

Gender-Based Violence

Informational Guide
For Field Teams

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Developed by: ROSALIND GHAFAR ROGERS, PhD, LMHC

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FOR FIELD TEAMS

NOTE FOR FIELD TEAMS

This informational guide provides information about gender-based violence (GBV), domestic violence (DV), and intimate partner violence (IPV), how to identify these forms of violence, how to provide basic support to survivors without doing further harm, and available resources for survivors. The goal of this informational guide is to provide basic information and resources on how to help someone if they share with you that they have experienced GBV/DV/IPV.

As non-GBV specialists, it your duty to respect and protect the rights and needs of all persons, to not make assumptions or judgments, to provide a listening ear (free of judgment), and to provide up-to-date information on available services and let survivors make their own choices. Your role is to provide non-judgmental support to Afghans regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, age, ethnicity/tribe/race/religion, who perpetrated/committed violence, and the situation in which violence was committed. It is **not** your role to:

- Seek out a survivor of GBV/DV/IPV. This can cause more harm. Instead, be a helpful source of support and resources if someone approaches you for help.
- Provide counseling, conduct an interview, understand what happened and the details, tell them what to do, or give your own opinion.

Your role is to:

- Establish safety for yourself and the survivor.
 - Build trust and rapport.
 - Actively and empathetically listen without judgment or making assumptions.
 - Assess and address urgent basic needs first.
 - Demonstrate care and support.
 - Recognize what you can and cannot manage. Some situations may require more specialized support beyond your role.
 - Focus on providing survivors with information about options and services that are available rather than asking detailed questions about the incident itself.
 - Help the survivor identify trusted sources of support, if any.
 - Support survivors in their decisions and choices, even if none were made.
 - Safely link survivors to supportive and competent services.
 - Respect and maintain survivors' confidentiality.
 - Support survivors in identifying and weighing the benefits and risks of their choices and decisions.
 - Continue providing nonjudgmental support to survivors who seek assistance on multiple occasions.
- GBV/DV/IPV operates in cycles whereby survivors may make many attempts to leave the relationship, as well as return to the abusive relationship. This cycle (honeymoon, tension building, and violent incident) makes it difficult for survivors to break free from an abusive partner.

KEY CONCEPTS

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on biological sex or gender identity. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or private. GBV can manifest in a variety of ways including:

- **Physical Violence** can include forms of violence or neglectful acts that cause physical pain or injury such as hitting, slapping, choking, shoving/pushing, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, burning, strangulation, cutting, shooting or use of any weapons.
- **Emotional or Psychological Violence** is the infliction of mental or emotional pain or injury, such as verbal abuse, verbal harassment, or confinement.
- **Sexual Violence** is any completed or attempted sexual act against a person's will or against a person unable to give permission or consent. Forms of sexual violence include rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, incest, child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation by someone in a position of power or in exchange for money, services, or goods.
- **Socio-Economic Violence** is perpetrated in a non-physical manner or embedded in laws, policies, or norms that deny women and girls, and other vulnerable groups, access to income/earnings, financial services, assets, and social opportunities for advancement. Examples include withholding access to financial resources or forbidding employment; discrimination and/or denial of opportunities, services, or resources; denial of access to education, health assistance, or paid employment; denial of property rights. Family members, community members, society, institutions, and organizations can perpetrate this type of violence.
- **Harmful Traditional Practices** can also be considered GBV if they are intended to maintain women and girls' subordinate status in society, such as forced marriage, child marriage, and/or female genital mutilation (FGM), and honor killings.

GENDER refers to the social differences between males and females that are learned. Though deeply rooted in every culture, social differences are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. Gender determines the roles, responsibilities, opportunities, privileges, expectations, and limitations for males and females in any culture.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) is violence that occurs within a private, domestic setting, generally between individuals who are related through blood or intimacy, that is used by one person to gain or maintain power and control over the other person. DV is not confined to women, as it can also include child abuse and elderly abuse in the domestic sphere.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) is one of the manifestations of DV and refers to a pattern of coercive and abusive behaviors by an intimate partner or ex-partner to maintain power and control and causes physical, psychological, and/or sexual harm. IPV is the most common form of violence against women in war and displacement.

GBV/DV/IPV IS CAUSED BY GENDER INEQUALITY AND THE ABUSE OF POWER. Anyone can experience GBV/DV/IPV including men, boys, and sexual and gender minorities. However, women and girls are disproportionately affected by male violence to subordinate, disempower, punish, or control. The gender of the perpetrator and the survivor are central not only to the motivation for violence, but also the ways in which society condones or responds to the violence.

CONSENT is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity or enter into an intimate relationship or marriage. It must be freely and actively given and cannot be provided by someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, by someone who is underage, or asleep or unconscious. Consent is specific, meaning that consent to one act does not imply consent to any others, and reversible, meaning that it may be revoked at any time. Consent cannot be assumed based on silence, the absence of "no" or "stop," the existence of a prior or current relationship, or prior sexual activity.

ABUSIVE TACTICS SPECIFIC TO IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Isolation Abusive partners may attempt to prevent a partner/spouse from learning English or from communicating or interacting with others, especially anyone with a shared cultural background.

Intimidation Destroying legal documents or papers like passports, resident cards, health insurance, or driver's licenses can be devastating to immigrant & refugee survivors and thus carries significant leverage for the abusive partner.

Threats Threatening deportation or withdrawal of petitions for legal status or applications for re-parole is a common abuse tactic capitalizing on fears surrounding immigration enforcement. This may be directed at the survivor or at his/her family members or loved ones.

Manipulation Regarding Citizenship or Residency Abusive partners may escalate situations beyond threats by following through on withdrawing, delaying filing, or not filing papers for residency, or lying by telling survivors that they will lose their citizenship or residency for reporting violence.

Financial Abuse Abusive partners may try to get survivors fired from their jobs or falsely report that they are undocumented in order to isolate them financially and socially.

Leveraging Children Threats to hurt children or take them away may be used against immigrant survivors unfamiliar with the U.S. legal system or afraid to contact law enforcement.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS are things that make a problem worse or more likely to occur. Factors that contribute to GBV/DV/IPV vary according to the setting, population, and type of violence. Some contributing factors to consider for the Afghan population include:

- War, displacement, migration, and resettlement
- Pre-migration trauma
- Disrupted or loss of social support system
- Social and economic isolation
- Family separation
- Acculturation stress
- Immigration status and unequal protection
- Language barriers
- Lack of familiarity with U.S. social systems and legal rights
- Discrimination and/or anti-immigrant sentiments
- Stigma and shame associated with GBV/DV/IPV
- Presence of mental health problems
- Substance use
- Loss of culture and destabilization of traditional roles (i.e., due to downward occupational and/or social mobility)
- Cultural practices, values, and norms that condone gender inequality, such as patriarchal cultural norms (i.e., sex is considered a marital right of the husband), family honor and shame (saving face), and/or rigid gender-role expectations (i.e., women's domain is inside the home). (** See note below)

** Note of caution that culture is not being essentialized as a cause of GBV/DV/IPV. Cultural values, norms, and practices are one of the factors that influence various aspects of GBV/DV/IPV in forced migrant and refugee populations. For example, the experience of forced displacement, migration, and resettlement may trigger what is known as cultural freezing which is the development and imposition of rigid values and normative behavioral expectations from one's country of origin, such as affirming male control as head of the household and the expectation of submissiveness in women. As such, the values, and normative behaviors of the country of origin are often distorted, idealized, romanticized, and/or stereotyped. This process of distortion and/or idealization does not happen in isolation, but is often a reaction to racism, discrimination, anti-immigrant/refugee sentiments, changes in family dynamics that occur during resettlement, loss of status and authority, and the collective survival of an ethnic/cultural community in the host country.

CONSEQUENCES OF GBV/DV/IPV

The impact of GBV/DV/IPV is immediate, as well as long-term, pervasive, and powerful, with far-reaching consequences on survivors' physical, psychological, and social well-being. It can be a life-threatening experience. Some possible consequences may include:

PHYSICAL HEALTH	PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH	SOCIAL HEALTH
Physical injury	Depression and sadness	Victim-blaming
Disability	Fear and anxiety	Stigmatization
Sexually transmitted infections	Self-blame, guilt, and shame	Rejection and isolation by family and/or community
Unwanted pregnancy	Re-experiencing the trauma, flashbacks	Forced marriage
Unsafe abortion, miscarriage	Avoidance of places or situations, isolation	Decreased earning capacity/contribution
Chronic pain	Anger	Increased poverty
Sleeping and eating disturbances or disorders	Hypervigilance, easily startled	Risk of re-victimization
Neurological disorders	Trouble concentrating or remembering	Death/honor killings
Death, including suicide	Suicidal thoughts/actions	

It is helpful to understand the potential consequences of GBV/DV/IPV that may affect a survivor's behaviors and choices after experiencing violence. It is also essential to avoid doing further harm by reinforcing any negative consequences, such as blaming the survivor for the violence she experienced because she remains in the relationship/marriage, or by minimizing their reactions.

Lastly, social consequences on survivors are one of the main reasons we need to ensure confidentiality. Survivors are not going to seek help if they are worried everyone will find out in their families or communities due to fear of social consequences. The more trust you develop by stressing and maintaining confidentiality, the more survivors will trust you and come to you for help.

POWER & CONTROL WHEELS

Power and control are the basic elements of an abusive relationship. The Power & Control Wheel is a helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors perpetrators use to establish and maintain control over their partners. It can also be a very helpful visual aid in helping survivors identify the various forms of violence and abuse they have experienced. Various iterations of the Power & Control Wheel are below, including translated into Dari and Pashto, for immigrant women, and Muslims.

Original Power & Control Wheel



Power & Control Wheel Dari



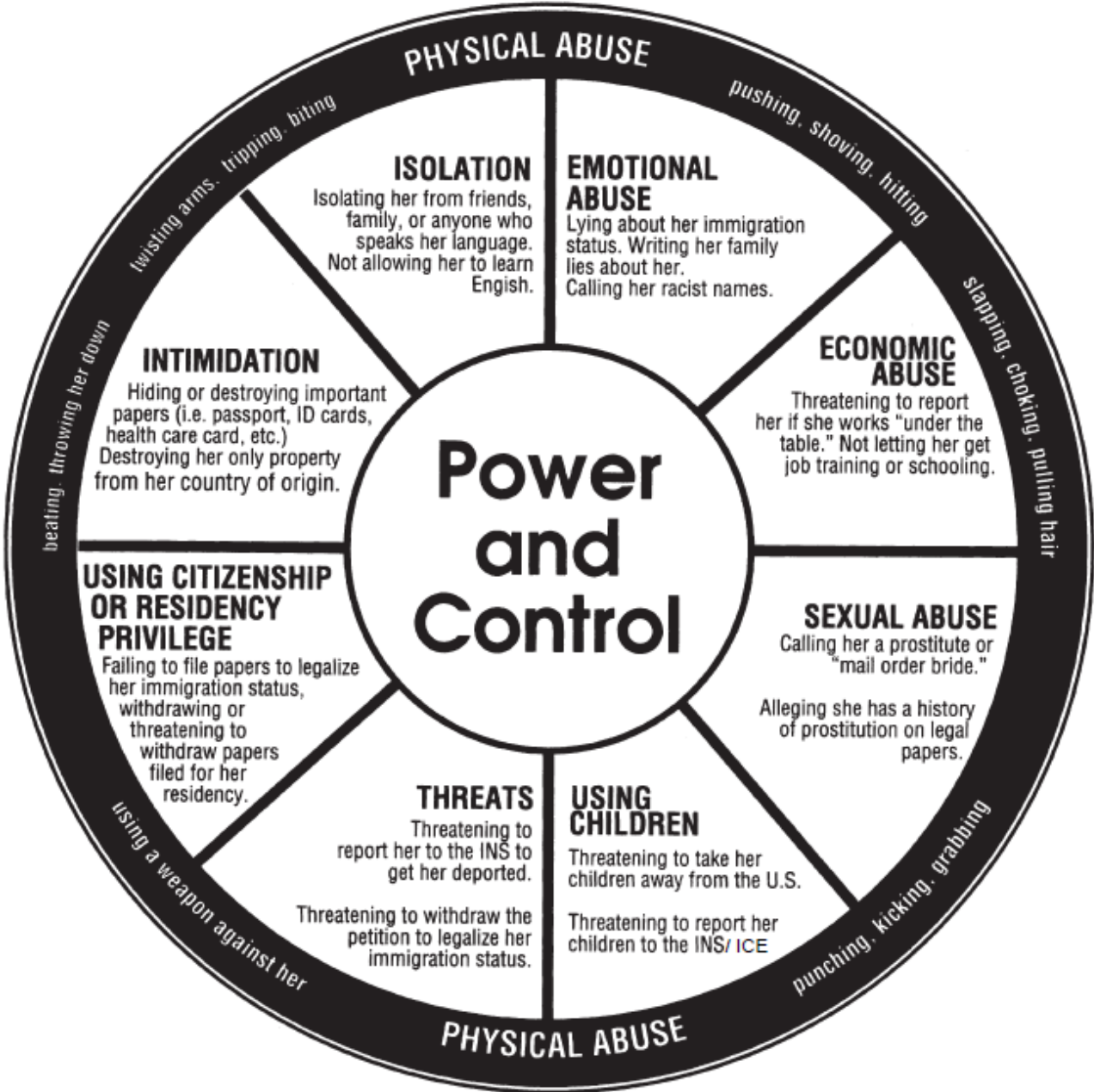
Retrieved from: <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>

Power & Control Wheel Pashto



Retrieved from: <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>

Power & Control Wheel – Immigrant Women



Retrieved from: <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>

Muslim Power & Control Wheel



Retrieved from <https://safeplace.msu.edu/-/media/assets/safeplace/docs/muslim-power-and-control-wheel.pdf?rev=67526691f71b458ab54b34b8bcb65d4&hash=41F2827BB255B21E00C3FC4A4E623DAA>

SURVIVOR-CENTERED PRINCIPLES

Most survivors of GBV/DV/IPV have multiple and diverse needs. Not all survivors react in the same way or need the same thing, so the first thing to do is to LISTEN and ask the survivor what they need rather than making assumptions about what the most urgent needs are. Survivors also need to be believed and not blamed for the violence that has happened to them, in order to build trust and ensure they feel comfortable coming forward to ask for help. Keep in mind that a successful outcome for refugee survivors may look very different from the Western conceptualization of success which usually involves the survivor leaving the abusive relationship. The following are key guiding principles to ensure that no harm is done to survivors.

RIGHT TO SAFETY

Safety refers to physical safety and security from harm as well as to a sense of psychological and emotional safety for people who are highly distressed. It is important to consider the safety and security needs of each survivor, his/her family members and those providing care and support, including yourself. Survivors who disclose GBV/DV/IPV may be at high risk of further violence from perpetrators themselves, people protecting perpetrators (including family, local leaders, or authorities) and members of their own family due to notions of family honor.

RIGHT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality refers to the right of a person to have information about them kept private unless they explicitly request it. This promotes safety, trust, and empowerment. Maintaining confidentiality means not disclosing any information at any time to any party without the informed consent of the survivor. Lack of confidentiality can put the survivor and others, including those the survivor has disclosed to, at risk of further harm.

RIGHT TO DIGNITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

All those who come into contact with survivors have a role to play in restoring dignity and self-determination that have been taken away by GBV/DV/IPV. Survivors have the right to choose who they wish to disclose to and which services they want to access. The survivor is the primary actor, and the role of helpers is to provide information they can use to choose their path to recovery. Failing to respect the dignity, wishes, and rights of survivors can increase their feelings of helplessness and shame, self-blame, and cause re-victimization and further harm.

RIGHT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

All people have the right to the best possible assistance without unfair discrimination based on gender, age, disability, race, language, religious or political beliefs, immigration status, sexual orientation, or social class.

SURVIVOR-CENTERED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Body Language is the messages we send with our face and other parts of our bodies. This includes how/where we sit with people – the environment we create. Use the acronym SOLER to have good body language to support survivors:

Square: Sit square with the survivor, facing her/him.

Open: Do not put anything (desk, chair, objects, etc.) between the survivor and you. The space between you and the survivor is open.

Lean toward the survivor. This helps the survivor know we are interested in what she/he is saying and that we want to stay and listen.

Eye contact: Maintain eye contact with the survivor at all times (unless it is considered culturally inappropriate in a particular circumstance).

Relax: Remain in a relaxed sitting position – not stiff and rigid. We want to be comfortable so that the survivor can feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

Verbal Messages are what we say. Follow the survivor’s pace, use the same language as the survivor, and use simple explanations to ensure the survivor feels safe and comfortable sharing her/his experience. Learn to remain silent and give the survivor time to think and process emotions.

Active Listening Skills

- Use **open-ended questions** to really understand how the survivor is thinking and feeling. Avoid questions that begin with “Why,” as such questions can feel like they are placing blame on the survivor.
- **Paraphrase and summarize** (“Let me see if I understand what you have told me so far.”).
- **Reflect content, thoughts, and/or feelings** so the survivor can see it like a mirror. Help the survivor see her/his situation and options more clearly. Help the survivor focus. (“It sounds like you were very scared in the moment when he yelled and raised his fist.”)

Validate and Normalize

- The best thing we can do is understand and acknowledge what survivors are feeling and make it feel normal. For example, if a survivor starts to cry, we can say, “You have every right to be upset and sad. It is okay for you to cry here. I will be with you, and we can talk when you are ready.”
- Because we want survivors to feel better, our instinct may be to tell the survivor NOT to show emotions or diminish her/his experience with variations of “Don’t be afraid,” “Don’t cry,” “It’s not as bad as it seems,” “Everything is going to be fine,” but we want to let survivors know that they are having a **normal reaction to an abnormal event**. This may feel uncomfortable to us—to have to sit with someone who is crying, or angry, or depressed—but being a true helper means that we allow them to feel what they need to feel. We should **validate and normalize** survivor’s feelings instead of telling them what NOT to feel.
- Healing statements are things that you can say to a survivor immediately after she/he discloses what happened and throughout the helping process in order to promote healing and recovery, such as:
 - *I believe you.*
 - *I am glad that you told me.*
 - *I am sorry this happened/is happening to you.*
 - *This is not your fault.*
 - *You are very brave to talk with me.*

Behavioral Messages are what we do. It is important to give information **NOT** advice.

- **Giving advice** means telling someone what you think they should do and how you think they should do it. Giving advice to survivors of GBV/DV/IPV is not useful in helping a survivor because you do not know if you are giving the right advice. **We should never give advice to a survivor.**
- **Giving information** means explaining facts to someone so they can make an informed decision about what to do. In GBV/DV/IPV cases, giving information is useful because it empowers a survivor to have control over her/his choices, and shows that you respect a survivor’s opinions and judgments.

SURVIVOR-CENTERED ATTITUDES

We all bring our own attitudes and beliefs to this work, and some of these attitudes may be harmful to survivors without knowing it. It is important to recognize and begin to challenge our own attitudes. Survivor-centered attitudes involve putting the best interests of the survivor first, ensuring that all work is based on what survivors want and need rather than our own opinion of what s/he wants and needs.

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES & BELIEFS	SURVIVOR-CENTERED SUPPORTIVE AND TRUE ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS
If women or girls who behave inappropriately are raped, it is their fault.	Rape is a choice made by the perpetrator to use his power over another person. It is never the fault of the survivors. Acts of GBV/DV/IPV are always the fault of the perpetrator.
If a survivor cannot answer the questions asked during an interview, they are making up the incident.	The psychological and physical responses trauma may lead a survivor to be confused and unable to answer questions about the event.
A woman causes her husband's violence because of her own behavior.	Violence is a choice of the perpetrator, and it never is justified to use in relationships.
A person who forces another person to have sex is just someone who cannot control their sexual desire	Most rapists are motivated by power, anger, and control, not the desire to have sex. Men can control their sexual impulses. Most rapes are planned in advance—the man is in control when he rapes.
IPV/DV is a family matter and should be handled within the family.	IPV/DV should be a significant safety and health concern for a community and is a crime in many countries. Thousands of women are killed every year due to IPV/DV. IPV/DV survivors require community support.
Most men beat their wives only after they have been drinking or using drugs.	Drugs and alcohol can be a contributing factor to GBV/DV/IPV. However, only the choice to use violence, power and control by the perpetrator is the cause of GBV/DV/IPV. Not all men who drink or use drugs beat their wives. Men who use alcohol and drugs make decisions about who they do beat which shows that they are choosing who to be violent towards.
A survivor should always report their case to the police or other authorities.	Survivors should be able to choose who knows about their case and how it is handled.
A man cannot rape his wife.	Women should be allowed to communicate to their sexual partners when they do and do not want to have sex. Many countries now have laws against rape in marriage. Married women have the same right to safety as unmarried women. Most women who live with DV/IPV have experienced some form of sexual abuse within their marriage.
It is the job of a field worker to determine whether a survivor is telling the truth.	It is the job of the field worker to support the survivor, believe in her/him, and provide options and resources.
Women are raped if they wear the wrong clothes or go to the wrong places.	Rapists look for victims they think are vulnerable, not women who dress in a particular way. No person, whatever their behavior or dress, “deserves” to be raped.
Women often lie about being raped.	Global research shows that, similar to report of other serious crimes, a very low percentage of rape reports are given falsely. This is the same as for other serious violent crimes.
Rape only occurs outside, at night when the victim is alone.	Rape can and does occur anytime and anyplace. Many rapes occur during the day and in the victims' homes, e.g., girls and women with disabilities can be raped when they are left at home alone. In addition, often women or girls know the perpetrator (their stepfather, uncle etc.) These rapes often occur in the home.
If a person does not “fight back,” she/he was not really raped or abused.	Rape and violence are potentially life-threatening. Whatever a person does to survive the assault is the appropriate action. This may include not fighting because of fear.
Incest (rape or sexual abuse by family member) is rare.	Incest is common and happens in every community.
Sexual assault usually occurs between strangers.	By some estimates, over 80% of rape victims know their attackers. The perpetrator may be a relative, friend, co-worker, boyfriend, or other acquaintance.
A survivor should not think too much about the violence she has experienced. She should “forget it.”	Survivors who are not allowed to talk about the violence they experienced have a much more difficult time recovering from it. All survivors should be offered the opportunity to talk about the assault with those personally close to them if they wish to do so.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS & LEGAL RIGHTS AVAILABLE TO IMMIGRANTS

Under all circumstances, DV, sexual assault, and child abuse are illegal in the U.S. All people in the U.S., regardless of immigration status, are guaranteed protection from abuse under the law. Any victim of DV – regardless of immigration or citizenship status – can seek help. All people in the United States, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, are guaranteed basic protections under both civil and criminal law. Laws governing families provide individuals with:

- The right to obtain a protection order for the survivor and child(ren).
- The right to legal separation or divorce without the consent of the spouse.
- The right to share certain marital property. In cases of divorce, the court will divide any property or financial assets the survivor and spouse have together.
- The right to ask for custody of child(ren) and financial support. Parents of children under the age of 21 often are required to pay child support for any child not living with them.

Survivors should consult with a family lawyer who works with immigrants to discuss how any of these family law options may affect or assist them.

Immigration options available for victims of DV, sexual assault, or other crime:

There are three ways immigrants who become victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and some other specific crimes may apply for legal immigration status for themselves and their child(ren). A victim's application is confidential and no one, including an abuser, crime perpetrator or family member, will be told that you applied.

- **Self-petitions for legal status under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).** VAWA has improved assistance to and services for immigrant victims of DV by providing options for victims to obtain lawful status in the U.S. without having to rely on abusers. Allows victims of abuse who are close relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to file for status on their own.
- **VAWA Battered Spouse or Child Waiver** are legal protections for immigrant victims of abuse who have conditional permanent residence. Survivors can file for a “waiver” of this “joint petition” requirement so that they do not need their spouse's participation in getting the condition removed from their conditional permanent residence status.
- **VAWA Cancellation of removal:** If a survivor is in removal (deportation) proceedings before an immigration judge, and the survivor is abused by her U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse, it might be possible to apply for “VAWA cancellation of removal.” If granted, the removal process can be ended, and the survivor can receive legal permanent residence.
- **U-nonimmigrant status** (crime victims) offers immigration protection for victims and is also a tool for law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes without fear of being deported. If a U visa is granted, a survivor will get a work permit and the ability to apply for lawful permanent residence (green card) after three years.

These immigration options each have specific requirements that must be established. Survivors should consult with an immigration lawyer who works with victims of domestic violence to discuss how any of these immigration benefits may affect or assist them.

Services available to victims of DV and sexual assault in the U.S.:

Federal law mandates that any hospital receiving government funding must provide care for all patients needing **emergency medical care** until a patient is stabilized. This law covers all individuals regardless of immigration status and does not require proof of citizenship or insurance. So, if an individual is undocumented and experiencing abuse and goes to a hospital, they have the right to not answer questions about proof of insurance or citizenship.

Immigrants and undocumented immigrants have a constitutional right to **file for custody of their children**. [National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project](#), [LIFT Justice for All](#), and [WomensLaw.org](#) all provide information about the intersection of family court and immigration laws. Reaching out to one of these resources can be a helpful first step in determining options.

Many migrants and refugees may not feel safe **talking to law enforcement**. However, it is important for everyone, including undocumented immigrants, to prepare themselves emotionally for the possibility of interacting with police, especially if they find themselves in a situation where they may need to call or text 911, call police, or file a protective order. If law enforcement asks about status, migrants and refugees have the right to stay silent or choose not to answer.

In the United States, victims of crime, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status, can access help provided by government or non-governmental agencies, which may include counseling, interpreters, safety planning, emergency housing and even monetary assistance.

Important documents that survivors should keep in an accessible location, if it is safe to do so:

- Birth certificates, including children's.
- Passports, visas to enter the U.S., and/or I-94 (expired or current), including children's.
- Documentation of immigration status for self, children, and if possible, for abusive spouse
- Driver's license or other photo IDs
- Any documentation to or from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, such as applications or petitions for employment authorization, status adjustment, temporary protected status, etc.
- Work authorization card, paycheck stubs
- Green card
- Alien number
- Medical/immunization records
- Evidence of residence with abuser, such as marriage certificate or legal documents with both names
- Photographs
- Social security cards
- Public assistance documents or cards
- Children's school records
- Checkbook, credit cards, cash.
- Documents, orders, petitions related to protection orders, custody of children.

SAFETY TIPS FOR SURVIVORS LIVING WITH AN ABUSER

If a survivor cannot leave an abusive relationship, the following tips can be shared to help keep the survivor and her/his children safe. The following suggestions cannot guarantee safety but can help make survivors safer. Some of the following suggestions may not be helpful to suggest to some survivors based on their specific circumstances, particularly if the suggestion may place the survivor in greater danger. Please use your judgment in making these suggestions

Before Violence Happens

Prepare Yourself

- Practice different ways to get out of your house safely. If you have children, practice with them as well.
- If you can, always have a phone available that you know you can get to. Know the phone numbers to call for help such as 911 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline on 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). It might also be useful to have a local domestic violence shelter's phone number handy.
- Let friends or neighbors who you know and trust what is going on inside of your home. Make a plan with them so that they know when you need help and what to do, such as calling the police or banging on your door. Create a signal or safe word, like flashing the lights on and off in your home or putting something in a window, which will alert them that you need help.
- Keep a copy of important papers/documents with you or in another safe place in case you have to leave in a hurry.
- If you can, call a domestic violence hotline or speak to an immigration attorney who specializes in domestic violence to discuss your options and to talk to someone, even if you feel that you are not ready to take further action.
- Think of several reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night that the abuser will believe in case you feel that the violence is about to erupt, and you need an excuse to get out.
- The abuser may have patterns to his/her abuse. Try to be aware of any signs that show s/he is about to become violent so that you can assess how dangerous the situation may be for you and your children.

Prepare Your Surroundings

- Be aware of anything the abuser can use as a weapon. If you can, try and keep any sharp or heavy objects that s/he may use to hurt you, like a hammer or an ice pick, out of the way.
- Know where guns, knives, and other weapons are. If you can, lock them up or make them as hard to get to as you can.
- Figure out where the “safer places” are in your home – the places where there aren't weapons within arm's reach. If it looks like the abuser is about to hurt you, try to get to a safer place. Stay out of the kitchen, garage, or other rooms where items can be used as weapons are kept.
- Try not to wear scarves or long jewelry as these could be used for strangulation.

During a Violent Episode

- Trust yourself. If you feel like the violence is escalating, try to remove yourself and your children from the situation if you can.
- Try to maintain distance from the abuser and avoid getting backed up against a wall. It might be useful to keep something between you and the abuser, like a table.

- If the abuser does start to harm you, do not run to where the children are; the abuser may hurt them too.
- If there is no way to escape the violence at that moment, make yourself a small target. Dive into a corner and curl up into a ball. Protect your face and put your arms around each side of your head, wrapping your fingers together.

After a Violent Episode is Over

Once you feel it is safe to do so, consider:

- Seeking medical attention for you and your children, if needed, and saving any documentation provided as part of your treatment.
- Calling the police if it is safe for you to do so and if you want to.
- Making a police report or filing for a restraining order if you think this could be useful in your specific situation.
- Contacting a local domestic violence organization to seek support, shelter, counseling, or other services.
- Taking pictures and other evidence of any injuries, destroyed property or clothing, etc., and saving it safely where the abuser cannot find it.

RESOURCES

The national resources below provide 24/7, free, confidential support, information, and referrals.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

www.ndvh.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE (1-800-656-4673)

www.rainn.org

National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline (24/7)

Videophone: 1-855-812-1001

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

www.missingkids.com

Teen Dating Violence Hotline (24/7)

1-866-331-9474 or text "LOVEIS" to 22522

Domesticshelters.org

Search for shelters and domestic violence programs near you.

The National Center for Victims of Crime

1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255)

1-800-211-7996 (TTY)

www.ncvc.org

National Immigrant Women’s Advocacy Project

1-202-274-4457

www.niwap.org

Tahirih Justice Center

National, nonprofit organization that serves immigrant survivors fleeing GBV. Provide free legal services and social services case management and operate an Afghan Asylum Helpline.

1-888-991-0852 (Pashto and Dari interpreters are available; Mon – Fri 10 am to 4 pm EST)

www.tahirih.org

National Human Trafficking Resource Center

1-888-373-7888 or text “BEFREE” to 233733

<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en>

ICNA Relief – Women’s Transitional Housing

malika@icnarelief.org (Malika MacDonald, National Director of Transitional Housing)

www.icnarelief.org/transitional-housing

Multiple locations: Jamaica, NY (2); Houston, TX; Dallas, TX; Atlanta, GA; Detroit, MI (2); Baton Rouge, LA; Phoenix, AZ; Anaheim, CA; Sacramento, CA; San Diego, CA; Orlando, FL; Palm Beach, FL; Tampa, FL; Raytown, MO; Chicago, IL; Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Alexandria, VA; Denver, CO; Seattle, WA

Temporary housing, case management (public benefits, legal and immigration support, mental health services and healthcare); Muslim-specific program; Shelter and support services; National program.

WomensLaw.org provides [referrals for immigration attorneys](#) and extensive information on the subject of [legal options for immigrant survivors](#) — always consult with a lawyer before proceeding with any course of action that could impact your immigration status.

Institute for Muslim Mental Health

<https://muslimmentalhealth.com/findtherapist/>

A network of mental health professionals in the U.S. that serve the Muslim population.

SEEMA

info@seemamentalhealth.com

www.seemamentalhealth.com

Directory of Muslim therapists and mental health professionals.

STATE RESOURCES

Although national and state resources are provided below, you are encouraged to identify what other GBV/DV/IPV resources may be available in your local area, as well as other available services in your local area, such as DV/GBV/IPV specialists, shelters, health centers, and mental health services. Also consider services provided by communities such as mosques/churches, women's groups, and social service agencies.

FLORIDA		
Florida Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-500-1119 or 1-800-621-4202 (TDD) or Florida Relay 711 or 1-800-955-8771 www.fcadv.org	
Florida Legal Assistance	1-305-247-1057 www.vidalaw.org	
Jacksonville Area Legal Aid	(904) 356-8371 (866) 356-8371 https://www.jaxlegalaid.org/	Legal services to DV victims, including immigration petitions for abused spouses and Refugee Immigration Project which helps refugees, asylees, Afghan SIV holders.
Hubbard House (Jacksonville)	Hotline: (904) 354-3114 or (904) 354-3958 Shelter: (904) 354-3114 Phone 2: (904) 354-0076 https://www.hubbardhouse.org/ hubbardhouse@hubbardhouse.org	Provides services to victims of domestic violence and their families, including 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, outreach center, individual counseling, children's services, court advocacy, and career help.
Women's Center of Jacksonville	Hotline: (904) 721-7273 Phone: (904) 722-3000 https://thewcj.org/	Locations in Arlington, S.A.F.E. Center in Southside, and satellite locations in Nassau and Baker Counties. Educational, mental health counseling, peer support, rape victim advocacy services, certified Rape Crisis Center for Duval, Nassau, and Baker Counties (forensic exams for sexual assault survivors of all genders over the age of 18).
Refuge House (Tallahassee)	Hotline: (850) 681-2111 Madison and Taylor counties Hotline: (850) 584-8808 (24 hours) https://refugehouse.com/ receptionist@refugehouse.com	Direct services to victims of DV and sexual assault: 24-hour hotline, legal assistance for injunctions for protection, compensation, and immigration, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rape crisis program, support

		groups, safety planning, supportive counseling, referrals.
Harbor House of Central Florida	Hotline: (407) 886-2856 https://www.harborhousefl.com/ contactus@harborhousefl.com	DV services: 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, court injunctions, and educational training
Radiant Hands (Tampa)	813-922-8889 tampa@radianthands.org www.radianthands.org	Social services, self-sufficiency, counseling, Muslim-specific program and support services
PENNSYLVANIA		
Pennsylvania Immigrant & Refugee Women's Network (PAIRWN)	717-980-3888 https://www.pairwn.org/ pairwn@pairwn.org	helps refer, advocate, network, educate, and empower immigrant women
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence	1-800-932-4632 or 1-800-553-2508 (TTY) www.pcadv.org	
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape	1-800-692-7445 www.pcar.org	
Center for Victims (Pittsburgh)	24/7 Hotline: 866-644-2882	Emergency services, legal and financial assistance, counseling services, housing, support services, children's services, community education
Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh	24/7 Hotline: 412-687-8005 Text: 412-744-8445	Emergency services, legal and financial assistance, counseling services, housing, support services, children's services, community education
Women Against Abuse (Philadelphia)	24/7 Hotline: 866-723-3014 Legal Center: 215-686-7082	Emergency shelter & services, legal and financial assistance, counseling services, housing, support services, children's services, community education
Lutheran Settlement House (Philadelphia)	24/7 Hotline: 866-723-3014	Emergency services, legal and financial assistance, counseling services, housing, support services, children's services, community education
Turning Point of Lehigh Valley (Allentown)	24/7 Hotline: 610-437-3369	Emergency shelter & services, legal and financial assistance, counseling services, housing, support services, children's services, community education

Philadelphia Legal Assistance	215-981-3800 www.philalegal.org	Legal services for abuse, custody support, divorce, public benefits
TEXAS		
Asian Family Support Services (Austin)	Hotline: 877-281-8371 or 512-651-3743 https://www.afssaustin.org/ saheli@saheli-austin.org	Asian and other immigrant families dealing with domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking. Services: crisis intervention, advocacy for legal and immigration matters, individual and group counseling, help applying for protective orders, safety planning, food and shelter, Economic Empowerment Program, Legal Services Program.
The Family Place (Dallas)	Hotline: 214-941-1991 https://www.familyplace.org/	Emergency shelter and transitional housing, child development center, safe campus learning center (grades K-2), community-based counseling, children's counseling, prevention education, supervised child visitation, Battering Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP), job readiness program, and legal assistance
Mosaic Family Services (Dallas)	Hotline: 214-823-4434 https://mosaicervices.org/ home@mosaicervices.org	Serves victims of trafficking, family violence, refugees, and unaccompanied minors. Legal services such as immigration and family law; emergency housing & shelter; comprehensive client advocacy; counseling & emotional support; community referrals; comprehensive case management; education & orientation about American culture and systems.
SafeHaven of Tarrant County (Fort Worth)	877-701-7233 (817) 536-5496 (Resource Center) https://www.safehaventc.org/	Shelter and a transitional living program, legal services, and domestic violence prevention education. Services are mainly provided to victims of domestic violence



Houston Area Women's Center	Hotline: (713) 528-7273 (Domestic Violence) or (713) 528-2121 (Rape Crisis) https://hawc.org/ info@hawc.org	Violence prevention and community education, two 24-hour hotlines, shelter, counseling, children's court services, sexual assault services, and domestic violence services
Tahirih Justice Center (Houston)	(713) 496-0100 https://www.tahirih.org/houston@tahirih.org	Services to immigrant survivors of DV, sexual assault, and trafficking. Services include free immigration, family, and civil legal services, forced marriage protection, social services, policy advocacy (domestic and sexual violence, gender-based asylum, fair immigration laws, and more), and training and education.
Asians Against Domestic Abuse (Houston)	Hotline: (713) 339-8300 https://www.aadainc.org/ info@aadainc.org	Support services, legal advocacy, Transitional housing, rental assistance, culturally sensitive counseling, outreach awareness, and referrals and resources. Languages spoken: Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Cantonese, Chinese, Filipino, Punjabi, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, and Urdu
Aid to Victims of Domestic Violence (AVDA) (Houston)	Hotline: 713-224-9911 https://avda.org contact@avda-tx.org	Victim advocacy, a legal advocacy program, counseling services, and a Battering Intervention & Prevention Program
An-Nisa Hope Center (Houston)	304-701-7937 Helpline: 832-324-9111 info@annisa.org www.annisahopecenter.org	Case Management; Counseling; Helpline; Education and Outreach; Short-term Financial Assistance; Jumpstart program; Youth mentorship program; Women's empowerment trainings; Support services and helpline; Muslim-specific program
Daya (Houston)	713-842-7222 Helpline: 713-981-7645 contact@dayahouston.org www.dayahouston.org	Languages: South Asian languages including Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Bengali, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam. Long-term, holistic case management; Crisis

		intervention; Long-term mental health treatment; Assistance with safety planning, protective orders, police reports and public benefits; Legal consultation and representation; Financial assistance for housing, legal services, transportation, childcare and education; Immigration support.
Hope's Door New Beginning Center (Plano)	Hotline: 972-276-0057 https://hdnbc.org/	24-hour hotline, individual and group counseling for adults, a children's program, emergency shelters, a transitional housing program, legal advocacy, LGBTQ services, and community education
Texas Muslim Women's Foundation (Plano)	Hotline: 972-880-4192 https://tmwf.org/	Culturally sensitive and trauma-informed agency. 24-hour hotline, 2 emergency shelters, counseling, immigration and family law, Zahra Khan support, transitional and HUD rapid re-housing, youth leadership program, interfaith education, 15+ languages spoken
Family Violence Prevention Services (San Antonio)	Hotline: 210-733-8810 Shelter: (210) 930-3669 Ext. 1206 https://fvps.org/ fvps-exdir@satx.rr.com	Shelter for women and children, 24-hour crisis hotline, individual and group counseling, on-site attorneys for legal assistance, on-site school for children (pre-k – grade 12), on-site adult education, case management services, transitional housing, and on-site primary medical and dental care
American Gateways (San Antonio)	(210) 521-4768 ext. 232 or 236 https://americangateways.org/	Serves the low-income immigrant community in Central Texas. Legal services, such as assistance with T and U visas, asylum, Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) petitions, representation in immigration court, permanent residency and naturalization, and family-based petitions. Community outreach and

		education resources to immigrant communities.
Legal Aid for Survivors of Sexual Assault (LASSA)	1-844-303-SAFE (7233), Option 1 https://lassatexas.org/	Divorce, custody, unpaid wages, benefits, work permits and immigration status
Texas Advocacy Project	800-374-HOPE (https://www.texasadvocacyproject.org/ info@texasadvocacyproject.org	Free legal services and education for survivors of DV and their families.
WASHINGTON		
King County Domestic Violence Hotline	Call or chat 24/7: 206-737-0242 or 977-737-0242	
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project	Seattle Office: 206-587-4009 Granger Office: 509-854-2100 Wenatchee Office: 509-570-0054 Tacoma Office: 206-816-3893 https://www.nwirp.org/	Direct legal services
Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse (Pullman)	Crisis: 208-883-4357 or 509-332-4357 or 1-877-334-2887 https://atvp.org/	
Dove Project (King County)	Help Line: 206-462-0911 www.vashondoveproject.org info@vashondoveproject.org	Survivor services, youth and family education, mental health services, and community outreach, legal services, short-term emergency shelter, safety planning
Domestic Abuse Women's Network (DAWN) (South King County)	24/7 Hotline: 425-656-7867 https://www.dawnrising.org/	
Refugee Women's Alliance (Seattle)	24/7 Crisis Line: 888-847-7205 https://www.rewa.org/	Help applying for protective orders, developing safety plans, and accessing safe shelters, family law services, support groups, mental health counseling
API Chaya (Seattle)	206-467-9976 Helpline: 877-922-4292 or 206-325-0325 info@apichaya.org www.apichaya.org	Helpline; Resources and Referrals; Advocacy-based Counseling; Safety and Support Planning; Basic Legal Advocacy; Support Groups, support services and helpline. Asian-specific program
Solid Ground Broadview Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Program (Seattle)	Emergency Housing Line: 1-800-621-4636 Office: 206-694-6700 https://www.solid-ground.org/get-help/housing/	

Catherine's Place (Tacoma)	253-572-3547 https://www.catherineplace.org/cplace@catherineplace.org	Individual services, healing/creative arts, ongoing groups, leadership development and community building
Tacoma Community House (Tacoma)	253-383-3951 (Advocacy Team) https://www.tacomacommunityhouse.org/info@tacomacommunityhouse.org	Free services and support for people harmed by DV, sexual assault, human trafficking. Safety planning, basic need assistance, referrals to community resources and services, legal advocacy, interpretation, translation, immigration assistance
Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County	24-Hour Hotline: (425) 25-ABUSE or (425) 252-2873 https://dvs-snoco.org/info@dvs-snoco.org	Emergency shelter, supportive housing, legal advocacy, and support groups.
YMCA Of Spokane	Hotline: 509-326-CALL (2255) https://ywcaspokane.org/programs/help-with-domestic-violence/	Free services
Eastside Legal Assistance Program (King County)	(425) 747-7274 (English) https://elap.org/info@elap.org	Legal services

LOOK, LISTEN, & LINK

DO'S, DON'TS AND WHAT TO SAY		LISTEN	
 LOOK		 LISTEN	
DO'S	DON'TS	DO'S	DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DO allow the survivor to approach you. Listen to their needs. ✓ DO ask how you can support with any basic urgent needs first. Some survivors may need immediate medical care or clothing. ✓ DO ask the survivor if s/he feels comfortable talking to you in your current location. If a survivor is accompanied by someone, do not assume it is safe to talk to the survivor about their experience in front of that person. ✓ DO provide practical support like offering water, a private place to sit, a tissue etc. ✓ DO, to the best of your ability, ask the survivor to choose someone s/he feels comfortable with to translate for and/or support them if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ DO NOT ignore someone who approaches you and shares that s/he has experienced something bad, something uncomfortable, something wrong and/or violence. ✗ DO NOT force help on people by being intrusive or pushy. ✗ DO NOT overreact. Stay calm. ✗ DO NOT pressure the survivor into sharing more information beyond what s/he feels comfortable sharing. The details of what happened and by whom are not important or relevant to your role in listening and providing information on available services. ✗ DO NOT ask if someone has experienced GBV, has been raped, has been hit etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DO treat any information shared with confidentiality. If you need to seek advice and guidance on how to best support a survivor, ask for the survivor's permission to talk to a specialist or colleague. Do so without revealing the personal identifiers of the survivor. ✓ DO manage any expectations on the limits of your confidentiality, if applicable in your context? ✓ DO manage expectations on your role. ✓ DO listen more than you speak. ✓ DO say some statements of comfort and support; reinforce that what happened to them was not their fault. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ DO NOT write anything down, take photos of the survivor, record the conversation on your phone or other device, or inform others including the media. ✗ DO NOT ask questions about what happened. Instead, listen and ask what you can do to support. ✗ DO NOT make comparisons between the person's experience and something that happened to another person. Do not communicate that the situation is "not a big deal" or unimportant. What matters is how the survivor feels about their experience. ✗ DO NOT doubt or contradict what someone tells you. Remember your role is to listen without judgment and to provide information on available services.
<p>Examples of what to say...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → "You seem to be in a lot of pain right now, would you like to go to the health clinic?" → "Does this place feel OK for you? Is there another place where you would feel better? Do you feel comfortable having a conversation here?" → "Would you like some water? Please feel free to have a seat." 		<p>Examples of what to say...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → "How can I support you?" → "Everything that we talk about together stays between us. I will not share anything without your permission." → "I will try to support you as much as I can, but I am not a counselor. I can share any information that I have on support available to you." → "Please share with me whatever you want to share. You do not need to tell me about your experience in order for me to provide you with information on support available to you." → "I'm sorry this happened to you." → "What happened was not your fault." 	

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LOOK, LISTEN, & LINK (continued)



LINK

DO'S

- ✓ **DO** respect the rights of the survivor to make their own decisions.
- ✓ **DO** share information on all services that may be available, even if not GBV specialized services.
- ✓ **DO** tell the survivor that s/he does not have to make any decisions now, s/he can change their mind and access these services in the future.
- ✓ **DO** ask if there is someone, a friend, family member, caregiver or anyone else who the survivor trusts to go to for support.
- ✓ **DO** offer your phone or communication device, if you feel safe doing so, to the survivor to contact someone s/he trusts.
- ✓ **DO** ask for permission from the survivor before taking any action.
- ✓ **DO** end the conversation supportively.



DON'TS

- ✗ **DO NOT** exaggerate your skills, make false promises or provide false information.
- ✗ **DO NOT** offer your own advice or opinion on the best course of action or what to do next.
- ✗ **DO NOT** assume you know what someone wants or needs. Some actions may put someone at further risk of stigma, retaliation, or harm.
- ✗ **DO NOT** make assumptions about someone or their experiences, and do not discriminate for any reason including age, marital status, disability, religion, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, identity of the perpetrator(s) etc.
- ✗ **DO NOT** try to make peace, reconcile or resolve the situation between someone who experienced GBV and anyone else (such as the perpetrator, or any third person such as a family member, community committee member, community leader etc.)
- ✗ **DO NOT** share the details of the incident and personal identifiers of the survivor with anyone. This includes the survivor's family members, police/security forces, community leaders, colleagues, supervisors, etc. Sharing this information can lead to more harm for the survivor.
- ✗ **DO NOT** ask about or contact the survivor after you end the conversation.



LINK (continued)

Examples of what to say...

- "Our conversation will stay between us."
- "I am not a counselor, however, I can provide you with the information that I have. There are some people/organizations that may be able to provide some support to you and/or your family. Would you like to know about them?"
- "Here are the details of the service including the location, times that the service is open, the cost (if applicable), transport options and the person's name for who you can talk to."
- "Is there anyone that you trust that you can go to for support, maybe a family member or a friend? Would you like to use my phone to call anyone that you need at this moment?"
- "When it comes to next steps, what you want and feel comfortable with is the most important consideration."
- "Do not feel pressure to make any decisions now. You can think about things and always change your mind in the future."
- "I cannot talk to anyone on your behalf to try to resolve the situation. But what I can do is support you during our conversation and listen to your concerns."
- "It sounds like you have a plan for how you would like to go from here. That is a positive step."

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OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO MIGRANT & REFUGEE SURVIVORS OF GBV/DV/IPV

1. Determine whether there are safety concerns and then explain the options and services available.
2. Emergency medical care
3. Police assistance
4. Criminal prosecution of the perpetrator
5. Community-based services are necessary to protect life and safety.
6. Crime victim services
7. Domestic violence services
8. Emergency shelters
9. Civil protection orders
10. Child custody and support
11. Crisis counseling
12. Short-term housing

If referred to a DV specialist, survivors should ask about:

- Filing an injunction for Protection petition at no cost
- Planning for safety
- Helping understand the legal system.
- Free confidential counseling and support
- Staying at a free DV shelter or another safe place
- Other available services that may be needed