

## **European Network for Work with Perpetrators (WWP EN)**

### **Guidelines to develop standards for programmes working with perpetrators of domestic violence**

**Version 2, 2017**

#### **Guidelines for Standards**

Guidelines for standards are necessary to assure the quality of effective and safe work with perpetrators of domestic violence. The safety for victims is a priority and interventions should ensure that the work does not endanger the partners or children of their participants.

WWP EN member organisations are expected to work to the guidelines or standards in their own country, and can follow these guidelines for standards. Any WWP EN member that does not have guidelines/standards in their own country is expected to work to these. Any other European organisation working with perpetrators is welcome to use these to inform their work, as long as they prioritise their own country's guidelines or standards, where these exist. Agencies should also refer to the following Council of Europe publications: suggested standards at 8.18 (pp 57-58) in the document, "Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services" (2008) and the "Domestic and Sexual Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Article 16 of The Istanbul Convention" (Hester and Lilley, 2014), particularly the "Checklist for Perpetrator Programmes" on pages 31-32. Services should also refer to the 2017 WAVE Handbook on "Prevention and Support Standards for Women Survivors of Violence: A Handbook for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention."

Programmes in the European countries are different in target group, funding, legal basis, and in many other aspects and conditions of work. Therefore, these guidelines do not intend to give detailed instructions. Instead, they intend to offer perpetrator programmes a framework for developing specific standards for work that is responsible and accountable.

Updates are continually required to integrate new research findings and best practice. As such, these guidelines are designed to be a living, dynamic document subject to an ongoing process of consultation and review.

## Terminology

- “Perpetrators”

For perpetrator programmes to succeed it is important that violence is not defined as the innate destiny of men, but as a chosen behaviour that they can modify.

“Perpetrator” could be seen as a term that labels and totally identifies a man as violent (i.e. in his character), leaving little room for the prospect of change. WWP EN recognizes the importance of the social and cultural roots of violence, and, as such, believes that men’s violence is located within a vast phenomenon that engages all men raised in an abusive, violent and patriarchal society. Therefore, we may consider it unhelpful to use terminology and language that flattens violence with identity. It might be relevant to promote terms that are consistent with the possibility of social change when talking about abusive men.

However, it is also well evidenced, that male violence against women has been and often still is seen as a “private matter”. One that women do not have a right to escape. In the framework of domestic violence as violation of human rights, we need to uphold the necessity to recognise it as a crime. It might, therefore, be too early to change the terminology as there has not yet been a sufficient shift in public awareness that allows this linguistic change.

- “Victims”

There are similar issues with the terms used for those on the receiving end of violence. Agencies may wish to reflect on using the term “survivor” or an equivalent word that separates the identity of the person from having been victimised by a partner. On the other hand, many women and children in Europe are murdered by (ex) partners or (step) fathers annually, so do not survive.

WWP EN understands the social and cultural dimensions of violence, and that violence against women and children is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. From this standpoint, it is argued that victimisation from male violence is a risk that all women face. As such, many organisations or individuals make the point that being a “victim” should not be labelled as a character defect of an individual, and that there is, therefore, not necessarily a “journey” from “victim” to survivor”. This also relates to discussions about violent men being held accountable for their behaviour, rather than this resting with those on the receiving end.

Living with or leaving violence is a complex task. Many people hold that women show an enormous amount of resistance and resilience in dealing with abuse, even if there are seemingly small actions or ways of demonstrating this, or if they do not survive. This needs to be reconciled with the understanding that long-term damage can and does result from abuse.

## The Istanbul Convention

As well as individual country laws or legislation, member states of international organisations like the United Nations and the Council of Europe (as well as the European Union countries) are bound by the relevant international law and/or legislation. The main legal instrument in Europe to eliminate violence against women in Europe is the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). It obliges parties to take the necessary measures to promote and protect the rights of women to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.

WWP EN shares the direction of and promotes the Convention in all its work. Our overall mission is to prevent violence in close relationships as a gender-based phenomenon and to foster gender equality. More specifically, to improve the safety of women and their children and others at risk from violence in close relationships, through the promotion of effective work with those who perpetrate this violence, mainly men.

This is also relevant to the WWP EN aims, the most important being that programmes incorporate a gendered perspective, i.e. an understanding of the relationships of violence with structural inequalities and power relations between men and women and with the underlying social constructions of masculinity and femininity. Further, they need a critical awareness of the intersections of gender with other social locations such as nationality, race, class, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion or others.

With regard to work with perpetrators, Article 16, on “Preventive intervention and treatment programmes”, states that:

- (1) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns.
- (2) Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support treatment programmes aimed at preventing perpetrators, in particular sex offenders, from re-offending.
- (3) In taking the measures referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, Parties shall ensure that the safety of, support for and the human rights of victims are of primary concern and that, where appropriate, these programmes are set up and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims.

WWP promotes the latter specifically in its mission and aims, and works actively to enable the achievement of this.

## The scale and nature of the problem

Male violence against women occurs in every European country and is a serious and widespread problem. Domestic violence against women is a pattern of coercion or coercively controlling behaviour by the intimate partner or ex-partner, which includes, but is not limited to, physical and sexual violence, emotional/psychological abuse, isolation, economic abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment and stalking.

These guidelines use the understandings and definitions from the Istanbul Convention. The following definitions are the most relevant:

“Violence against women” is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;

“Gender” shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men;

“Gender-based violence against women” shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately;

These aspects of the Convention’s preamble are also of note:

- “Recognising that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over, and discrimination against, women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women;
- Recognising the structural nature of violence against women as gender-based violence, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men;
- Recognising, with grave concern, that women and girls are often exposed to serious forms of violence such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour” and genital mutilation, which constitute a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and a major obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men;
- Recognising that women and girls are exposed to a higher risk of gender-based violence than men;
- Recognising that domestic violence affects women disproportionately, and that men may also be victims of domestic violence;

- Recognising that children are victims of domestic violence, including as witnesses of violence in the family;”

Agencies running perpetrator programmes carry a great responsibility for all those involved. Work with male perpetrators of domestic violence aims to stop the violence and enhance the safety of victims of domestic violence (women and children). However, it should also be seen as embedded in a wider process of cultural and political change towards abolishing gender hierarchies, gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as other forms of personal and structural violence and discrimination.

### **Extending definitions of violence**

Many programmes in the sector have long understood the need to work to an extended definition of domestic violence that encompasses a complex assessment of behaviour, context and impact.

This means paying attention to the following issues:

- Abuse restricts victims’ everyday lives in a situation where they are continually “micro-managed” (Kelly and Westmarland 2016).
- The cumulative effects of coercive control over time, serve to “entrap” women and that are gendered in terms of tactics and consequences (Stark, 2007).
- Abused women have long talked about how psychological abuse impacts on their physical and mental health, some stating that this is worse than the effects of physical violence.
- Existing inequalities influence how abuse works and impacts on people, as Hester (2017) points out, it sustains and strengthens gender inequalities, in that the uses and threats of abuse control women’s lives and reinforce men as more powerful, and are experienced differently in different contexts and social relations.

Any understandings that focus only on incidents, physical violence or criminal behaviour is not going to address these issues, and therefore the success and impact of a programme is going to be, at best, limited, at worst, dangerous.

If perpetrator programmes are to be truly effective in addressing abusive men’s behaviour and successfully accountable to women and children and their experiences of domestic violence, they need to recognise and address these in their programme design, implementation and outcome measurements. Further, if we recognise that women and children’s responses to abuse are forms of resistance, this has implications for how partner services operate, and how we work with perpetrators on their behalf (Vlais, 2014).

## **A. Principles for perpetrator work**

### **A.1. Aims and objectives of the work**

The main goal of the work with male perpetrators is to increase the safety of the victims of violence.

Perpetrator programmes must give priority to the safety, human rights and dignity of the women partners and their children at every level of the programme. The goal of perpetrator programmes should be explicit both for the facilitators and for the men they work with. This may create tensions that need to be managed, such as not affording men complete confidentiality or suspending places for not informing the programme of their partner's contact details.

Women and children's safety is a very complex and far-ranging issue. This relates not only to a good relationship between the perpetrator programme and the service/s supporting the (ex)partner, but to all the other agencies involved in a family's life as well.

### **A.2. Collaboration with victim support services and intervention systems**

There has to be the willingness and principles of work of putting safety of women and children as a priority for perpetrator programmes. To effectively deal with domestic violence, perpetrator programmes should be an integrated part of a holistic intervention system and actively participate in inter-agency alliances and networks against domestic violence. Cooperation and participation in alliances and networks should be acknowledged and funded.

It is particularly important to cooperate closely with services for women victims and their children to ensure their safety as well as to achieve an integrated approach to domestic violence. These principles of co-operation should be implemented, for example, by including representatives from women's support services as experts in steering committees and advisory boards of perpetrator programmes.

WWP EN supports non-competition for funds, however, given that the problem of gender-based violence is at epidemic proportions, the stakeholders working against this violence are many and that the funding awarded is not nearly adequate, this will set up dynamics that contribute to services being forced into competition for funding.

WWP EN believes that there should be the provision of more funding. There should be more money with a focus on integrated approaches, not separating out the issues of a community approach, but in lobbying for more funding to certain standards, so that this community

response can include perpetrator work. As such, we want to see work with perpetrators in partnership with local women's services.

It is the responsibility of perpetrator programmes to reach out to the specialised women's support services to establish communication in an attempt to set up collaboration. However, it is also recognised that this may not always lead to an effective partnership. Nevertheless, perpetrator programmes should make constant and ongoing efforts to converse and cooperate with women's services.

Collaboration and networking with all other services, agencies and professionals working with domestic violence (e.g., the justice system, social services, health services, and child protection services) is of vital importance, so that programmes contribute to the safety of women and children and hold violent men accountable.

### **A.3. Theoretical understanding**

Perpetrator programmes should be based on the understanding that violence against women and children is unacceptable and that violent men are responsible for their use of violence. All perpetrator programme staff should work in ways that do not excuse, condone or minimise and condemn any form of victim blaming, but that also treat the man with respect. Each perpetrator programme further needs to have explicit theoretical understandings, which include, but are not limited to, the following aspects:

- Gender theory - understanding of the gender hierarchy (including social, cultural, religious, ethnic, and political influences), gender-based male socialization, constructions of masculinity and femininity, power and inequality, structural violence.
- Extended definitions of domestic violence and types of abuse.
- Origins of violence - understanding of the causes and mechanisms that lead to violence.
- Theory of intervention/theory of change – understanding of how the proposed intervention will enable participants to change their violent attitudes and behaviours. This should also include an understanding of resistance to change and the phases through which an individual may go through.

Programmes may also wish to consider the following in their programme design:

- The impact of psychological abuse on women and children;
- Domestic violence in same sex relationships;
- That domestic violence can be a precursor to partner homicide, as such, perpetrator programmes may consider how to highlight their role as a preventative measure;

- Domestic violence perpetrators causing harm to others: birth outcome (pregnancy is not a protective factor), children and other family members;
- The possible differences between aggression, violent resistance and coercive control;
- Measures to maximise programme retention and completion;
- Intake procedures and assessments for suitability;
- The importance of attention to motivation (internal and external) and any changes in this over time.

These considerations should lead programmes to formulate them into a written rationale of their approach and work with perpetrators. This could be termed a “model of work” or a “programme logic model”. This should be a living document that all staff understand and work to.

#### **A.4. Models of understanding violence**

Programmes should use an ecological model to understand the complex factors and pathways that enable and influence perpetrators’ use of abuse. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- society (macro) – e.g. impunity, devaluing women, masculinity, children’s status, media violence;
- institutions (meso) – entitlement, failed sanctions, discrimination, “honour” codes, poverty;
- family/peers/community (micro) - peer approval, stereotypes, myths, rewards, opportunity, family stress, obedience code;
- individuals (ontological) – masculine sale, emotional and cognitive deficits, growing up in families unable to provide basic care, depersonalised sex, stimulus abuse, early trauma.

One such model is an interactive one developed by Hagemann-White in 2010. As suggested by Hester and Lilley (2014), although a programme cannot necessarily effect change at every level, it should strive to understand the factors at all levels that influence how a perpetrator can take responsibility for his violence and unlearn this behaviour on an individual level. As such, programmes can interrupt his chosen abusive behaviours and encourage him to create relationships based on respect and notions of equality. Key aspects of this work include addressing constructs of masculinity and associated entitlements, emotional regulation, cognitive distortions and enabling him to increase empathy for women and children.

Perpetrator work explicitly integrates both the cultural and clinical approach in achieving attitudinal and behavioural change in their target group. Providers (e.g. group

facilitators/trainers/counsellors) should use methods in group or individual settings to encourage, lead and model change in the targeted beneficiaries. However, belief systems and structures of micro and macro levels of society may support resistance and undermine change. Providers should be fully aware of this and address this in the programme content.

Finally, perpetrator programmes' theoretical background should be embedded within a wider framework of promoting social change, eliminating violence against women and, more broadly, decreasing violence in society.

## **B Important issues for perpetrator work**

### **B.1. Partner contact and services**

Generally, there are specific issues that are critical for women whose men have enrolled in a perpetrator programme. These issues must be dealt with in order to meet the criteria for increasing safety for women and children.

Article 16.3 of the Istanbul Convention states that parties, when setting up perpetrator programmes, should have “the safety of, support for and the human rights of victims” as their primary concern. “Domestic and Sexual Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Article 16 of The Istanbul Convention” (Hester and Lilley, 2014), elaborates on this further to point out that attendance of her partner on a programme may have a bearing on a victim’s decision process around staying or leaving her abuser, or give her false hopes about the change a programme can enable for abusive men. As such, partner contact and services should cover the following:

- a) Increase the partner’s safety. Perpetrator programmes have to assure that the men’s partner are informed about the goals, the content of the programme and about its limitations (e.g. no guarantee for non-violence).
- b) Inform about how her partner can use the programme attendance to manipulate or further control her.
- c) Inform about the possibilities to receive support and safety planning themselves.
- d) Include information provided by partner in risk assessment and evaluation of level of violence of the perpetrator.
- e) Be warned if their partner drops out of the programme or if facilitators perceive a risk to the women or children.
- f) Make sure that contact with the partner is voluntary for her.
- g) Not imply (that victim has) any responsibility for the men’s participation or progress in the programme.
- h) Assure that women’s needs be respected and efforts have to be made to minimize any possible risk related to contacting them.

All of these aspects require that there is exchange of information and shared procedures for evaluation of risk between the partner service and perpetrator programmes. Different services and countries might have different requirements in law as to the possibility of information sharing and privacy issues. It is true that, in these services, it is very important that the women and men seeking assistance should be involved in the process. Programmes for both parties should try as much as possible to work on a basis of direct consent from “clients”.

It is important to stress that most of these issues are particularly critical in countries that are starting perpetrator programmes and in which there is not a consolidated path to building trust and rapport between services tackling domestic violence.

## **B.2. Children**

Children are always directly or indirectly affected by domestic violence. There is not a large body of research on risk for children in Europe, however, more severe the violence against the woman, the more severe it is against the children (Hester, 2005).

A specific child protection policy including the concrete steps to be taken when a child is at risk should be established for the programme, according to the local context and legal situation.

Including the perspective of these children should be a priority of perpetrator programmes both in the direct work with the men and at the level of integration in a wider intervention system and cooperation with other agencies. The effects of domestic violence on children and the participants' fathering should be part of the curriculum of perpetrator programmes.

## **B.3. Approaches and attitudes**

Perpetrator programmes are based on the belief in the ability of abusive men to change.

Perpetrator programmes should hold the men they work with accountable for the violence they use and emphasise the need to take on responsibility for their violent behaviour and its consequences. Even so, it is essential that practitioners treat the perpetrator with respect and as persons of intrinsic worth.

One of the basic assumptions of programmes should be that the use of violence is a learnt choice, and, as such, can be unlearned. Therefore, one of the first aims of the work with the men should be supporting perpetrators to recognise that they choose to use violence.

Discourses of denial, justification, excuses or blaming others or the circumstances should be respectfully challenged and deconstructed.

A detailed focus on the violent or abusive behaviour reconstructing their concrete actions, thoughts and feelings, helps men to recognize their active role in the use of violence. A close exploration of the many different impacts and consequences of their violence on their partners and children helps to foster men's empathy, accountability and motivation to change.

Practitioners need to ensure that the clients, victims as well as perpetrators, do not come to any harm through the approaches of the programme. They should recognise that in some cases (e.g.

alcohol misuse, personality disorders) it may be more appropriate to refer the man to a service that better suits his these needs, or to address them before working with him on addressing his abusive behaviour, to or to collaboratively work with this service to address issues alongside their use of violence.

The approach of the majority of perpetrator programmes is a combination of cognitive-behavioural techniques, with a strong educational component, an attitude that abuse/violence is not acceptable and backed by gendered understandings of the context and impact of domestic violence. Evidence suggests that more structured programmes can have moderately successful outcomes such as reducing physical violence towards women (Gondolf, 2002). Moreover, programme completion is important for achieving its objectives, so that measures to enhance regular attendance and active engagement during sessions should be considered.

An overarching consideration is how to create environment that favours change. The treatment environment must be safe enough to encourage the participants to feel comfortable in disclosing information, and enable them to take the risk of identifying and changing their attitudes related to gender relations, entitlement etc.. Given that personal change is a difficult process and that programmes are attending to women and children's safety as a priority, a safe environment is necessary to facilitate the targeted profound changes required from the perpetrators.

#### **B.4. Risk assessment**

Programmes should have systematic assessment of risk factors, risk management and safety planning. Identifying men with a potentially high risk of being violent enables facilitators to initiate appropriate measures for victims' safety and provides important information on special treatment needs, or provides guidance as to whether the programme itself is even suitable. Programmes need to consider if they will take on men who show a high level of risk, and, if so, at what level or in which circumstances they will not work with abusive men.

Risk assessment and management should be undertaken and documented at intake, then at set times during the programme and whenever the perpetrator's behaviour or situation indicates a possible change in risk. These risks may relate to his past or current behaviour, complicating issues such as mental health states or substance misuse, high-risk situations or his partner's vulnerabilities. For a full discussion of risk factors, programmes should refer to the WAVE Handbook on "Prevention and Support Standards for Women Survivors of Violence: A Handbook for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention."

The victim's assessment of the situation is usually the most accurate (Saunders 2000), possibly except in attempted and actual femicide where, in one study, only around half of women

predicted this (Campbell et al 2003). Since the risk of homicide greatly increases after women separate from their abusers, or whilst they are planning this, particular attention should be paid to risk and safety planning at these times and up to at least 6 months after separation. Attention should also be paid to any suicidal ideation from the perpetrator, which may present slightly differently, but may also influence the risk of both his harm to himself and potentially to others (such as in cases of “family annihilators”). It is generally suggested that the use of a recognised risk assessment tool, plus professional judgment (as informed by the victim’s views) is the most accurate way to address risk assessment. If possible, as many sources of information as possible should be included, such as police records and information from any other agency attending to the participant or his family. The information should be used to manage the perpetrators’ risk and inform safety planning with his (ex)partner and any children.

Programmes should also contribute to a multi-agency assessment of risk factors, or encourage this if systems are not already present. Risk assessment can be instrumental in helping other agency staff, such as health, social or children’s services, to understand the dynamics of a relationship, including within a specific cultural context, and respond appropriately.

However, limitations to risk assessment procedures or tools used should be taken into account at all times. Most important is the acknowledgement that risk is not a static phenomenon but one that constantly changes over time (Gondolf 2012, Deacon and Gocke 1999), partly because risk is subject to so many changeable variables.

### **B.5. Staff qualification**

For a high standard of work with perpetrators, and in addition to their basic training (for example in psychology and/or the nature of domestic violence), the following competencies for facilitators may be considered:

**Different ‘Levels’** i.e. basic (B) versus ongoing (O), i.e. needs continual practice, reflection, knowledge building.

**Knowledge:** Articles / Books / Workshops / Lectures / Presentations / Chatrooms / Webinars.

- Recognise abusive behaviours and underlying beliefs. (B)
- Understand effects of violence on victims. (B)
- Recognize manipulation and misuse of children in partner abuse. (B)
- Recognise substance abuse. (B)
- Basic understanding of mental health issues, including personality disorders. (B)
- Maintain confidentiality and understand its limitations. (B)
- Understand legal responsibilities of programme providers. (B)

- Understand the theoretical basis of all aspects of the programme including theories on the origin of violence. (O)
- Understanding of trauma and attachment. (O)

**Skills:** Practice / Workshops / Discussion / Reading and Practising / Agency specific skills training.

- Ability to convincingly present the benefits of participating and adhering to the Pp. (B)
- Maintaining coherence and consistency of the Pp. delivery. (B)
- Ability to use cultural and linguistic skills in work with diverse population of perpetrators. (B)
- Ability to work with relevant statutory and community services, especially on victim safety. (B)
- Ability to work in a way that is “gender informed”, for example, to use gender transformative approaches in the work. (O)
- Ability to work directly with perpetrators, including involuntary and low-motivated clients. (O)
- Developing and maintaining relationship or working alliance with a client. (O)
- Ability to motivate, especially regarding participants’ resistances, and work with a participant on treatment objectives setting. (O)
- Responding to abusive behaviours and manipulation in the session and with the partner. (O)
- Responding to verbal and nonverbal aspects of the participant’s behaviours and messages, including emotional state. (O)
- Manage group dynamics. (O)
- Recognizing and addressing participants’ parental role. (O)
- Knowledge of and capacity to maintain intake criteria. (O)
- Recognizing and responding to all aspects of risk and safety issues, including recognising suicidal ideation and risks to partner and children. (O)
- Developing and maintaining collaborative relations in a team. (O)
- Monitor, document and evaluate treatment achievements. (O)
- Ability to promote and disseminate information about work with perpetrators in public; engaging in public advocacy. (O)
- Reflect on own work and to seek advice/support where necessary. (O)

**Values:** Supervision / Discussion / Learning from Practice / Reflection / Codes of professional values and ethics.

- Understand processes of change, and the personal, interpersonal, social and structural factors which might support or inhibit such change. (B)
- A commitment to violence-free relationships and to gender equality. (O)
- Understand the role of gendered socialization, culture and masculinity in society, individual clients and oneself, and, therefore, the need to offer interventions that are gender-sensitive. (O)
- Understand the effects of working with violence on providers. (O)
- Capacity to receive and integrate feedback about own work. (O)
- Recognise the importance of self-reflection, including one's own needs for professional development. (O)
- Consideration of one's own experiences with and understanding of violence and its impacts. (O)
- Accountability at different levels. (O)

Systems should be in place to manage ethical issues such as confidentiality, data privacy, facilitator-client relationship.

### **B.6. Quality assurance, documentation and evaluation, including support to workers**

Perpetrator programmes should document and evaluate the programmes' outcomes and relate it to national and, where possible, international findings of best practice and research.

Success should not be measured on programme completion rates or self-reported levels of violence alone. Ideally, as Hester and Lilley (2014) advise, reports from women/partner should be collected wherever possible, in order to ascertain whether their and their children's perceptions of safety and quality of life has improved. These should be triangulated with the perpetrator's reports and any other available data sources.

Measures of success should go beyond the stopping of violence alone, such as the 6 measures of success identified by the Mirabal Project (Westmarland et al, 2010). These are as follows:

1. Improved relationships underpinned by respect and effective communication.
2. An expanded space for action.
3. Safety & freedom from violence.
4. Safe, positive & shared parenting.
5. An enhanced awareness of the impact of the man's violence on himself and others.

## 6. Safer, healthier childhoods.

WWP EN promotes the use of the WWP EN Impact Toolkit, as developed and piloted by several European partners. The toolkit provides unique opportunity to establish a network-wide ongoing data collecting for the purpose of evaluation and comparison of outcomes of different programs and in different countries.

The toolkit comprises of questionnaires aimed at men and women, and give the opportunity to compare situations and behaviour at four stages during the programme. Behaviour can be compared at 3 stages during the timeline of: ever in the history of the abuse; in the 12 months preceding the programme and during the programme.

This toolkit covers the areas listed in the Mirabal Project. The areas/themes covered are as follows:

1. Changes (motivation and perception of changes made).
2. Violent/abusive behaviour (physical, sexual, emotional).
3. Impact (and perceptions of impact).
4. Police call outs (clients' report of).
5. Children (situation, feelings, relationship with father, parenting).
6. Relationship (current fear level, status, hopes).
7. Well-being (partner only).
8. Reasons for abuse (perpetrator only).

Measures to prevent relapse may be in place which can make the outcome evaluation over time even more complex. Further, financial changes or imposed criteria may compromise outcomes, for example a request from funders to economise resources, such as a request to reduce the number of sessions or drop maintenance sessions. This, in turn, may negatively impact the safety of women.

Further, facilitators should create and implement measures to continuously monitor the quality assurance, internal processes and outcomes of their work.

Working with violence (perpetrators and victims) is emotionally taxing for the staff and providers. Organizations designing and delivering programmes should ensure regular support in order to maintain quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the programme, and to manage the risks for the mental health and functional consequences of the staff.

Regular team sessions and supervision are the most important measures to ensure the quality of services and well-being of the staff, in terms of preventing of job burnout. Programmes may also wish to provide opportunity for consultation and on-job retraining.

### **B.7. Family and couple therapy and mediation**

Programmes should be able to evidence that their intervention does not put the partner and any children in physical or emotional danger or re-traumatise them at all times (not just during the sessions). Joint sessions can be contraindicated and can result in enabling the perpetrator to escalate his levels of control, abuse and/or violence.

Further, programmes should also ensure that their interventions are not set up so that the female partner is implicated in the abuse or somehow even partly responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour, as this would collude with society's victim blaming tendencies.

### **B.8. Ethical and legal issues**

The implementation of the Istanbul Convention is significantly affected by the social, cultural and legal contexts of the various European countries. This has led to considerable variation as to how local laws are either practised or overlooked, specifically with reference as to the prosecution of gender-based violence by police and courts.

Key issues in relation to local laws are:

- A need for more training for e.g. police, probation, courts and judges (a difficult to reach profession) so that this helps create a more level field (i.e. brings provision into line where policies have been developed over a longer period of time and seem more effective.)
- A greater emphasis on the need for agencies to report violence, which however may be disempowering for victims if there are not sufficient supports in place for her, e.g. court advocates, legal protection, shelter accommodation. An emphasis on compulsory reporting will also have an effect on worker discretion at various points in the process, and again may expose victims of violence.
- There is also a need to acknowledge that as in some countries where there is a historical mistrust of agencies, such as the police, people are very unlikely to self-report.
- Issues of men attending programmes where the law does not compel men to do so, i.e. voluntary attendance. This seems to be a very difficult task in some cultures, however, it may also have something to do with the way in which programmes are presented. For example, in some countries, a programme for perpetrators might deter prospective clients, if seen solely as a negative, so programmes may need to promote what they offer to men as encouraging or positive for them.

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