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## Overview

This standard is about advocating on behalf of victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse. As part of this standard you will be expected to act within victims and survivors' informed consent. It also includes representing the views and wishes of victims and survivors when dealing with appropriate agencies.

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.

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**Performance**  
**criteria**

- You must be able to:
- P1 describe your role and responsibilities to victims and survivors in line with organisational requirements
  - P2 explain your organisation's confidentiality policies to victims and survivors, including circumstances when information may need to be shared and why
  - P3 explore with victims and survivors their circumstances and options, including:
    - P3.1 their advocacy support needs
    - P3.2 options available for advocacy
    - P3.3 the benefits of advocacy
  - P4 advocate on behalf of victims and survivors to other agencies to meet victims and survivors advocacy' needs
  - P5 make appropriate representations of victims and survivors' views and wishes to other agencies
  - P6 challenge oppression and discrimination against victims and survivors in constructive ways
  - P7 facilitate effective communication between victims, survivors and other agencies in line with partnership arrangements
  - P8 encourage victims and survivors to express their requirements to other agencies who can support them
  - P9 negotiate with other agencies on behalf of victims and survivors to realise their needs and rights
  - P10 communicate with victims and survivors in a way and at a pace which meets their needs and abilities, and
    - P10.1 encourages question
    - P10.2 confirms their understanding
    - P10.3 promotes victims and survivors' informed decision making
  - P11 ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of victims and survivors throughout the advocacy process
  - P12 provide victims and survivors with regular updates on progress and outcomes of advocacy processes
  - P13 maintain accurate and up to date records in line with organisational policies and procedures

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P14 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 providing information and advocacy support, 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 and information to victims and survivors
- 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 the role of external support agencies in providing support and interventions for victims and survivors in your area
- K14 multi-agency arrangements for providing support and interventions for victims and survivors in your area

## **Requirements particular to advocating on behalf of victims and survivors**

You need to know  
and understand:

- K15 the importance of effective advocacy to victims and survivors and how to provide this
- K16 the importance of maintaining victims and survivors' right to make their own decisions and techniques for allowing this

## **Requirements relating to communicating with victims and survivors**

You need to know  
and understand:

- K17 the importance of, and methods for, building trust and empathy with victims and survivors
- K18 appropriate styles and forms of communication including body language
- K19 how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K20 the importance of non-verbal communication
- K21 barriers to communication and disclosure including:
  - K21.1 causes
  - K21.2 feelings and reactions victims may have
  - K21.3 ways to overcome them
- K22 the importance of being aware of your values and beliefs
- K23 the impact your values and beliefs may have when working with victims
- K24 how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour and the importance of doing so
- K25 circumstances where it is necessary to go against victims and survivors expressed wishes
- K26 the importance of ensuring that victims and survivors understand why their expressed wishes may not be met
- K27 limits of confidentiality applying to your role

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<b>Originating organisation</b>	Skills for Justice
<b>Original URN</b>	SFJ GK105
<b>Relevant occupations</b>	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA); Crisis Worker; Refuge Worker
<b>Suite</b>	Preventing and addressing domestic violence and abuse
<b>Key words</b>	sexual; representation; consent; communicate; support; partnership