

## Overview

This standard is about you talking to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, particularly in the first meetings where the person has approached your organisation, including via referral or emergency referral.

It includes your ability to prepare for meetings and to talk with victims and survivors in way that builds trust and facilitates disclosure.

It is acknowledged that when meeting with victims and survivors in an emergency it is not always possible to prepare in advance. The demonstrating of competence in preparing for meetings is therefore likely to be with reference to non-emergency meetings.

This standard is for practitioners who support those experiencing domestic abuse, which may include instances of sexual violence and abuse in a domestic violence context.

It is recognised that abuse can occur without physical violence, yet can be equally damaging to those affected. Throughout this standard, where the term 'abuse' is used it is taken to include instances also involving physical violence.

Domestic abuse is frequently perceived as a gendered crime perpetrated by men against women; however this standard is intended for practitioners who support those experiencing domestic violence within any intimate or family relationship, regardless of their social background, age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity.

In some organisations, the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' may be used individually or interchangeably.

### There are three elements

- 1 Prepare for meetings with victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse
- 2 Communicate with victims and survivors regarding their situation
- 3 Take action in response to information provided by victims and survivors

## Performance criteria

## Prepare for meetings with victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse

- You must be able to:**
- P1 review available information prior to meeting victims and survivors including information on;
    - P1.1 their personal circumstances
    - P1.2 age and gender
    - P1.3 any known risk factors
    - P1.4 the reasons for their introduction to your services
  - P2 contact victims and survivors using their preferred means of communication where known
  - P3 make contact with victims and survivors in appropriate and safe environments which take account of their circumstances and;
    - P3.1 any risks to their welfare and safety
    - P3.2 risks to health, safety and welfare when meeting face to face
    - P3.3 any risks to your own safety and welfare
  - P4 introduce yourself and your organisation to victims and survivors including stating the reason for your contact
  - P5 agree with victims and survivors whether they wish another person to support them, where suitable for the nature and purpose of the meeting
  - P6 agree with victims and survivors suitable date, time and venue for meetings
  - P7 confirm that victims and survivors are comfortable with proposed meeting arrangements using agreed methods
  - P8 prepare meeting rooms in advance and as appropriate for the physical and emotional needs of victims and survivors
  - P9 make relevant sources of information available to victims and survivors regarding domestic and sexual abuse including relevant services your organisation offers

## Communicate with the victims and survivors regarding their situation

- You must be able to:**
- P10 explain your organisation's confidentiality policies to victims and survivors
  - P11 identify the services which you and your organisation can offer to victims and survivors

- P12 confirm that all those accompanying victims and survivors understand their role, in line with your own role and responsibilities
- P13 work with victims and survivors to explore their circumstances and:
  - P13.1 their relationship with the abuser
  - P13.2 the nature of the abuse suffered
  - P13.3 the impact of abuse on their safety, health and wellbeing
- P14 communicate with victims and survivors in a manner and at a pace which meets their needs and abilities and:
  - P14.1 uses active listening techniques
  - P14.2 responds with empathy
  - P14.3 treats victims and survivors with dignity and respect
  - P14.4 accepts victims and survivors statements
- P15 respond to any initial disclosure of abuse in line with organisational policies and procedures
- P16 explore with victims and survivors:
  - P16.1 any problems they believe the abuse is causing or has created
  - P16.2 aspects with which they would welcome immediate help

**Take action in response to the information provided by the victims and survivors**

- You must be able to:
- P17 identify possible services and ways forward which address victims and survivors needs including:
    - P17.1 addressing their immediate health, safety and welfare
    - P17.2 the health, safety and welfare of any dependents
  - P18 explore possible services and ways forward with victims and survivors
  - P19 take urgent action to safeguard victims and survivors health, safety and wellbeing where this is under immediate threat
  - P20 obtain consent of victims and survivors to courses of action in line with organisational policies and procedures
  - P21 explain to victims and survivors what information you may have to share with others and why, including what action is being progressed
  - P22 agree future contact arrangements with victims and survivors as appropriate for their needs

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- P23 ensure consistent support with victims and survivors in terms of who interacts with them
  - P24 refer victims and survivors to other agencies and services which can meet their needs, including when your organisation's services do not meet their identified needs
  - P25 maintain accurate and up to date records in line with organisational policies and procedures
  - P26 maintain confidentiality in line with organisational policies and procedures

## Knowledge and understanding

### Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

#### You need to know and understand:

- K1 legal and organisational requirements for communicating and engaging with victims and survivors, and potential victims of domestic violence and abuse, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 relevant legislation applicable to your area of work
- K3 your organisation's policies and procedures for:
  - K3.1 registration of cases
  - K3.2 case management
  - K3.3 ensuring confidentiality of information
  - K3.4 disclosure of information to third parties
  - K3.5 circumstances under which disclosure may be made
- K4 your organisation's role, objectives, remit and services for addressing domestic violence and abuse, including the provision of support to victims and survivors
- K5 organisational requirements relevant to allowing others to be present in discussions with victims and survivors
- K6 relative benefits and disadvantages that the presence of others during discussions with victims and survivors can create
- K7 the limits of your authority and responsibility and actions to take if exceeded

### Key, general requirements for addressing domestic violence and abuse

#### You need to know and understand:

- K8 what constitutes abuse, and its prevalence in your local community
- K9 signs of abuse and the methods used by abusers to gain power and control
- K10 the impact of abuse upon all of those affected by it, including victims, survivors and children
- K11 how children and young people may be used by abusers as part of their abuse
- K12 types of information and support sought by those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- K13 sources of information and support available to those affected by abuse
- K14 the role of external support agencies who provide referrals and support to victims and survivors in your area
- K15 how cultural, social and gender related aspects impact upon abuse

- K16 the importance of being aware of your own values and beliefs
- K17 the impact your own values and beliefs may have when working with victims
- K18 the importance of not imposing your own values and beliefs and others
- K19 how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour and the importance of doing so

**Requirements particular to engaging and communicating with victims and survivors**

**You need to know  
and understand:**

- K20 the actions required where disclosure of abuse is identified
- K21 the importance of and methods for building trust and empathy with victims
- K22 appropriate styles and forms of communication including body language
- K23 how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K24 barriers to communication including:
  - K24.1 their causes
  - K24.2 feelings and reactions victims may have
  - K24.3 ways to overcome them
- K25 limits of confidentiality applying to your job role
- K26 circumstances where it is necessary to go against victims and survivors expressed wishes
- K27 the importance of ensuring that victims and survivors understand why their expressed wishes are not being met and why

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