
Overview

This standard is about you providing support to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse through court processes. It includes ensuring that victims and survivors understand the procedures and their role within these, and also that they understand the outcomes arising.

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.

Performance
criteria

- You must be able to:
- P1 obtain available and relevant information regarding victims in line with organisational requirements, including:
 - P1.1 any assessment of their needs
 - P1.2 risks to their safety and wellbeing
 - P2 ensure that victims understand court processes and procedures relevant to their case in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P3 identify aspects of risk and vulnerability of victims and survivors which affect their part in court proceedings
 - P4 explore with victims whether they require any support through court processes in line with organisational practices and policies, including:
 - P4.1 protection
 - P4.2 emotional support
 - P4.3 practical support
 - P5 agree with victims and survivors relevant support and actions to be taken in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P6 arrange safe access for victims, survivors and yourself to and from, and within, court buildings in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P7 advocate on behalf of victims and survivors, to ensure relevant parties are aware of victims' and survivors' circumstances and associated risks
 - P8 explain court proceedings to victims and survivors and the reasons for actions being undertaken in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P9 explain to victims and survivors their risks and potential needs arising from outcomes of their cases in line with organisational policies and procedures, including:
 - P9.1 exploring their needs
 - P9.2 assess further risks to victims arising from case outcomes
 - P10 address victims and survivors identified needs and risks in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P11 communicate with victims and survivors in a manner and at a pace which meets their needs and:
 - P11.1 encourages questions

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- P11.2 confirms their understanding
 - P11.3 promotes victims and survivors informed decision making
 - P12 identify and address concerns which victims and survivors may have regarding courts processes
 - P13 maintain accurate and up to date records of your discussions and their outcomes in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P14 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 providing support to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse through the court process, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 legislation, policies and procedures relevant to your area of work
- K3 legal and organisational requirements regarding bringing information to the attention of police where relevant to an actual or alleged offence
- K4 your organisation's policy and procedures for
 - K4.1 confidentiality of information
 - K4.2 disclosure of information to third parties
 - K4.3 circumstances under which disclosure may be made
- K5 your organisation's role, remit and services relating to addressing domestic violence and abuse
- K6 limits of your role, authority and responsibility, and actions to take if these are exceeded

Key, general requirements for addressing domestic violence and abuse

You need to know and understand:

- K7 what constitutes domestic violence and abuse and its prevalence in the community
- K8 signs of abuse and methods used by abusers to gain power and control

Requirements particular to supporting victims and survivors through the court process

You need to know and understand:

- K9 sources of information regarding victims and survivors and how to access these
- K10 types of courts, their respective processes and procedures and the role of victims and survivors within these including for pre-trial preparations
- K11 roles and responsibilities of court officials you work with
- K12 the importance of managing victims and survivors expectations through the court process and how to do this

- K13 risks victims and survivors might face when progressing court cases, and how to address these
- K14 aspects of risk and vulnerability that may affect victims and survivors including victims and survivors at risk of intimidation
- K15 support available to victims and survivors through court processes
- K16 how to assess the physical and emotional condition of victims and survivors
- K17 how to establish victims and survivors needs in relation to testifying in court
- K18 actions to take when you have concerns about the fitness of victims and survivors to testify
- K19 how to maintain security and welfare of victims
- K20 correct ways of informing witnesses and relevant others of their role, including procedures they will be involved with during the criminal justice process
- K21 how to be sensitive and flexible in your approach
- K22 how to address victims reluctance or fear of testifying
- K23 importance of partnership working between those advocating on behalf of victims and survivors,
- K24 relevant criminal justice agencies and their protocols for victims, witnesses and survivors
- K25 sources of support for victims and survivors during court proceedings and how to access these, including witness support teams
- K26 how to work effectively with other agencies when supporting victims

Requirements relating to communicating with victims and survivors

You need to know and understand:

- K27 the importance of building trust and empathy with victims and survivors, and methods for achieving this
- K28 styles and forms of communication suitable for victims and survivors needs
- K29 the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language
- K30 how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K31 possible barriers to communication including:
 - K31.1 their causes
 - K31.2 feelings and reactions of victims and survivors
 - K31.3 ways to overcome them
- K32 the importance of being aware of your own values and beliefs

K33 the impact your own values and beliefs may have when working with victims
how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and
behaviour and the importance of doing so

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