
Overview

This standard is about working with victims and survivors of domestic violence to assist them in recognising the causes of abuse, and supporting them in dealing with abuse. It includes your ability to help them to build their confidence, take control of their lives and empower them in living a life without abuse.

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.

For the purposes of this standard, 'community' may refer to areas of practice, constituencies, geographical areas, service users or different groups of victims and survivors.

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

Performance criteria

- You must be able to:
- P1 gather and assess available records and information which informs your understanding of victims and survivors' circumstances, including:
 - P1.1 victims and survivors health and wellbeing
 - P1.2 nature and history of abuse suffered
 - P1.3 outcomes of risk assessments
 - P2 work with victims and survivors to explore their circumstances, including:
 - P2.1 the nature of the abuse suffered
 - P2.2 the impact of abuse on their safety, health and wellbeing
 - P3 respond to signs of distress in victims and survivors in ways which reduce their stress
 - P4 agree with victims and survivors their needs to be addressed which enhances their safety, health and wellbeing
 - P5 support victims and survivors to recognise the benefits of support they can access in line with multi-agency arrangements
 - P6 explore options with victims and survivors which take account of the individuals':
 - P6.1 age
 - P6.2 level of maturity
 - P6.3 sexual orientation
 - P6.4 gender
 - P6.5 social, ethnic and cultural background
 - P6.6 family and friends, where relevant
 - P7 explore with victims and survivors the relevance and feasibility of options which address their needs, including:
 - P7.1 the impact of options on their daily life
 - P7.2 concerns or potential obstacles in progressing options and their impact
 - P7.3 actions to address concerns and obstacles in progressing options
 - P8 encourage victims and survivors to make informed choices about their preferred options, in ways which:
 - P8.1 ensure that options can be implemented

-
- P8.2 gain commitment to achieving realisation
 - P9 work with victims and survivors to identify support and actions they can take which address their abuse and associated risks
 - P10 assist victims and survivors to develop coping strategies which address their emotional needs
 - P11 assist victims and survivors to access support which:
 - P11.1 progresses agreed activities
 - P11.2 maximises their independence
 - P12 maintain levels of contact with victims and survivors which offers the amount of support necessary to meet their needs
 - P13 support victims and survivors to reflect on and recognise their progress and achievements towards meeting their needs
 - P14 support victims and survivors to address any unexpected developments they encounter which affect their wellbeing, health and safety
 - P15 communicate with victims and survivors in a manner and at a pace which meets their needs, and:
 - P15.1 encourages questions
 - P15.2 confirms their understanding
 - P15.3 promotes victims and survivors' informed decision making
 - P16 maintain accurate and up to date records in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P17 maintain confidentiality in line with legislative and organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

You need to know and understand:

- K1 legal and organisational requirements for empowering victims and survivors to recover and to regain control of their lives, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 relevant legislation applicable to your area of work
- K3 relevant others you may need to work with including:
 - K3.1 agencies and organisations
 - K3.2 colleagues
 - K3.3 community representatives
 - K3.4 service users
 - K3.5 stakeholders
 - K3.6 victims and survivors
- K4 your organisation's policies and procedures for
 - K4.1 registration of cases
 - K4.2 case management
 - K4.3 ensuring confidentiality of information
 - K4.4 disclosure of information to third parties
 - K4.5 circumstances under which disclosure may be made
- K5 your organisation's role, objectives, remit and services for addressing domestic violence and abuse, including the provision of support to victims
- K6 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:

- K7 what constitutes domestic violence and abuse, and its prevalence in your local community
- K8 signs of abuse and methods used by abusers to gain power and control
- K9 the impact upon all those affected by domestic violence and abuse, including victims, survivors, children and dependants
- K10 how children and dependants may be used by abusers as part of their abuse
- K11 the types of information and support sought by those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse

- K12 sources of information and support available to those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- K13 how cultural, societal and gender related aspects impact upon domestic violence and abuse
- K14 the role of external support agencies in providing support and interventions for victims and survivors in your area
- K15 multi-agency arrangements for providing support and interventions for victims and survivors in your area

Requirements particular to empowering victims and survivors

You need to know and understand:

- K16 sources of information about victims and survivors' needs and circumstances and how to access these
- K17 support groups and services available in your area, their role and remit, and how to access them
- K18 legal options, support and advice available to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, including:
 - K18.1 options available according to their circumstances
 - K18.2 how to access legal options
 - K18.3 timescales for legal options
- K19 the role of the principal legal agencies involved in providing protection to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse
- K20 the role and nature of the health and social care sector, including:
 - K20.1 roles and functions of the principal agencies
 - K20.2 how to access health and social care services
 - K20.3 registration with general practitioners
- K21 referral routes for different parts of the healthcare sector and between different practitioners
- K22 when and how to challenge and alter referral routes in the interests of victims and survivors
- K23 assessment methods suitable for assessing victims and survivors needs
- K24 fears and concerns individuals may have about social work and healthcare services
- K25 how to recognise and respect fears and concerns of victims and survivors

- K26 methods and techniques for working with victims and survivors, including
 - K26.1 encouraging open and honest discussion
 - K26.2 respecting their priorities in relation to their health and social well-being
- K27 the right of victims and survivors to refuse advice and information
- K28 providers of accommodation and associated services which address the needs of victims and survivors, and how to access them
- K29 types of accommodation that are available and the forms of support which they offer to victims and survivors
- K30 factors affecting the vulnerability and risk to victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse
- K31 the types, levels and indicators of harm and vulnerability that can be used when assessing risk
- K32 the importance of ensuring victims and survivors control the progress and content of discussions
- K33 how to make suggestions and offer advice in a manner that is supportive and non-directive
- K34 the importance of being non-judgmental about the lives and choices of individuals
- K35 the importance of avoiding blame to victims and survivors for abuse they have suffered

Requirements relating to communicating with victims and survivors

You need to know and understand:

- K36 the importance of and methods for building trust and empathy with victims and survivors
- K37 appropriate styles and forms of communication including body language,
- K38 how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K39 the importance of non-verbal communication
- K40 barriers to communication including:
 - K40.1 their causes
 - K40.2 feelings and reactions victims and survivors may have
 - K40.3 ways to overcome them
- K41 the importance of being aware of your values and beliefs

-
- K42 the impact your values and beliefs may have when working with victims
 - K43 how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour and the importance of doing so
 - K44 circumstances where it is necessary to go against victims and survivors' expressed wishes
 - K45 the importance of ensuring that victims and survivors understand why their expressed wishes may not be met
 - K46 the limits of confidentiality applying to your role

Developed by	Skills for Justice
Version number	2
Date approved	December 2013
Indicative review date	December 2018
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating organisation	Skills for Justice
Original URN	SFJ GK104
Relevant occupations	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA); Crisis Worker; Refuge Worker
Suite	Preventing and addressing domestic violence and abuse
Key words	sexual; empowerment; confidence; recovery; coping; support; risks