Module 3: Risk assessment and safety planning

Timeframe: app. 4 hours

Content:

Topic 1: Risk Assessment

Topic 2: Safety Planning with Survivors

Topic 3: Safety Planning for Agencies

General objectives:
This module aims to
- make participants aware of the high risk of repeat violence in the area of domestic violence against women and children
- increase knowledge about factors influencing dangerousness
- develop basic skills for safety planning with survivors
- and make participants aware of the importance of looking after their own safety when working in the area of violence prevention
Background information

Topic 1: Risk Assessment

The risk of repeat offences is very high in the case of domestic violence against women; isolated occurrences of abuse are rare. Countries are bound by national and international laws and policies to fight violence against women and “have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence, whether those acts are perpetrated by the state or private persons, and provide protection to victims” (Council of Europe 2002: para II).

Repeat victimisation is the most reliable risk-marker for domestic violence against women and their children. The greater the frequency of previous assaults, the more likely it is that further assaults will occur. A second important risk-marker is that of separation: the majority of murders, attempted murders and acts of serious violence are committed when victims attempt to leave their abusers. Paradoxically, it may be safer, so to speak, to stay in a violent relationship than to end it (Walby and Myhill 2001; Richards 2003). Separation from an abusive partner is associated with increased risk of femicide, particularly when the perpetrator is highly controlling (Campell 2003). Research shows that victims of homicide have often been in contact with agencies for assistance prior to their death. The speed and quality of service providers’ responses to victims’ emergency requests may have a direct bearing on whether or not a serious assault becomes a homicide (Richards 2004). Incidents of violence also happen after separation in the context of child contact or conflicts over custody.

Over the last decades instruments for risk assessment have been developed through research and practice. Two of the well known ones are the Danger Assessment Scale (Campbell 1995) and the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) instrument developed by the British Columbia Institute on Family Violence. In Europe law enforcement agencies started to engage in routine risk assessment. For example, the London Metropolitan Police has started to implement the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Model (SPECSS) (Humphreys et al 2005).

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1 Risk markers or risk factors are 'characteristics that increase the likelihood of reassault' (Gondolf 2002, p. 167).
2 http://www.dangerassessment.org/WebApplication1/ March 15, 2008
3 http://www.stopyouthviolence.ucr.edu/summer/SARA%2520-%2520Spousal%2520Assault%2520Risk%2520Assessment%2520Guide.pdf March 15, 2008
Listening to victims as a core strategy in risk assessment

It is important to notice that risk assessment instruments are not instruments to predict re-offending but to assess the level of danger for the victim. Thus, they are instruments to improve prevention, not prediction.

Critical analysis concludes that risk assessment tools should not be used as the only basis for safety planning but as one source of information and that such instruments should not be a substitute for listening to women (Websdale 2000). The importance of listening to women’s assessments of their partner’s dangerousness is supported by several studies. Research by Weisz, Tolman and Saunders (2000) showed that the addition of survivors’ predictions to risk factors significantly improved the accuracy of prediction of severe re-assault. Gondolf (2002) found in his four-year follow-up evaluation of US perpetrator programs that women’s perceptions of safety and the likelihood of re-assault emerged as the most consistent and strongest risk markers. Gondolf concluded that “In fact, the women’s predictions were as useful as all the batterer characteristics combined” (Gondolf 2002, p.174).

Importance of multi-agency co-operation

Coordinated community response is an important instrument and – if carried out adequately – an effective tool for providing protection and safety to victims of domestic violence (Shepard/Pence 1999). Some countries, such as the UK, have developed specialised interventions for high-risk victims like the multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs); research shows that MARACs are effective in reducing the rate of re-victimisation (Robinson 2006).

Topic 2: Safety Planning with Survivors

While agencies like law enforcement might engage in internal risk assessment in order to decide which interventions are needed in a case and how intensive they should be, it is important to notice that risk assessment should never be an end in itself but serve to enhance the safety of victims. Thus, victims have to be involved in safety planning, their assessment of risk has to be taken seriously (see Gondolf 2002) and risk assessment has to occur parallel to safety planning with the victim.

Agencies that do not provide ongoing safety planning and ongoing support to the victims should not carry out risk assessment with the victims since this can lead to additional stress and insecurity on the victim’s side. Therefore, all victims should be supported by specialised women’s services, which as part of their standard practice carry out regular risk assessment and safety planning with the victim. Risk assessment should not be a single procedure but an ongoing process and it should be carried out repeatedly because risk factors can change.
Agencies that do not specialise in violence and are responsible only for part of the victim’s treatment and support—like health services—should only carry out basic risk assessment and safety planning in the acute crises situation; for instance, by asking the victim if she is afraid of going back home and helping her to find a safe place or taking her to hospital (see Module 2 Health Care). Such services should not engage in in-depth risk assessment and leave this task to specialised services.

**Topic 3: Safety Planning for Agencies**

Every agency dealing with violence should have a policy on risk management and safety planning for the institution, for instance, in form of a Safety Plan (see Handout Safety plan for institutions). This is very important because only if agency staff take care of their own safety they will be able to help the victim. Special attention in safety planning has to be given to situations where violent men turn up at the agency and demand to know where the victim is or to see her immediately. It is very important to react immediately to that and to not accept any trespassing, aggressive behaviour or threats. The police should be called immediately in such cases and the staff and victims’ safety have to be given the highest priority. In a dangerous situation there is no time to discuss how to react appropriately. Therefore, it is of crucial importance that every agency has a Safety Plan and that all staff member know exactly what to do.

Example: The Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre in Vienna, which receives reports from police after domestic violence interventions and pro-actively supports victims and prevents re-offending, has a video monitoring system as well as an alarm system with a direct line to the police. Every staff member on duty has to wear a special band on her wrist; in a situation of danger she has to alarm the police by pushing the button on it. The Intervention Centre also has a safety plan and a person responsible for implementing it; trainings for staff on how to deal with dangerous situations are carried out regularly.

**Approaching the offender**

Staff at domestic violence agencies are often worried and doubtful about confronting an offender who may accompany the victim or come to visit her. A typical concern is that addressing the problem might cause the abuser to commit further acts of violence or take revenge. However, experience has shown that offenders who do not have to face any consequences of the violence they have committed tend to repeat their violent acts. They feel safe, in particular if the victim keeps silent or does not dare to take steps against the abuse. If nobody reacts to the violence, abusers might conclude that what they have done is tolerable. Therefore, it is necessary to react to acts of violence, to confront abusers and to state clearly that violence is a crime that it is not tolerable or justifiable in any case and that it has consequences. The offender should realise that he must not commit any further violence, in his own interest as well, as otherwise the situation would get worse for him.

If the abuser is confronted, the victim has to be informed beforehand and adequate safety measures have to be taken. **Victims should never be left alone with the risk of further violence.**
ATTENTION: The offender should not be confronted if he is angry or aggressive or has trespassed rules of the institution. In this case the safety of the victim(s) and also the staff of the agency is the most important concern. It is necessary to set clear limits and not to get involved in discussions with aggressive abusers. In such a case the police should be called immediately.

References


Shepard, M. F. / Pence, E. L. (Ed) (1999): Coordinating Community Response to Domestic Violence – Lessons from Duluth and Beyond, Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi


Practical part

Exercise Topic 1: Risk Assessment

Timeframe: 90 minutes as a minimum:
- 25 minutes for group work
- 20 minutes for presentation of group work results
- 45 minutes for input by trainer and discussion

Aims and objectives: This exercise aims to make participants aware of the risk factors in domestic violence. Participants learn about risk factors and are enabled to identify them in practice.

Methods: group work (4-6 participants per group), presentation of group work results, input by trainer and discussion

Material: Handout Topic 1 - Risk Factors

Description of the exercise: Case study from Austria

Mrs. Y has been married to her husband for one and a half years; for both of them it is the second marriage. Both are originally from Turkey and have children from previous marriages but only the 5 year old daughter of Mrs. Y lives with them. Mr. Y’s children live with his ex-wife and Mrs. Y’s other children are already grown up and live on their own. Before they got married, Mr. Y was charming and polite to his wife. But soon after the wedding he becomes very controlling and tries to prevent her from visiting her family or going out with friends. He wants her to account for every minute she is out of the house and if she comes back from work later than usual he explodes and accuses her of being a bad wife and whoring around with her colleagues.

Mrs. Y, who is an emancipated woman, does not put up with his behaviour and does not submit to his “orders”. As his controlling behaviour and possessiveness gets worse she tells him that she wants to divorce him.

From this moment on he starts to threaten that he will kill her if she leaves him; he also threatens that he will kill her children. Mrs. Y has the Austrian citizenship, but Mr. Y does not and depends on her for his visa.

Despite his threats Mrs. Y files a petition for divorce. When he finds out he beats her and threatens again to kill her if she does not withdraw the petition for divorce.

Mrs. Y reports the physical violence and the threats to the police. The police issues an expulsion and barring order obliging Mr. Y to leave the family home for 10 days. Despite the expulsion of her husband Mrs. Y decides to move out of the family home with her daughter because she is very afraid of her husband. A staff member of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre contacts Mrs. Y after the police intervention and also advises her not to go back home.

Mr. Y continues to be violent; he follows Mrs. Y to her work place, and threatens her there as well. He says that he will kill her and flee to his home country and that her case will be in the newspaper. Mrs. Y calls the police but he flees before they arrive. She reports the threats to the police again; the police informs the prosecutor’s office who decide not to
arrest Mr. Y. With the support of the Intervention Centre Mrs. Y obtains a court order that prohibits her husband to come to her home, to her work place or to contact her. But Mr. Y continues to follow and threaten her.

Questions for the group work:

1. What is your assessment of the dangerousness of Mr. Y?
   - not dangerous
   - dangerous
   - very dangerous
   - extremely dangerous

   The group should come to a joined opinion about the degree of dangerousness and find arguments to support their assessment.

2. What are your criteria for dangerousness? What risk factors can you identify in the case story?

Participants are asked by the facilitators to write the results of their group work on a flip-chart and to present it to the whole group.

Notes for trainers:
This case study is based on a real case and unfortunately the woman was killed by the husband. It might be shocking for participants to hear the outcome of the story but it is necessary that they realise how important it is to take the safety of victims seriously and to be able to identify risk factors.

Trainers should make participants aware of all relevant risk factors but also of the risk for the victims that stem from differing opinions among agencies regarding risk assessment. In the case study above the prosecutor’s office completely underestimated the risk. The trainers should point out that it is very important that all agencies involved use the same risk assessment tool, that they are aware of the risk factors, and that risk assessment is a routine standard in their every day work.

Unfortunately, homicides and cases of severe violence occur in every country and trainers should point that out and refer to statistics. Trainers may also decide to use a case study from their own country, which may be easier because they know more about the background.

Exercise Topic 2: Safety Planning with Survivors

Timeframe: 120 minutes (including approx. 10 minutes break)
15 minutes preparation for role play
20 minutes role play
25 minutes reflexion on role play
10 minutes break
50 minutes presentation of results, discussion and input trainer
Aims and objectives: The aim of this exercise is to learn about important elements of safety planning and to develop skills on how to do safety planning with survivors.

Method: Role play in small groups (6 persons), reflexion in small groups, presentation, input by trainer, discussion

Material: Handouts “Risk Assessment with Survivors” and the Handout “Safety Planning with Survivors”.

Description of the exercise:

Role play: Safety Planning with Susan

Roles:
Susan, woman seeking help
Counsellor in a counselling service
2 coaches
2 observers

Scenario:
Susan B seeks help from a counselling service in her home town. She reports that her husband repeatedly beats her and sometimes also the children. He also verbally abuses her and threatens to kill her if she leaves him. Susan wants to leave but she is afraid of what he would do if she does leave him. She asks the counsellor what she could do for her safety.

Preparation:
The participant playing the counsellor gets the Handouts “Risk Assessment with Survivors” and the Handout “Safety Planning with Survivors”. Together with one of the coaches she/he prepares herself/himself for the role play. The participant playing Susan also prepares herself/himself with help from the second coach.

Role play observers:
In addition to observing the role play the observers also facilitate the exercise and pay attention to staying on time. One of them observes Susan, the other the counsellor.

Questions for reflexion:

Susan:
How did the talk go for the character of Susan?
What was helpful? What was difficult?
Did she feel safer after the talk? What had helped her feel safer?
What else would Susan have needed?

Counsellor:
How was the talk for the counsellor?
What was the counsellor’s goal?
What did the counsellor try to make Susan feel safer?
What was good? What was difficult? 
What else could I have said/done differently as a counsellor?

The observers facilitate the reflexion by asking the questions and take notes of the answers. Then they give their feedback on the role play. Finally, they present the results of the reflexion to the whole group.

**Notes for trainers**
The facilitator should emphasise again that risk assessment and safety planning always have to go hand in hand and that detailed risk assessment like the BIG 26 in Handout Risk Assessment with Survivors should only be carried out by specialised victims services who are able to offer long-term and intensive support. Thus, the goal of the exercise is not that all agencies use a detailed risk assessment instrument but rather that they become familiar with such instruments and aware of risk factors.

**Topic 3: Safety Planning for Agencies**

**Timeframe:**
- 90 minutes
- 30 minutes for group work
- 60 minutes for group work reports, discussion and input by trainer

**Aims and objectives:** The exercise aims to make participants aware of the importance of safety for staff in their own agency, to facilitate discussion about existing safety planning in their agencies and to learn about standards for Safety Plans in agencies.

**Method:** group work (5-6 participants), reports from group work, discussion, input by trainer

**Material:** Handout Safety Planning for Agencies

**Description of the exercise:**
Participants are asked to form groups, to appoint a reporter and somebody taking notes and to discuss the issue of safety in their own agency along the following (and additional) questions:

**Questions for group work:**
- What kind of dangerous situations did or could occur for staff and clients in our agency?
- Does our agency have a safety plan for staff? If yes, what does it contain and how is it implemented?
- Does our agency have technical safety precautions? If yes, what kind of?
- What are the strong points concerning safety in our agency? What are the weak points? What would we like to have?

Important results of the discussion are written down on a flip-chart and presented to the whole group by the rapporteur.
Notes for trainers:
The facilitators encourage participants to take their own safety seriously and to demand from their management that staff and client safety are dealt with continuously and that a Safety Plan is drawn up and implemented. The facilitators present key points of a safety plan from the Handout Safety Planning for Agencies.
Handouts Topic 1:

Handout  Risk Factors

Adapted from: WAVE-Network (Women against Violence Europe) (2006): Bridging Gaps - From Good intention to good cooperation⁴, Manual, DAPHNE project Bridging Gaps, Vienna

The risk of repeat offences is very high in the case of domestic violence; isolated occurrences of abuse are rare. In times of separation or divorce, the risk of violence tends to rise: The majority of murders, attempted murders and acts of serious violence are committed when the victims attempt to leave their abusers. Ironically, it may be safer, so to speak, to stay in a violent relationship than to end it. The factors listed below have been identified in international studies as risk factors for a high degree of danger. The more factors apply in a specific case, the higher the risk that acts of violence will be repeated or that the violence may increase or escalate.

- **Previous acts of violence against the partner and the children or other members of the family:** The perpetrator’s history of abuse and the forms and patterns of violence he has used are important indicators of his future behaviour. Thus, it is important to find out whether he has previously committed acts of abuse. Former convictions or reports to the police alleging violence are indicators of a strong potential for violence.

- **Separation and divorce are times of high risk:** As mentioned above, domestic violence often escalates when a victim wants to leave the abuser. Therefore, this phase must be considered as an additional risk factor for escalation.

- **Severity and frequency of violent acts:** The severity and frequency of violent acts also play a role in assessing the dangerousness of an abuser. Acts of severe violence include armed violence, use of objects to injure a victim or strangling. Perpetrators who have committed frequent, severe acts of violence are particularly dangerous.

- **Violence against former partners or family members:** Acts of violence committed against former partners or family members also indicate a risk factor for dangerousness.

- **Acts of violence by other family members:** Violence committed by family members of the perpetrator is another risk factor. It is especially difficult for the victim to escape the violent relationship, because in such cases the woman concerned is often controlled by the whole family, which may make it impossible for her to flee.

⁴ http://www.wave-network.org/start.asp?b=15
Acts of violence outside the family: A great majority of domestic violence offenders commit violent acts only within the family circle. However, if they show violence outside the domestic sphere as well, this indicates a general tendency to use violence. Such perpetrators may also assault the staff of support centres or authorities. Thus, safety planning for shelters and agencies is of particular importance.

Possession of weapons, use of weapons: If a perpetrator possesses weapons (legally or illegally), this increases the risk of acts of armed violence. The risk is especially high if he has already used arms in the context of former acts of violence, or if he threatened to use a weapon in the past. Therefore, the abuser’s licence to carry firearms should be revoked. Violent perpetrators may also use techniques of combat sports or aggressive animals (fighting dogs) as weapons.

Abuse of alcohol or drugs: While violence is not caused by alcohol and drugs, in persons who are inclined to use violence, they may lower the threshold of using violence and thus contribute to an escalation of violence.

Threats: Threats should always be taken seriously. The perpetrator’s threats express his intention and his plans, and often indicate further acts of violence that are to be expected. It is wrong to assume that persons who “only” use threats are not dangerous, but are just the proverbial barking dogs that seldom bite. Practical experience has shown that severe violence is often preceded by threats. Therefore, threats are important indicators of the dangerousness of a perpetrator.

Threats of murder/serious coercion: Threats of murder are dire threats that must always be taken seriously. In many cases of domestic murder, the victims had repeatedly been threatened with murder before they were killed.

Threats of suicide, depression: Threats of suicide should always be taken seriously as well. There are many examples of perpetrators who kill themselves as well as their partner, other family members or a new partner. If an abuser threatens to commit suicide, a physician should always be consulted to assess the risk of the perpetrator’s harming himself or others. Although many abusers use threats of suicide as a means of emotional blackmail, one can never be sure whether they will carry out the threat. Depression may also be a risk factor for the dangerousness of a perpetrator. Depressive phases are characterised by tunnel vision: One does not see any alternative; nothing seems to make any difference. At this stage, violent acts may escalate.

Extreme jealousy and possessiveness: Abusers who kill or severely injure their partners are often possessed by the desire to own their partners. They are extremely jealous and some regard every man around their partner as a rival. They control and monitor the partner and constantly accuse her of infidelity. This may lead to delusional jealousy, which is especially dangerous because the abuser is losing his grip on reality.
Extremely patriarchal concepts and attitudes: Extremely patriarchal concepts and attitudes may also be risk factors with regard to dangerousness. A typical view in this context is that a girl or young woman must not lead a self-determined life, but has to obey her father as he is the head of the family. Such attitudes may also mean that a girl or a young woman is strongly persuaded or forced to marry, or that she is prevented from getting a divorce. What is particularly dangerous is a situation in which very rigid concepts of honour and sexuality prevail and women become victims of violence or are even killed if they do not obey these rules or if they are accused of having dishonoured the family.

Persecution, psychological terror (stalking): Many perpetrators are not ready to accept a separation from their partner and try to prevent it by all means, also by using violence. There are abusers who continue to commit violent acts after a separation and threaten their former partners for many years.

Danger for children: Threats to harm the children have been identified as a risk factor. Children are also exposed to violence after separation or divorce of the mother, since they cannot leave a violent father and, during visits, children may become victims of violence. The abuser’s aggressions against the partner may also extend to the children, and he may take revenge by abusing or even killing them. Therefore, safety planning must always integrate the children, and fathers who use violence should not be granted visitation rights before they can prove that they have effectively tackled their violence problems.

Non-compliance with restraining orders by courts or police: If a perpetrator does not meet obligations such as compliance with restraining orders, protective orders requiring him to stay away from the victim, or other orders by the courts or youth welfare authorities, this also indicates a high-risk situation, because it shows that the perpetrator is not willing to observe the restrictions that have been defined nor to change his behaviour.

Possible triggers: One has to bear in mind that certain situations may lead to a sudden escalation of violence. Often violence is triggered by a change in the relationship (e.g., when a woman takes a job against the will of her partner, when she looks for help or files for divorce, or when a divorce summons is served upon her husband). Therefore, it is very important to consider which situations or events may trigger violence and to take adequate safety measures in order to forestall violence.
Handouts Topic 1

Handout  Risk Assessment with Survivors

Over the past decades, several instruments to assess the danger of a perpetrator of domestic violence have been developed through research and practice. However, these instruments are not designed to measure or predict risk but rather represent a tool for prevention. They serve to gather information systematically and in conjunction with previous experiences and knowledge in order to find out if a victim is at risk of serious harm. In multi-agency cooperation it is important to share information and engage in coordinated risk assessment. **Risk assessment should be carried out with the victims of violence and only if there is a relationship of trust and support, preferably by a woman’s service that specialises in domestic violence against women and children. Risk assessment should always be accompanied by safety planning.**

**The BIG 26:** The Domestic Abuse Intervention Program (DAIP) in Duluth/USA developed 26 questions to assess the dangerousness of a perpetrator:

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**The more questions are answered with „yes“, the higher the risk of serious harm!**
Handout Topic 2: Safety Planning with Survivors


The following points should be considered in supporting women victims of violence and their children:

- Whom can she talk to about her situation, and whom can she trust? (friends, relatives, employer, teachers in school, etc.)?
- She should pack a bag with her most important belongings and those of her children, especially with all her important documents, and leave it with someone she can trust. Remind her always to have the keys for the house/apartment and the car with her so that she won’t leave them behind.
- If there are weapons in the house, explore ways to have them removed.
- In an emergency, what works best to keep her safe?
- Whom can she call in an emergency?
- Encourage her to call the police if the violence starts again. How can she call the police? Does she have a mobile phone? (The number of the police can also be dialled if the phone is blocked or if there is no credit balance left; 112 is the number of the European emergency line operating in all the countries of the EU.)
- Can she devise a signal with the children or the neighbours to have them call the police or get help if she cannot do it herself?
- If she needs to escape immediately, where can she go? Help her think through several places where she can go in an emergency. Write down the addresses and phone numbers and tell her to keep them someplace where the perpetrator won’t be able to find them.
- If she has to escape, what are the escape routes?
- Remind her that, in the middle of a violent assault, it is best to try to run away, or sometimes to placate the assailant, anything that works to protect her and the children.

If the woman is planning to leave the violent partner:

- How and when can she leave most safely?
- Does she have transportation, money, and a place to go?
- Does she know how to get to the nearest women’s shelter? Does she know the telephone number? Advise her to write it down and keep it where her partner won’t find it.
- What can she and others do to prevent her partner from finding her?
- Whom in her support network does she trust to protect and support her?
- How will she travel safely to and from work or school/kindergarten to pick up the children?
- What community/legal resources will help her feel safer?
- What custody and visitation provisions would keep her and the children safe?

5 http://www.wave-network.org/start.asp?b=15

PRO TRAIN: Improving multi-professional and health care training in Europe –
Building on good practice in violence prevention
Can she get a restraining order to prohibit the perpetrator from coming near her or contacting her?

**If the woman has separated from the violent partner:**
- Increasing safety measures such as changing or installing safety locks on doors and windows;
- If possible, installing a better security system (window bars, locks, better lighting, a fire extinguisher, etc.);
- Instructing the children or family/friends to call the police in a situation of danger;
- Talking to school teachers and child care providers about who has permission to pick up the children, and developing other special precautions to protect the children;
- Building up a social network to support her, e.g., finding women’s support services, asking family, friends, colleagues for support, etc.;
- Obtaining a barring/restraining order by the police/the court, if possible.

**Safety bag**
- Advise the client to have the following available in a safety bag, in case she and the children need to escape:
  - Passports, birth certificates;
  - Marriage certificate;
  - Health and social security cards;
  - Immigration documents;
  - Driver’s licence, car papers;
  - Divorce papers, other legal documents and important contracts;
  - Phone numbers and addresses of family, friends and community services;
  - Clothing and comfort items for herself and her children;
  - Keys (house, car, etc.);
  - Children’s favourite toys, school books, etc.
Handout Topic 3: Safety Plan for Agencies

Adapted from: WAVE-Network (Women against Violence Europe) (2006): Bridging Gaps - From Good intention to good cooperation, Manual, DAPHNE project Bridging Gaps, Vienna

Services and institutions can only support and protect victims successfully if they also take care of their own safety. For the police safety measures for police officers usually are part of daily routine. In social and health services threats to the safety of employees is not always an issue. Protecting the employees and the clients against all sorts of violence as well as supporting them should be part of the policy of every organisation involved in domestic violence prevention. Every agency dealing with domestic violence should develop and implement a Safety Plan along the following guidelines:

Steps of safety planning

1. Policy of the institution – Safety Plan
   • clear policy of the agency concerning the occurrence of violence, harassment or discrimination – planning of safety measures; this includes:
   • development of a written safety plan for the support of employees and clients in cases of violence (Who is responsible for support, what kind of support – e.g. a lawyer, some time off,...)
   • comprehensive and written safety plan, about what has to be done in dangerous situations; informing everyone about the safety plan
   • planning of implementation of the safety plan on all levels: Association / agency of the institution, Management, Employees, Clients
   • regular (annual) evaluation of the Safety Plan.

2. Prevention of violence and implementation of the safety plan
   • Technical safety precautions (safety door, video, direct line to the police...)
   • Monitor daily security measures (e.g. Who is allowed to enter the institution? When are the doors open, when closed? Who has to take what safety precautions?)
   • Regularly informing new employees about the safety measures
   • Regular ‘safety practice’ (checking the safety precautions, discussing the measures with everybody)
   • Early warning system: with imminent danger (e.g. an aggressive client), take timely measures, discuss the situation in the team meetings, don’t let it ‘wait’
3. Follow-up after occurrences of violence

- Plan for what has to be done immediately after the violence - Who has to do what and when (e.g. call the police / make a report, ‘institutional ban’ for clients, emergency session…)
- Supporting directly affected people (find out their needs, organise and realise supporting measures – which kind of support, competency…)
- Find out the needs of the other employees, organise and realise supporting measures (e.g. supervision)
- Reflecting on the processes concerning safety planning (What did work, what did not?)
- Revising and improving the Safety Plan.