

Lesson 3: Identifying Domestic Violence

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AS A RESULT OF THIS LESSON, YOU WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO:

Utilize the Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel to identify the presence of domestic violence.

Asking about DV

2

Using your organization's DV questions or the questions on Slide 17 is a good first step.

However, many people do not know enough about what constitutes domestic violence, abuse or healthy relationships to be able to clearly or fully answer those questions.

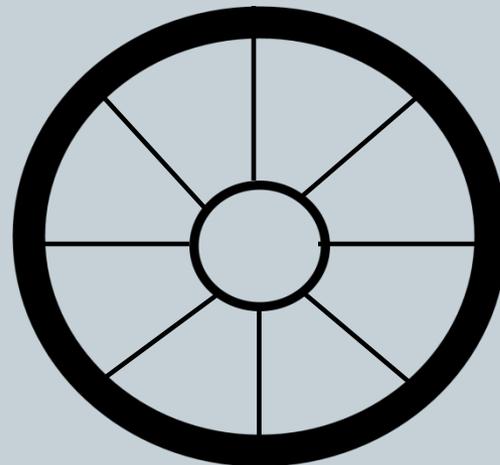
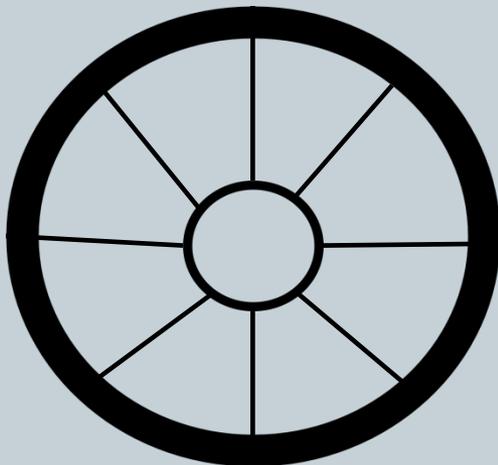


Asking about DV continued

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The Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel are great tools to use to help survivors name what has happened to them and to start a dialog about the impact of the abuse.

We will be looking at both of these wheels.



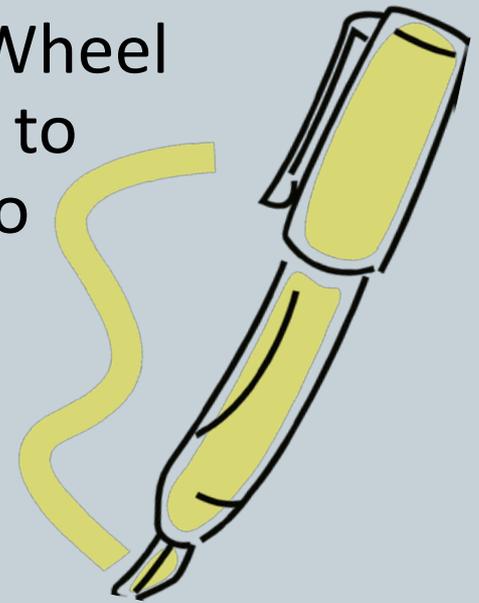
Highlighting Power and Control Tactics

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The Power and Control Wheel illustrates many of the most common tactics that abusers use and gives examples.

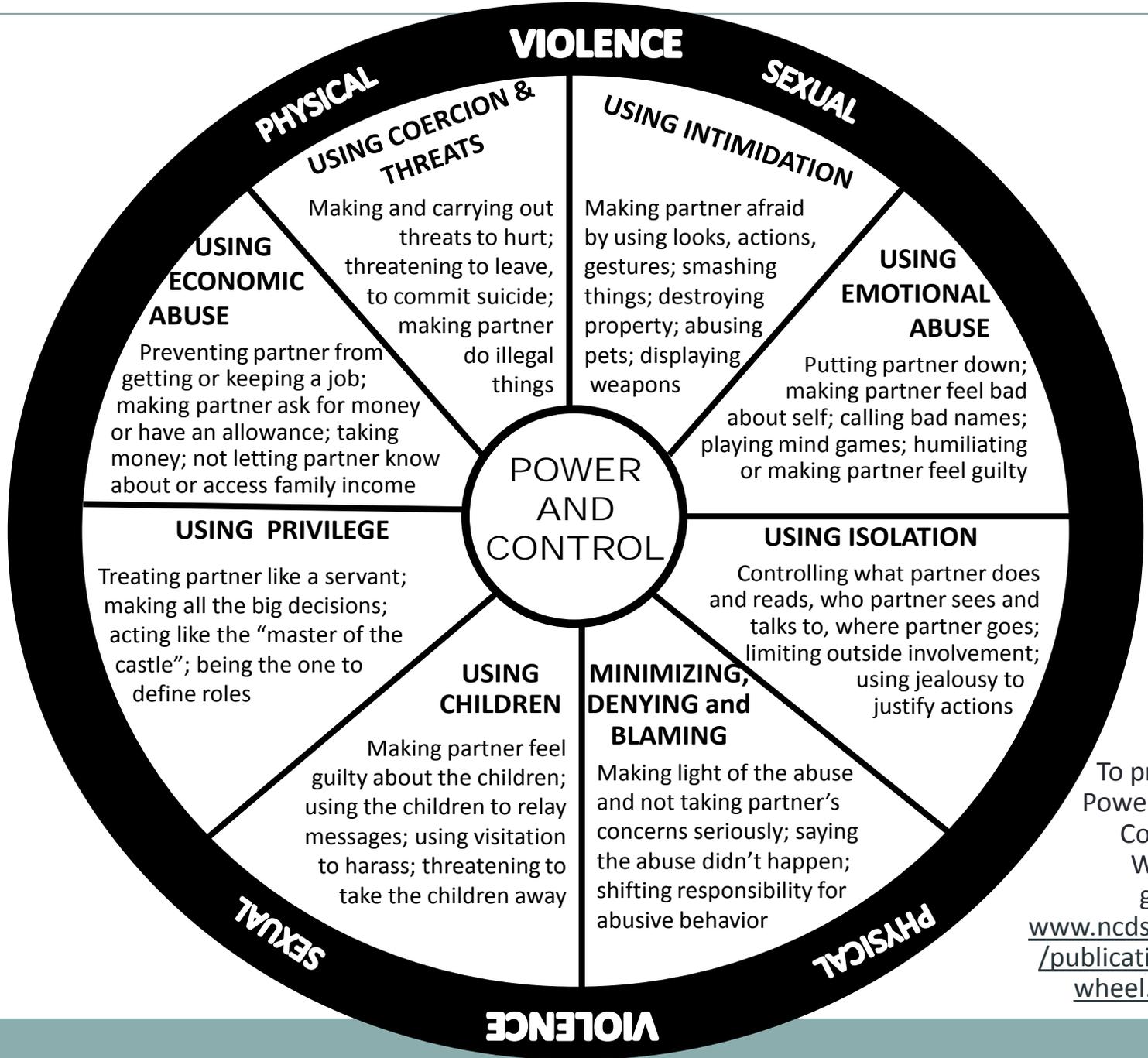
When discussing the Power and Control Wheel with a survivor of abuse, it can be helpful to offer a highlighter and invite the person to highlight the tactics used by their abusive partner.

This technique can help the survivor to identify what s/he has experienced.



Power and Control Wheel

Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project – Duluth, MN



To print a Power and Control Wheel go to:

www.ncdsv.org/publications/wheel.html

The Equality Wheel

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The Equality Wheel can also be a valuable tool to use when talking to a survivor about the abuse, particularly when used in conjunction with the Power and Control Wheel.

While the Power and Control Wheel can help a survivor identify the abuse that is present in the relationship, the Equality Wheel can help a survivor identify what is missing from the relationship.



The Equality Wheel continued

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DV is not just about the presence of violent or controlling behaviors. It also about the absence of dignity that characterizes healthy relationships where power is equal.

Reviewing the Equality Wheel together can start a conversation about what the survivor would like and what the survivor deserves to experience in a relationship.

The Equality Wheel continued

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Some survivors will have had relationships that have been healthy and equal and will be able to relate to the qualities mentioned in the Equality Wheel. Sadly, some survivors have never been treated in the ways described in the wheel.

It is important to tell survivors that they really do deserve to be treated as an equal and that equal, healthy relationships are possible.

Instilling hope is a vital part of mental health care. ²

Equality and Cultural Diversity

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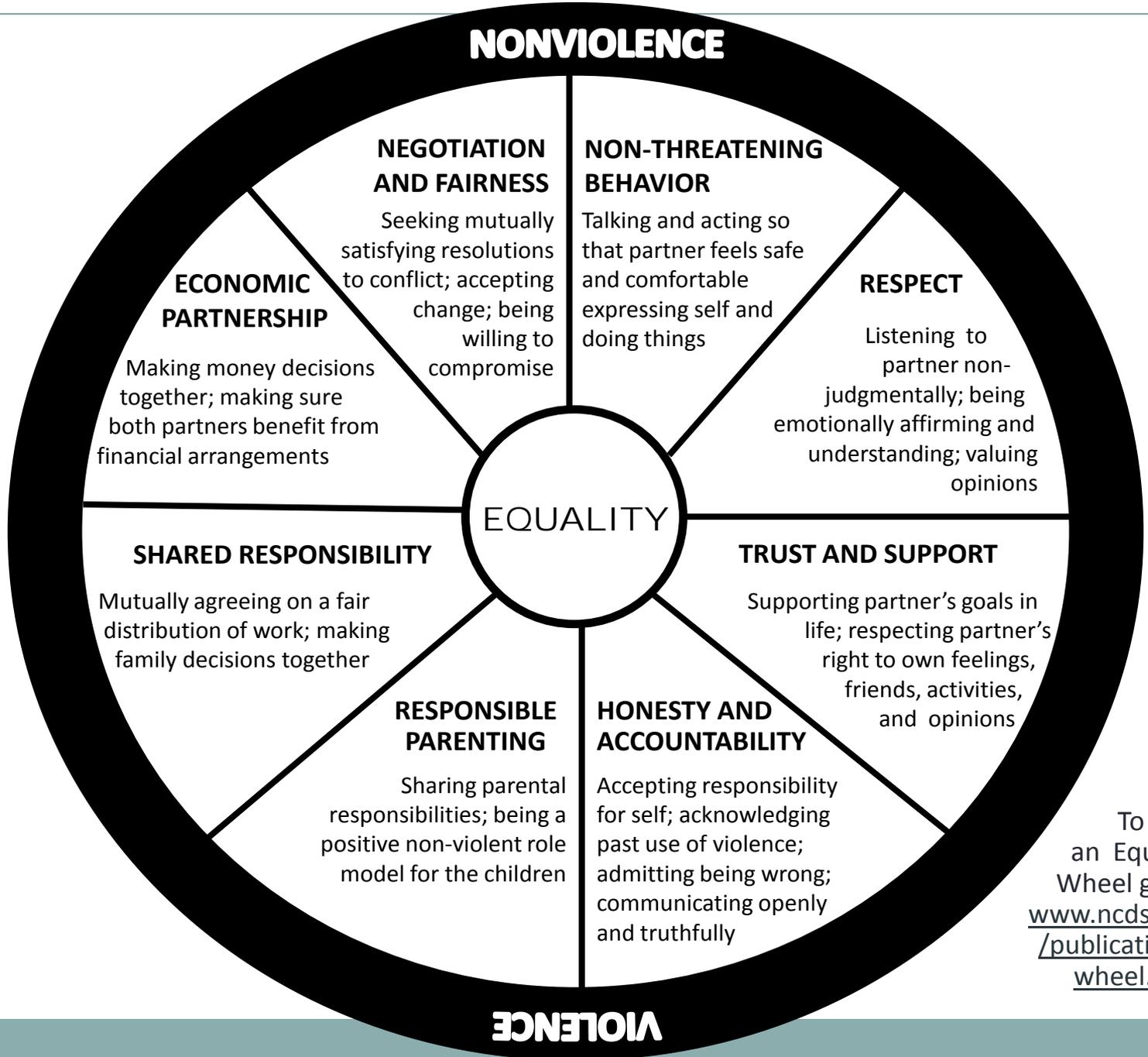
Please keep in mind that equality does not have to mean “sameness.” It can mean mutuality and respect across differences. For example, the Equality Wheel can be used with women from highly conservative cultures.

While they may have traditional beliefs about gender roles and responsibilities, that does not mean they cannot be treated as an equal in the ways described by the Equality Wheel.



Equality Wheel

Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project – Duluth, MN



To print
an Equality
Wheel go to:
[www.ncdsv.org
/publications
wheel.html](http://www.ncdsv.org/publications/wheel.html)

Lesson 4: Identifying Risks and Planning for Safety

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AS A RESULT OF THIS LESSON, YOU WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO:

Identify domestic violence related safety risks

Assist someone who is experiencing domestic violence with basic safety planning

A Verb, Not a Noun

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“Safety Plan” should be used as a *verb*, not a noun. For example, “Let’s safety plan” rather than “Let’s create a safety plan.”

It needs to be an active process, not just a checklist or a form. Circumstances, risks and resources change. Planning for safety needs to be an ongoing, dynamic process.

Safety planning is most useful when it helps the survivor develop or strengthen the critical thinking skills necessary to adapt to changing conditions.

Planning for Immediate Safety

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Your role is to assist survivors with immediate safety planning. They can do more in depth safety planning with a DV advocate, if they wish to do so.

It is also important to periodically check back in with survivors about their plans for safety since the risks they face and their options for safety will likely change over time.

Let survivors know that you are concerned for their safety and that DV can be very dangerous – emotionally, physically and sexually. Tell them you can help them assess their safety risks and resources and strategize for how they can respond.

The 3 R's - Risks, Resources and Responses

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Safety planning is about

- Assessing **Risks**
- Identifying **Resources** and
- Strategizing **Responses**

R
R
R

Risks

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Research indicates that survivors are good judges of the risks they face.

You can help survivors assess their risks by asking questions about what has happened to them and what they think might happen to them in the immediate future.

(Remember, we are focusing on immediate safety planning.)

Do not jump to conclusions about what particular behaviors might mean. Ask survivors what the behaviors mean to them. Something that sounds inconsequential to you might be a huge red flag to the survivor.



Abuser Risks and Life Risks

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There are 2 types of risks you should explore with survivors:

- 1. Abuser Risks** – risks coming directly from the abuser
- 2. Life Risks** – DV-related risks that come from sources other than the abuser. These can include risks posed by:
 - Family members (abuser's and/or survivor's)
 - Culture or Faith community
 - Economic vulnerability
 - Immigration status
 - Being a target of oppression
 - The legal system
 - Personal values, beliefs or behaviors
 - A lack of community resources



Questions about Abuser Risks

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What types of **control tactics** does your abusive partner use?

Are you currently **living together**? Do you have any **plans to change your living situation**?

Does your abusive partner have access to **firearms**?

Is your abusive partner **employed**?

What types of **threats** has your abusive partner made?

Does your abusive partner **drink** or use **drugs**?

Does your abusive partner appear to be **suicidal**?

Do you have any particular concerns about the **next couple of days**?

Why Focus on those Abuser Risks?

RISK	SIGNIFICANCE
Control	Highly controlling abusers are more likely to kill their partners. ³
Separation Violence	About 75% of ER visits and calls to police occur after separation. Even the perception that the survivor is going to leave can be dangerous. ^{4,5}
Firearms	Abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse. ⁶
Employment	Abusers without stable employment are more likely to harm their partners. ⁷
Threats	Threats can be good indicators of what may actually happen. ⁸
Substance Abuse	Drug use by abusers is associated with higher risk of homicidality. ⁹
Suicidality	Loss of control can trigger an abuser to commit suicide. About 1/3 of DV homicides in WA involve homicide-suicides. ¹⁰
Immediacy	The focus of your safety planning should be on increasing survivors' safety until they can plan in depth with a DV advocate.

Separation Violence

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Leaving an abuser can result in an escalation of violence.

Abusers may try to coerce their partners into reconciliation or retaliate against them for the perceived rejection, abandonment, or injustice.

Because leaving may be dangerous - dangerous from the point that the abusive partner thinks the relationship may end - does not mean that the survivor should necessarily stay.

Research indicates that ultimately survivors can best achieve safety and freedom apart from their abusive partners.

The key to safer outcomes is careful, thorough safety planning.

Adapted from material on www.aardvarc.org.

Life Risks

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Context is not only important in determining who is being abused and being abusive (*remember ICE?* Intent, Context and Effect.) It is also important in assessing risk.

Life risks can exacerbate the danger that survivors already faces. For example, if family members pressure a survivor to stay in a relationship because of their religious beliefs, that can make it harder for the survivor to leave and might limit where the survivor can go for help.



Questions about Life Risks

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What factors, other than your partner, contribute to the abuse in your relationship or make it hard for you to stay emotionally, physically, or sexually safe?

What pressures are you under to stay in the relationship?

Does the availability or non-availability of adaptive devices (e.g., wheelchair or glasses) or medications impact your options?

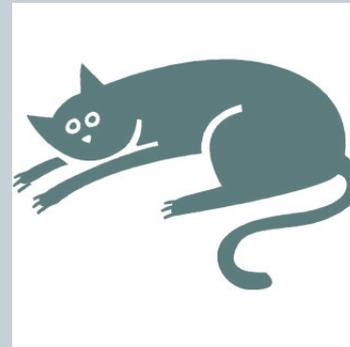


Questions about Life Risks continued

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Does alcohol or drug use impact your options?

If you have children or pets, how does their safety impact your own?



Are you facing any particular challenges in the next couple of days?

Resources for Safety Planning

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The same factors that can be *Life Risks* for one person, may be **Resources** for another.

After you have discussed risks faced by survivors, it can be helpful to assess their available resources and to focus on their strengths.

- *Who in their life is an ally to them?*
- *What support is available to them?*
- *What resources do they have economically, culturally, spiritually, etc. that can enhance their emotional, physical, and sexual safety?*



Responses for Enhancing Safety

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Survivors have likely already utilized many strategies for protecting themselves. *What has worked for them in the past. What options would they consider using in the future? What options would they avoid?*

If they have concerns for their safety in the future, *would they:*

- *Call 911?*
- *Call a domestic violence help line?*
- *Try to leave?*
- *Seek help from friends, family, neighbors, clergy?*



Responses for Different Settings

*Do they have
response plans
for the variety
of places
where they may
be at risk?*

Home
School
Car
Your Organization
Work
Phone
Computer
Family's Homes
Religious Settings
Medical Facilities
Daycare
Cultural Events
Recreational Activities

Assist survivors with creating response strategies that are feasible.

In Depth Safety Planning

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While you will focus on the survivor's immediate safety needs, a DV advocate can assist the survivor with more in depth safety planning. This can be done over the phone, in person, and in support groups.

Talk to survivors about their options for speaking with an advocate. Is it possible for them to call from your office or from another location in your building? Would it help if you initiated the call and then put them on the phone? Do they have a safe way to call later? Do they want to call anonymously?



Safety Planning Scenario

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Think of a specific client and imagine that person shared this with you...

“My partner has been getting more and more emotionally abusive lately. I think it might be related to our increasing financial problems. It is so hard to have the energy to go to work and get stuff done. I am worried that I am going to get fired. I am dreading going home tonight because I don’t want to be pressured for sex again. There was hell to pay last time I refused. The landlord might evict us, if the neighbors complain about the noise again. What should I do?”

Assessing the Risks

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Keeping in mind what you know of your client's cultural identity and the configuration of their family (children, pets, etc.), please answer the following questions:

- What **risks** does the abusive partner pose?
- What **life risks** does the client face?
- What **resources** are available to the client?
- What are the client's options for **responding** to the situation? How might they protect themselves emotionally, physically, and sexually tonight?
- Who could you consult with regarding how to help this person safety plan?