
Overview

This standard is about addressing calls from victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse with tact and sensitivity.

It includes your ability to manage calls, present a positive impression of yourself and your organisation over the telephone, and communicate with callers including those who might be distressed or anxious.

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 open calls in line with organisational practices and procedures including
 - P1.1 using words, phrases and terminology accepted by your organisation
 - P2 communicate with callers in a manner and pace appropriate to callers, and which:
 - P2.1 develops and maintains a positive atmosphere
 - P2.2 allows callers to progress at their own pace
 - P2.3 reflects an interest in and understanding of the situation
 - P2.4 maintains calm and control throughout the call
 - P3 explain your organisation's procedures for maintaining confidentiality to callers
 - P4 gain information from callers regarding their requirements and circumstance using appropriate questioning methods and techniques
 - P5 confirm you are listening by acknowledging and clarifying the points raised by callers
 - P6 respond appropriately to initial disclosures of abuse in line with organisational policies and procedures
 - P7 place callers on hold only where necessary, stating the reason and likely duration of the wait where possible
 - P8 arrange to return calls when necessary at a time which is convenient and safe for the caller
 - P9 address the requirements of callers in line with organisational guidance
 - P10 balance callers' needs with your organisation's requirements and:
 - P10.1 manage callers' expectations in line with organisational practices and approaches
 - P11 close calls in line with organisational procedures and practices
 - P12 follow your organisation's approved procedures throughout calls
 - P13 maintain accurate and up to date records of conversations 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 addressing callers who are victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 relevant legislation applicable to your area of work
- K3 legal and organisational requirements for reporting information to the police to an actual or alleged offence
- K4 your organisation's policies and procedures for:
 - K4.1 ensuring 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, objectives and services for addressing domestic violence and abuse, including the provision of support to victims and survivors
- K6 the limits of your authority and responsibility, and actions to take if exceeded

Key, general requirements in 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 the methods used by abusers to gain power and control
- K9 the impact of abuse upon all those affected, including victims, survivors, children and dependants
- K10 how children 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 agencies and stakeholders in providing referrals and support to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in your area
- K14 misconceptions and stereotypical viewpoints in the public domain regarding the levels and causes of abuse

Requirements particular to addressing callers**You need to know
and understand:**

- K15 your organisation's accepted wording when greeting and communicating with callers
- K16 appropriate types of questioning, including open, closed and probing questions
- K17 the importance of and techniques for effective listening
- K18 how to maintain the effective participation of callers
- K19 the importance of and methods for determining the requirements and needs of callers
- K20 barriers to communication including:
 - K20.1 causes
 - K20.2 feelings and reactions which victims and survivors may have
 - K20.3 ways to overcome them
- K21 actions available when a disclosure of abuse is identified
- K22 techniques for maintaining control of calls while maintaining positive relationships with callers
- K23 your organisation's procedures for dealing with callers who :
 - K23.1 are silent
 - K23.2 are distressed
 - K23.3 are anxious
 - K23.4 are aggressive or abusive
 - K23.5 make repeated, regular calls
 - K23.6 are suicidal
 - K23.7 are likely to commit self-harm
 - K23.8 have particular communication requirements
- K24 your organisation's procedures for informing callers where calls are recorded
- K25 circumstances where it is necessary to go against the caller's expressed wishes
- K26 the importance of ensuring that callers understand what is happening and why
- K27 the importance of being aware of your values and beliefs
- K28 the impact your values and beliefs may have
- K29 how to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour and the importance of doing so

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