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Brief talking points from Parashat Lech Lecha for Domestic Violence Awareness Shabbat

1. Story-telling:

- a. For the community: As we tell our communal story via the story of Abraham and Sarah, we provide a model for storytelling. It is our goal to encourage individuals, including those who are in unhealthy relationships, to tell their personal stories as well. The community can and must listen to these stories with open hearts. Telling our communal story shows everyone in the community that telling one's story and having others listen is powerful medicine.
- b. For the survivor: You decide how to tell your story. Like Abraham, you have been called to embark on an internal journey of self-discovery.

2. Abram and Sarai's names were changed to include a letter from God's name. They become Abraham and Sarah after they heard God's call and were willing to go to a new, unknown land. In the same way, we make space for people in unhealthy relationships to go to a new land of healthy relationships.

- a. For a survivor: Go forth to a land you don't currently know – to your true self, not defined by others. We will be here to support you in this new land.
- b. For anyone who has harmed an intimate partner or child or loved one: Go forth to a land you do not know – to a place where you don't need to be in control. We will be here to support you in this new land.
- c. For members of the community: Go forth to a land you do not know, listening to those you have not listened to before, being willing to be present, to walk on the journey with others in new ways. Like Abraham, be ready to say "Hineini" – I'm here for you.

These talking points are based on a drash by Naomi Tucker and Rebecca Schwartz, 2002:

<http://www.shalom-bayit.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Lech-Lecha-2009-NaomiTucker.pdf>,
here.

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