



DECEIT

RECOVERY PACKET A

Escaping Coercive Control

A safety planning guide for people leaving coercive relationships

This packet is for people who are in or recently left a relationship where they were systematically controlled. It includes crisis hotlines, a safety planning worksheet, what to expect, and where to go next. Print it. Keep it somewhere safe.

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CRISIS RELAY · 24/7

If you need help now

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call your local emergency number (911 in the US, 999 in the UK, 112 in the EU). If it is not safe to keep this document on your device, delete it after reading or print it and keep the physical copy somewhere the person harming you cannot find it.

These hotlines are free, confidential, and available 24/7. They are not affiliated with Deceit.

UNITED STATES

National Domestic Violence Hotline**1-800-799-7233**

Text: START to 88788

24/7

*Free, confidential. Over 200 languages via interpreters.***love is respect****1-866-331-9474**

Text: LOVEIS to 22522

24/7

*For teens and young adults in dating relationships.***Crisis Text Line**

Text: HOME to 741741

24/7

*Text-based crisis counseling.***RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline****1-800-656-4673**

24/7

Free, confidential. Connects to a local sexual assault service provider.

UNITED KINGDOM

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge)

0808 2000 247

24/7

Run by Refuge. Live chat available on the site.

Shout 85258

Text: SHOUT to 85258

24/7

Free text-based crisis support.

Rape Crisis England & Wales

0808 500 2222

24/7

Sexual violence support line and live chat.

AUSTRALIA

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

Text: 0458 737 732

24/7

National domestic, family and sexual violence support.

Lifeline

13 11 14

Text: 0477 13 11 14

24/7

Crisis support and suicide prevention.

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

24/7

For children and young people aged 5-25.

CANADA

9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline**9-8-8**

Text: 9-8-8

24/7

*Call or text. English and French. Handles all crisis types.***Kids Help Phone****1-800-668-6868**

Text: CONNECT to 686868

24/7

*For children and young adults. Over 100 languages via interpreters.***Sexual Violence Helpline****1-888-933-9007**

24/7

Bilingual English and French. National toll-free.

OTHER / NOT LISTED

Find A Helpline

DIRECTORY

*Search by country and support type for free, confidential helplines worldwide.***Befrienders Worldwide**

DIRECTORY

*Emotional support centres by country.***International Directory of Domestic Violence Agencies**

DIRECTORY

Search by country for domestic violence shelters, hotlines, and crisis centres.

SAFETY PLANNING • WORKSHEET

Safety planning worksheet

Fill out this worksheet and keep it somewhere safe. Print this PDF and fill it in by hand. Keep the physical copy somewhere the person harming you cannot find it. If you share a device, do not save this digitally.

1. Immediate safety

My local emergency number is:

A trusted person I can call right now:

Their phone number:

2. If I need to leave quickly

Where I will go (a place the person harming me does not know about or cannot access):

How I will get there (car, transit, ride — and the backup if the first option is not available):

What I need to take with me (documents, money, keys, medication, phone charger, change of clothes):

3. Documents to gather

Check each item you have gathered or have copies of in a safe location. If you cannot take the original, photograph it.

☐ Identification (driver's license, passport, state ID)

- ☐ Birth certificates (yours and children's)
- ☐ Social security cards / national ID
- ☐ Financial records (bank statements, tax returns, pay stubs)
- ☐ Insurance cards and policies
- ☐ Medical records and medication
- ☐ Custody or court documents
- ☐ Lease or mortgage documents

4. Technology safety

Devices the person harming me has access to (phone, laptop, tablet, shared accounts):

Accounts I need to change passwords for (email, banking, social media, cloud storage):

A safe device I can use (not shared, not monitored):

Whether location sharing is on (maps, find-my-phone, social media, photos):

5. Stabilizing moves

Three things I can do this week to regain footing — small, concrete, doable.

1.

2.

3.

WHAT TO EXPECT • RECOVERY PHASING

Recovery is a sequence of safer openings

Recovery from coercive control is not a straight line. You may feel clear-eyed one day and disoriented the next. That is not a setback. It is how recovery works. The patterns below are named so you can recognize them. Recognition is not the same as healing, but it is the first step. You cannot stabilize against something you cannot see.

You were not gullible. You were targeted.

PHASE 01 • IMMEDIATE**The first weeks after leaving**

- Expect disorientation. Your social network, daily structure, and identity were tied to the system. The void is real. It is not a sign that you made the wrong decision.
- Find one safe person. It does not have to be someone who understands your specific experience. It has to be someone who will not judge you for having been deceived.
- Do not make major decisions immediately. Your judgment is recovering from a system that trained you to distrust it. Give yourself time before making big life choices.
- If you left a high-control group, consider contacting a cult recovery organization. They have seen this before. You are not their first case.
- If you are in physical danger, use crisis resources first. Safety before recovery.

PHASE 02 · SHORT-TERM**The first six months**

- The grief will come. You may grieve the community, the identity, the years, the money, the relationships. This is normal. It is not weakness.
- The anger will come. You may feel rage at the leaders, the system, the people who stayed, and yourself. This is also normal. It is not bitterness.
- Start reading about coercive control and thought reform. Understanding the mechanism helps separate "I was deceived" from "I am gullible." You were not gullible. You were targeted.
- Consider therapy with someone who understands religious trauma or cult recovery. Not every therapist understands this. Ask before you commit.
- Rebuild one relationship at a time. The people you cut off may or may not welcome you back. Some will. Some will not. Both are their right.

PHASE 03 · LONG-TERM**The first few years**

- Your worldview will rebuild. It will not look like what it was before the deception, and it will not look like what it was during. It will be something new. That is the point.
- You may never recover the money, the years, or the relationships. That loss is real. Do not let anyone tell you it was "a learning experience" as if that makes it okay. It was not okay. You survived it. Those are different things.
- You may want to help others who are still inside. That impulse is good. But do not make it your identity. You cannot save anyone who is not ready to leave. Trying will drain you and may put them in danger.
- You may experience triggers, a song, a phrase, a building, a style of prayer. These will fade. They are not signs that you are still under the system's control. They are signs that your nervous system remembers what your mind is still processing.
- At some point, you will stop thinking about it every day. That is not forgetting. That is healing.

WHAT NOT TO DO • COMMON MISTAKES

What not to do

These are the moves that feel right in the moment but can put you at risk. They are listed here because they are common — not because you should have known better. The impulse behind each one is understandable. The action is not safe.

- 01** Do not confront the leader or group immediately. Your safety comes first. Confrontation can trigger retaliation, harassment, or escalation.
- 02** Do not try to rescue everyone still inside. You cannot. Trying will drain you and may put them in danger. They will leave when they are ready, not when you are.
- 03** Do not expect your family and friends outside the group to understand immediately. They may be supportive, confused, or dismissive. Their reaction is about their limitations, not your experience.
- 04** Do not jump into another high-control system. The vulnerability after leaving one cult or controlling church makes people susceptible to another. Give yourself time before committing to a new community, ideology, or leader.
- 05** Do not suppress the anger. It will come out anyway. Find healthy outlets: therapy, exercise, writing, art. The anger is evidence that what happened to you was wrong.
- 06** Do not rush to forgive. Forgiveness may come, or it may not. It is your choice and your timeline. No one has the right to tell you to forgive the people or system that harmed you.

RESOURCES · WHERE TO GO NEXT

Resources

These organizations provide support, information, and referrals. They are not affiliated with Deceit. They are listed here because they have been useful to people in situations like yours.

CULT RECOVERY

International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA)

Global network for cult research and recovery. Maintains a directory of therapists and support groups.

icsahome.com

Cult Information Centre (UK)

UK-based resource for people affected by cults and high-control groups.

cultinformation.org.uk

Cult Recovery 101

Online resources and community for people leaving high-control groups.

cultrecovery101.com

RELIGIOUS DECONSTRUCTION

Religious Trauma Institute

Resources for people experiencing religious trauma, including therapist directory.

religioustraumainstitute.com

r/Exvangelical (Reddit)

Community of people who have left evangelical Christianity. Not a substitute for therapy, but a place to not feel alone.

reddit.com/r/exvangelical

The Life After Podcast

Podcast by people who have left high-control religion. Covers deconstruction, trauma, and rebuilding.

thelifeafter.podbean.com

Leaving the Fold (Journey Free)

Resources and community for people leaving fundamentalist and high-control religions.

journeyfree.org

MEDIA LITERACY

NewsGuard

Rates the reliability of news websites. Browser extension shows trust ratings next to search results.

newsguardtech.com

Media Bias/Fact Check

Rates the bias and factual reporting of media sources. Useful for understanding the framing of a source.

mediabiasfactcheck.com

Information Futures Lab (Brown)

Resources for verifying online information and understanding misinformation ecosystems.

sites.brown.edu/informationfutures/

Poynter MediaWise

Digital media literacy project. Teaches fact-checking skills for everyday users.

poynter.org/mediawise/

POLITICAL DEPROGRAMMING

Life After Hate (US)

Support for people leaving far-right and extremist movements. Founded by former extremists.

lifeafterhate.org

Parents for Peace (US)

Support line and resources for families affected by radicalization. Run by former extremists and family members.

parentsforpeace.org

Exit USA

Helps people leave white supremacist and other extremist groups. Confidential support.

exitusa.org

Moonshot CVE

Organization that works to redirect people away from violent extremism online.

moonshotteam.com

MENTAL HEALTH

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741 (US) or 85258 (UK). Free, 24/7 crisis support via text.

crisistextline.org

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (US)

Call or text 988. Free, confidential support for people in distress.

988lifeline.org

Psychology Today Therapist Finder

Search for therapists by specialty, including religious trauma and cult recovery.

psychologytoday.com/us/therapists

BetterHelp

Online therapy platform. Not specialized in cult recovery, but accessible if local options are limited.

betterhelp.com



Recovery from coercive control, institutional harm, or digital surveillance is not a straight line. You may feel clear-eyed one day and disoriented the next. That is not a setback. It is how recovery works.

The patterns in this packet are named so you can recognize them. Recognition is not the same as healing, but it is the first step. You cannot stabilize against something you cannot see.

If you are using this packet, you have already started.

You were not gullible. You were targeted.

deceit.site/recover