

Empathy Letter Guidelines

An empathy letter is your opportunity to share with the group your understanding of the effects of your behaviors on your victim(s). As people develop a better sense of the impact of their behavior on others, they have a better opportunity to stop using abusive behaviors towards them.

Unlike the letter you wrote during your participation in the Weekly group, this letter is to be written by you, written from your child's perspective, outlining how he/she may have been impacted by your abusive behavior.

Include the following descriptions, from your child's perspective, of your abusive behaviors:

- The first time your child felt frightened by your abusive behavior, whether that behavior was directed at the child or his/her mother
- The worst incident of abuse that your child experienced, either directly towards him/her, or indirectly because the abuse was directed towards mom
- Any other types of emotionally or psychologically abusive behaviors your child would say he/she has experienced from you
- Any other types of abusive behaviors your child may believe you have used towards his/her mother and/or siblings

Include the following descriptions of the impact of your abusive behaviors:

- Changes in your child's behavior toward you and other family members
- How your child felt at the time of the significant incidents
- His/her avoiding certain subjects, issues, or situations with you
- Changes in his/her performance at school
- Your child's concerns for the impact of your actions on his mother and siblings
- Symptoms of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, physical injury, and trauma

Finally, include:

- Your child's feelings toward you now
- What your child does or does not want from you now