



MODULE 4

Addressing the Emotional Burden

Training for women's economic empowerment • 4 hours



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How this module works

Understand the feelings economic abuse leaves behind, find kind and low-cost ways to cope, and rebuild your confidence, your voice and a resilience that lasts.

4 h

Learning time

4

Lessons

4

Exercises

4

Reflections

4

Languages

4.1

50 min

The emotional impact

Practice: EX 4.1 • EX 4.2

4.2

55 min

Coping and self-care

Practice: EX 4.3 • EX 4.4

4.3

55 min

**Confidence and
empowerment**

Practice: EX 4.5 • EX 4.6

4.4

50 min

Lasting resilience

Practice: EX 4.7 • EX 4.8



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Learning objectives

By the end of this module you will be able to:



Understand the impact

Recognise the feelings economic abuse can cause, and see why they are normal responses, not personal failings.



Cope with kindness

Build a set of healthy, free or low-cost ways to steady yourself and protect your wellbeing.



Rebuild confidence

Reconnect with your worth, reclaim your voice and notice the strengths that were always yours.



Grow lasting resilience

Develop the habits, support and outlook that help you recover and grow stronger.

LESSON 4.1 • 50 MIN

The emotional impact

Content note: This lesson talks about difficult feelings. Go at your own pace, take breaks, and share only what you wish to.

IN THIS LESSON

- The feelings many women share
- Why economic abuse cuts so deep
- Truths to hold on to

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L4.1 Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:



Name common feelings that economic abuse can cause



Explain why these feelings are normal responses



Describe four reasons why economic abuse hurts so deeply



Recall the truths that help when shame feels strong

THIS LESSON

L4.1

Duration: 50 min

Practice: EX 4.1, EX 4.2

Quiz: 5 questions, 70% to pass



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Key terms

The words you will meet in L4.1, in plain language.

Emotional impact

The effect an experience has on your feelings, your energy and how you see yourself.

Anxiety

A strong feeling of worry or fear that can make your body tense and hard to calm.

Shame

A painful feeling that something is wrong with you. After abuse, it is often undeserved.

Self-blame

Thinking that what happened was your fault. Abuse is always the abuser's responsibility.

Grief

The sadness we feel after a loss: of time, of trust, or of the life we hoped for.

More than a money problem



Economic abuse is not only about money. Being controlled and watched leaves marks that no bank statement can show.

- Many women feel worry, shame or tiredness long after the abuse ends
- These feelings are not a sign of weakness
- Naming them is the first step to setting them down

Feelings many women share

If you recognise yourself here, you are not alone. Naming a feeling loosens its grip.



Anxiety and fear

Constant worry about money or his reaction keeps the body on alert. It can be hard to switch off, even once you are safe.



Shame and self-blame

Abusers try to make women feel it is their fault. This shame is undeserved and not yours to carry.



Lost confidence

Being told again and again that you cannot cope wears away self-belief. Confidence can be rebuilt, step by step.



Grief and loss

It is natural to grieve for lost time, lost trust and the life you hoped for. Allowing grief is part of healing.

A normal response

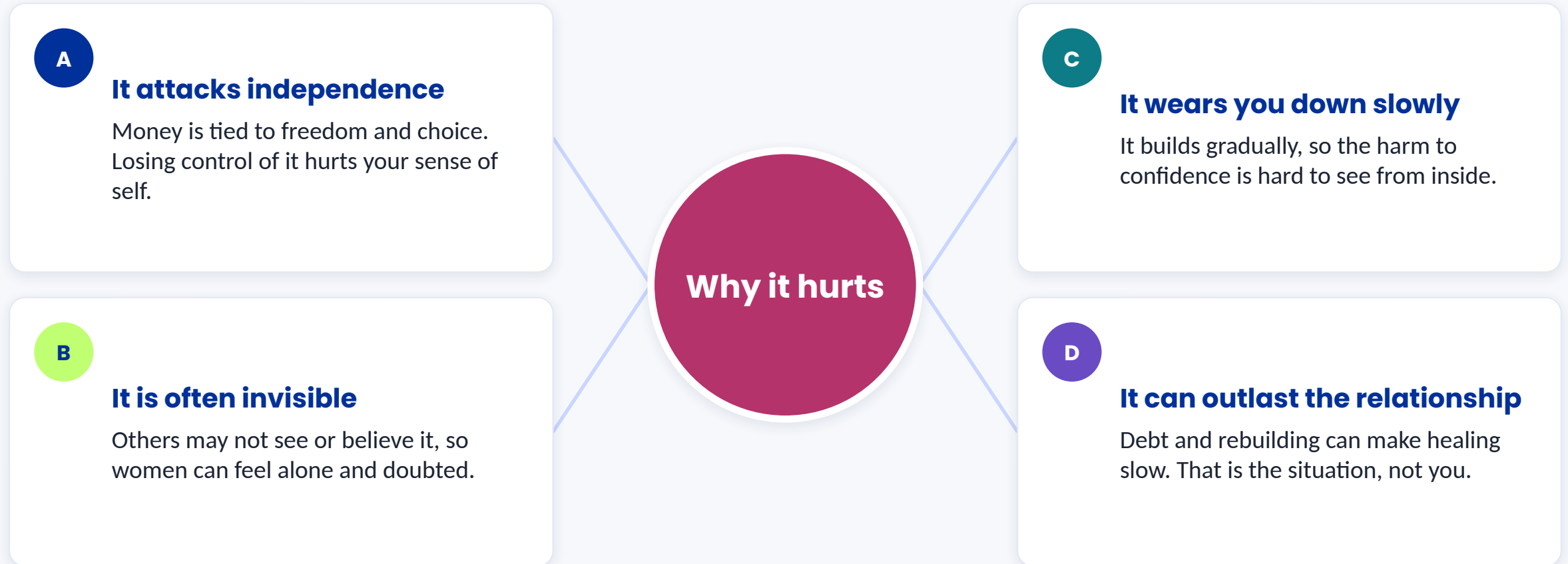
YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME

These feelings are a normal response to an abnormal situation. They are not a flaw in you.

Feeling them is not dwelling on them. It is the first step to healing.



Why economic abuse cuts so deep



What shame says, and what is true

Shame often speaks loudest. These answers come from the truths in this lesson.

A Shame says

- I let it happen
- I should be over this by now
- Asking for help means I am weak

B The truth is

- Only the person who chose to abuse is responsible
- There is no right speed for healing
- Reaching out is a sign of strength

Truths to carry with you

Read these slowly. They are true even if you do not fully believe them yet.



It was not your fault

Responsibility for abuse lies only with the person who chose to abuse, never with the person who lived it.



Your feelings are valid

Anger, grief, numbness, relief: whatever you feel is a real response. There is no right or wrong way to feel.



Needing help is human

Reaching out shows strength and self-respect. Everyone needs support at times.



Healing is possible

With time, support and kindness to yourself, women do recover, rebuild and thrive. You can too.

Look after yourself as you learn



Talking about feelings can bring up strong emotions. That is okay. You decide how much to share and when to pause.

- Take a break or a few slow breaths whenever you need one
- Talk to someone you trust after the session
- If feelings stay heavy, a counsellor or helpline can help

You do not have to carry this alone

These services are free and confidential. They listen, support you and help you find further help.

ITALY

02 2327 2327

Telefono Amico Italia

Volunteers listen when you feel alone or upset, every day, 24 hours. The service is free; you pay a normal call. WhatsApp 18-21.

24/7

GERMANY

0800 111 0 111

TelefonSeelsorge (crisis line)

Free, anonymous, 24/7 when you are in crisis. Also 0800 111 0 222 or 116 123, and chat or mail. In German.

free • 24/7

PORTUGAL

213 544 545

SOS Voz Amiga (listening line)

Anonymous listening when you feel alone or sad. Every day 15:30-00:30. Normal call cost.

ACROSS THE EU

116 006

Helpline for victims of crime (where available)

EU number for victims of crime. Active in Germany and Portugal. No 116 006 service found in Italy: call 1522, or 112 in danger.



In an emergency, call 112.



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Check your understanding

Try answering these in your own words before moving on.



Name two feelings that economic abuse can leave behind.



Why are these feelings called a normal response to an abnormal situation?



Give two reasons why economic abuse can cut so deep.



Which truth from this lesson would you share with a friend, and why?

L4.1 Key takeaways

Before the next lesson, hold on to these five points.



Economic abuse is an emotional experience, not only a financial one.



Anxiety, shame, lost confidence and grief are normal responses.



It hurts deeply: it attacks independence, stays hidden and wears you down.



Abuse is never the fault of the person who lived it.



Your feelings are valid, needing help is human, and healing is possible.



Now put it into practice

Finish this lesson on the FIRE learning platform, or with your group.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Shame says, truth answers

On the platform · about 10
minutes



EXERCISE 4.1

A letter of compassion

20 min · Individual



REFLECTION 4.2

The weight we carry

15 min · Group · Private: only
you see your answers



LESSON QUIZ

5 multiple-choice questions

70% to pass · unlimited retakes

LESSON 4.2 • 55 MIN

Coping and self-care

Content note: This lesson suggests ways to care for yourself. Use what helps, skip what does not, and take breaks when you need them.

IN THIS LESSON

- Healthy ways to cope
- Self-care that costs nothing
- Grounding yourself in a hard moment
- What drains you and what restores you

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L4.2 Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:



Name four healthy ways to cope



Choose free self-care ideas that suit you



Use four grounding steps when anxiety rises



Notice what drains your energy and what restores it

THIS LESSON

L4.2

Duration: 55 min

Practice: EX 4.3, EX 4.4

Quiz: 5 questions, 70% to pass



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Key terms

The words you will meet in L4.2, in plain language.

Coping

The ways you manage stress and difficult feelings. Some help more than others.

Self-care

Small, regular acts that look after your body and mind. It need not cost money.

Grounding

A simple way to bring your attention back to the present moment and calm your body.

Boundary

A limit you set to protect your time, energy and wellbeing, such as saying no.

Counsellor

A trained person who listens in confidence and helps you work through difficult feelings.

Healthy ways to cope

It helps to have a few reliable things to reach for. Adapt these to what fits you.



Connection

Talking with someone you trust, or with others who understand, eases loneliness. It is one of the strongest protectors.



Routine

Regular meals, sleep and a short walk bring a sense of stability when life feels uncertain.



Movement and rest

Gentle movement releases tension; real rest restores you. Both are needs, not luxuries.



Professional support

Counsellors and support services offer a safe, confidential space. Seeking them is a wise choice.

When to ask for more support



Self-care helps, but sometimes it is not enough on its own. Reaching out early is a sign of strength.

- Heavy feelings do not ease after several weeks
- Sleeping, eating or daily tasks become very hard
- You have thoughts of harming yourself: seek help right away

Self-care that is free

COSTS NOTHING

Self-care is not about spending money. It is about treating yourself with care and respect.

Small acts tell you something important: you matter.



Four free ways to care for yourself

These cost nothing and can be done almost anywhere.



Time in nature

A walk outside, time among trees or by water, or sitting in daylight can calm the mind.



Breathing and stillness

A few minutes of slow, deep breathing can settle a racing mind and ease stress.



Daily kindness

A warm drink, a favourite song, a quiet moment: small acts of kindness to yourself.



Saying no

Setting gentle limits protects your time and energy. You are allowed to do this.

Grounding yourself when it is hard

When anxiety rises, these steps bring you back to the present. They take a couple of minutes.

1



Pause

Stop and notice that you feel overwhelmed. Naming it takes away some of its power.

2



Breathe

Breathe in slowly, hold gently, then breathe out for longer than you breathed in.

3



Notice

Name a few things you can see, hear and touch right now.

4



Soften

Say one kind phrase to yourself, such as 'This is hard, and I am doing my best.'

What drains you and what restores you

Notice, without judgement, where your energy goes. Then shift a little towards what restores you.



Tends to drain

- Replaying hard moments alone
- Pulling away from people
- Harsh self-criticism
- Always busy, never resting
- Comparing your path to others



Tends to restore

- Talking with someone safe
- Gentle contact with people who care
- Speaking to yourself kindly
- Real rest and small pleasures
- Honouring your own pace

Your calm toolkit



In a hard moment, it is difficult to think clearly. A small toolkit, ready in advance, means you do not have to.

- Three things that help you feel calmer
- One person you can reach out to
- One free act of self-care and one grounding step

Check your understanding

Try answering these in your own words before moving on.



Name two healthy ways to cope with stress.



Give two examples of self-care that costs nothing.



What are the four grounding steps?



When is it a good idea to ask for professional support?

L4.2 Key takeaways

Before the next lesson, hold on to these five points.



Healthy coping rests on connection, routine, movement, rest and support.



Self-care need not cost money: nature, breathing, kindness and saying no.



Grounding (pause, breathe, notice, soften) calms the body in hard moments.



Shift your energy gently towards what restores you.



If heavy feelings do not ease, reaching out for help is a strength.

Now put it into practice

Finish this lesson on the FIRE learning platform, or with your group.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Build your calm toolkit

On the platform · about 10
minutes



EXERCISE 4.3

Build your calm toolkit

20 min · Individual



REFLECTION 4.4

Permission to rest

15 min · Group · Private: only
you see your answers



LESSON QUIZ

5 multiple-choice questions

70% to pass · unlimited retakes

LESSON 4.3 • 55 MIN

Confidence and empowerment

Content note: This lesson includes a story of recovery after economic abuse. Take care of yourself and share only what you wish to.

IN THIS LESSON

- Reconnecting with your worth
- Where confidence really comes from
- Reclaiming your voice
- Marta's story from Portugal

Module 4 • Addressing the Emotional Burden



L4.3 Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:



Explain why self-worth is not earned or lost



Name four sources of confidence



Describe four steps to reclaiming your voice



Identify what helped Marta rebuild her confidence

THIS LESSON

L4.3

Duration: 55 min

Practice: EX 4.5, EX 4.6

Quiz: 5 questions, 70% to pass

Key terms

The words you will meet in L4.3, in plain language.

Self-worth

Your sense of your own value as a person. It is part of you, not something you earn.

Self-talk

The way you speak to yourself in your head. It shapes how you feel.

Peer support group

A group of people with similar experiences who meet to listen to and help each other.

Confidence

Trust in your own abilities and choices. It grows through action and support.

Self-compassion

Treating yourself with the same kindness you would offer a good friend.

Your worth is yours

YOUR WORTH

Self-worth is not earned or lost. Abuse hid yours, but it did not remove it.

This lesson helps you find your way back to it.



Reconnecting with your worth

These four practices help you find your way back to your own value.



Question the lies

The cruel things you were told say more about the abuser than about you. Notice them and question them.



Notice your strengths

You came through something hard. That took courage, skill and endurance. Give yourself credit.



Speak kindly to yourself

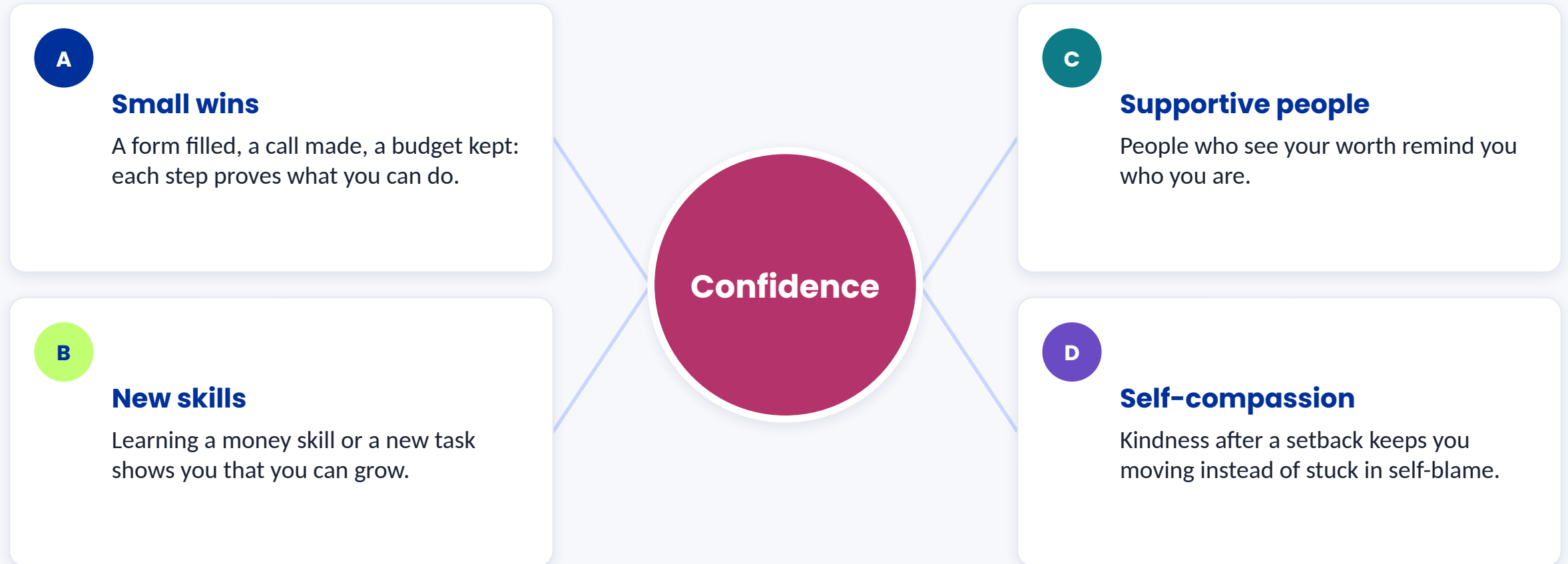
Use the tone you would use with a friend. Kinder self-talk rebuilds self-belief.



Reclaim small choices

What to eat, where to go: each small decision you make and trust rebuilds your sense of control.

Where confidence really comes from



From harsh to kind self-talk

The way you talk to yourself shapes how you feel. Try a kinder version.

A Harsh voice

- I am useless with money
- I always get it wrong
- I cannot do this alone

B Kinder voice

- I am learning, and I manage more than I think
- I made a mistake, and I can try again
- I can do this, with support

Reclaiming your voice

Abuse often silences. Learning again that your thoughts and wishes matter takes time.

1



Notice

Notice your own opinions, preferences and feelings. They are still there.

2



Express

Practise saying them in small, safe ways, with people you trust.

3



Set boundaries

Say what is and is not okay for you. This skill grows stronger with use.

4



Decide

Make choices that are truly yours. Each one shows that your voice counts.

Marta finds her voice

CASE STUDY · PORTUGAL

Marta



What happened

For years, Marta was told she was 'useless with money' and could not manage alone. She came to believe it. After she left, she barely trusted herself to make even small decisions.

What changed

With counselling from a local service and a peer support group, she began with tiny choices, then a budgeting course, then a part-time job. Two years later, she mentors other women.

THINK ABOUT IT

- What helped Marta trust herself again?
- Why start with tiny choices?
- How did her confidence return?

In Portugal, services such as APAV and CIG offer counselling and support.

Confidence grows through action



Confidence did not return to Marta in one leap. It came through support, small wins and time. Recovery is real.

- Start with one small choice today
- Notice it and give yourself credit
- Let people who support you see your progress

Check your understanding

Try answering these in your own words before moving on.



Why does this lesson say that self-worth is not earned or lost?



Name two of the four sources of confidence.



What are the four steps to reclaiming your voice?



What helped Marta rebuild her confidence?

L4.3 Key takeaways

Before the next lesson, hold on to these five points.



Your worth is part of you: abuse hid it, but never removed it.



Confidence grows from small wins, new skills, support and self-compassion.



Kinder self-talk helps rebuild self-belief.



Reclaiming your voice: notice, express, set boundaries and decide.



With support and time, confidence returns, as it did for Marta.



Now put it into practice

Finish this lesson on the FIRE learning platform, or with your group.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Small steps, stronger voice

On the platform · about 10
minutes



EXERCISE 4.5

Your strengths inventory

20 min · Individual



REFLECTION 4.6

The voice that returns

15 min · Group · Private: only
you see your answers



LESSON QUIZ

5 multiple-choice questions

70% to pass · unlimited retakes

LESSON 4.4 • 50 MIN

Lasting resilience

Content note: This lesson looks to the future. Some reflections may bring up feelings. Go at your own pace and share only what you wish to.

IN THIS LESSON

- What resilience really means
- The four pillars of resilience
- Small habits that sustain you
- A gentle wellbeing check-in

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L4.4 Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:



Explain what resilience is, and what it is not



Name the four pillars of resilience



Choose small daily habits that keep you strong



Create a simple personal resilience plan

THIS LESSON

L4.4

Duration: 50 min

Practice: EX 4.7, EX 4.8

Quiz: 5 questions, 70% to pass

Key terms

The words you will meet in L4.4, in plain language.

Resilience

The ability to face hard times, bend without breaking, and recover and grow afterwards.

Wellbeing

Feeling well in body and mind, and being able to cope with daily life.

Check-in

A short, kind moment to notice how you are doing. It is not a test.

Support network

The people and services you can turn to: family, friends, groups and professionals.

Purpose

A sense of what matters to you and gives you reasons to keep going.

What resilience really means



Resilience is not toughness, and it is not never struggling. It is the capacity to bend without breaking, then recover and keep growing.

- It is not a fixed trait: it can be built
- Resilient people still feel pain and have hard days
- Every part of it can be strengthened, starting now

Not facing life alone

STRENGTH TOGETHER

Resilience is not facing life alone. It is being well supported enough to face it at all.

Resilience means recovering, learning and growing each time you fall.



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The pillars of resilience



Small habits that sustain you

Resilience lives in small, repeated choices, more than in big moments.

1



Stay connected

Keep regular contact with people who support you, even briefly, before a crisis comes.

2



Keep gentle routines

Steady rhythms of sleep, meals, movement and rest give your days a calm shape.

3



Mark your progress

Notice how far you have come, not only how far there is to go.

4



Ask for help early

Reach out at the first signs of struggle. That is resilience, not a failure of it.

A gentle wellbeing check-in

Use this now and then as a kind check-in, not a test. Each 'not yet' is an invitation.

Area	Ask yourself
Connection	Do I have someone I can talk to honestly? Do I know where to turn for support?
Rest	Am I getting enough rest most nights? Do I sometimes rest without guilt?
Body	Do I move my body in a way that feels good?
Kindness	Do I speak to myself with some kindness? Do I notice my own progress?
Hope	Do I have small things I look forward to?

Your resilience plan

A simple, personal plan brings this module together.



My people

One person or service for each part of your support network.



My habit and meaning

One daily habit you protect, and one thing that keeps you going.



My early signs

One sign that tells you to reach out, and your first call on a hard day.



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Carry this forward



You are not what happened to you. You are what you choose to become.

- You have named economic abuse and its impact
- You have built skills, learned your rights and cared for your wellbeing
- Every step counts, for you and for the women beside you

Check your understanding

Try answering these in your own words before moving on.



In your own words, what is resilience?



Name the four pillars of resilience.



Which small habit would you most like to protect, and why?



Why is asking for help early a sign of resilience?

L4.4 Key takeaways

Before the next lesson, hold on to these five points.



Resilience means bending, recovering and growing, not never struggling.



It rests on connection, self-care, meaning and self-compassion.



Small daily habits keep it strong: stay connected, keep routines.



Mark your progress and ask for help early.



Caring for your wellbeing is ongoing, and every step counts.

Now put it into practice

Finish this lesson on the FIRE learning platform, or with your group.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Resilience: myth or truth?

On the platform · about 10
minutes



EXERCISE 4.7

Your resilience plan

20 min · Individual



REFLECTION 4.8

Looking forward

15 min · Group · Private: only
you see your answers



LESSON QUIZ

5 multiple-choice questions

70% to pass · unlimited retakes

Where to get help

These services are free and confidential. You can call them for yourself or for someone you support.

ITALY

1522

1522 Anti-violence and stalking helpline

Free, 24/7, also from mobiles. Help in Italian, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, German. Also by chat and app.

free • 24/7

GERMANY

116 016

Violence against Women Support Hotline (Hilfetelefon)

Free, anonymous, 24/7. Interpreters in many languages and sign language. Chat (daily 12-20) and email in German.

free • 24/7

PORTUGAL

800 202 148

Information Service for Victims of Domestic Violence

Free, 24/7, confidential information and referral. Also by SMS 3060 or email violencia@cig.gov.pt.

free • 24/7

ACROSS THE EU

116 006

Helpline for victims of crime (where available)

EU number for victims of crime. Active in Germany and Portugal. No 116 006 service found in Italy: call 1522, or 112 in danger.



In an emergency, call 112.



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Module summary

What you can now do after Module 4

- ✓ You understand the emotional weight of economic abuse, and that it was never your fault.
- ✓ You have kind, practical ways to cope and care for yourself day to day.
- ✓ You can rebuild your confidence and reclaim your voice, step by step.
- ✓ You can grow resilience through connection, habits, meaning and self-compassion.
- ✓ You know that asking for help is a strength, and where to find it.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Keep using the FIRE tools, your support network and local help services. Finish all four modules to receive your FIRE programme certificate.

Complete the final module quiz (70% to pass) to earn your Module 4 certificate and badge.



END OF MODULE 4

Thank you for learning with FIRE

[Continue on the FIRE learning platform: fire.elnlab.eu](https://fire.elnlab.eu)



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