just great for that because I could just get obliterated’. Another woman expressed it....”but if I dried out or got clean I would just become this icicle inside.....with drugs I didn’t have to think why I was scared of sex, scared of love, scared of caring...” p 185. (Brackenridge & Carmody 1992).

Women who are drug or alcohol dependent and who have been sexually assaulted share many feelings and have issues in common with other women who also have been sexually assaulted. Negative self image and low self-esteem are common both to women who have been sexually assaulted and women with substance dependence.

Drugs and alcohol can be used as a coping mechanism when dealing with the effects of sexual assault. It can be used to subdue feelings of; anger, self blame, guilt, a sense of worthlessness, impotence, depression, of being somewhat different from other people and basic distrust.

Some young women have said they resort to drugs and alcohol “as a way of escaping.” They also said “that it made them feel good for a short period of time.”

*Have you ever used alcohol or drugs to escape the realities of your life?
If so how have they helped you cope and or escape through the hard
times? Is this a sustainable way to manage the effects of abuse? What
other ways may help you cope?*



How has the use or misuse of drugs and alcohol contributed negatively to your life?



Self Harm

Self harm is a way of expressing very deep distress. Often, people don't know why they self harm. It's a means of communicating what can't be put into words or even into thoughts & has been described as an inner scream. Afterwards, people feel better able to cope with life again, for a while.

A person who self harms is likely to have gone through very difficult, painful experiences as a child or young adult. Experiences like these erode self-esteem. Emotions that have no outlet may be buried & blocked completely out of awareness. If a trusted adult betrays or abuses them and there are no other witnesses, children will often blame themselves. They turn their anger inwards. By the time they become adults, self injury can be a way of expressing their pain, punishing themselves, and keeping memories at bay.

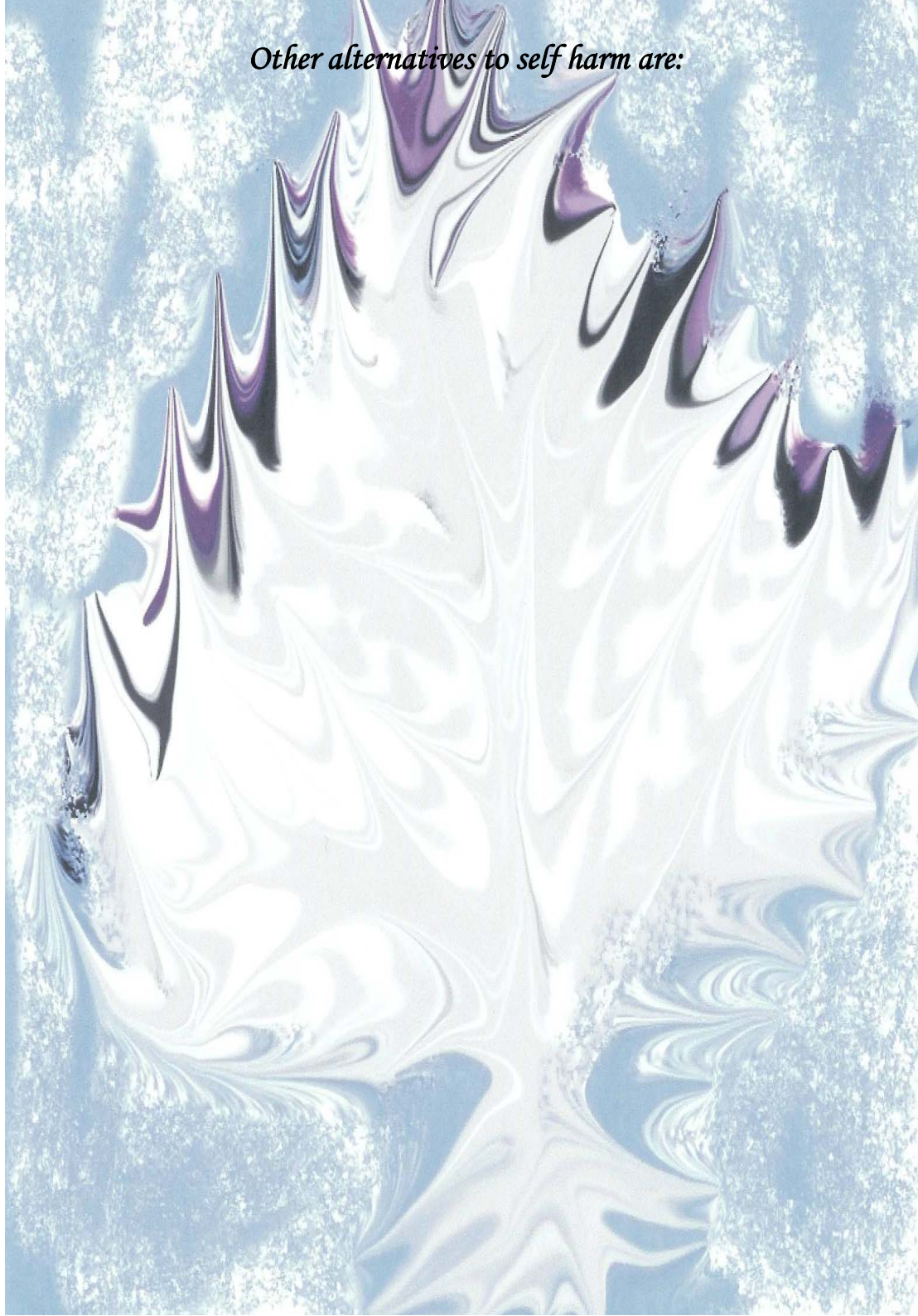
Self harm is when you deliberately inflict physical harm on yourself, usually in secret and often without anyone else knowing. Some examples are cutting, burning, biting or hitting your body, pulling out hair or scratching and picking at sores on your skin.

As well as support from a friend, family member or counsellor, it may also be necessary to create a list of alternative strategies to self harm for managing your emotions. If you are feeling like you want to harm yourself there are a number of things that you might try to distract yourself until the feelings become more manageable.

Some ideas for releasing energy or feelings include:

- *Instead of self harming/ cutting try holding ice on the part of your body you want to harm.*
- *Choose to put off harming yourself until you've spoken to someone for 15 minutes (& see if you can extend it for another 15 minutes & so on, until the feeling passes.)*
- *Exercise go for a run or walk in the park to use up excess energy.*
 - *Draw or write in red texta over your body*
- *Yell or sing at the top of your voice on your own or to music. You might do this in a pillow if you don't want other people in the house to hear.*
- *Cry- crying is a healthy way to express your sadness or frustrations.*

Other alternatives to self harm are:





Some Young women resort to self harming as a way of coping with the effects of sexual assault/abuse?

Do you self harm?

How long does that feeling last, before reality sets in?

Do you envisage this to be helpful in the long term?

Dreaming hurts more than living

*Lying down finally I don't have face the harshness of the world.....
how wrong*

*A girl sits there in a black room she is wearing just white,
she looks so pure,
it's me,*

she raises her hand it holds a blade.....

*she lifts her other arm,
the sleeve falls down,
it's covered in scars,
she puts blade to arm,
and slow out comes the blood,*

*it rushes and doesn't stop,
then she drops to the floor,
it's a white dress no more,*

*she's covered in red,
pure or innocent,*

*no, she is hurt and her innocence has been taken,
I take one last look into her eyes and see nothing but pain.
then I wake.....*

*Dreaming hurts more than living,
so I won't sleep not till I think it's safe.....
it will never be!*

What other strategies can you adopt, to help cope with difficult times, that may be less harmful?



SUICIDE

Not all young people who are depressed are suicidal;. Push the limits at home, isolate themselves from family members and experiment with risky behaviour.

Loss of someone important-separation, death

Recent suicide of a relative or friend

Breaking relationship

Trouble at school

Family conflict

Being a victim of abuse.

Warning signs.

Express feelings of hopelessness.

Schoolwork and attendance drops.

Drawing or writing about death.

Giving away personal possessions.

I wish I was dead/ no one cares if I live or die

Feeling worthless

Withdrawing form friends

Suddenly cheerful. Like a decision has been made.

Reach out -website provides online database of services to prevent youth suicide.

www.reachout.asn.au

ask them outright

listen to them

take it seriously

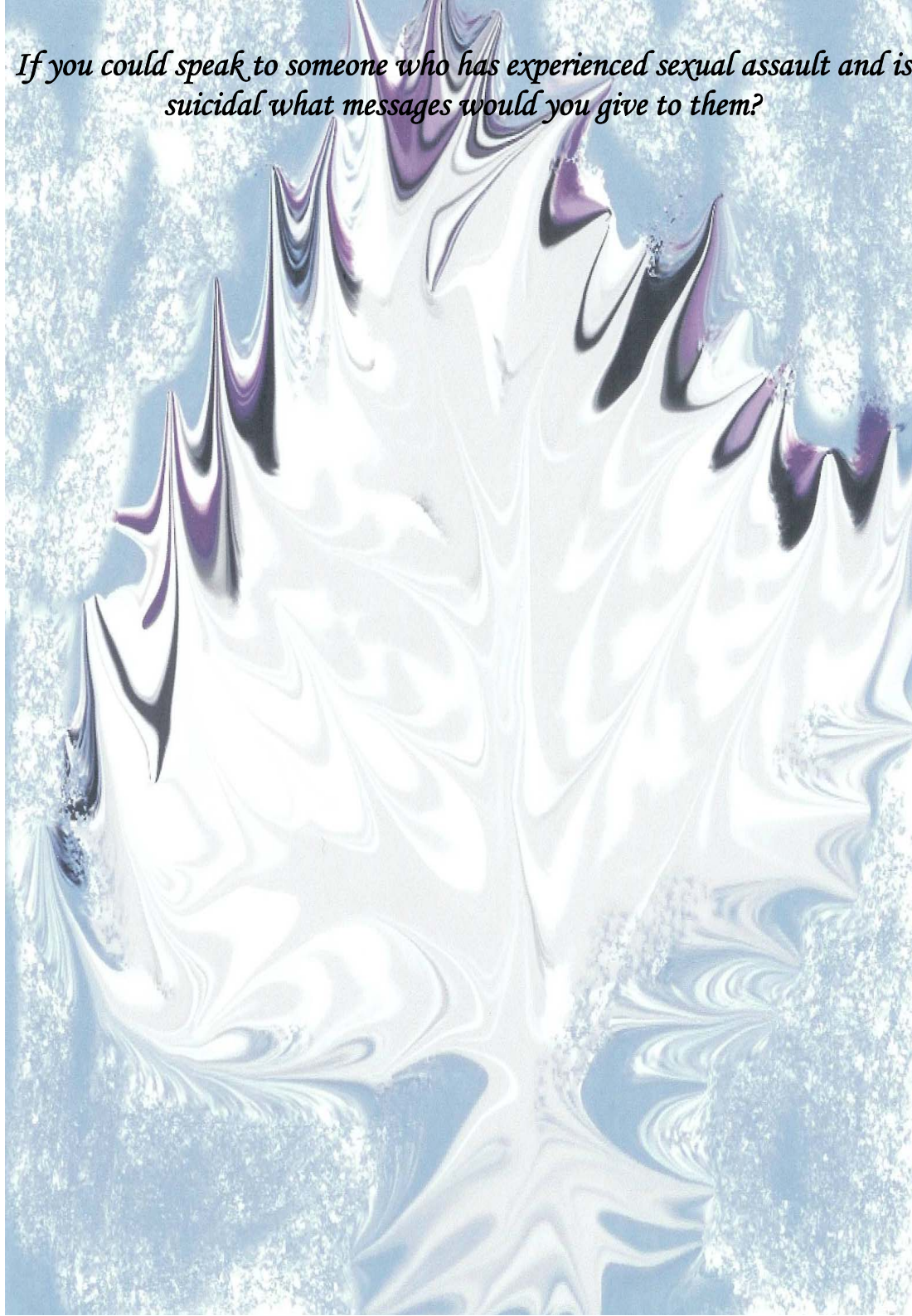
don't keep it a secret

stay with them

give hope and support.

Get help.

If you could speak to someone who has experienced sexual assault and is suicidal what messages would you give to them?





Spring

“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well intentioned words.”

Rachel Naomi Remen

Myths, realities, young women, violence & relationships

'Put downs aren't abuse' "If he is jealous, that's a compliment to me"

It can stop you from seeing family and friends, going to school, looking and dressing the way you normally do. It can rob you of time to yourself and make you feel trapped. It's not your problem, it's your partners.

'Put downs aren't abuse'

Telling partners they are 'worthless', 'crazy', 'stupid' or 'ugly' is very bad for them emotionally. It can scar them forever, and it doesn't belong in a good relationship. Unfortunately we are so used to put downs that we often don't recognise them for what they are; ways of destroying a person's self esteem.

'There is no abuse in young people's relationships'

About one in four young women are abused in intimate relationships. Some young men are also abused. It is happening more and more.

'Abuse only happens to a particular type of person'

Abuse happens to all kinds of people, both sexes, rich, poor, all ages, all religions and all cultures. There is not one 'particular type' of victim.

'People who get abused deserve it'

Nobody deserves to be raped, hit, put down, isolated or criticised. Nobody asks for it, enjoys it or wants it. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser.

'What young people experience in relationships is not abuse or violence'

Young people go through all the same kinds of abuse that make up 'domestic violence'. Physical assault is a crime. So is sexual assault. Keeping someone isolated, putting them down, taking their money – all these have long term effects and are no way to treat a friend, let alone a lover.

'You can pick the type of young person who is abusive'

Abusers don't always 'look the type'. All of us are capable of it, but some people do it often – and do it deliberately, people like this may be nice to everyone else except their partner.

Relationship Violence

Relationship violence is a whole range of different types of abuse where one partner abuses the other to try and control them.

Social Abuse

Social abuse includes trying to make you feel bad in public, making fun of you, keeping you away from your family, friends, neighbours and other day-to-day contacts and keeping you shut up at home. This is all about controlling who you see, how you think and where you go.

Physical Abuse

This means using force or trying to use force. Things like pushing, pinching, slapping, punching, kicking or assault with any kind of weapon. It also means trying to frighten you through looks, actions, and gestures, or smashing things.

Financial Abuse

This includes taking your money, restricting what you buy or stopping you from getting a job or getting at money. This is to make you depend on the other person for money.

Sexual Assault or Sexual Abuse

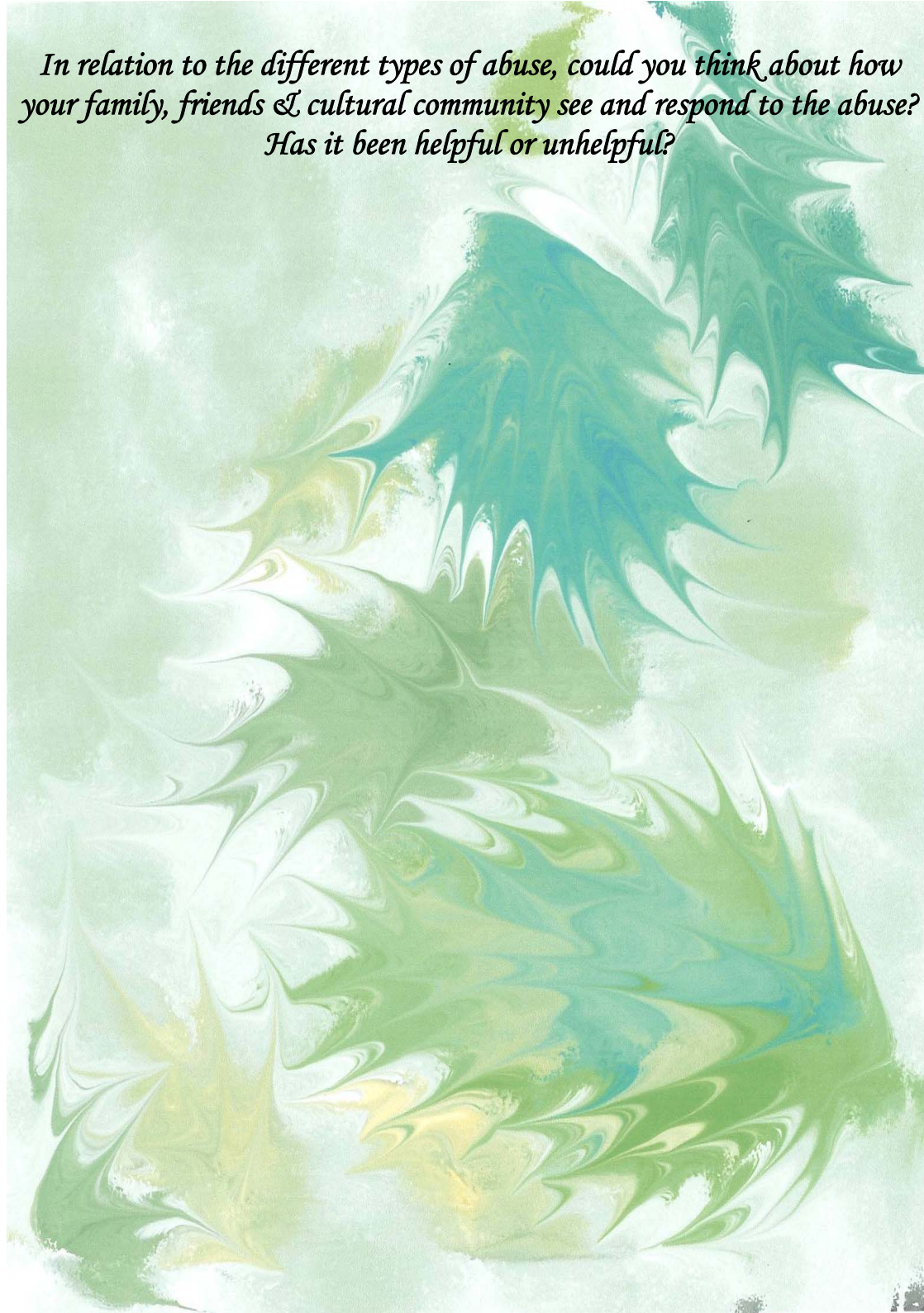
Forcing sex or sexual behaviour on you when you don't want it is sexual abuse. This may mean unwanted sexual touching, pressuring you to have sex or any kind of rape.

Emotional Abuse

Threatening you, insulting you, using foul language, harassing you, frightening you, putting you down, refusing to take your concerns seriously, saying that you cause all the problems, playing 'mind games', abusing pets or displaying weapons – all these are ways to destroy your self confidence and self esteem. They make you feel guilty and more dependent on the other person. Your partner may also threaten to leave or to commit suicide if you leave. (They often give jealousy as an explanation for behaving like this.)

All of these are wrong. Everyone has a right to feel safe in his or her relationships. You have the right to control your own life.

*In relation to the different types of abuse, could you think about how your family, friends & cultural community see and respond to the abuse?
Has it been helpful or unhelpful?*



The Wrong Idea

I liked him a lot so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I went out with him a few times so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I had something to drink that one night so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I was being the life of the party so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I had lied to my parents about being with him so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I wanted to look nice and wore my short skirt and tight top so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I agreed to have him take me home so maybe I gave him the wrong idea.

I tried to get out of the car but he didn't get that idea.

I pushed him off me but he didn't get that idea.

I said that I didn't want to do anything but he didn't get that idea

I said "no" but he didn't get that idea.

I told him I had been wrong to trust him but he didn't get that idea

I said I didn't want to see him again but he didn't get that idea.

I felt so ashamed but he didn't get that idea.

I told him this felt like rape but he didn't get that idea.

People will say it was my fault but they have no idea.

People will say I led him on but they have no idea.

People will say that I let it go too far but they have no idea.

People will say that girls like me deserve this to happen but they have no idea.

People will say that rape can't happen between friends but they have no idea.

People will say that anyone can fight back if they want it to stop but they have no idea.

People will say that he wouldn't do something like this but they have no idea.

People will say that I don't appear to be hurt but they have no idea.



In a healthy relationship you might feel:

Respected

Supported

Able to be yourself

Do you feel any of these in your relationship/s? If so which ones, and can you think of other qualities in your relationship?



In an abusive relationship you might feel:

Pressured

Trapped

Unsafe

Scared.

Do you feel any of these in your relationship/s? If so which ones, and can you think of other abusive behaviors present in your relationship?

Love shouldn't be just a four-letter word.

*Losing everything else that's important such as friends, relationships with family,
AND yourself.*

*Owing things to him. Like he does something nice for you but there's always a cost.
He always wants something back,*

*Vows that you have to make that he is the only one for you and all that matters
and needs to be listened to and needs to have his wants given in to and he knows
what is right.*

*Everything that you like about yourself no longer has a place and instead his likes
come first. It's what he says about you that is true and your own thoughts don't
matter anymore.*

*But if love were just a four letter word... BUT IF LOVE WERE A
FOUR LETTER WORD...*

*Letting you be your own person and have your own interests and friends and doing
the things you like to do.*

*Letting you say no to things you don't want to do and being able to change your
mind if that's what you want to do.*

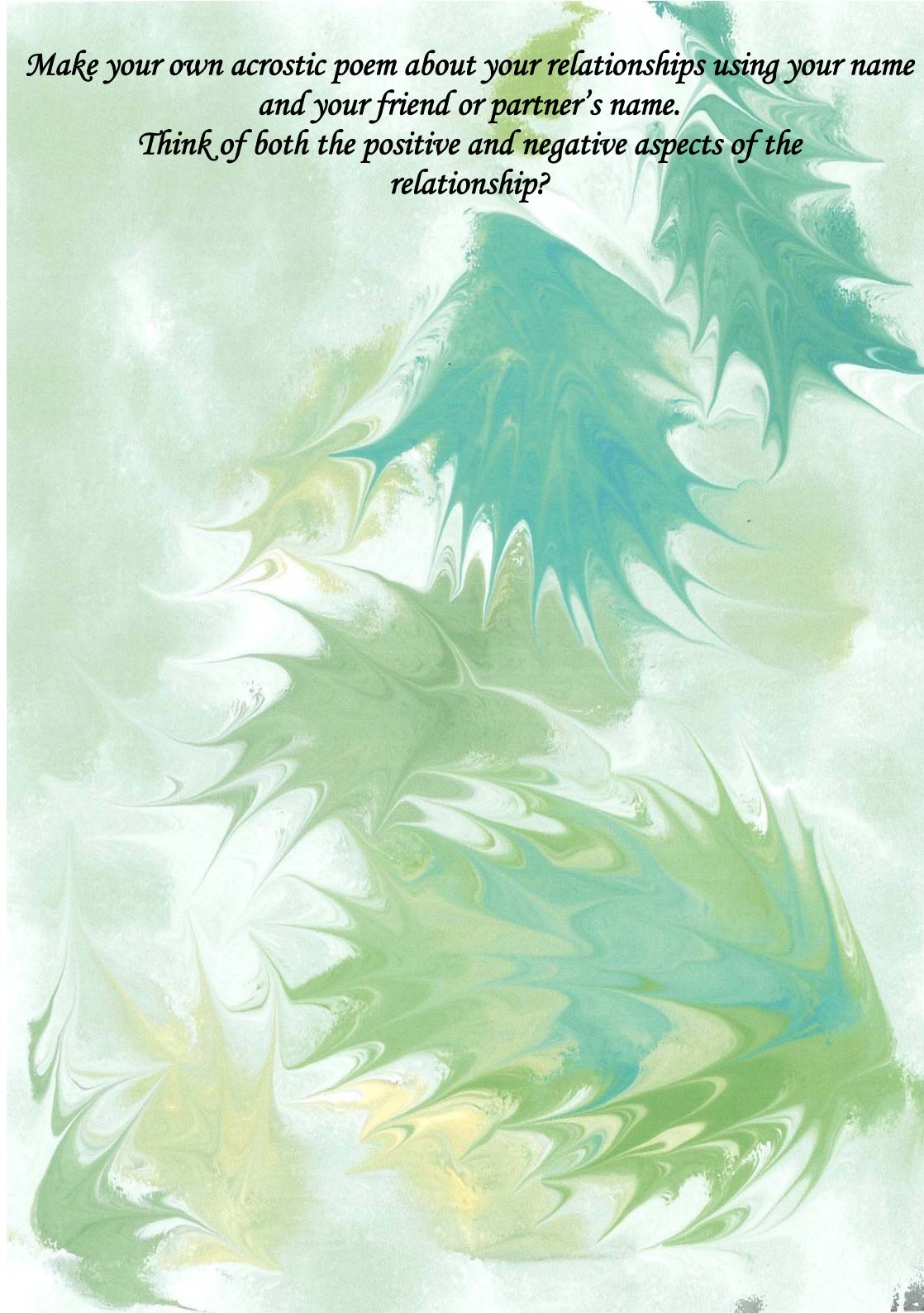
*Openly talk to you about what they think and feel and not hiding things from you
if it is about your relationship. When there is conflict being able to talk openly and
honestly about it. Trust is the key and openness and honesty are huge parts of trust.*

*Valuing who you are and respecting your ideas and your feelings so you feel impor-
tant and safe. Wanting to know more about why you do certain things and think
certain ways*

*Encouraging you to follow your hopes and dreams and support you and not hold
you back to be their follower of what they want to do and what they want to hap-
pen.*

***BEING IN LOVE IS ABOUT TWO LIVES, NOT ONE. NO ONE SHOULD
HAVE TO GIVE UP THEIRS FOR THE SAKE OF THE OTHER.***

*Make your own acrostic poem about your relationships using your name
and your friend or partner's name.
Think of both the positive and negative aspects of the
relationship?*



Respect

Your rights in a relationship

If you are in a relationship YOU MUST be treated with respect which means your boyfriend or girlfriend.....

Is willing to compromise

Lets you feel comfortable being yourself

Is able to admit to being wrong

Tries to resolve conflict by talking honestly

Enables you to feel safe being with them

Respects your feelings, your opinions and your friends

Accepts you saying NO to things that you don't want to do (like sex)

Accepts you changing your mind

Respects your wishes if you want to end the relationship

When someone loves you, you feel valued, respected and free to be yourself. You should not be made to feel intimidated or controlled.

Think about your relationship – do you feel respected?

Respect Checklist

When someone really likes or loves you, they treat you with respect.

The following are signs of a relationship that is based on respect.

*Tick the box if these statements are true for your
Relationship:*

- You are free to see other people and family when you want*
- You feel like you can be yourself, even if you are different to the other person*
- You are free to say no to things you don't want to do*
- You are free to change your mind*
- You feel safe never scared or threatened*
- You are supported to make your own decisions*
- You can express your opinions and beliefs*
- You feel good about yourself*
- You are free to end the relationship if you want to.*

How many ticks did you get?

If you don't always feel like this, maybe you are not being treated with respect.

Sexuality & You

Your sexuality is about your sexual identity and experience.

Most important is how you feel about your body. To like and care for your body and trust what your body tells you.

For any good sexual relationship to develop that involves intimacy and good feelings about the other person, it's important to have good feelings about yourself and your body first. If you dislike your body it's hard to share it with someone else.

Young children learn about their bodies through touch and touching others. People are born as sexual beings and as children develop so also does their sexuality, physically and emotionally.

Before 5 years of age most people have developed a gender identity, knowing what sex we are and what is expected of us because of that gender. Girl things and boy things start to take on different characters and make us act in different ways.

Adolescence is a time where sexuality and sexual awareness takes on more focus in our lives. Peer pressures and "rules" about how to be and how not to be can make life stressful, uncomfortable and confusing.

There are lots of mixed up messages like "Good girls don't do it:" yet "Good boys do".

"he only wants one thing" and "she's got a problem because she doesn't want it at all".

You need to look at who you are listening to and who you believe in terms of making decisions for yourself about sex.

Sexual relationships can be heterosexual or homosexual and either type of relationship can be healthy and fulfilling. Trust plays a huge part to make relationships work, as well as respecting each other for who you are, what you think and how you want to be.

Sex needs to be freely entered into, not coerced or manipulated to please someone else, to give in to peer pressures or to stop someone from leaving a relationship.

You need to have accurate information to protect you and your partner and keep yourself safe.

For a young woman who has been sexually abused it may be a struggle to develop both a healthy view of themselves as well as being in a sexual relationship. You may feel bad about yourself and your body besides being intimate and taking the risk of trusting another person. Sexual activities can relive memories or tap into feelings that were there when the abuse was happening.

The mind as well as the body can hold memories and can react with feelings of pain or stress that often may have no rational explanation. For other young women being in control of any sexual relationship makes them feel safer. This can mean being in control in starting the sex, saying what will happen and deciding when it will end. Control can be gained by talking with partners but sometimes it is done in such an "over the top" way that it is harming to the young woman and any gained potential relationship.

Some young women believe if they "choose the sex" they are in control or that sex is all they are good for and is the only way to get close to someone.

"Some teenagers feel uncomfortable, terrified, or damaged when they engage in any sexual touching. Others feel loved, appreciated, worthwhile, and needed. Many have a mix of feelings. It's important to pay attention to your reactions to sexual situations now".

Barbara Bean & Shari Bennett. The Me Nobody Knows. A guide for teen survivors.

Jossey-Bass Pub. San Francisco 1993.

(adapted from: Baker's Dozen. Meeting yourself halfway. Dr. Sidney Simon. Argus Communications. Illinois. 1974)

If things don't seem right stop doing what you are doing.

Talk to someone who can help you sort things out.

Work on your relationship with your body first. Get to know what you like about it, how to look after it and how to listen to what it is telling you.

Three steps to a healthy sexual relationship.

1. Respect yourself. To understand and feel comfortable with your body and your feelings. They need looking after and the first person responsible for this is you.

2. Have friendships which are comfortable and rewarding with people of both sexes. Talk to your friends and find out if they have questions and concerns like you. Being close to people and developing trust helps you know when trust and respect is happening and when it isn't.

3. A sexual relationship is something that both people agree to and participate in together with a high rating of trust, respect and honesty.. "Yes" means agreeing to what you will do and "no" means agreeing to what isn't OK and when to stop.

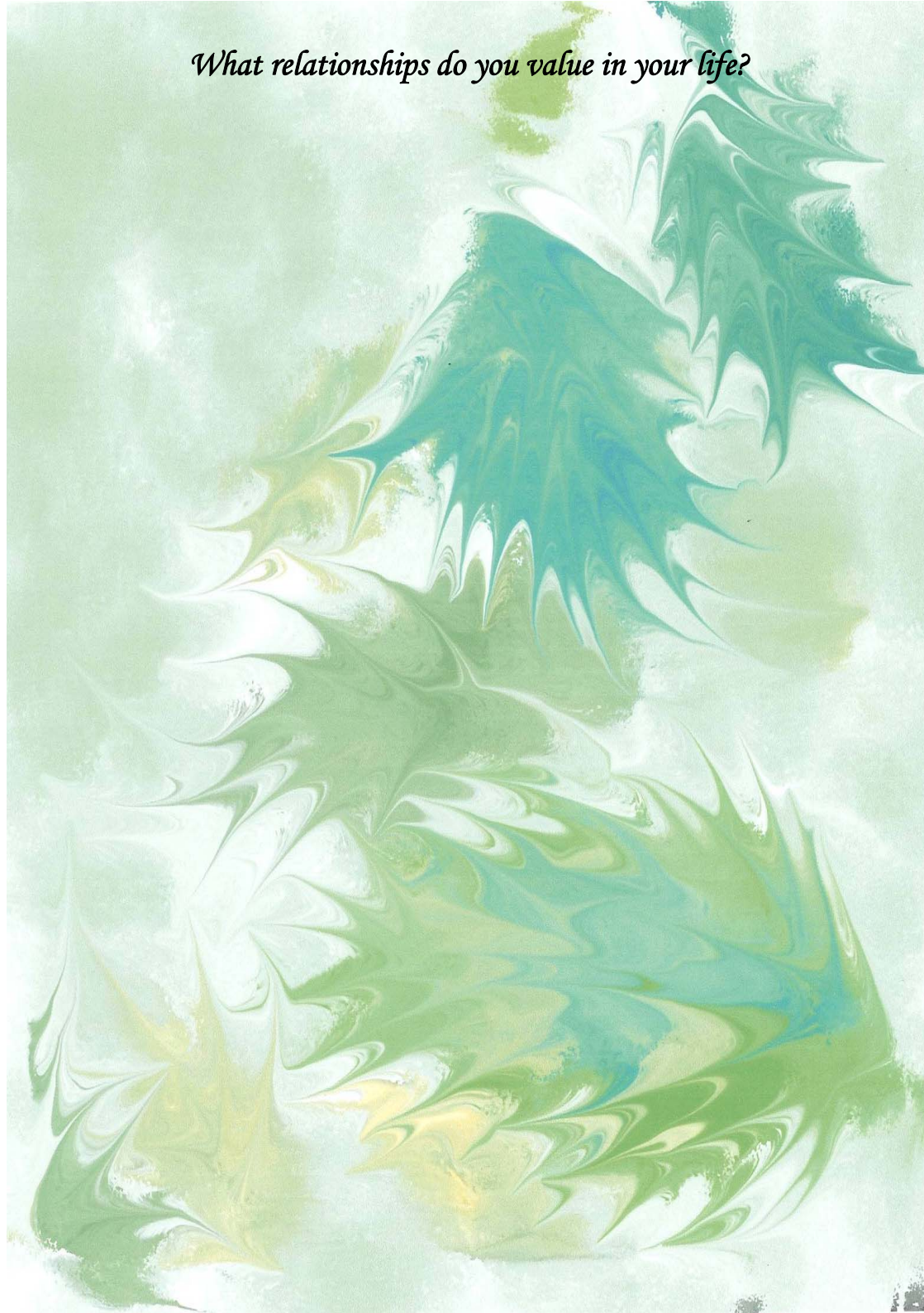
Exercise:

*Sex is..(Taken from The Wellness Workbook
Regina Ryan & John Travis. Ten Speed Press. California. 1981)*

Put a circle around the five words that fit for you. Put an X next to the 5 you would never associate with sex. Put two stars by the words you would like to experience most.

Natural / Normal / Healthy / Fun / Freeing / Exciting / Necessary / Beautiful / Graceful / Glowing / Generous / Caring / Responsible / Pleasant / Patient / Slow / Fast / Warm / Gentle / Respectful / Enjoyable / Active / Delicate / Boring / Scary / Tense / Frightening / Disgusting / Cruel / Painful / Embarrassing / Hard / Guilty / Angry / Easy

What relationships do you value in your life?



Friend to friend.

*I know how sad you're feeling
And how hard life can be
This poem is to remind you
You have a friend that's me.*

*I won't tell you to lie
To smile and be brave
But the true path to happiness
You alone can pave.*

*I wish all your dreams to come true
You'll realise life goes on*

*I can see the tears in your eyes
And I wish that you could see
That every time you hurt yourself
You take a part of me.*

Jaimee.

Who Are Friends?

Friends are often an important part of our lives. Our friends are usually people we trust and respect. True friends will be there for the good and bad times. It may not be easy to maintain friendships as friends sometimes disappoint, and sometimes friendships need to be reassessed. Take a look at your friendships and think about what makes a good friend?

Think about how you have been a good friend to someone.



“We all need friends with whom we can speak of our deepest concerns, and who do not fear to speak the truth in love to us”

Margaret Guenther

If a friend tells you they have been raped:

Do

*Listen to them, be sensitive to the information
Believe what they tell you,
Ask/check they are safe now
Let them know it wasn't their fault
Respect their confidentiality
Let them talk about how they feel... only what they want to tell
Get the name of support or services that can help them and let them know about them.*

Don't

Say things like... "you should have..." or "why didn't you..." or "why don't you just leave"

Blame them for the abuse

If you or someone you know has been raped you can contact:

*YOUR LOCAL SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICE
HOSPITAL – AFTER HOURS SEXUAL ASSAULT WORKER*


Sex without consent is RAPE..... RAPE is a crime



Summer

*“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without hope.”*

Helen Keller



*Do not stand at my grave and forever weep.
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and forever cry.
I am not there. I did not die.*

Melinda Sue Pacho

Colour Me

*Red is anger
Enraged by gossip and spite
Impatient with people's ignorance
To solve things by only a fight*

*Orange is warmth
Sitting by a fire
Lazing on a summer's day
With thoughts that just inspire*

*Pink is pleasant
Hearing raindrops patter
Smelling bread that's just been baked
Seeing butterflies scatter.*

*Purple is what's underneath
Holding secrets deep
Scared to let other people know
The worries that you keep*

*Blue is cold
Feeling not quite right
Wanting to escape the pain
Hiding out of sight*

*Green is caring
Voices gentle and hushed
Telling stories to those who listen
And hands to hold in trust*

*Yellow is happiness
Talking to a friend
Doing things you like to do
And never have this feeling end.*

Do you have a color that represents who you are or how you feel? If so what is it and why is it symbolic to you?



Alphabet Trilogy

A IS FOR

*Absolutely fabulous when the timing is right
Admiration for what you can do and what you will do
Attitude that tells people who you are*

B is for

*Beautiful things that remind you why you're alive
Believing in yourself no matter what the crowd says
Books...read any good ones lately?*

C is for

*Case- get off mine and look at your own
Charades that help you escape when you don't feel like yourself
Codes between friends who know what you mean*

D is for

*Dancing that moves you away from everything else
Different from the rest yet still has an important place
Ditch anyone who disrespects who you are*

E is for

*Ecstasy that you feel when something goes right
Empathic when you know you are right
Excellence when you do something really right*

F is for

*Fairy tales- Snow White was really corporate manager of a wood chopping
business
Feathers- Just spread your wings and fly
Fragile females.....NOT*

G is for

*Girls who'll be women while boys remain boys
Give and take.....as long as both sides do it
Go for it.....it's waiting for you to find it*

H is for

*Hair that's everywhere.....as long as you can comb it
Heartache and heartbreak,....look after it- you only have one
History is yesterday and in 24 hours it will be tomorrow*

I is for

Impossible.only sometimes and not forever
Intense conversations that can leave you feeling full or empty
Instinct.trust it

J if for

Jealous of my shoes.walk in them for a day and see how it feels
Jump in my car.speed kills.just take me home.not to heaven
Just because.you don't always have to have a reason

K is for

Kidding.just make sure the other person knows it's a joke
Knowing your place and then rewriting it
Knee deep in crap. Just one small step and it's a giant leap out of it.

L is for

Laughter.it's the best feeling and it costs nothing
Last word. Choose it carefully as it may not be welcomed back
Lazy days are better than crazy days

M is for

Manuscript.write your own life story
Meditate on your intentions before you do your deeds
Mirrors that always remind you that you are not alone

N is for

No.....I mean it when I say it
Nobody's fool so don't treat me like one
Nurture yourself with kindness and care

O is for

O.K mean it when you say it or don't say it at all
Open up to people. A closed shop can never show the gifts it has inside.
Ornaments should be seen for the beauty they hold and not for their use by people

P is for

Pansy.where the weakest flower can hold the strongest colours
Peace.those quietest of moments
Philosophic phrases.SHIT HAPPENS!!!

Q is for

Quarrels that make a disagreement a major battle and then a war
Questions that make an answer never complete
Quicksand where you're trapped before you even saw it coming

R is for

*Raped by what life sometimes offers you
Real life.....it's happening every day
Resiliency to deal with those every day real life happenings*

S is for

*Sisterhood.....united we stand
Sexuality.....it's yours and it's up to you how you proclaim it
Success.....isn't the happy ending.....it's having no endings*

T is for

*Trust....you get what you give
Tears....nature's greatest healer
Talking it out.....don't keep it in*

U is for

*Ugly.....not if you're looking from the inside
Uncertain.....be certain when you don't know and find out more
U-turn.....you can always change your mind*

V is for

*Vacant.....just because you don't show it doesn't mean it's not there
Voices.....for talking and singing and sharing.....don't be silent
Voyage.....if that is life then "safe journey"*

W is for

*Wish upon a star.....there's a trillion out there for you
Watch.....be the keeper of your own time
Windows.....open them and opportunities will come in*

X is for

*X files.....enjoy the unexpected
X ray...let people know what's on your inside and they may let you know theirs
Xanadu.....create magic in your dreams*

Y is for

*Youth.....something a lot of people passed and now miss what they left behind
Years that now seem so slow but speed up quickly
Yesterdays that never hold the promise of tomorrows*

Z is for

*ZigZag.....why can't it just be a straight walk?
Zodiac.....at least the stars think I'm something
Zoo.....if you could collect things in your life what would they be?*

Write your own Alphabet Trilogy



Alphabet Trilogy—Continued.....



The Myths and Facts of Child Sexual Assault

Myth: *Most children who experience child sexual assault are female.*

Fact: *Research indicates that on average 30% of all women and 16% of all men have experienced some form of sexual abuse as a child.*

Myth: *The majority of adults who assault children were themselves sexually assaulted as children.*

Fact: *Evidence does not support the view that offenders have also been a victim of sexual abuse, with between 20-30% of offenders disclosing their own sexual abuse during childhood.*

Myth: *Homosexuals are more likely than heterosexuals to assault children.*

Fact: *Offenders are most commonly heterosexual men, even if the victim is a boy. Many offenders are married men who live with a partner and children.*

Myth: *Most children don't know the people who assault them.*

Fact: *Approximately 85% of offenders are known to the child. Most offenders are relatives or close friends of the child whom the child trusts.*

Myth: *Untrue allegations of child sexual assault are frequent, children often make up stories about adults to get them into trouble.*

Fact: *Children rarely lie about sexual assault. Statistics show that 98% of cases, children's statements are found to be true. Children who report sexual abuse often describe sexual behaviour in detail, information they are unlikely to have unless their stories are true.*

Myth: *People who molest their own children are not a danger to other people's children.*

Fact: *Sexual assault is a seldom and single offence. If a man abuses his own children he is capable of abusing their friends and others.*

Myth: *Sexual offenders have a sleazy or frightening appearance*

Fact: *Sexual offenders do not look any different from anyone else. They are usually "average" people in our community. In fact they usually try hard to impress adults they come in contact with to earn respect and trust.*

Myth: Children often misinterpret what an adult is doing and wrongly accuse the adult of sexual assault.

Fact: Studies show that children tell often long after the abuse has started and the sexual touching has increased. What started seemingly innocent “accidental touching” or “just tickling” is later used by an offender, when the sexual touching increases, to defend his behaviour and blame the child.

Myth: The child may be at fault for encouraging the sexual activity.

Fact: A child cannot be held responsible for the abusive behaviour of an adult. The child is in a vulnerable position compared to the adult, who often has authority over the child. The child is likely to trust the person and believe they are safe.

Myth: If a child doesn't tell about being sexually assaulted it is because they have a bad relationship with their parents or carers.

Fact: Sexual abuse has often been called the “silent problem” because the hardest thing for a child who is being abused is to tell.

Myth: A child that says they have been sexually assaulted and then later says that it didn't really happen, is clearly lying about it.

Fact: Children may retract an allegation because of enormous pressure placed on them to make it go away. The family may be at risk of breaking up, parents are distressed and the child has no support. Disbelieving adults give the child the idea that if they say it was a lie things will return to normal. However an offender will not stop abusing and often becomes more aggressive knowing that if the child says something again people will not believe them.

Myth: It's less damaging if victims are young or intellectually disabled because they don't really understand what is happening.

Fact: Sexual abuse is damaging to the development of all children. They suffer psychological damage from the abuse and their world now feels unsafe.

Myth: females do not commit sexual offences against children.

Fact: Women commit less frequently than men but can also abuse.

Myth: Children who are sexually abused are scared forever

Fact: While being sexually can be traumatic it need not damage a child for the rest of their life.

Be Proud

*(Adapted from: A matter of pride. Meeting yourself halfway. Dr. Sidney Simon.
Argus Communications. Illinois. 1974)*

- *Something I recently made as a gift for someone special*
- *My family*
- *My loyal friends*
- *My loyalty to friends*
- *Deciding not to do something I would normally do*
- *Deciding to do something I wouldn't normally do*
- *Being sensitive to someone in trouble*
- *A talent I have and use*
- *Being creative*
- *Something I have written*
- *Forgiving a friend*
- *Being open and honest to someone*
- *Telling the truth even though it was hard*
- *Spending time with my younger siblings*
- *Planning a surprise for someone*
- *Being positive even though it's hard at times*

If any of those fit for you write about them. If not, what things would you list as being proud of?



Beautiful
Christina Aguilera

*Everyday is so wonderful, then suddenly, it's hard to breathe
Now and then I get insecure, from all the pain
I'm so ashamed*

*I am so beautiful no matter what they say
words can't bring me down
I am beautiful in every single way,
yes words can't bring me down
so don't you bring me down today*

*To all your friends your delirious
so consumed, your all alone
Trying hard to feel the emptiness, the piece is gone,
yes Left the puzzle undone, is that the way it is?*

*You are beautiful no matter what they say
words can't bring me down, No, no
Cause you are beautiful in every single way,
yes words can't bring me down. Oh, no
so don't you bring me down today*

*No matter what we do,
no matter what we say,
Were the song inside the tune, full of beautiful mistakes
And everywhere we go, (And everywhere we go)
The sun will always shine
(the sun will always, always, shine)
And tomorrow we might awake on the other side*

*Cause we are beautiful no matter what they say
yes words won't bring us down, no
we are beautiful in every single way,
Yes words can't bring us down, oh, no,
So don't you bring me down today*

*Can you think of a song, poem, story or movie that you connect with?
What is it and why is it special to you? How does it make you feel
when you watch listen or read it?*



Metaphorically Speaking

Trust is like rock climbing. You know that someone you trust will never let go of the rope no matter how hard the climb.

Hope is like a soft toy. It's not real but it gives you as much comfort as any real thing.

Loyalty is like going out in the surf and the biggest wave takes you for the best ride.

Betrayal is like when you're walking in to shore and that same big wave knocks you over when you're back is turned

Friendships are like a garden of flowers. Sometimes they wilt but with a bit of care will always grow back.

Fashion is like bottles of soft drink. It's always changing flavours and colours, but once the bottle's empty the taste of it is forgotten and you're waiting for the next one.

Love is like the weather. It's always changing and you can't control the changes.....and you never believe the weatherman.

Life is like that box of chocolate. If you leave it too late to taste it, the box will be empty.

A dream is like believing in that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and.....

The future can be like finally finding it.

If you could think of a metaphor for your life what would it be? Make up your own or use one which already exists.



Hope

Hope is an emotional belief in the possibility of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances within one's personal life. Hope implies a certain amount of perseverance ie; believing that something is possible even when there is some evidence to the contrary.

High hopesor.....what makes ants move plants.

In Greek mythology Pandora was a beautiful woman given a box by Zeus, a decorated chest. She was told not to open it or there would be devastation. But Pandora was curious about the locked box and the more she thought about it, the more she wanted to know what was in it. She wondered if there were jewels or other treasures inside. One day she decided to break the box and peek inside. Out of the box streamed all the evils of the world- hate and jealousy, cruelty and hunger, pain and sickness, old age and death. Pandora tried to slam down the lid but it had been too late. Then one last thing, very small and beautiful floated out of the box. It was hope.

And for all the evil that would happen in the world there would also stay hope to keep people from despair.

*“Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.”
- Emily Dickinson*

*“Every area of trouble gives out a ray of hope ; and the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable.”
- John Fitzgerald Kennedy*

*“Hope is a waking dream”
- Aristotle*



Looking for an echo.

*I'm looking for an echo
Someone who hears my voice
And takes the time to answer back,
Because that's been their choice.*

*I'm looking for an echo
Someone who hears my heart
And knows the pain it holds inside
That's breaking it apart.*

*I'm looking for an echo
Someone who hears my hope
And gives me back the strength I need.....*

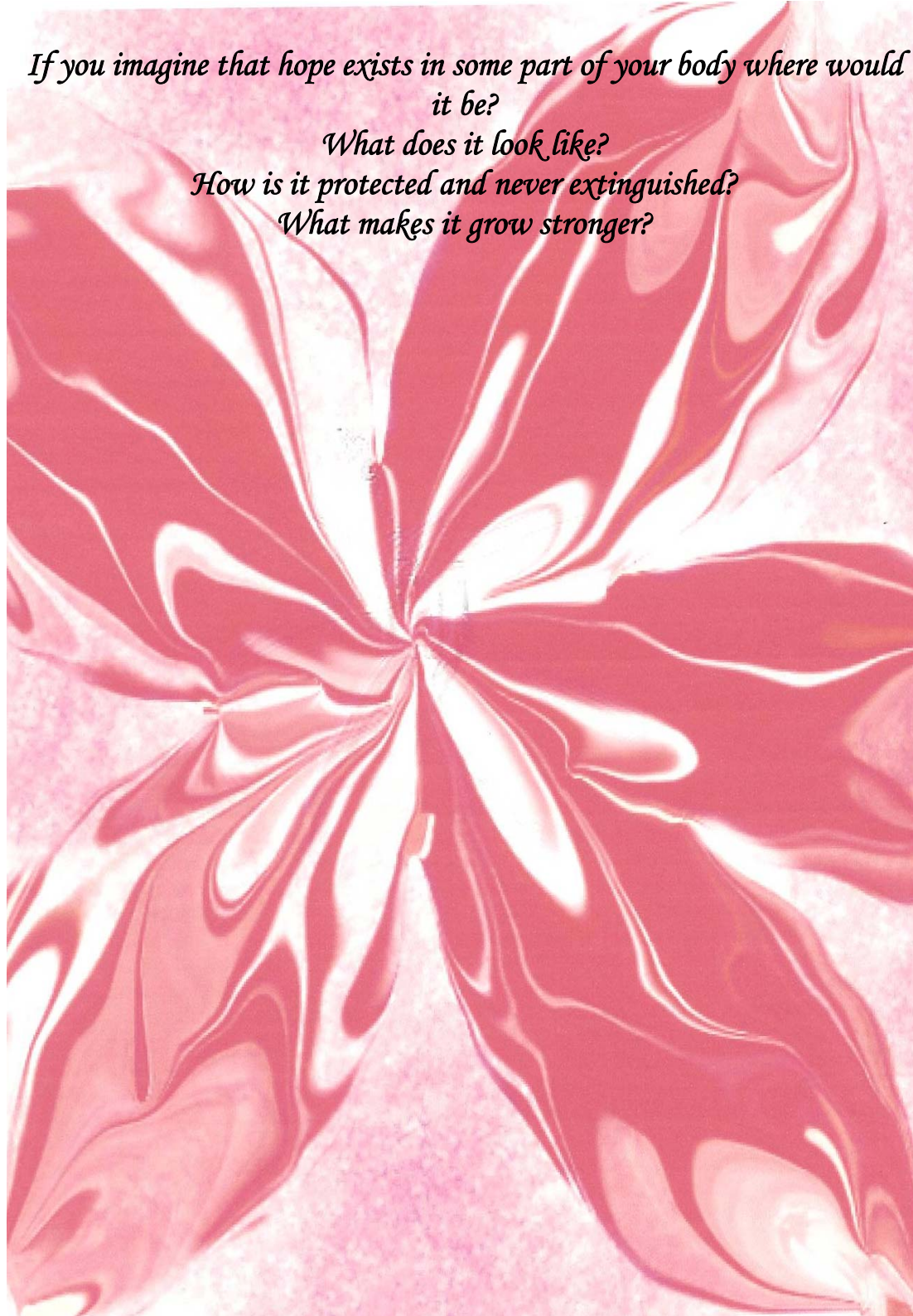
.....Well all I need is hope

If you imagine that hope exists in some part of your body where would it be?

What does it look like?

How is it protected and never extinguished?

What makes it grow stronger?



Telephone Directory

Emergency

<i>NSW Rape Crisis Centre</i>24 hrs.....	9819 6565
24 hrs.....	1800 424 017
<i>Police</i>emergency.....	000
<i>Penrith</i>	47219444
<i>St Marys</i>	9677 5099
<i>Mt DrUITt</i>	9625 0000

NSW Health Sexual Assault Counselling

<i>Penrith</i>	4734 2512
<i>Blacktown/Mt DrUITt</i>	9881 8700
<i>Dympna House</i>	9797 6733 or 1800 654 119
<i>WAAAT</i>	9881 1230
<i>Luxford road clinic</i>	9881 1911

Women's Health

<i>Blacktown Women & Girls Health Centre</i>	9831 2070
<i>YWCA, Parramatta– Encore Program</i>	9633 3919
<i>WASH House Mt DrUITt</i>	9677 1962
<i>Warehouse</i>	4721 8330

Community Health Centres:

<i>Blacktown</i>	9881 8700
<i>Doonside</i>	9881 8650
<i>Mt DrUITt</i>	9881 1200

Accommodation

<i>Youth Emergency Accommodation Service</i>	9318 1531
<i>Bidwill Crisis Refuge</i>	9268 0808
<i>Penrith Youth Refuge</i>	4371 1275

Legal Aid

<i>Domestic violence advocacy service</i>	9637 3741 or 1800 626 267
<i>Women's legal resource centre</i>	9749 5533 or 1800 674 333
<i>Mt DrUITt Community Legal Centre</i>	9675 2009
<i>Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre</i>	1800 686 587

Telephone Directory
DV court assistance schemes:

Blacktown.....9671 9126
Mt Druitt.....47315098
Docs Helpline.....132 111
Children's Helpline.....1800 551 800
DV crisis line.....1800 656 463

Mental Health Services

Mental Health Information Service.....9816 5688 or 1800 674 200
Transcultural Mental Health Centre, North Parramatta.....9840 3800
NSW Association for Mental Health.....9816 1611

Accommodation Information and Referrals

Homeless Persons Information Centre.....9265 9081/7
Women & Girls Emergency Centre.....9360 5388
Women's Refuge Resource Centre.....9518 8379
Aboriginal Homeless People.....9799 8446 or 0417 197 167
Stepping Out— Medium term housing for women, with or without children, who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse.....9950 9398
Youth Emergency Accommodation Line.....9698 5833 or 1800 424 830

Eating Disorder Services

Eating Disorder Association of NSW.....9899 5344
www.edansw.org.au
Eating Disorder Support & Information Line.....(02) 9412 4499

Drug & Alcohol Services

Alcohol & Drug Info Service.....9361 8000(24 hrs)

Self Help Groups

Advocates for Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA).....1300 657 380
Women Incest Survivors Network.....9358 5172
Camperdown Drop in Support Group.....9515 3680

Self Defence

Women's School of Self Defence Glebe.....9568 3883
Australian Women's Self Defence.....9130 8064

Sexual Health Services

Aids Information Line.....9332 9700 or 1800 451 600
Family Planning Association Health.....1300 658 886
SWOP (sex workers outreach project).....9319 4866 or 1800622 902

References

