




Healing from Domestic Violence

Where there is breath, there is life.
Where there is life, there is hope.



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Introduction

None of us ever deserves to be harmed.

Domestic violence is traumatic and interrupts our lives and our relationships with other people. Because these experiences happen more than once, and often get worse over time, it can be confusing for us to know what to do. Many of us have felt that our lives were out of control and can easily become overwhelmed by our feelings and experiences. We may even blame ourselves or feel like we have lost our worth, our strength, and our power. We need to understand and believe that **the abuse is not our fault and healing is possible.**

The purpose of this booklet is to help us make decisions if we are unsure about what to do and help us feel more in control. We will all respond differently to our experiences, and we are not alone. Our healing will begin even if it is confusing and difficult. It will take time.

Remember to breathe – where there is breath, there is life – where there is life there is hope.



Where There Is Breath, There Is Life

Our minds, bodies, and spirits are connected; each impacts the other. Our whole being can be harmed when we experience violence and abuse in our relationships. When one or more pieces of ourselves are harmed, we feel it everywhere else. If we can begin healing and restoring one part of ourselves, all parts of us can benefit.

Whenever we are harmed, focusing on our breathing can help parts of our healing process.

Take a breath. When we focus on our breath, we can think more clearly, have more control of our actions or reactions, and restore our energy.

Low and s-l-o-w. The stronger and most restorative breath comes from breathing low in our bodies, from below our belly buttons, rather than high in our chests. Our inhales should fill our bellies and our exhale should be long and s-l-o-w.

Movement + breath. We breathe deeper when we stop, relax our shoulders and neck, and sigh. Movement with breathing is important for anyone who has experienced trauma. Raise your arms on the inhale and lower your arms on the exhale. Inhaling naturally and exhaling low and s-l-o-w will help release our tension, whatever it is, and help us feel present in the moment.

Adapted from Norma Wong from Move to End Violence



Where There Is Life, There Is Hope

Hope is the life force that keeps us going. Hope can help us recover more easily from the pain we feel when we experience violence and abuse.

When we experience violence and abuse, we can sometimes believe that our experience is normal. We can begin to feel that we don't have any control over our options.

Regaining or maintaining control over our own thoughts, decisions, and actions can help us rebuild our sense of power and freedom from the domination and violence.

When we slow down, we can begin to undo the harm or traumatic impact of the violence. Listening, thinking, speaking, eating, and moving slower will help us make one decision at a time.



Practice Daily Self Care

The most important step we can take is to practice daily self care.

Kindness – Be compassionate with ourselves.

Rest – Try to sleep 6 to 8 hours each night.

Breathe – Practice breathing deeply, low and s-l-o-w.

Water – Drink water and stay hydrated throughout the day.

Support – If we are able, spend time with friends and family who accept and support us, and make us happy.

Spaciousness – Take five minutes a day to do something restorative for ourselves (drink a cup of tea, take a quiet moment to think of something positive, or take a short walk.)



What Is Domestic Violence?

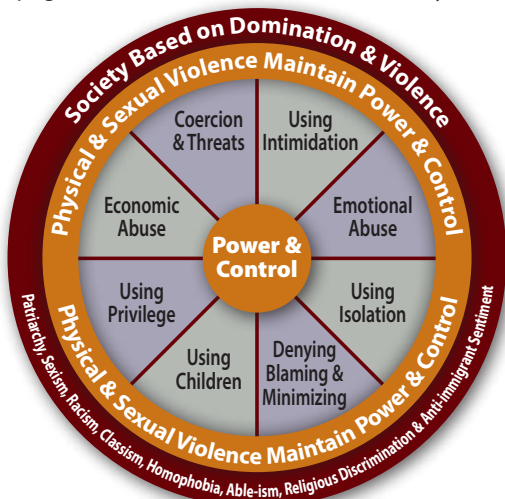
Domestic violence is a pattern of abuse in relationships that one partner uses to control the other partner.

Domestic violence can hurt our social, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. It harms our health, economic independence, and how we parent. It is not something that happens just once, and usually gets worse over time. Living in fear harms us emotionally and physically. People are responsible for their abusive choices. An abusive partner may deny what they did, make excuses for it, or blame us for what they did. People choose to be violent. Drugs, alcohol, religion, culture, or other people do not make them use violence.

By talking with someone we trust and seeking support for ourselves we can begin to heal from the abuse.

Patterns of Power & Control

Here's a way to think about our experience with domestic violence that may be helpful. The red ring shows the ways our society or culture supports controlling and abusive choices. The orange ring shows how people use threats of physical and sexual violence to control us. In the middle are the tactics that are part of a pattern of behavior that an abusive partner may use to exert power and control over us. The next page describes how these behaviors may show up and feel like.





Common Abusive Tactics or Behaviors

Our partners may use:


Fear: Make us afraid with their voice, looks or actions. Destroy our things, outing our sexuality, gender identity, or mental health struggles, or threatens to contact immigration officials.

Emotional Abuse: Put down our feelings, rights, or opinions; call us names, always tells us we are wrong, ignore us, or yell at us.

Isolation: Keep us away from our family, friends, work, or culture; block calls or monitor emails, withhold our assistive technology, or stop us from learning English.

Denying, Blaming, Minimizing: Deny what they did and blame us for it or tell us it wasn't too bad.

Using of Children: Threaten to take our children or leave the family; ask the children to watch us; or push us to become pregnant.



Using Privilege: Take power over us just because they are male, or use another identity like race, sexuality, gender identity, religion, disability, or U.S. legal status.

Economic Control: Refuse to pay bills, refuse to let us work, mess with our job, quit their job to try and control us.

Coercion/Threats: Say they will hurt us, themselves, or someone else. Harm our pets. Say they won't care for our disabilities. Scare us with weapons, threaten to disclose our immigration status, sexuality, gender identity, or another identity.




Specific Communities

Many of us experience discrimination and unfair treatment based on our identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, immigration status, or ability. If we identify with one or more of these communities, we may experience additional, very real, and valid fears and concerns about seeking help for our experiences with domestic violence. We may want to seek out friends or a trusted person in our network or community who shares our identity who can help us find safer and more helpful resources. There is a resources section at the end of this brochure for national hotlines and organizations committed to supporting all of who we are.

LGBTQ or Gender Nonconforming People

Those of us who identify as LGBTQ or gender nonconforming may be afraid of “being outed” by the person who is hurting us if we are not out to everyone. We may also understandably fear that seeking help may make us a target of harassment or bullying. The person who is hurting us may exploit these fears to keep us from getting help. And if our family, co-workers, school, or community do not value our sexual orientation and/or gender identity, it can be a barrier to turn to them for support.

So, What Can I Do? You may want to reach out to LGBTQ-friendly organizations, locally or nationally, or student clubs like an LGBTQ Center



or Gay Straight Alliance to find out about LGBTQ-specific resources. You may also find a supportive counselor, colleague, or community leader who can help you find resources that will be helpful.

Communities of Color or Indigenous Communities

Those of us who identify as a person of color or as Indigenous may also be impacted by racism and our country's history of systemic discrimination and oppression (such as the genocide of Indigenous communities, slavery of the Black community, and incarceration or deportation in immigrant communities). White supremacy can cause us additional harm in healing from domestic violence. For example, we may fear seeking help because we may have been discounted, dismissed, disparaged, and, most often, ignored. We may experience an increased impact of domestic violence because of the ways our society devalues our bodies as people of color and Indigenous people.

So, What Can I Do? You may want to consider whether or not the criminal justice system is a helpful solution for you. These systems have complicated histories and impacts on our communities. Individuals and leaders in your community who can relate to your experience may be able to better support you and find resources that will be helpful to you.



Individuals Without U.S. Legal Status or DACA Recipients

If we don't have a current U.S. lawful immigration status or are a DACA recipient, we may not report the abuse to authorities or seek help in fear of being deported. We may also fear telling a school staff member or other community member because your information may lead to an investigation that might cause you or the person who is hurting you to be deported if one or the other does not hold a U.S. legal status.

So, What Can I Do? Heightened immigration enforcement policies have justifiably increased fear in contacting law enforcement. If this is a concern for you, contact an immigration attorney, or someone who is licensed to better understand the implications of your status when looking to get help in healing from domestic violence. You may also connect to a trusted community or family member who will support you in navigating systems that may not feel safe for you to do on your own. For information on low or no cost legal resources in Idaho, please see the resources page at the end of this booklet.



Muslim Communities

Those of us who are Muslim may feel additional shame, guilt, or self-blame from misinterpretation of our belief systems or the discrimination our communities experience. These may cause us anxiety about the future or decisions about marriage and family. Our religious communities can be supportive and may also struggle to show up for us in helpful ways. Some of us experience compassion, and, unfortunately, some of us may experience shaming from our communities.

So, What Can I Do? You do not deserve to endure the emotions of shame, guilt, and self-blame. Try to find someone in your community who can support you, and help your family and community understand that there are a number of Islamic principles that are supportive of survivors. There are also online resources developed by the Muslim community that may help you hold your religious beliefs as a pathway to healing.



People with Disabilities or Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

If we have a physical, mental, cognitive, or intellectual disability or are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, we may use assistive devices or depend on others to meet some or many of our basic needs. If we were hurt by our personal care providers, our daily needs or assistive devices may be used against us as a coercive tactic to control us or stop us from seeking help. We may feel shame for trusting the person who is hurting us. We may also experience barriers in seeking help based on stereotypes people have about us as individuals with disabilities.

So, What Can I Do? You may find support within disability or Deaf and hard-of-hearing organizations, like a Center for Independent Living, or protection and advocacy organizations, like DisAbility Rights Idaho. These organizations can help you advocate for your self-determination and enhance your safety.



Choices About Our Safety

Choices about safety are difficult. We may consider risks of physical and emotional harm, our personal, children's, family member's or friend's safety, the access to financial resources, or our spiritual or religious beliefs. We may wonder about the loss of the relationship and risks if an arrest is made, detention takes place, or if our immigration status is further investigated. We may have additional life challenges including housing, disability, or unlawful immigration status.

Many of us who experience abuse continue to remain in contact with the person who is harming us. We may stay in the relationship because leaving might make our lives more difficult, we may have no resources to leave, or we still feel the good parts of the relationship. We may wonder if leaving will be better or worse for us and our children.

We are experts on our own lives. We know how to make choices about the risks we face. No matter what choices we make about leaving or staying, an advocate with a community or tribal domestic violence program can help us make decisions about our safety, our basic needs, and any concerns or risks we may have. Advocates understand that leaving is not always possible for us or may not be what we want.



Risk of Dangerousness of Future Harm

Domestic violence is always dangerous and we have noticed that certain behaviors can increase our risk of serious harm. While there is no way to predict behavior, the following are warning signs of increased dangerousness in a relationship and those **factors in red** are warning signs of increased risk of death:

1. History of domestic violence including **forced sex, current attempted strangulation,** or **physical abuse during pregnancy.**
2. Threats to kill you or any children or others we care about such as parents, friends, including **movement of weapons as a threat.**
3. Threats of suicide by the abuser.
4. **Recent separation** from the relationship or separation from employment.
5. Obsessive, controlling or coercive behavior, such as monitoring everything you do and everywhere you go, or **extreme possessiveness** or **stalking.**
6. Prior police contact for domestic violence or other criminal behavior.
7. Alcohol or drug use by the abuser.

If you have noticed one or more of these behaviors in your relationship, an advocate can help you make decisions about your safety.




Our Families

We may have children, stepchildren, younger siblings, or extended family we care for and who may have been hurt by domestic violence. We can be a strong and loving connection for our children to help them heal and stay safe. Everything we do to protect and support them is important for their health, safety, and future.

Routine can be healing for our children. Domestic violence hurts our children's sense of safety and security. We can help them know what to think about, where we will be and when we'll be back. Things like getting enough sleep, physical exercise, and healthy foods can help our children heal.

We are important in our children's lives. We can try hard every day to protect them, be firm, loving, and understanding. When we are there to listen to them and know their needs, to help them grow up strong and healthy.

Our children need emotional support. We can't do everything alone, but we can connect to safe and supportive places and people outside of the home. Things like school, faith-based activities, sports, arts, club activities, or after-school programs can be helpful. Our family and friends can be great support. We can sometimes find counseling or support groups for children, youth, and ourselves. Community or tribal domestic violence programs can help us find more options.



We need to take care of ourselves too. Our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health helps our children. When we take care of ourselves, we have more energy to truly enjoy them and be there for them.

Being positive helps our children. Our children do better in life when they feel good about themselves. We can build their skills through play, chores, school, and other activities. We can remember to tell them what they are doing well, why they are fabulous, and how much we love them. Our hugs and other healthy touches that they like, when they like it, are a part of healing.

Our children may be having a hard time because of the violence. It's okay for us to ask for help when we need, and know that there is hope, healing and strength within reach.



Our Housing Needs


Our community and tribal domestic violence programs may be able to help us with short-term emergency housing and some programs may have access to rental assistance funds, transitional housing units, and/or long-term housing.

Short-Term Housing – Emergency Shelters

Shelters: Shelters are time limited. No fees are charged to stay. Most have shared bedrooms with other survivors, kitchens, common areas, and/or bathrooms. Families share a room together.

Children: Shelters are equipped for our children, but we can bring their favorite toys or things like stuffed animals and blankets. Many shelters do not have childcare, so we are responsible for making our own childcare arrangements.

Accessibility: We cannot be denied services because of our disability or because we are Deaf or hard-of-hearing. All shelters must allow service animals. If we have a disability or are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, we can request reasonable accommodations to changes of policies or practices to meet our needs.



Pets: Some shelters will accept our pets or have arrangements with local animal shelters or animal advocacy groups.

Services: Shelters can usually provide food, clothing, and toiletries. Some may have counseling or support groups for us and our children.

Confidentiality: Because our privacy is important, our identity and that of other residents at the shelter and their circumstances should be kept private.




Choices on Civil & Criminal Orders of Protection

The civil and criminal legal systems have two types of orders. None of us need to choose these options, but a community or tribal domestic violence program advocate may be able to help with this process.

Civil Protection Orders (CPO) – There is no cost to file a petition for a protection order and there is no need for an attorney. The paperwork for a civil protection order is available at your local court clerk’s office. The form is also available at Idaho.tylerhost.net/SRL/.

The Idaho Domestic Violence Advice Line is also a resource available to help understand civil protection orders - 1-877-500-2980.

Criminal No Contact Orders (NCO) – If there is an ongoing criminal case, the judge will usually sign a no contact order requiring that the person using the violence (the defendant in a case) to stay away from and not harass those of us experiencing the violence. Those of us with an order in place can ask the court to change or remove it. NCOs are only in place as long as a case is ongoing (so if the charges are dropped, the order will be dropped too).



Immigration – Those of us who do not have a current U.S. lawful immigration status can contact an attorney or someone who is Bureau of Immigration Accreditation (BIA) licensed (beware of scammers) to better understand the implications of our immigration status when looking to seek help from an abusive relationship and/or identifying any possible legal immigration remedies.



Service Providers in Our Communities

There are different types of community service providers or governmental organizations that assist individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Each of these professions has different roles, ethical guidelines, and confidentiality requirements. Those of us who are working with any of these individuals can **ask them to explain their role and their limits of confidentiality.**

- Domestic violence advocates employed by community and tribal domestic violence programs.
- Mental health professionals (licensed counselors or social workers) in private practice or employed by a domestic violence program.
- Victim witness coordinators employed by law enforcement or prosecutors.
- Domestic violence court coordinators employed by the court system.
- Civil attorneys in private practice or with Idaho Legal Aid Services, or a criminal prosecutors employed by the city or county government.
- Culturally specific or issue specific organizations may provide access and resources specific to an individual's culture/ethnicity or other identity.
- Disability advocacy organizations may provide assistive technology or resources specific to an individual's disability.



Services at Our Domestic Violence Programs

Advocates at a community or tribal domestic violence programs generally provide these services:


Information to help us understand our rights and options, how to heal from trauma, and the root causes of violence.

Safety Planning so we can decide what we want to do to avoid harm as much as possible.

Skill Building for coping, dealing with strong feelings, problem solving, connecting with your children, and accessing resources.

Encouragement for understanding, respecting, and embracing our diverse cultural realities and lived experiences.

Supportive Counseling or support groups for us and our children to better understand and heal from the trauma.



Connecting us to Community Resources including government benefits we might be eligible for, court processes, child protective services, assistive technology for those of us with disabilities, health care, reproductive health needs, immigration relief, housing, employment resources, and more.

Identifying Social Support and Connections like family, social, and community support networks.

Promoting Social Change to encourage behaviors or social norms to interrupt violence against girls and women and people who are gender oppressed.



Why Gender Violence Happens

Gender violence is a problem in our society that affects all our communities. Gender violence can include domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking. While we are all hurt by gender violence – girls, women and people who are gender oppressed are hurt the most.

Gender violence is a common occurrence because of our cultural beliefs and what we consider to be “normal” or “acceptable.” In our culture, men are given more value and power than any other gender. This leads to high rates of gender violence.

Gender violence does not happen in isolation. Gender violence is supported by larger forces or **systemic oppressions**, like patriarchy, which takes power over and harms girls and women. Systemic oppressions are the ways in which history, culture, beliefs, institutional practices and policies interact to keep a ranking or power over others.

Our society ranks or values human beings based on identities, like gender, race, national origin, class, sexuality, ability, immigration, or refugee status. Ranking human beings supports the **power and privileges** that some groups of people have to keep power over others.

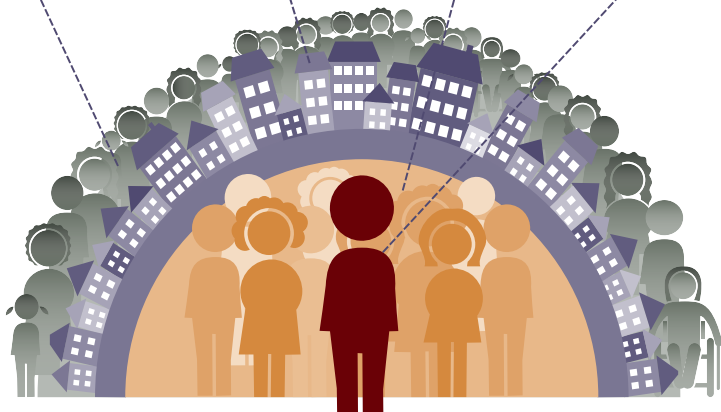
Individuals do not act in isolation, but are influenced by other people, social structures, and our society

Systemic Oppressions like Patriarchy – Large forces which dominate and harm groups of people based on gender and other identities.

Government, Religious, and Community Structures – May educate and enforce oppression and dominance.

Families, Friends, and Peers – Influences us to accept discrimination (i.e. “boys will be boys” = sexism), inequity (i.e. “if girls acted like ladies things like this wouldn’t happen” = strict gender roles) or oppression.

Individuals – May choose to use violence that is fueled and supported by a dynamic system of power and dominance.





Towards Thriving


Here are some of the ways we can all move from surviving to thriving:

Spaciousness. Breathing, making time for quiet reflection or meditation, or being in nature are ways to increase our awareness to see things for what they are in that very moment.

Strong Social Network. Being around caring, supportive people is important in our times of difficulty. While talking with a loved one, family member, or friend will not make our troubles go away, it allows us to share our feelings, gain support, receive positive feedback, and come up with possible solutions.

Being Optimistic. Staying positive can be difficult, but maintaining a hopeful outlook is an important part of our resiliency. That does not mean we ignore our problem. It means understanding that setbacks are only in that moment and that we have the skills we need to move forward.

One Small Action. We cannot do everything at once, but we can focus on an area of life that is important to us and take one small action. Thinking about the challenges we might face can help us be ready with a plan. Small steps can renew our hope!



Our Lives Have Purpose! We can find a way to get involved in our community, stay connected to or explore spirituality, celebrate traditions and culture, or participate in activities that are meaningful to us.

Those of us who have experienced violence or abuse often want to get involved in our communities to end gender violence. Here are ways some of us are making a difference in our community:

- Expressing our experiences through art, photography, or dance.
- Learning more about feminism - the belief in social, economic, and political equity across genders. Read authors like bell hooks or watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, "We Should All be Feminists."
- Advocating for gender equity. Idaho can and should do better. In a recent national study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Status of Women in the States: 2015", Idaho ranked 50th overall on the status of women



Glossary

Assistive Technology – Tools people with disabilities use for functions that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to perform.

Coercion – Forcing someone to do something by using force or threats.

Empowerment – Practice of increasing self-awareness, raising consciousness, and building confidence.

Equity – Everyone receives what they need rather than the same (equality) to thrive by taking into account the lived experience of individuals.

Liberation – No longer being controlled or dominated by an outside force.

Oppression – Exercise of power and domination over another.

Patriarchy – Social system in which power is held by men and withholds opportunity from women.

Restorative – Renewing strength, health, and consciousness.

Social Norm – Behaviors and beliefs that are valued and supported in a society.

Systemic Oppression – Oppression is built into institutions like government and education systems and gives power and positions of dominance to some groups of people over other groups of people. Systems of oppression are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies.



National Hotlines

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY line for Deaf/hearing impaired). Free, confidential assistance 24/7 to victims of domestic violence. Multilingual and may connect you with a local program that can provide assistance.

National Latin@ Network, Casa de Esperanza Bilingual Helpline: 1-651-772-1611 or www.casadeesperanza.org; www.nationallatinonetwork.org
A 24-hour Spanish bilingual domestic violence helpline as well as an online resource directory to find organizations that are equipped to assist individuals. Information on the website is also available in Spanish.

Strong Hearts Native Helpline: 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483) open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CST, 7 days a week.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888 or www.traffickingresourcecenter.org. Available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24/7. More than 200 languages.

RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or www.rainn.org. Free, confidential assistance 24/7 to victims of sexual assault. This hotline will connect you with a local program that can provide assistance. RAINN is multilingual via phone and the RAINN website has a “chat” feature that you can use to talk with an advocate.



Idaho Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs Help-line Numbers

Advocates Against Family Violence – Caldwell (208) 459-4779

Advocates for Survivors of Domestic Violence – Hailey (208) 788-6070

Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse – Moscow (208) 883-4357

Bingham Crisis Center – Blackfoot (208) 681-8712/ Spanish (208) 681-8715

Boundary County Youth Crisis and DV Hotline – Bonners Ferry (208) 267-5211

Coeur d'Alene Tribal STOP Violence Program – Plummer (208) 686-0601

Crossroads Harbor Domestic Violence Shelter (previously known as Mini Cassia Shelter for Women & Children) – Rupert (208) 436-0987

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center – Idaho Falls (208) 235-2412

Elmore County Domestic Violence Council – Mountain Home (208) 587-3300

Family Crisis Center – Rexburg (208) 356-0065

Family Safety Network – Driggs (208) 354-7233

Family Services Alliance of SE Idaho – Pocatello (208) 251-4357

Lemhi County Crisis Intervention – Mahoney House – Salmon (208) 940-0600

Oneida Crisis Center – Malad (208) 766-3119



Priest River Ministries – Priest River (208) 290-6529

ROSE Advocates – Weiser (208) 414-0740

Safe Passage Violence Prevention Center – Coeur d’Alene (208) 664-9303

Shoshone County Women’s Resource Center – Wallace (208) 556-0500

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Victims of Crime Assistance Program –

Fort Hall (208) 339-0438

Shoshone Paiute Tribes STOP Domestic Violence Program – Owyhee, NV
(775) 757-2013

‘Úuyit Kímti Program (New Beginnings) (formally known as the Nez Perce Tribe Women’s Outreach Program) – Lapwai (208) 621-4778

Voices Against Violence – Twin Falls (208) 733-0100

Women’s & Children’s Alliance – Boise (208) 343-7025

YWCA of Lewiston-Clarkston – Lewiston (208) 746-9655

If the harassment happened on campus or is impacting your ability to focus on your studies or access school events/facilities, contact your school’s program(s) for survivors of sexual assault.



Linen Building, 1402 W Grove St., Boise, ID 83702 • 1-888-293-6118 • www.engagingvoices.org

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