
4. B. Staying Safe. How Do We Stay Safe?

4. C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. Who Can Help?

4. D. Setting Goals. What Do We Want?

4. E. Supporting Survivors or Victims. How Can We Help?

4. F. Taking Accountability. How Do We Change Violence?

4. G. Working Together. How Do We Work Together as a Team?

4. H. Keeping on Track. How Do We Move Forward?
Each set of tools also has the following information:

1. **What Is It?**
   - Definitions
   - Why it is important
   - Using the tools in this section
   - Further key questions

2. **Tool Across the 4 Phases**
   - Describes some questions or concerns likely to come up when using this set of tools depending on whether one is at the phase of 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparing, 3) Taking Action, or 4) Following Up (See Section 3.6. Interventions over Time: 4 Phases for more about the 4 phases)
   - Relates this category with other categories with which it might connect

3. **Tips**
   - Special things to watch out for or to be aware of

4. **Special Considerations**
   - Things that might be particularly important to think about from the perspective of:
     - Survivor or victim of violence;
     - Community allies or people intervening in violence; and
     - Person doing harm

5. **Facilitator Notes**
   - Tips and suggestions for the facilitator

6. **Real Life Stories and Examples**
   - Brief real-life stories that illustrate situations where these tools might be useful

7. **Tools**
   - Snapshots or short question guides to begin the process
   - Worksheets or longer question guides meant for more thoughtful and thorough reflection and exploration
   - Charts used to organize what can become complicated information
   - Checklists that can more rapidly move individuals or groups through a process for thinking about next steps
Mixing and Matching the Tools

Flexibility in Stage of Intervention

Interventions often do not take a straight course from beginning to end. They may involve many people with different interests and agendas. They need to be flexible to accommodate people’s changing schedules and varying availability. They must deal with human changes in mood, in willingness to go along with a plan, and with what can be very unexpected and surprising changes as people react emotionally to violence and to challenges to violence.

Most of what you may think of as these categories returned to again and again as groups make their way through interventions to violence. These eight categories are reminders of things that your group should consider and reconsider as you move through an intervention. They also contain tools that groups might find helpful to coordinate and make sense of what can be confusing and emotional situations of violence and intervention.

Individual versus Group Use of Tools

Some of these tools can be used for individuals to think through steps along the way. Some of them are more effectively used for groups. At times, individuals can think about these questions for themselves, and then bring them to compare with others in the group. In that way, they can be useful guides for group discussions and agreements that might involve compromise. They may also lead times where groups may recognize disagreement, even to a point that compromise is not possible.

Tools Take Different Amounts of Time

Snapshots or checklists typically take the shortest amount of time. Worksheets and charts take more time. However, it is difficult to predict how long each step of the process will take, depending upon the situation, the complexity and the level of emotion involved, and the number of people.
A.1. What Is Getting Clear?
A.2. Getting Clear Across the 4 Phases
A.3. Getting Clear Tips
A.4. Special Considerations
A.5. Facilitator Notes
A.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
A.7. Getting Clear Tools
A.1. WHAT IS GETTING CLEAR?

Getting Clear: Key Questions

- What is going on?
- What kind of violence or abuse has happened or is happening?
- Who is getting harmed?
- Who is doing the harming?
- What can be done?

What Is It?

Getting Clear means taking the time to look around, reflect and think about what is happening. It can be a quick snapshot taken at a single moment. What is going on – right now? Or it can be a more thoughtful, broad view of the big picture. What is going on – looking from many angles? How did we get there? Where are we going?

Why Is It Important?

Getting clear is especially important when you are in crisis and are confused. Having a clear understanding of the situation is helpful when you are first starting an intervention and a clear starting point from which to take action is needed. As things change, it may be necessary to continue to reassess the situation, taking snapshots along the way and noting changes as they unfold.

Piecing Together the Big Picture

Getting Clear often involves thinking about what you already know about the situation and learning from what others have seen or experienced in the situation.

Sharing information can create a fuller picture of what is going on. It is like the story of a group of people, each looking at an elephant from only one angle. One person only sees the trunk, someone else the tail, someone else the rough hide of the elephant. However, only together can the group have a more accurate picture of the elephant. In the same way each of you may describe and understand the situation in an entirely different way. Only with each other can you put the pieces together and understand that you are seeing different angles of one larger reality.
Highlighting the Important Points

Interpersonal violence can be especially confusing. These stories can be complicated because they involve close and sometimes long-term relationships, mixed emotions, the involvement of many people and dynamics of violence that unfold in multiple ways. Figuring out what is going on can thus be very difficult. Sometimes the process of Getting Clear requires us to sort through a whole set of details. It may be important to lay out all of the pieces first before figuring out what are the most critical points, and the patterns that are the most important to try to change.

Sharing Information without Constant Repetition or Rehashing

Getting Clear is helpful because it allows others to help. Taking collective action towards change often involves having other people’s input on the process of Getting Clear. It may also involve sharing some details about the violent situation with the people you are asking for help. While not everyone needs to know every detail of the situation, out of concern for privacy, confidentiality or safety issues, many will want some basic information in order to decide if and how they want to get involved. Good information will also help everyone to make better decisions about what actions to take.

Finding a good way to write down, record or otherwise remember these details without making someone repeat the story over and over again is useful. It prevents those telling the story, especially the survivor or victim, from having to repeat and re-live the situation. It also keeps track of important details that can be lost as people get tired repeating the story or assume that everyone already knows the details.

USING THE TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

The Getting Clear section offers basic information and tools to help you get clear and figure out what is happening at any given moment. If you need simpler, shorter tools to help when you are in immediate crisis or have less time, refer to Tool A1. Getting Clear Snapshot/Quick Question Guide. If you need to do a full assessment at the beginning of an intervention, or when you have more time or more people involved, refer to Tool A2. Getting Clear Worksheet. You can also use these tools as you move across through different stages of what might be a long process.

Tool A3. Naming the Harms Chart and Tool A.4. Harms Statement Worksheet can help you get specific about what harms happened or what is happening and figure out how specific and what details are important for what purpose.

Tool A.5. Getting Clear Intervention Factors-at-a-Glance gives you more in-depth information about what type of violence situation you are dealing with, thoughts on communicating about the situation with others who may get involved, figuring out what strengths and weaknesses you have in terms of moving towards a successful intervention, and other factors that might be important as you move forward.
A.2. GETTING CLEAR ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Figuring out what is going on or Getting Clear may look different at different phases of an intervention process.

PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED

In this Toolkit, the beginning actions to Getting Clear, may be particularly important. It may be a key opportunity to really think about what is happening and what needs to be done. Getting clear on the details – by answering the questions in Snapshot/Quick Question Guide or Worksheets – can lead to actions that can really address the problem. Writing these details down or recording them in some way can help others understand all of the important points of the situation without having to tire everyone out by repeating the story.

PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION

Intervention rarely ends with one action. It is helpful to keep assessing or Getting Clear of the situation as it changes over time. Things might look different as small actions or reactions take place, different events or factors enter the picture, or new people get involved. You may need to do quick snapshots of the situation at various times.

PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION

As you get ready to take action, big actions or small, you may need to continue taking snapshots and Get Clear on the situation as things continue to change or you find out new information.

PHASE 4: FOLLOWING-UP

As you move through the planning and action steps of intervention or perhaps as you reach its conclusion, you can continue to do quick snapshots of Getting Clear on the situation to figure out where things are at or what may have changed in the situation of violence.
RELATED TOOLS

Tools to identify people who can help out or are connected to the situation are in Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers and Section 4.G. Working Together.

Tools to help you look at your goals or what you want to achieve are in Section 4.D. Goal Setting.

Tools to look at how ready you are for taking action including what you need to be ready are in Section 4.H. Keeping on Track.
A.3. GETTING CLEAR TIPS

#1 READ “SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW”

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

#2 FOCUS ON WHAT AND HOW. BEWARE OF “WHY’S”

It is normal to wonder “why” something is happening. Why is the person doing harm doing what he/she is doing? Why me – why am I the victim of violence? And so on. These “why” questions are often impossible to answer. They can keep us stuck in not-knowing and not-doing. Step away from “why” questions and move more towards “what” is happening and “how” do we change the situation.

#3 LEARN FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF OTHERS

Do your assessment with other trusted people. You may learn that you only have part of the picture. You may be able to fill others in with important information. You may be able to step away from emotions that can be confusing. You may understand how you can work better together. Or you may find out that your differences are so serious and unchanging that you cannot work with each other.

#4 LOOK OUT FOR THE DANGER SIGNS

Although all forms of violence can be dangerous, including verbal abuse and other non-physical forms of violence, there are some signs that are particularly important. These are some signs linked to higher degrees of danger:

- Availability of guns or other weapons
- Previous use or history of violence
• Threats to kill self and/or others
• Choking
• Use of alcohol and/or drugs that contribute to violence
• Person doing harm senses a loss of power and/or control (Examples: survivor/victim is about to leave or has left an abusive relationship; person doing harm senses that other people are finding out about the situation and may take action)

#5 UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SURVIVOR’S OR VICTIM’S EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE

It may be particularly important to ask the survivor or victim of violence to name the violence if that person is not you. Why? First, they may be the only people who actually know the extent to which violence has taken place. Much of the violence may have been committed away from other people – or may take place in very subtle forms that others do not even notice.

Someone may have been violent once, but used that violence to show what could happen in the future. This threat may still be operating even if it is a one-time action. It can be hard for others to understand how something from the past can still have the power to cause fear for a long time afterwards.

Also, the survivor or victim may have been living with violence in isolation. Or others may have not believed that violence was taking place. Denial, minimizing the violence, and blaming the victim are very common when we look at interpersonal violence.

Having the survivor or victim name the violence and having others also listen, understand and validate this naming can be an important first step in taking action to repair the harm and stop future violence from happening. This may be an important step in an intervention in and of itself.

#6 STAY FOCUSED ON THE PATTERNS OF ABUSE OR VIOLENCE

Once you begin to name the harm, it is common to begin to closely analyze everyone’s behavior. This is especially common when the survivor or victim and person doing harm have been involved in a relationship (intimate, family or other) that has gone on for a long time. If you know them well, you may be able to come up with a long list of grievances under the name of each person. While people may need to brainstorm or get these thoughts and feelings out in order to clear the air, come back to the main issue which is addressing and ending violence.

This Toolkit is not meant to create perfect relationships. It is meant to address and change fundamentally unhealthy, mostly one-sided patterns of behavior that cause significant and/or repeated harm to one person, a group of people or a series of people in situations where one person after another is being harmed.
AIM FOR COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS — ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS UNCLEAR WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE AND WHAT ARE THOSE HAMRS

We often find big differences in what people think about the situation of violence including who is more responsible for the harm, who did what, and who is the most harmed. In other words, the process of getting clear/assessment can reveal completely different perspectives that do not come together to form a whole. It is important to go back to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know to develop a common understanding about violence and interventions. This may help to bring these perspectives together.

One common situation is when the survivor or victim has also taken on attitudes or actions that are unhealthy or even abusive. This can cause you to look for ways in which a survivor or victim “asked for it” or contributed to the dynamics of abuse. You may want to protect the primary person doing harm by balancing the list with everything the other person did that was unhealthy. This can cause people to question who is really the survivor or victim in the situation causing divided opinions or questions about whether this is simply a bad and unhealthy relationship with equal blame on both sides. If this is the case, some questions to ask are:

- Who is more afraid?
- Who starts the violence?
- Who ends up getting harmed?
- Who is usually changing and adapting to meet another’s needs or moods? (Some say: Who sets the weather in this relationship?)
- Who is more vulnerable?
- Who is using violence for power and control (abusive violence)? Who is using violence to try to maintain safety or integrity in an already violent situation (self defense)?
- Who has to win?

Also see Section 5.6. Distinguishing between Violence and Abuse, by Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse for more information.
The process of Getting Clear is also one about gathering and recording information. It can serve different purposes for different people. As you record and share this information, you might want to think about different versions depending upon the purpose. Below is a list of possible reasons for and results from Getting Clear.

- Getting clear on the situation of violence
- Remembering details and sorting out for important information
- Getting clear on what you want to address and change
- Sharing information with those you want to help support you in an intervention
- Avoiding the tendency to deny and minimize violence
- Naming the harms as preparation for facing the person or people responsible for the harm
- Naming the harms as a way for someone doing the harm to start to take accountability
A.4. GETTING CLEAR SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The process of Getting Clear may be different depending upon your relationship to violence and to the people most closely involved in violence. This Toolkit promotes a process that brings together different viewpoints to create a better picture of what is really going on. This can and should happen regularly throughout the intervention. It is also important to think about some special considerations depending upon the person’s relationship to violence.

The survivor or victim is often the person who best understands the dynamics and impact of violence. She/he/they are also likely to be the person most affected by violence. Especially when we are thinking about interpersonal violence, the nature of harm can be subtle or hidden. It may have developed over a period of time, beginning with small abuses that end up becoming a pattern of abuse. It may have been one particularly violent incident that gives the message that this can always happen again.

People on the outside may not see or understand these dynamics. For example, those in domestic violence relationships can come to understand that a certain look or glance can mean that a beating could follow. To others, they might not notice that look or may dismiss it as not very harmful. They may even accuse the survivor or victim of being too sensitive or exaggerating without realizing that the survivor or victim may know very well what such looks or glances mean.

At the same time, survivors or victims can minimize or deny violence in order to protect their relationship or to fend off feelings of shame or vulnerability. Their understanding of the dynamics may change as they begin to talk about the abuse and feel some safety as they are being believed and protected by others.

The survivor or victim may also be placed in the position of having to repeat what happened to them over and over again. This can put a huge strain on this person as they remember traumatic events and as they respond to people’s questions about what happened, where and why. Many times they are asked questions that can sound victim-blaming. They can get tired and give shorter and less descriptive stories, sometimes giving people incomplete information that can make the intervention harder to carry out.
The process of Getting Clear, especially at the beginning, is important. It can be an opportunity to write things down or have them recorded so that these things do not need to be repeated over and over again. The Tools in this section can help to go through this process in order to be thorough and to prevent people from having to repeat things again and again.

In this Toolkit, we do not say that the survivor’s perspective is the only or always the most important perspective, although it can be. Some anti-violence and feminist organizations do say this as a part of their “survivor-centered” philosophy. We do, however, believe that the perspective of the survivor is unique and must be considered in a very serious way. In some cases, you may decide that this is the central perspective or the only one that counts. For more on “survivor-centered” decision-making, see Section 4.G. Working Together.

If you are the survivor or victim, the process of getting clear can be a difficult one. If you can, begin your part of Getting Clear by sitting down alone in a comfortable and safe place or with a trusted friend, family member, community member, counselor or advocate to get clear on the situation of violence. You can use the Tools in this section to help you make your way through the details – writing them on paper, saying them to someone else who may write them down or record your words.

Recalling details of violence and harm can take a long time and bring up memories, flashbacks, sleepless nights or nightmares. You may go back and forth about what really happened. You may feel regret and shame as you reveal the details, even to yourself. Be prepared for strong and perhaps confusing feelings. Know that this is normal.

Because this Toolkit is geared towards an intervention, this information is also meant to aid people in taking the right action at the right time. This allows for you to possibly share intimate details with people closest to you. You can then get support to figure out what other details need to be shared with other people depending on what you want to accomplish, who needs to know, and why. Possible audiences include loved ones, others affected by violence, those involved in the intervention, the person or people doing harm, and possibly a larger public audience.

The process for remembering details may be different than the process for figuring out what is most important to share and how. Questions to ask may be: What is important for right now? Who needs to know and why?

Find a way to get ongoing support during this process from people who you trust. Show them this Toolkit and other resources so that they can better offer support.

Take a breath, make your way through these Tools and find support.
The community ally (family, friend, neighbor, co-worker, community member) may also be in a position to see other important things that are going on. It may also be important for your ally to get information gathered from the process of Getting Clear to help them play a positive role in the intervention.

If you are a community ally, you may see ways in which the survivor or victim has been harmed or is endangered that may not be noticed by the person being harmed. You may notice other aspects of the situation that are important to understand what is going on or what can be done. You may also learn important things from the survivor or victim or others involved in the violence. We urge you to learn about the dynamics of violence by reading Section 2. The Basics and by looking closely at the Tips in this section which offer some lessons from others who have been involved in interventions to violence.

Take a breath, make your way through these Tools and find support.

In this Toolkit, we allow for the perspective of the person doing harm to enter the situation. This is different from many anti-violence organizations that often automatically dismiss this perspective as an attempt to manipulate the situation or blame the victim. Experience shows that people doing harm often hold a perspective that attempts to dismiss the violence through denial, minimization or victim blaming.

People doing harm have often continued and justified harm through a perspective that minimizes their role in violence, blames the victim and tries to convince others either to ignore the violence or justify it. This is especially true if the person doing harm is in a position of power in relation to the person being harmed or accused of being harmed.

While this is not necessarily the case, and the point of interventions is to try to change these tendencies over time, it may be important to keep this possibility in mind. The person doing harm may have a very different story to tell than the survivor of violence. Challenging unequal power and ending violence often prioritizes the voice of the person who has been harmed.

If you are the person doing harm or are the person accused of doing harm, we urge you to be open to the perspective of the survivor or victim of harm and to those carrying out this intervention. This openness may feel threatening at times, but a shift in your view of this situation and an understanding of the harm you may have caused can lead to positive change for you and others.

Take a breath, make your way through these Tools and find support.
This Toolkit works best with someone acting as a facilitator. This may be a friend, family member or community member. It may also be a helpful professional or someone working in an organization who is willing to work with the values and approach behind this model.

Please note again that this Toolkit contains a unique approach to dealing with violence and may be very unfamiliar to people used to working with violence. It may even be against their policies. You can share this Toolkit with people you might want to act as a facilitator and see if they are comfortable with this perspective and model.

If you are a facilitator or are willing to help out by providing a role in helping another person or a group to work through this Toolkit, then these notes are to help you.

## #1 Encourage and Support People to Learn Fundamental Information First If They Have Not Already.

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.

## #2 Support People by Going Through These Getting Clear Information and Tools That Seem Useful.

When people are in crisis, it can especially be helpful to break down this section into manageable parts. People may be able to glance through the whole section but then begin by working through the What Is Going On? Snapshot: Quick Question Guide or What Is Going On: Worksheet. You may be able to help by knowing what is available in this section and in the overall Toolkit but help guide people to bite-size next steps.
#3 SUPPORT A COLLECTIVE OR GROUP PROCESS.

We encourage people to join together with other trusted people to carry out an intervention together. You may be collecting the information for Getting Clear by carrying out this process with a couple of people or even a small group. This may be done all together if this makes sense or by going to different people and gathering this information individually.

Be aware that any process that starts bringing together different people may also pose new risks or dangers. A group may already have formed or be an obvious group to work with. Or, you may want to read the sections on Section 4.B. Staying Safe and Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers first before expanding this group.

If you do this in a group, it can be helpful to organize this information visually on something everybody can look at. Some ways could include:

- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Easel paper
- Post-its or cut-outs you can put on the wall
- Objects you can move on a table or on the floor

#4 FIND USEFUL AND SAFE WAYS TO DOCUMENT THIS INFORMATION SO THAT IT DOESN’T GET LOST.

It is also helpful to document/or keep in some permanent way this information so you can refer to it later, compare it with changes that occur over time, and share it with people who were not at this meeting.

Ways to document include:

- Write notes
- Draw picture
- Take pictures of notes, post-its, objects
- Roll-up and re-use easel paper notes

Again, make sure that these documents are kept in a safe way. And make sure the people most affected by violence or involved in this intervention are part of deciding who and how this happens. This may mean that even if you usually share everything that happens with your partner, your close friend, your mother, and so on, you cannot do it in this case.

Remember that emails can easily be forwarded. Written notes can be found and read by other people who may endanger the people involved, even if they don’t mean to. Think about how gossip could harm a situation and try to make judgments about who is safe to share information with and how to make stronger agreements to keep information safe. On the other hand, shared information can also be part of your plan to bring more people together.
Story A: I hear yelling in my apartment building. What is going on?

I live in a small apartment building in a city in the South near the border with Mexico. We have several immigrants from different countries living in the building. Some of us keep to ourselves and some have made friendships with the other residents. There is not a lot of fighting and violence here. But if there is, at least someone will hear – the next door neighbor or the people directly upstairs or downstairs.

I was hanging out with some of my neighbors. We don’t know each other too well but we like to get together once in awhile. Sometimes our conversations turn to gossip about other people in the building. One time, one of them talked about the neighbors who live right next door to them, a couple that has been fighting. The couple has a 5-year old daughter. The husband has lived in the building for a few years – a seemingly nice guy who tends to keep to himself. He married a woman who moved in about 6 years ago. His wife mostly speaks Spanish. She’s friendly but communication is usually pretty limited if you don’t speak Spanish which most of us don’t. I’ll call them “Marcos” and “Maria” although those are not their real names. My neighbor continued with the story saying that he has heard them fighting and that the husband was yelling at his wife, Maria, “Go ahead and call the police. You don’t even speak f**ing English.”

I had never heard any yelling, myself. But when I heard the story, I wondered why Marcos mentioned the police. Immediately, I thought he may have hit Maria and perhaps she threatened to call the police, but I wasn’t sure. When I heard about his comment about her English, I was more worried. Why is he insulting her about her English? Is he telling her she can’t seek help even if she wanted to? Why is he telling her that the police won’t do anything? Why is he yelling like that about the mother of his daughter who probably heard everything he said? These are all abusive and pointed to signs of more serious abuse. I also know that this type of violence doesn’t usually stop one time. It was likely to continue and could get worse. I figured this story wouldn’t stop here.

We wondered what was going on but didn’t make any plans for action.

Later, I was talking to people who lived upstairs from them. I’ll call these neighbors Tom and Grace, although these are not their real names. They could really hear the yelling, which was mostly coming from Marcos. Maria’s voice was much quieter or she seemed to be crying. They thought they heard things being thrown around and were getting worried. They could hear the daughter crying during these times. I told them about what I heard from the other neighbors. Since they seemed really concerned, too, we tried to make sense from the things we knew and we had heard.

4.0. Introduction

Section 4: Tools to Mix and Match contains sets of tools organized around activities that can be useful in planning and carrying out community-based interventions to interpersonal violence. They follow basic concerns that many or most groups interested in violence intervention have faced.

These sets of tools are organized in the following categories:

4.B. Staying Safe: How Do We Stay Safe?
4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers: Who Can Help?
4.D. Setting Goals: What Do We Want?
4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims: How Can We Help?
4.F. Taking Accountability: How Do We Change Violence?
4.G. Working Together: How Do We Work Together as a Team?
4.H. Keeping on Track: How Do We Move Forward?

**Tools to Mix and Match**


- Tool A.2. Getting Clear Worksheet
- Tool A.3. Naming the Harm Chart
- Tool A.4. Harm Statement Worksheet
- Tool A.5. Getting Clear: Intervention Factors Chart & Checklist
You can use this Snapshot/Quick Question Guide to help to get started and as a way to take snapshots along the way. This just asks some possible basic questions to start getting a clearer picture of the problem.

- What is going on?
- Who is getting harmed?
- What kind of harm?
- Who is doing the harm?
- What is the impact of this harm?
- Who knows about what’s going on?
- What other people or dynamics are important in positive ways?
- What other people or dynamics have been harmful or made things worse?
- Any other important things to know?
- Are there any important changes?
- What’s the next step?
This example is from:

**Story A:** I hear yelling in my apartment building. What is going on?

Read Story A in Section A.6. Getting Clear Real Life Stories and Examples for the full story and background.

For this exercise, the person telling the story has filled out the quick question guide by themselves. This is also something they can go through with the two sets of neighbors who have shared their knowledge of what is going on with Marcos and Maria.

**What is going on?**

Marcos has lived in the building for awhile. Some of us know him but not so well. Maria moved in about 6 years ago. Nobody we know in the building knows much about her. She speaks Spanish and very little English. From the yelling and the noise reported from different neighbors, we know that there is violence happening. It seems that this has started in the last few months.

**Who is getting harmed?**

Maria seems to be the one getting harmed. And so is their daughter, although it is not clear if she is directly getting hit. Their daughter is being harmed just by watching this happen and hearing the yelling and insults against her mother.

**What kind of harm?**

There are the kind of fights where there is at least the emotional abuse of yelling. Things are being thrown, which is physically threatening. We think that this could mean that there is also physical abuse or at least something that could lead to physical abuse. The reference to the police also makes us wonder if there is physical abuse, too. There is the kind of abuse where the mother is being insulted for not speaking English. There is harm against the daughter who must witness the yelling, insults, and things being thrown around.

**Who is doing the harm?**

The primary person doing harm seems to be Marcos.
What is the impact of this harm?

I don’t know this family well so I have to guess at some of the impact of this harm right now. I know that Maria is upset during the times that the yelling is happening. Their daughter is clearly crying and upset. I know that the impact of violence can go way beyond being upset during times of violence – it can cause a whole cycle of violence for this family.

As a neighbor, I feel upset that this family is experiencing violence. When I see Maria or their daughter, I think about the violence. I don’t think that Marcos is benefiting from his violence. I feel like my own sense of peace is violated by violence in our building.

Who knows about what’s going on?

So far, the next door neighbors who first talked about the yelling know. The people upstairs from Marcos and Maria know, and I know. I’m not sure who else knows.

What other people or dynamics are important in positive ways?

The neighbors who I talked to seemed at least concerned. Even though we were gossiping and not necessarily talking about doing anything about it yet, this could be positive. I don’t have a strong relationship with either Marcos nor Maria but we have a friendly relationship. This could be a positive dynamic. Even though it looks like Marcos is being abusive to both his wife and at least indirectly to his daughter, he also appears to be a loving father, which is another positive dynamic. He has lived in the building a long time and probably would like to keep his home and keep a friendly relationship with his neighbors, which is another positive dynamic.

What other people or dynamics have been harmful or made things worse?

So far, we don’t know much about the situation and what might be negative. But the fact that Maria seems to be a recent immigrant and we don’t see other family members around makes us wonder if she is isolated. We also wonder about her immigration status, which would definitely make a difference if we decided to call the police. These days, the police might report her to immigration authorities and the results could be her arrest and her separation from her U.S. born daughter.

Any other important things to know?

There is definitely emotional abuse. And throwing things is a form of physical abuse. Is there also direct physical abuse? Has Maria been looking towards anybody for help? Is she open to get help? Is Marcos open to get help? What resources are there for them? We’re not sure.

Are there any important changes?

The most important change that we know of is that some of us as neighbors have started to notice and talk about what is going on.
What’s the next step?

At this point, my neighbors Tom and Grace seem to be concerned enough to take some sort of action if needed. I feel this way, as well. But we aren’t sure what to do. We just let each other know that we would keep each other informed and think about next steps. We also want to try to keep it inside the building and not involve the police because that could make things worse. This is especially true because we don’t know if Maria is undocumented. We think that maybe our own internal actions can stop things at an early stage and at least we have each other for support.

The next step will be to talk to Tom and Grace and share this Toolkit with them. Maybe I’ll just photocopy a couple of pages so they don’t get overwhelmed.
GETTING CLEAR TOOL A2: WHAT IS GOING ON? WORKSHEET

You can use this What Is Going On? Worksheet when you have more time or when you can do this with the support of other people if that is helpful. It can help to identify what are the key issues of violence, abuse or harm you or someone you are close to are facing.

Please take some time to think about the following.

- How can you describe the harm that is happening?
- Who is getting harmed? In what ways?
- Who is doing the harm? In what ways?
- How long has the harm been going on?
- Is it happening all of the time? Does it happen in cycles?
- Has it been getting worse? More frequent? More serious?
- What is still happening now, might be happening now or could happen in the future?
- Are there particular words or a term that best describes it?
- Are there certain people, things or circumstances that make it get worse? Or make it get better?
- Have people tried to get help before? Who? What kind of help? What happened?
- Who knows about the situation of harm?
- What are other important things to know about?
- Are there some key things you still need to find out? If so, what are some possible next steps for finding out?
- What else is important to do next?
If you are already getting started, at least one person has likely identified that there is some sort of violence, abuse, or harm taking place. This may already be named, or there may be a more vague feeling that some problem needs to be addressed.

Can you name the harm? How would you name it? What is important in naming it?

Even if the abuse, violence or harm clearly fits into the categories of domestic violence, sexual assault or another form of abuse, one may find it more comfortable or useful to use one’s own words to name the harm.

Example: “My power was taken away.” “He violated my boundaries.” “She violated my sense of trust – Now I can’t even trust myself.” “He made me feel like I was nothing – worthless.” “My community was destroyed – what felt like my safe home was turned into somewhere nobody felt safe.”

While some of these sentences above may have resulted in an act or pattern of violence that could also be called domestic violence or sexual assault, the survivor or victim of violence may find it more powerful and accurate to use their own words to describe what happened and what the consequences have been.

Naming the harm can be a useful first step. For some of us, it can be uncomfortable or scary to put words to abuse or violence. It can make us feel embarrassed, ashamed, guilty or vulnerable. If you are the survivor or a victim, you may fear that naming the harm will bring more harm including retaliation. If you are the person who did harm, you may not want to admit what you have done. If you are community members, friends or family, you may feel that you do not have enough information to make a judgment or that it is not our place to name the harm.

To name the harm, you can use your own words. Or you can look at the information in Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know to see if this information helps you to name the harm.

The following Naming the Harm Chart is another way to think about harms. It shows that harms can take many forms: emotional; physical; sexual; economic; using family, friends, children and pets; and using people’s vulnerabilities such as their immigration status. It can include threats of harm.

Harms may also come from friends, family and community members who looked away while violence was happening, blamed the victim or participated in the harm.

Below is a chart to recall the types of harms. They may be harms that have been committed in the past. They may be happening currently. Or we can use the chart to imagine what harms have been threatened or could happen in the future.
**EXAMPLE A3: NAMING THE HARM CHART**

This is a list of possible harms that a person may experience from the primary person doing harm. It could answer, "I experienced these forms of violence or harm from you. You..."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
<th>SEXUAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Isolated the survivor or victim</td>
<td>- Physically harmed through</td>
<td>- Made unwanted sexual looks or actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kept friends or family away</td>
<td>pushing, slapping, hitting,</td>
<td>- Created an unsafe sexual environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Humiliated with looks and insults</td>
<td>punching, pulling hair, choking</td>
<td>- Forced sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yelled</td>
<td>- Threatened harm</td>
<td>- Forced unwanted types of sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tried to control what the survivor or victim did</td>
<td>- Physically threatened by</td>
<td>- Forced to have sex with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tried to control what the survivor or victim thought</td>
<td>throwing things or punching walls</td>
<td>- Exposed to unwanted pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatened or damaged the reputation of survivor or victim</td>
<td>- Used or threatened with weapons</td>
<td>- Rent controlled &amp; deprived of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stalked including constant texting, phone calls</td>
<td>- Left survivor or victim in dangerous places or situations</td>
<td>- Abused in the sexual environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Made survivor or victim nervous all the time causing them to “walk on eggshells”</td>
<td>- Threatened or used self-harm or threats of suicide</td>
<td>- Harmed self externally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY, FRIENDS, CHILDREN &amp; PETS</th>
<th>ECONOMIC</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Harmed or threatened harm to family, friends, or others</td>
<td>- Withheld money</td>
<td>- Threatened to call immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harmed or threatened harm to children</td>
<td>- Took away money</td>
<td>- Refused to support immigrant papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harmed others in front of children</td>
<td>- Threatened to or destroyed property or valuables</td>
<td>- Threatened to “out” someone to others for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caused fear in children</td>
<td>- Didn’t give enough money to survive</td>
<td>- Forced to participate in unwanted acts such as stealing, violence against others, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caused children to devalue or disrespect survivor or victim</td>
<td>- Threatened job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatened to take custody of children</td>
<td>- Didn’t allow to work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatened to kidnap children</td>
<td>- Forced to work unfairly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harmed or threatened harm to pets</td>
<td>- Gambled or used credit cards recklessly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CAUTION**

Note that the presence of weapons and threats of suicide are markers of serious levels of danger. Also note that dangers can heighten when a person doing harm senses a loss of power and/or control. Previous forms of harm can escalate into more serious types and levels of harm. While we do not automatically consider threats of suicide to be a form of harm, we also note that threats to commit suicide or harm oneself can often be used to manipulate and to control others. For more, see Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know.
This is the list of possible harms caused by friends, family or community members. It could list how these community members should have been helpful but instead added to the harm. It could answer, “I wish I could have gotten help and support from you, but instead you…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
<th>SEXUAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Did not believe stories of harm</td>
<td>- Let the physical harm continue</td>
<td>- Allowed sexual harm to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insulted or humiliated the survivor or victim</td>
<td>- Pretended not to notice physical harm</td>
<td>- Made it seem like the survivor or victim wanted the sexual harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Blamed the survivor or victim for asking for or causing harm</td>
<td>- Told the person doing harm information that made things more dangerous for the survivor</td>
<td>- Made it seem like survivor or victim had a duty to accept sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gossiped</td>
<td>- Didn’t allow survivor/victim to escape or find safety</td>
<td>- Didn’t want to hear about anything sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Minimized the violence</td>
<td>- Tried to get the survivor to minimize the harm</td>
<td>- Enjoyed hearing about sexual harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Denied that the violence was happening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Only supported people in positions of power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Criticized the survivor or victim for leaving or wanting to leave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Criticized the survivor or victim for staying or wanting to stay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY, FRIENDS, CHILDREN &amp; PETS</th>
<th>ECONOMIC</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Made friends or family turn against the survivor or victim</td>
<td>- Didn’t help with affordable resources that may have been helpful</td>
<td>- Threatened to call immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Didn’t help yourself, friends and family to understand the dynamics of violence</td>
<td>- Let financial reliance on person doing harm get in the way of helping</td>
<td>- Didn’t understand how calling the police or systems could lead to further harm such as deportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Didn’t help the children with support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look at each of these categories and use it to map the types of harms done. You can use the Naming the Harm Chart (Example) on the previous page as a guide.

The columns signify different forms of harm.

The rows signify who is being harmed. This may be direct or indirect harm. This may also be either individual people or they may be thought of as workplaces, organizations, neighborhoods and so on.

### WHO IS HARMED?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:________</th>
<th>Name:________</th>
<th>Name:________</th>
<th>Name:________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional</strong> (name calling, isolation, humiliation, threatening suicide, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong> (pushing, slapping, pulling hair, beating, threats to harm, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual</strong> (forced sex, unwanted sexual acts, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong> (taking money, gambling, preventing from work, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family, Friends, Children, &amp; Pets</strong> (threatening friends, family, children, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong> (threatening to call immigration, threatening to “out” someone; etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once a Getting Clear Worksheet and Naming the Harm Chart is filled out, you may want to make a simpler harms statement or set of statements. These statements can serve different purposes. It can be good for one’s emotional health to be clear about what harms were done. It may be to make sure this is clear and understandable to people helping to make sure that they understand what situation they are addressing. It may be useful for presenting either in writing or verbally to the person doing harm. You may be in the position of sharing this with the public.

Since there are different purposes and different audiences for harms statements, this Toolkit offers some possible categories of harm statements that might help you think about ways to write statements.

**Harms Statement Uncensored.** Might include strong language, cursing, things that were done and how they hurt people.

**Harms Statement to share with others helping or possibly with a team.**
Can still be strong but include more specific details about what was done, for how long, changes in frequency and other things that you may have created when thinking about “What Is Going On” (See Getting Clear Tool A3: What Is Going On? Worksheet).

**Harms Statement to share with the person doing harm.** Can still be strong but may include more specific, concrete details about what was done and what you want the person to be accountable for.

**Harms Statement for a person doing harm to write up.** As a step towards accountability, should be specific, details and include what the impact of the harm has been to different people – even if not intentional. (See Section 4.E. Taking Accountability)

**Harms Statement for the Public.** Depending on the purpose, this may be used to let the public know about the situation of violence and the steps that have been taken to deal with the situation. It may be very detailed or general depending on what you think is the most positive way to share information with the public.
An intervention may include a number of factors. Below are some factors that may be significant in thinking about the harm, thinking about who you might involve in an intervention, thinking about your goals or what you want to have happen, and possibilities for connecting people to the positive goals of this intervention.

Generally, challenging factors increase as you move down the list.

1. **What is the relationship between people involved in the violence?**
   - Violence by a stranger
   - Violence by a former partner or acquaintance but are not connected to now
   - Violence by someone with whom we share community
   - Violence in an ongoing relationship

2. **What is the timeframe of violence?**
   - Pattern from the far past
   - Isolated incident from the far past
   - Isolated recent incident
   - Emerging pattern of violence or abuse
   - Long-standing pattern of violence
   - Re-emergence or return of violent pattern

3. **What is the visibility of violence?**
   - Public violence witnessed by one or more others (may also be situation where violence is private as well)
   - Public and private violence witnessed or known about by others
   - Incident of private violence with no witnesses
   - Pattern of private violence with no witnesses

4. **What is the level of danger?**
   - History and likelihood of use of weapons (guns, knives, explosives, etc. and/or other highly dangerous forms of violence)
   - Threatened use of weapons and/or highly dangerous forms of violence
   - Accessibility to weapons or possible highly dangerous forms of violence (even if this person has not acted in this way in the past)
   - No shown willingness or ability to carry out highly dangerous forms of violence
   - History of self-harm and/or suicide attempts
   - Serious concerns related to substance abuse and/or mental illness
   - Risk of retaliatory violence that is not necessarily life-threatening
   - Low likelihood of retaliatory violence

5. **What is the degree to which survivor or victim might be involved in the intervention?**
   - Survivor or victim is the key person leading the intervention
   - Survivor or victim is leading but has input from others
   - Survivor or victim has high level of involvement but with others as primary people intervening
   - Survivor or victim is “in the loop” but maintaining some distance from the details of the intervention
   - Survivor or victim has little or no involvement in the intervention due to choice or other factors (for example, the survivor is a child)
6. How much can we expect to engage the person doing harm?
- Has no friends or social connections
- Has issues related to substance abuse and/or mental illness that seriously gets in the way of them having meaningful social connections
- Has friends or buddies but they all collude (contribute to) violence
- Has friends or buddies but fights them or disengages if they challenge this person
- Only connection is with the survivor or victim
- Knows people who the person doing harm respects or has opinions that matter even if they may not be close friends
- Has close relationships with people whom the person doing harm respects and whose opinions matter
- Has close relationships with community members who can help support them to stop violence and use new behaviors; the person doing harm is able to talk about hard things at least with certain people

7. How likely is it that we can involve community allies in the intervention?
- No connections or community
- There are connections or community, but they will excuse or even support violence
- One or two people who are connected to at least the survivor or victim and/or the person doing harm willing to get involved in positive way
- No close community, but belong to community setting (neighborhood, city, ethnic community) that has at least some people or an organization that would be willing to get involved
- At least one or two strong leaders and a group of connected people who would be willing to get involved

8. How much do the survivor or victim, community allies, and/or person doing harm share values?
- No shared values and/or opposite values
- Some overlap of values
- Significant overlap of values
- Shared membership in a values-based community (for example, faith institution, community group, political group, etc.)
An intervention may include a number of factors. Below are some factors that may be significant in thinking about the harm, thinking about who you might involve in an intervention, thinking about your goals or what you want to have happen, and possibilities for connecting people to the positive goals of this intervention.

**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN VIOLENCE**
- Violence by a stranger
- Violence by a former partner or acquaintance but are not connected to now
- Violence by someone with whom we share community
- Violence in an ongoing relationship

**TIMEFRAME OF VIOLENCE**
- Pattern from the far past
- Isolated incident from the far past
- Isolated recent incident
- Emerging pattern of violence or abuse
- Long-standing pattern of violence
- Re-emergence or return of violent pattern

**VISIBILITY OF VIOLENCE**
- Public violence witnessed by one or more others (may also be situation where violence is private as well)
- Public and private violence witnessed or known about by others
- Incident of private violence with no witnesses
- Pattern of private violence with no witnesses

**DANGER OF VIOLENCE**
- Low likelihood of retaliatory violence
- No shown willingness or ability to carry out highly dangerous forms of violence
- Risk of retaliatory violence that but level of harm likely low
- Accessibility to weapons or possible highly dangerous forms of violence (even if this person has not acted in this way in the past)
- History and likelihood of use of weapons (guns, knives, explosives, etc. and/or other highly dangerous forms of violence)
- Threatened use of weapons and/or highly dangerous forms of violence
- History of self-harm and/or suicide attempts
- Serious concerns related to substance abuse and/or mental illness

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**NOTE: CHALLENGES INCREASE AS YOU MOVE DOWN LIST**

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Survivor Involvement in Intervention

- Survivor has little or no involvement due to choice or other factors, for example, the survivor is a child
- Survivor is "in the loop" but maintaining some distance from the details
- Survivor has a high level of involvement but with others as primary people intervening
- Survivor is the key person intervening

Likelihood to Engage Person Doing Harm

- Has close relationships with community members who can help support them to stop violence and use new behaviors; the person doing harm is able to talk about hard things at least with certain people
- Has close relationships with people whom the person doing harm respects and whose opinions matter
- Has people who the person doing harm respects or has opinions that matter even if they may not be close friends
- Only connection is with the survivor or victim
- Has friends or buddies but fights them or walks away if they challenge them
- Has friends or buddies but they all collude (or contribute to) violence
- Has issues related to substance abuse and/or mental illness that seriously gets in the way of them having meaningful social connections
- Has no friends or social connections

Likelihood to Involve Community Members

- At least one or two strong leaders and a group of connected people who would be willing to get involved
- No close community but community setting (neighborhood, city, ethnic, community) that has at least some people or an organization that would be willing to get involved
- One or two people who are connected to at least the survivor or victim and/or the person doing harm willing to get involved
- No connections or community

Shared Values

- Shared membership in a values-based community (for example, faith institution, community group, political group, etc.)
- Significant overlap of values
- Some overlaps of values
- No shared values and/or opposite values
STAYING SAFE
HOW DO WE STAY SAFE?

B.1. What Is Staying Safe?
B.2. Staying Safe Across the 4 Phases
B.3. Tips
B.4. Special Considerations
B.5. Facilitator Notes
B.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
B.7. Staying Safe Tools
B.1. WHAT IS STAYING SAFE?

Staying Safe: Key Questions

- What are risks and dangers right now?
- Risks to whom?
- What level of risk? High, Medium, Low, None, Emergency?
- What are the risks and dangers if we take no action?
- What are the risks and dangers if we take action?
- Who needs safety and protection
- What plans can we make to provide safety and protection?

What Is It?

Staying Safe includes concerns, plans and actions all meant to minimize the current, potential and future levels of harm or increase the level of safety. As you take action to address, reduce, end or prevent violence, a primary concern is staying safe.

In this Toolkit, Staying Safe has 3 parts:

1. Risk Assessment to identify the level of danger, potential danger or harm;
2. Safety Planning to plan steps and roles to minimize this danger or harm;
3. Safety Actions to take steps to minimize this danger or harm.

Why Is It Important?

Staying Safe is a centerpiece for most violence interventions. This model is unique in that it understands that taking action to address violence is often risky, in and of itself. This Toolkit provides many ways to ask you to consider how taking action (or not taking action) can result in harm. It also asks you to consider how an action you take may not bring harm to yourself, but could bring harm to others. The possibility of getting in the way of danger and risking retaliation to yourself and the survivor or victim (if you are not the survivor or victim) are considerations that are important every step of the way. Retaliation that might involve other loved ones such as children or other family and friends can be a real danger. And, in some situations, taking action can set off levels of harm and endangerment to the person doing harm (from themselves or from others) that should also be taken into consideration.
In this model, we know that gaining long-term safety and other goals we seek can sometimes involve short-term risks. We urge you to think carefully and thoroughly about all possible risks and dangers and safety planning and action to counteract these risks and dangers no matter what actions – large and small – you decide to take.

Safety Takes Many Forms

In the Toolkit, Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Basics Everyone Should Know, we saw how violence can take many forms and hurt many people.

Safety may also take many forms:

- **Emotional**
  - Basic feelings of worth and integrity
  - Ability to make basic life decisions

- **Physical**
  - Safety from physical harm and neglect or threats of physical harm; having basic needs of home, food, shelter and clothing

- **Sexual**
  - Freedom from unwanted sexual looks, gestures, or touch;
  - Safety from exposure to unwanted sexualized environment including language, pictures, audio, visuals
  - Safety from pressure to be involved in unwanted sexual activity
  - For children, protection from any type of sexual look, gesture, touch or exposure

- **Economic or financial**
  - Safety that we will have basic needs of home, food, shelter, and clothing
  - Safety that we will have a decent job or source of livable income

- **Spiritual**
  - Safety to hold and express our spiritual beliefs

- **Other**
  - Other forms of safety such as safety for immigrants from detention and deportation, safety from homophobia, safety from political persecution, and more
Staying Safe Can Involve Both Planning and Action

People often think about making safety plans – for example, who to call in case of emergency or what to pack in case you need to get away. But sometimes safety requires taking higher levels of action and possible risk – for example, removing guns or other weapons to reduce the level of danger; calling friends for a meeting to figure out who can take care of children or pets in case someone has to get away; getting friends or family to keep watch at the home; or helping someone move to a safer home.

This section offers some basic information and tools for you to understand the risks as you move to action (or if you choose not to act) and to prepare for safety.

Using the Tools in This Section

Safety is never a guarantee, but this section offers tools to help increase safety or reduce risk and harm.

Tool B1. Risk Assessment Chart looks specifically at risks and dangers if one takes no action and if one takes action.

The following safety-related tools look more at how you can plan and prepare for safety. Tool B2. Safety Plan and Action Worksheet and Tool B3. Safety Plan and Action Chart provide guides to custom-made safety plans and actions depending upon your particular risks and dangers and the resources you have available to help you stay safe.

Tools also include a more conventional Tool B4. Escape Safety Checklist for those who need to prepare for situations in which escape is necessary.

Finally, Tool B5. Meeting Person Who Did Harm Safety Worksheet helps with safety planning for those of you who may consider meeting directly with the person doing harm.
B.2. STAYING SAFE ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Figuring out how to stay safe may look different at various phases or levels of crisis.

**PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED**

As you get started, you or someone you know may already be in a dangerous and harmful situation. You may need to think about very basic safety needs such as telling trusted people about the situation of violence. Taking care of medical or mental health needs may come first. For some, escaping from the situation of harm may become a priority.

**PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION**

If you are entering a phase of planning and preparation, safety concerns may be different. For example, figuring out trusted allies and how to keep information safe among them might become a key issue. Finding helpful allies who can also support the person doing harm to take responsibility might be important at an early planning stage.

**PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION**

As you get ready to take action, big actions or small, you may face new risks and dangers. Taking action may increase risks for those involved in the intervention or may trigger reactions that could further jeopardize safety. It may be important to use tools to assess risks and plan for safety that focuses just on the next step to be taken.

Risk assessment and safety planning may focus around next steps – with each action requiring its own risk and safety consideration.

**PHASE 4: FOLLOWING-UP**

As you move through the planning and action steps of intervention or perhaps as you reach its conclusion, you may be able to create systems to establish longer-term safety. You may be able to focus on maintaining and sustaining systems of safety or taking lessons learned to create wider community safety zones.

**RELATED TOOLS**

Tools to look closer at people who can help out with safety are in *Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers* and *Section 4.G. Working Together*. Tools to help you look at whether and how safety is a goal are in *Section 4.D. Goal Setting*. Tools to look at risks and safety when preparing to take action steps are in *Section 4.H. Keeping on Track*. 
B.3. STAYING SAFE TIPS

#1 READ “SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW”

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

#2 TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT RISKS CAN INCREASE AS YOU TAKE ACTION TO END VIOLENCE

Our model of community action recognizes that taking action to create safety can sometimes mean taking additional risks, at least in the short run. What is important is for everyone to understand what risks you are taking, who might be endangered and what precautions may ensure greater safety or minimize harm.

Interpersonal violence is often about maintaining control over others. When people take action to end violence or gain safety, violence or threats of violence can increase. In some situations, threats get more serious. Levels of violence may escalate beyond levels experienced in the past. People doing harm may also threaten to harm themselves including suicide.

Risk assessment should take into account possible reactions from the person doing harm. This could include acts of retaliation which could be provoked when the person doing harm senses loss of control, exposure through public disclosure or other negative consequences resulting from the intervention. Safety planning and safety actions need to take into account these increases in risk.

#3 THINK ABOUT SAFETY FOR EVERYONE

Safety may involve many different people – the safety of the survivor (or primary victim or target of violence), safety of others close by (children, friends, family, workplace, or community), safety for people carrying out an intervention, and safety for the people who caused or are doing harm. When possible, aim for a course of action that ensures the safety for all involved.
#4 INVOKE OTHER TRUSTED PEOPLE IN STAYING SAFE

Because intervention actions are often taken under conditions of danger, any move to take the next step should involve at least one other person and hopefully more trusted people to help with planning, support and follow-up.

**Other trusted people could help in some of the following ways:**

- By acting as a sounding board
- Go through a safety plan together
- Go together with someone who is taking an action, waiting in the car or around the corner until you know someone is safe
- Being on the other end of a cell phone to receive a call that everything went okay
- Watching someone’s children to make sure they are safe
- Distracting or confronting someone who may be a danger
- Even if someone is going to take some action alone, it can be helpful to have a back-up or use a buddy system – with someone who knows what they are going to do, when, and can be in communication with them either by going with them, standing close by or at least be in communication via phone or text.

#5 MAKE SAFETY CHECKS A REGULAR PART OF YOUR PLAN

The levels of risks and dangers can change constantly. Make sure you make risk assessment and safety plans a regular part of your intervention – and, if necessary, a regular part of your daily lives.

**A situation can change due to a number of factors:**

People have started to know about the violence and may say things or do things that cause a change – for example, they may treat the person doing harm differently

People have gathered to take action. The simple fact that people are starting to gather together and take action steps may change the situation

The survivor or victim of violence may feel more empowered to act assertively or in other ways that could shift the dynamics of power; this can cause positive change as power starts to shift; this can also increase danger if the person or people doing harm react negatively to this change.
#6 REMEMBER THE SIGNS OF INCREASED RISK

The risk of harm and level of harm is generally greatly increased if:

1. Weapons are involved – guns, knives, machetes, and others that can cause great harm;
2. Someone has a history of committing acts of violence; and
3. Someone is also threatening suicide. As mentioned above, risks can also increase as the person doing harm senses a loss of control. Violence or threats of violence can escalate in these situations.

You may need to take extra steps to assess risks and take steps to increase safety if you are facing higher levels of risk or harm.

#7 SEPARATE SAFETY FROM OTHER FEELINGS OF DISCOMFORT

For some of us, the word “unsafe” has become equivalent with “uncomfortable,” “anxious,” “nervous.” The English language and other languages have limitations in distinguishing between these different forms of safety. Lack of safety or exposure to risks and harm are negative. However, other forms of discomfort such as anxiety, vulnerability, nervousness, embarrassment or shame may be a necessary but difficult step towards creating safety in the long term.

Exposing someone to situations that are out of their comfort zone, that may challenge their thoughts and actions that may make them feel insecure because such thoughts or actions are unfamiliar are not necessarily threats to safety, although they may make someone feel unsafe.

For example, someone who is asked to take accountability may experience this as making them feel vulnerable and, therefore, unsafe. A survivor or victim who is nervous about talking about and sharing their experience of abuse with allies may feel a sense of embarrassment or shame that makes them feel unsafe. Community allies who recognize the need to involve themselves in addressing harm that they had previously ignored may feel feelings of nervousness and uncertainty that feel unsafe.
#8 Remember and Prioritize the Safety of Children and Youth

Remember the sensitivity and vulnerability of children and youth to violence. If actions are taking place, they are affected by them. Actions taken for safety may be experienced as scary and threatening to young people. Careful attention may be made to think about including them in on a plan before it happens – or perhaps protecting them from that plan. Their level of maturity and ability to keep information confidential may be taken into account when considering their involvement.

Regardless of the involvement of children and youth in safety or intervention plans, special attention needs to be paid to the emotional, sexual and physical safety of children. You may consider how they can be cared for and kept safe away from the situation of harm or situations of intervention. You may consider how people they trust can spend time with them to let them express their feelings of confusion or fear, assure them that they will remain cared for and make sure they are able to continue in activities important to their well-being: time to play, attendance at school, time to do homework, regular meals, and regular sleep.

Be aware of mandated reporting laws in your state. Know that school staff, social workers, people who work regularly with youth and children, medical staff and sometimes religious leaders are required to report to authorities if they suspect physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

If children are kept safe away from parents or guardians, make sure you know the laws in terms of removal of children, escape from violence, or what is considered kidnapping. Make sure you know what school rules are in terms of who can take children from school premises. You can contact local anti-violence programs like domestic violence hotlines and shelters and sexual assault counseling centers, police or lawyers who are familiar with issues of violence, children and custody to find out. It may be possible to call without using the actual names of anybody involved to get this information without endangering yourself or these children.

Although this Toolkit is geared more for adults, youth may also be using this for violence intervention. If you are a young person reading this section, then this information is still for you.
B.3. **STAYING SAFE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The process of Staying Safe may be different depending upon your relationship to violence and to the people most closely involved in violence. This Toolkit promotes a process that brings together different viewpoints to create a better picture of what is really going on. This can and should happen regularly throughout the intervention. We believe that bringing people together in a coordinated way can build “safety in numbers.” That means that people acting together to address or end harm can create a safety net. This Toolkit promotes safety for everyone involved in violence including the survivor or victim, the community allies and the person or people who have caused harm. It also recognizes that different people in different positions may face different types of safety concerns. It uses the special roles, relationships and skills of many people to create a wider safety net.

The survivor or victim is often the person who best understands the dynamics and impact of violence. That person is also likely to be the person most affected by violence. Especially when we are thinking about interpersonal violence, the nature of harm can be subtle or hidden. It may have developed over a period of time, beginning with small abuses that end up becoming a pattern of abuse. It may have been one particularly violent incident that gives the message that this can always happen again.

Likewise, the survivor or victim may have developed a keen sense of how best to stay safe under unsafe conditions. This sense can even appear to others as a strange or unwise way to keep safe. For example, survivors or victims in situations of violence are known to provoke violence as a way to control a situation that will happen regardless. People involved in a regular pattern of violence can begin to sense when tension is building. Survivors or victims or violence can sometimes react to this tension by doing something to bring on violence. For example, someone may even provoke a fight or challenge someone to, “come here and hit me” because they know that they will eventually be hit anyways. Having some control over when it happens can seem irrational to others who are not living under this fear, but can make sense in a world in which one has so little control.

This Toolkit recognizes that people who have had to live for a long time under unsafe conditions may have learned to deny or minimize the seriousness of violence for various reasons. Violence may have become a normal condition. Minimizing violence may become a coping mechanism. For others, it may seem like no other choice or escape exists – thereby making violence something to tolerate.

The primary survivors or victims of violence have already had their safety violated.
As people begin to hear about the violence and get involved, the survivors or victims may risk the judgment and blame of others as they hear the story. Many people do not understand the basics about violence and instead fall easily into victim blaming. Victim blaming can create a situation of even more danger and vulnerability. Survivors or victims who have sought safety through friends, or programs or the police may also fear retaliation for telling others. They may have been told that they will be hurt even more if they try to seek help.

If you are the survivor or victim, your direct experience with violence may make safety your first concern. As mentioned above, you may have different feelings and relationships to the idea of safety. Desire for safety may have caused you to turn to this Toolkit. Fear for your safety may also make you afraid to take action. It is also common for people to deny or minimize danger as a way to cope with an overwhelming sense of fear.

Feeling mixed and confused is normal. It is normal to wish the worst for someone who has hurt you. It is also normal to want them to be protected, especially if they are someone you have cared about. It is normal to forget about and excuse the ways that they have hurt you in one moment and think only about these things in another.

These concerns can lead to double-edged criticisms by others. You might be accused of not caring about yourself (your children, your family or others in harm’s way). You might also be accused of being selfish and not caring about the person doing harm. This can be a very difficult situation.

Use of this Toolkit offers you an opportunity to think more clearly about what safety means to you and what kinds of safety you seek. It urges you to be as realistic as possible about the dangers you face and the potential dangers that you and others face as you take action. It encourages you to think realistically about risks and to make plans that take these risks into account. It reminds you that other people close to you or who get involved may also be taking risks.

The Toolkit can also help others do a better job of supporting you. You may find that during an intervention, your safety seems to become less important as people focus their energy on the person or people who have done harm. You may need to call more attention to your safety or pick out a couple of trusted people who can help you brainstorm and plan your safety and help you get others to keep their attention to safety concerns. Use these tools to get clear and to protect yourself and others as you take action.
Community allies may already be experiencing harm or threats to harm. As community allies step in to get involved in an intervention, they may expose themselves to more risk. They may be thinking about survivor or victim safety and also have to consider their risks, safety plans and safety actions.

If you are a community ally, you may already be aware that your involvement carries risks. You may be worried about a number of things. How can you make sure your actions do not lead to retaliatory violence against the survivor or victim? How can you make sure that your actions do not reveal confidential information in such a way to increase danger for the survivor or victim or others? Can you become the target of retaliation? Can you be threatened in order to reveal more information such as the whereabouts of the survivor or victim, the location of children, plans for intervention and so on?

Depending on the situation of violence and the plan for intervention, safety concerns may be relatively low. But in highly lethal situations or in situations in which the community ally is physically, emotionally or financially dependent upon the person doing harm, these threats can be high.

Be aware of your own risks and safety needs. Be honest with yourself and others about your own willingness to take these risks. Think about your own bottom-lines or boundaries regarding how much risk you are willing to take on or how much you are able to do. Let others know your limitations, and think about the best roles that you can take given these limitations.

Remember also that “safety is in numbers.” Work with others to create safety plans that can rely on greater numbers of people taking advantage of their various roles, locations and skills to create a wider safety net. Use these tools to protect yourself and others as you take action.

When people take action to end violence, the safety of the person doing harm may be one of the lowest on the list of concerns. This Toolkit encourages us to think about the safety concerns of everyone. When we think about the safety of the person doing harm, this does not mean that we avoid consequences or actions that may seem negative or threatening to that person. Naming violence, asking someone to stop their violence and demanding that people take responsibility or accountability for this harm may appear threatening to that person. It may ask them to be in a position that calls attention to things that have hurt other people and may feel shameful. It may lead others to threaten or even to harm that person when they find out what they have done.
This Toolkit asks us to consider offering an intervention process that also respects the integrity of the person doing harm and that provides enough safety for that person to go through the process of taking accountability with dignity if he or she chooses to take the responsible path. Experiencing negative feelings can be a central part of the process but for some, this may even feel like a threat to safety.

This is different from intervention processes that deliberately use humiliation or forms of violence to “get even.” Attempts to “get even” are not recommended in this Toolkit. However, intervention processes that result in someone feeling shame because they did something wrong, because they face the judgment of other people or because they have to step down from positions of power are often necessary steps in someone taking responsibility for their actions.

If you are a community ally, think about how standard interventions to violence such as calling the police could also threaten safety and work against the aims of intervention. Think about ways in which you can provide alternatives to support accountability without subjecting someone to the harms of arrest and imprisonment or actions that might invite other systems such as immigration control.

If you are a community ally with special ties to the survivor or victim of violence, to particular allies or to the person or people doing harm, then you can use your connections and relationships to support them in special ways. You can use your compassion and understanding to bring them out of isolation and into a more connected and collective experience of violence of intervention. Your care and support may help create a path from shame and anger towards responsibility.

If you are the person doing harm or who has been accused of doing harm, use this as an opportunity to experience the shame of doing harm, the judgment of others who may be hurt, disgusted or horrified by your actions, and the possible consequences you are asked to take. Understand how your attitudes or actions, even if unintentional, threatened the safety of others.

Find friends, allies or other supporters to help you through the painful process of admitting or reflecting on actions that led you to this process. Remember that the role of allies is not to excuse you but to support you, perhaps in ways that may be challenging. Even if you do not agree with everything, see if you can shift your perspective. See if you can carry out some of the actions of accountability and make it through uncomfortable negative feelings, a sense of vulnerability and, perhaps, what may feel like your own lack of safety. See if these actions can actually lead to a greater sense of humanity.

Ask others working with you to support you through this process. Taking responsibility to try on new attitudes and actions can be uncomfortable and may feel very threatening. Taking responsibility can also lead to new healthy relationships with yourself and with others.

For tools that can help you take responsibility and make important changes in your life, see Section 4.F. Taking Accountability.
Risk assessment, safety planning and safety actions are very sensitive to changing conditions. They might require constant assessment and reassessment. They may be very specific to a single step or action to be taken.

Because of this, facilitators may need to take both a broad role in looking at overall risks and safety planning and check to see if safety plans are in place as things change and as people take new actions.

If you are a facilitator or are willing to help out by providing a role in helping another person or a group to work through this Toolkit, then these notes are to help you.

**#1 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PEOPLE TO LEARN FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION FIRST IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY.**

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.

**#2 MAKE SURE THAT PEOPLE TAKE THE TIME TO THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT RISKS AND SAFETY PLANNING.**

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.
#3 Bring people together to form a safety plan.

Safety is best found in numbers. Even if someone is going to take some action alone, it can be helpful for them to have a back-up or buddy system – someone who knows what they are going to do, when, and can be in communication with them either by going with them, standing close by or at least being in communication via phone or text.

#4 Make sure that risk assessment safety planning is a regular part of the intervention.

Risks and, therefore, safety plans can often change as the situation changes and as actions are taken.

Make safety planning a regular way for everyone to lower risk.
Story B. Confronting the Person Who Raped Me

A young immigrant woman came to an immigrant rights organization seeking assistance. She had gone to a party with her former employer, the owner of a bar. That evening, he attempted to rape her. She was able to struggle and get away. However, the experience was clearly traumatizing. Outraged, the woman had decided that she wanted to confront this man. She talked to the advocate about her plan to enter the bar and directly confront him, convinced that her sense of violation could only be met by this bold move.

The advocate, moved by the courage of this woman, responded by offering to go into the bar with her, a strategy ultimately challenged by the advocate’s team of co-workers. This offer went beyond the usual practices of this organization and much beyond what most anti-violence organizations would recommend. Interested in the further exploration of this woman’s request, this organization wondered whether this was the right opportunity for “therapy” except the organization? Besides, it seemed like she was seeking her own pathway to healing which for her meant facing him head-on.

The advocate decided not to go with her and confront this man. But she did decide to act as a supporter or facilitator to see if she could provide a supportive anchor for this woman to carry out this plan of action. Self-determination became the guiding value for the organization’s workers. Safety was also foremost in their minds. How could they prioritize safety without taking away this woman’s self-determination?

The staff team discussed what a facilitated community-based intervention would look like in this situation. How could the advocate ask exploratory questions without trying to convince this woman not to go or to scare her off? The advocate met again with this young woman. This time she helped her explore her goals in confronting this man. Could her goals be met in other ways? Did she think about safety? It became clear that this woman’s goal was direct confrontation even after all of the questions. But she was also open to discussing safety plans and to role play this action. She appreciated the support to figure this out.

The advocate role-played possible scenarios based upon her knowledge of the dynamics of sexual assault. She presented possible dangers as well as responses of victim-blaming, denial, threats and violence. She helped the woman explore who else among her friends and family might be willing to help. The role play brought up many situations which this woman had not considered. She recognized that marching into the bar on her own or with others was too dangerous. She had not thought of the possibility of his denial or his manipulation that it was her fault or her imagination. After going through the role play, she realized that these were all possibilities and appreciated the opportunity to go through the process. She took this as useful information that helped her clarify a safer plan which still met her goals.
Since the advocate was also interested in helping this woman explore what other allies she had, she asked more about this. Although the advocate had at first been convinced to march alongside her, she thought more about this. It was dangerous. She did not “know” this man, his possible reactions, or how her presence could make the situation more dangerous. Supporting this woman to center this “intervention” within her own community made more sense. They are her first-line supporters. They know her and the situation in which she worked. And the advocate was willing to help think through their possible roles and safety as well as hers.

The woman could not identify anybody within her community to help out when this plan was first discussed. But the question seemed to make an impression. By the time she decided to go and confront the man, she had talked to a friend who agreed to stay close to her phone in case any crisis occurred.

After thinking through and role-playing the safety plan, she called her former employer to meet her at a restaurant. He agreed. When she went to prepare for the meeting, she talked to the waiter at the restaurant and asked him to keep a close watch on the situation in case anything happened. These were two allies, the friend and the waiter, that she organized to help support her safety.

The woman ended up meeting with her former employer, confronting him by naming his action and her outrage. Within a short time, he admitted his guilt and apologized without further incident. She called the organization following this confrontation with great appreciation, relief and a sense of closure.

This story illustrates the basic principles of the model of community-based intervention, the critical role of helping the survivor identify her own goals and a plan of action to meet these goals. It also highlights the importance of exploring a collective response and the opportunity it opens for a different set of options resulting from the involvement of other people. It also offers one example of engagement with the person doing harm and the transformative power of this possibility for the survivor. We can imagine that the “healing” powers of this action were deeper and more powerful than anything the police or professionals could provide.

4.B STAYING SAFE: HOW DO WE STAY SAFE

Tool B1. Risk Assessment Chart
Tool B2. Safety Plan and Action Worksheet
Tool B3. Safety Plan and Action Chart
Tool B4. Escape Safety Checklist
Tool B5. Meeting Person Who Did Harm Safety Worksheet
**STAYING SAFE TOOL B1: RISK ASSESSMENT CHART**

**Risk Assessment: What Is It?**

A risk assessment is a kind of measurement of harm, violence or danger. It takes into account what has been done in the past, what is happening now, and what could happen in the future.

Risk assessment also has to take into account changing conditions. This can include any increases in risk as people start to find out that violence has been happening or people start to find out that an intervention is being carried out. These new changes can set into motion a whole series of responses. It is important to think through all possible scenarios.

It is also important to think of the risks of harm to all people involved: the survivor or victim of violence; people close by such as family, friends, and, especially, children; and the person or people doing harm.

**What Can Increase Risk?**

The risk of harm is generally greatly increased if:

1. Weapons are involved – guns, knives, machetes, and others that can cause great harm;
2. Someone has a history of committing acts of violence; and
3. Someone is also threatening suicide.

Risk can also increase when people begin to confront violence. Some people leaving violent relationships have found that the level of violence or threats can actually increase during the time they are trying to get away or regain control of their lives. This does not mean that one should not leave or confront an abusive relationship. It does mean that someone may need to take extra steps to be aware of dangers and take extra action to provide safety. Safety planning and safety actions prepare people to increase safety, but it does not guarantee it.

1. Consider the full range of harms already being faced. Look at the Harms Chart filled out from the section Getting Clear: Naming the Harm Chart.
2. Review the Naming the Harm Chart to see what is still a risk now and what may be a risk later.
3. Fill in the chart’s following questions to assess risk.
**COLUMN 1: RISK, DANGER OR HARM**

In the first column, you can name the risk, danger or harm in your own words. The following is a list that may also be useful to think of categories of harm. You can use specific words to describe the particular risk in your situation.

- Physical or threatened harm to the body or to one’s life
- Physical or threatened harm to others such as children, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers
- Physical or threatened harm to self; threats of suicide
- Physical threat through use of weapon
- Physical and emotional threat through stalking or harassment using phone, text, email
- Emotional or verbal harm such as loss of reputation; “outing” or sharing unwanted information or lies to friends, family or community; isolation
- Emotional or verbal harm such as threats to harm relationships with family, friends or children
- Emotional or verbal harm through insults, threats, humiliation
- Sexual harm including rape, molestation, forced sexual acts, exposure to pornography and so on
- Financial harm through destroying property or taking away property
- Financial harm through loss of job
- Financial harm through taking money from bank account
- Financial harm through refusing to repay loans or debt or through reckless use of credit cards or gambling
- Other harms such as threats to report to immigration enforcement
- Other
COLUMN 2: WHO OR WHAT IS CAUSING THE HARM

In the second column, you can name the person or situation that may be causing the harm. Harm may be directly threatened by a person. Or the threat may come from a situation such as insecure employment, being an undocumented immigrant or something linked to a larger system of inequality.

COLUMN 3: TARGET OF RISK, DANGER OR HARM

In the third column, you can name the person or thing that is the target of risk, danger or harm. It may be the direct survivor or victim; it may be others including friends, family, or community; the threat may be to your home or to a job or to one’s immigration status. The threat may be to a pet. The threat may be to those who are about to take action.

COLUMN 4: WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF DANGER

There are many ways that you might want to name levels of danger. For example, the Forest Service uses a system of:

This Toolkit suggests:

- Emergency
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- No risk now
- More information needed

You can use colors or names or symbols that suit you. The important things to think about is when it is so high that quick action is necessary (Emergency) when the danger really has disappeared for some reason (None right now) or when more information is needed (More information needed).
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<td>What is the risk, danger or harm?</td>
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What Are Safety Plans? Safety Actions?

Once the level of harm and potential risks are considered, you and your allies or team will want to think about safety plans in case of emergency and safety actions to try to gain safety now and in the future.

Safety Plans

Safety plans are often considered for “what if” situations. It requires thinking through who one can call in an emergency, signals to others that one needs help, safekeeping of items needed if one needs to escape, plans to pick up children and keep them safe.

Safety Actions

Safety actions may need to take place immediately in order to be safe, reach safety, or get people immediately out of harm’s way. Safety actions are particularly necessary in situations of crisis and high danger. This does not always mean danger in terms of physical harm but also danger of emotional, sexual, financial harm. It may include taking action to remove weapons or taking action to move children to a safer place. It may mean distracting someone who is dangerous in order to de-escalate situations of violence or get them away while more plans for safety are being made. It may also mean calling friends and family to begin to involve them in providing a safety network.

Gathering Together to Make a Safety Network

Because Safety Plans and Actions are often taken under conditions of danger, any move to take a Safety Action should involve at least one other person and preferably more trusted people to give back-up planning, support and follow-up.

Therefore, Safety Plans and Actions are best done with a group of community allies whose roles may include:

1. Brainstorming risks, safety plans and actions
2. Brainstorming who best can play various roles in creating safety
3. Getting more information on who can help or what dangers might be
4. Playing an active role in the safety plan or action
1. Get together with another person or team to come up with this Safety Plan and Action Worksheet.

2. Make Risk Assessment Chart or look at Risk Assessment Chart if already made. Make sure it based on up-to-date information. (See Section Keeping Safe. Risk Assessment Chart)

3. Think about how each risk can match up to a Safety Plan to address that risk. You may need to start with the highest emergency risks (Emergency and Very High) before being able to address the risks with lower levels of danger.

4. For each risk or set of risks that go together, think about a Safety Plan:
   a. What do we need to do to be safe (or to reduce the risk)?
   Categories of what you can do for safety can include the following:
      • Prepare for escape
      • Tell trusted people about the situation
      • Ask trusted people to take certain roles
      (See Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers for more roles)

**ROLES**

- Keep a watch for danger (may be something that is in a position to check and see)
- Emergency person to call
- Help to brainstorm in times of confusion or crisis
- Be there to remember plans and details
- Check in on a regular basis through stopping by, calls, emails, texts
- Share a “special message” so that they can get emergency help when that “special message” is given
- Offer physical protection
- Offer emotional or spiritual support
- Be around to act as a “witness” to harm
- Distract or reason with person or people doing harm
- Confront person or people doing harm to prevent further harm
- Go get and take care of children or other dependents if needed
- Go get and take care of pets if needed
- Offer home, workplace, church or other location as a safe place
- Offer to keep emergency items in a safe place
• Find out about and contact appropriate resources which could include violence intervention program/organization; counselor; knowledgeable family members or friends; internet; lawyer or legal services; workplace; union; school; and so on.
• Prepare or gather things that you need to take some kind of action
• Get locks or change locks as needed
• Keep certain things in protected areas – friend’s home, safety deposit box, workplace

b. Safe ways to contact people

• Think about confidentiality and making sure that information does not become public because people share computers, voice mail, and can read other people’s text messages

c. Safe transportation if needed

• Safe routes to take if needed
• Safe forms of transportation
• Safe place to park car
• Back-up transportation if needed
• Pick up of other allies, family, or friends if needed

d. Safe place to meet if needed

• Think about confidentiality and making sure that people are safe to talk
• If you are contacting the person doing harm or someone who is potentially harmful, think about meeting in a public space where there are people around

e. Safe places to escape to or hide if needed

• Depending on the situation, people may need safe places to hide or public places where they might be safer

f. Communication plan detailing

• Signs or signals that things are okay – or not okay
• Follow-up communication that things are or went okay – or not okay
• Follow-up communication for next steps
• Agreement on who can know what – and who cannot
5. Think about what requires immediate action. This Toolkit refers to these as Safety Actions. These may need to be taken to ensure minimal, bottom-line levels of safety. Safety Actions may come up in a situation of emergency, high risk. On the other hand, it may come up because there is an opportunity or opening to take action more easily now than later.

Examples of situations in which you may want to take a Safety Action include:

- Someone needs to escape from immediate risk of significant harm including injury, entrapment, physical or sexual assault, kidnapping, arrest, deportation, death
- Children or youth need to be removed from risk of significant harm of any sort
- Weapons need to be removed in order to decrease high level of danger
- Emergency health or mental health concerns require immediate action
- Someone causing harm needs to be immediately removed from a situation, asked to stay away, distracted from entering a situation, locked out, banned (at least temporarily), physically restrained (if this is necessary to keep them from causing harm)

While this Toolkit encourages transparent and honest communication and action, this will not always be possible, especially at early stages of intervention, and before support towards the higher goals of violence intervention can be agreed upon. Distraction, hiding information and outright dishonesty are at times necessary particularly in situations of high danger. Safety Plans and Actions may need to take into account attempts to trick someone or may require some level of force in order to carry out this action.

This may at times mean a level of dishonesty and/or some level of threats, force or restraint upon the person doing harm.

This Toolkit recognizes that pragmatic and practical action can aim at the highest values but may need to balance safety first. As interventions are able to include all aspects of support and cooperation including from the person or people doing harm, it may be able to bring in higher levels of transparency and honesty. This honesty could include open discussions about why earlier Safety Actions were carried out in less than honest ways.
**SAFETY PLAN AND ACTION WORKSHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THIS SAFETY PLAN IS FOR THE FOLLOWING SITUATION:</th>
<th>THIS SAFETY PLAN COVERS THE TIME PERIOD:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THIS SAFETY PLAN IS AS FOLLOWS. THIS MAY INCLUDE:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the risks and dangers? Or what can go wrong?</td>
<td>Who is responsible for what part of the safety plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do we need to look out for? Who or what can cause risks and dangers - people, situations, systems?</td>
<td>Do we have all the bases covered? Do we need to bring in more people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who can get hurt? How?</td>
<td>Is there an emergency back-up plan? What is it? How will we know we should go into emergency mode? Is there a signal or code?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can we do to stay safe?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Section 4B, Page 27*  
www.creative-interventions.org
The follow-up plan is as follows. This may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Who Needs to Communicate and To Whom?</th>
<th>Who Can Know?</th>
<th>Who Should Not Know?</th>
<th>What Are the Next Steps?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did it go?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did we learn?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does this affect our safety plan? Our overall intervention?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any changes to be made? What are they?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If it is helpful to have the Safety Plan and Action information in chart form, you can use this tool.

**COLUMN 1: RISK, DANGER, OR HARM**

In the first column, you can name the risk, danger or harm in your own words. Because this Safety Plan and Action Worksheet is aimed at narrow and specific situations, you may find that it is better to be quite detailed about the risk and/or the person who might be at risk (column 3).

**COLUMN 2: WHO OR WHAT IS THE CAUSE**

In the second column, you can name the person or situation that may be causing the harm. Harm may be directly threatened by a person or a potential system.

**COLUMN 3: TARGET OF RISK, DANGER, OR HARM**

In the third column, you can name the person or thing that is the target of risk, danger or harm. Think of anyone involved who could be harmed.

**COLUMN 4: WHO IS LOOKING OUT FOR SAFETY**

Think about who can be responsible for watching over or dealing with a particular risk. It may mean that if the risk is to a certain person, then it is this person’s job to make sure that the person in question is safe. For example, many people may be in danger in a situation of domestic violence. A child may require the special attention of someone who makes sure that his or her needs do not drop out of the picture as people deal with a larger situation of violence. If someone’s particular task is to focus on that child, then it may be easier to assure that he or she does not get left out or ignored, especially in times of crisis.

**COLUMN 5: WHAT SAFETY ACTION AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES**

This may take the form of small actions such as:
- Check to see if a particular risky or dangerous person is arriving
- Make sure children are in a safe place
- Keep a particular risky or dangerous person distracted
- Stay in the car, keeping watch nearby
- Make sure to offer a particular person emotional support during and/or after a Safety Action is taken
**SAFETY PLAN & ACTION CHART**

**THIS SAFETY PLAN IS FOR THE FOLLOWING SITUATION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN 1</th>
<th>COLUMN 2</th>
<th>COLUMN 3</th>
<th>COLUMN 4</th>
<th>COLUMN 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk, danger or harm?</td>
<td>Who/What is the cause?</td>
<td>Target of risk, danger or harm?</td>
<td>Who is looking out for safety?</td>
<td>What safety actions and under what circumstances?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THIS SAFETY PLAN COVERS THE TIME PERIOD:**

---

**CAUTION**

Is there an emergency back-up plan? What is it?

How will we know we should go into emergency mode? Is there a signal or code?
THE FOLLOW-UP PLAN IS AS FOLLOWS. THIS MAY INCLUDE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did it go?</td>
<td>Who needs to communicate and to whom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What did we learn?</td>
<td>Who can know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does this affect our safety plan? Our overall intervention?</td>
<td>Who should not know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any changes to be made? What are they?</td>
<td>What are the next steps?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some people may be in a situation where they need to think about escaping. For many domestic violence programs, the safety plan equals an escape plan.

While this Toolkit conceives of safety as something more than an escape plan, there are times when people may need to think about escape.

If you have children and are thinking of leaving your partner, consider how to take children with you. Once you leave, it can be difficult to regain custody if your children are left with your partner.

We are including an example of an “escape to safety” plan for those may be in this situation. This was adapted from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) website at http://www.ncadv.org/protectyourself/SafetyPlan_130.html.

**IF YOU ARE STILL IN THE RELATIONSHIP:**

- Think of a safe place to go if an argument occurs - avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons (kitchen)
- Think about and make a list of safe people to contact
- Keep change with you at all times
- Memorize all important numbers
- Establish a “code word” or “sign” so that family, friends, teachers or co-workers know when to call for help
- Think about what you will say to your partner if they become violent
- Other
- Other

**REMEMBER, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE WITHOUT FEAR AND VIOLENCE.**
IF YOU HAVE LEFT THE RELATIONSHIP:

☐ Change your phone number
☐ Screen calls
☐ Save and document all contacts, messages, injuries or other incidents involving the person doing harm
☐ Change locks, if the person doing harm has a key
☐ Let neighbors know about your safety needs; see if they will look out for risky or dangerous people or act as a place for you to seek emergency help
☐ Avoid staying alone
☐ Plan how to get away if confronted by an abusive partner
☐ If you have to meet your partner, do it in a public place
☐ Vary your routine
☐ Notify school, work or other contacts of places you go to regularly
☐ Call a domestic violence crisis line or shelter
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________
IF YOU HAVE LEFT THE RELATIONSHIP (CONTINUED):

If you leave the relationship or are thinking of leaving, you should take important papers and documents with you to enable you to apply for benefits or take legal action. If you are planning to leave or think that you may need to, keep these items in a place that is easy to grab if you are running or keep originals or copies with a safe friend, co-worker or neighbor.

- Driver’s license or other identification for you and your children
- Social security cards and birth certificates for you and your children
- Marriage license
- Birth certificates for yourself and your children
- Passport for you and your children
- Immigration papers for you and your children
- Leases or deeds in your name or both yours and your partner’s names
- Medication
- Your checkbook
- Your charge/credit cards
- Bank statements and charge account statements
- Insurance policies
- Proof of income for you and your spouse or domestic partner (pay stubs or W-2’s; past taxes)
- Documentation of past incidents of abuse (photos, police reports, medical records, etc.)
- Set of keys to the house and car
- Title to your vehicle
- Other _____________________________________________________________
- Other _____________________________________________________________
Many domestic violence or sexual assault programs recommend that people never meet with the person doing harm, assuming that physical separation is the only safe option and that calling the police or having contact through an attorney are the only ways to have contact. They also warn others not to have contact with the person doing harm.

This may not be realistic or desired for many people in situations of violence. This Toolkit explores the possibility of contacting, communicating with and possibly working together with the person or people doing harm towards a resolution in which harm can be addressed, reduced or ended and future harm can be prevented.

The survivor or victim may still have some kind of relationship with the person or people doing harm. They may even be living together. Even if the survivor or victim and the person doing harm are no longer in contact, other people may be involved in this intervention and may be dealing with the person doing harm.

Depending upon the situation, such meetings can carry risks such as:

- Danger of physical or sexual violence
- Danger of emotional and verbal abuse
- Threats of various forms of violence
- Intimidation and use of fear to get the survivor or victim to come back or stop any kind of intervention
- Manipulation (intended or unintended) to get the person to go along with the desires of the person or people doing harm
- Manipulation (intended or unintended) to get the person to doubt their own beliefs
- Lies that make the person doing harm appear innocent – or make the survivor or victim or other community members look like they are to blame
If someone (survivor or victim, community ally) decides to meet with the person or people doing harm with knowledge of these risks, then some ways to stay safer include the following:

• Go through the Risk Assessment and Safety Plan and Action sections above with at least two or more people.

• Be very clear with yourself about the reason for the meeting, the expectations of outcomes, and the possibility of reaching these outcomes – think about all of the ways that this could go wrong and be clear about how you will feel or what you will gain or lose in case things go wrong.

• Understand that risk can increase when people doing harm sense a loss of control. Dangers can escalate beyond what you might have thought was possible.

• Understand that promises to be cooperative, to have one last visit, to give back belongings and so on can be insincere ways to regain control or hurt someone.

• Meet in a public place where other people are around whenever possible.

• If for some reason the meeting needs to take place in a more private space, then go with another person or have someone waiting nearby and maintain contact with the safe person. Make sure that the door or other escapes are kept within your eyesight.

• Have some kind of code or special message for the person waiting and a back-up plan if you do not come out by a certain time.

• Role play with or think about all of the possibilities with at least one other person and have that person play all possible options including the worst case scenario of what could happen – prepare for the expected and the unexpected.

• Know that you can always change your mind and not meet.

• Think about ways you can communicate through safer means such as email, letter, safe friends or family, attorney or mediator rather than a face-to-face meeting.
If more than one person is meeting, substitute “we” for “I” and make sure that everyone going to the meeting is in agreement about the following.

1. I am meeting with _________________ under the following circumstances:

2. I am meeting for the following reasons or to get the following results:

3. I plan to get these results through the following words or actions (make sure that each expected reason or result in #2 is matched with appropriate words or actions):

4. I will not say or do the following things because that will get in the way of my safety and/or getting my goals:
5. The safest place and time (including length of time) for us to meet is:

6. The safest way to contact ______________ is (include who will contact, form of contact, words that will be used and not used):

7. Other safety concerns to think about (such as time of day, whether that person is sober or drug-free, whether that person is likely to have a weapon, whether that person may be with someone else who can be a danger, whether that person will be with children) are:

8. Other people that would be good to have along for reasons of safety are (include their role and their level of participation – observe and witness only; speak only to certain points; or take the most active role)

9. Other people that should know or be aware that this meeting is happening are:
10. Other people who should not know that this meeting is happening are:

11. Things that ________________ may think that they could gain from this meeting are the following (these may be things that have no relation to your own reasons):

12. When I say or do the things that I plan in Question #3, the possible reactions include:

(Role play each statement if possible. Think of or get other people to think of all of the possible things that the person doing harm might say or do – including worst case scenarios. Knowledgeable people may be others who know a lot about violence or people who know the person doing harm well including his or her faults. Be prepared. Think of how you will respond. Think of what you will say and not say. Make sure that everyone that will be going to the meeting is in agreement.)
13. After this meeting is over, people could be affected in the possible ways (Think about whether or not someone else’s confidence might be broken, whether there could be retaliation against yourself or other people after the meeting is over, what kind of responses could have, what kind of other reactions might follow and whether there are supports in place):

14. Follow-up communication and support for each affected person can happen in the following ways:

15. During the meeting, I will stick with the following words and actions (best to keep to 1 or 2 main points).

16. During the meeting, I will not say or do the following no matter what.
17. Emergency situations may include the following:

18. I have a plan to respond to each emergency in the following ways:

19. I need more information on the following in order to make this a safe and effective meeting.

20. My next steps in preparation for the meeting are the following (include plans to contact other people or resources, adequate support for after the meeting and more information needed).
21. I have gone through this worksheet and have:

- Read through Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know section
- Read through the entire Section 4.B. Staying Safe section
- Answered every question in this worksheet thoroughly with the help of at least one other appropriate person
- Followed through with all preparations (See Question 20)
- Thought of all possible responses that __________ could have
- Thought of my possible responses carefully
- Shared this worksheet with everyone else who will go and made sure that they agree – if they are expected to talk and act during the meeting, then they have also actively answered all questions in this worksheet
- Considered emergency worst-case scenarios and have an emergency plan for each
- Feel confident that this meeting is worth having and safety risks are worth taking
- Have someone I can trust to check in with and get support from before and after the meeting takes place

If you were not able to check all of these boxes, then we urge you to reconsider this meeting and take more time to see if you can get a greater level of safety before moving on.
C.1. What is Mapping Allies and Barriers?
C.2. Mapping Allies and Barriers Across the Four Phases
C.3. Tips
C.4. Special Considerations
C.5. Facilitator Notes
C.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
C.7. Mapping Allies and Barriers Tools
C.1. WHAT IS MAPPING ALLIES & BARRIERS?

Key Questions

- Who can help?
- Who can get in the way?
- Who is in a good position to support the survivor or victim?
- Who is in a good position to offer support to the person or people doing harm?
- Who can become an ally or become a better ally with a little bit of help?
- What kind of help do they need and who can give it?

What Is It?

Mapping Allies and Barriers involves taking a look at who we have around us as helpers and community resources (allies). It also involves looking at who could get in the way of an intervention (barriers). It may also include looking at “swing” people – people who could be better allies with a little bit of help. Swing people may even be barriers who have the potential to become allies.

Community allies can play all kinds of roles in interventions to violence. They can provide support (practical, emotional, etc.) to the person who has been harmed; they can contribute to engagement, support, and accountability with the person doing harm; they can support other allies playing more involved or higher-risk roles in the intervention; and they can provide logistical or interpersonal support to the intervention team.

Why Is It Important?

This model is based on the idea that working together collectively gives us more support, power, resources and good ideas than working alone. It is also based on the idea that communities have a responsibility to come together to end violence and that we all directly benefit by creating a safer, healthier community.

Finding and mapping community allies and barriers involves looking at the people and organizations around you. Who can play a role? It may be people near and dear. Or it may be people we don’t know well but who can play an important role in dealing with a particular situation of harm. They may be people who can stick around for the long-haul of an intervention, or people who can play a useful role here and there.

When we build our teams with care and consideration, we create teams that build the morale of individual members and the intervention overall. We can create teams that last.
USING THE TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

The Mapping Allies and Barriers section offers basic information and tools to help you think about who can be brought to help (allies) and who you might need to avoid or work around (barriers).

If you need simpler, shorter tools to help when you are in immediate crisis or have less time, refer to Tool C1. Mapping Allies & Barriers Snapshot/Quick Guided Questions.

When you get more time, you can go through Tool C2. Mapping Allies & Barriers Worksheet.

The checklists, Tool C3. Ally Roles Checklist and Tool C4. Good Ally Checklist can help you to brainstorm about different roles that allies can play and what characteristics make for a good ally.

Thinking about allies specifically to support the person doing harm can take special thought. Tool C5. Allies to Work with the Person Doing Harm Chart can help.

Tool C6. Barriers Checklist can help determine who or what might be getting in the way of an intervention.

When you are ready to sum up who you might have as an ally and/or a barrier, you can use Tool C7. Allies and Barriers: Summary.

And, finally, Tool C8. Invitation to Help with an Intervention helps you to think through the steps to invite other people – or to figure out what to do if they do not want to or cannot join. It gives an example of a script to use and things to think about giving them in order for them to be a better ally – even if they do not choose to join.
C.2. MAPPING ALLIES & BARRIERS ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Mapping Allies and Barriers can look different at different phases or levels of crisis. It involves team building and matching specific allies to specific roles. It can take place at all stages of an intervention because after every action we take, we assess how it went, what makes sense to do next, and who might be able to help (or might have a hard time, or might get in the way, or might need a one-on-one check-in, etc.). Mapping community allies and barriers can look one way when we first get started and build our initial team, and then look a different way once we start planning and taking different actions.

**PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED**

When we first start talking with each other about addressing or stopping a situation of violence, we may sit with just one other person (a close friend, family member, witness to the violence, person affected by the violence, etc.) to brainstorm who could help us and who might stand in our way.

We may initially think there is no one who can help. Or we may name one or two supportive people, and also identify a pool of people who might be able to help later, depending on what we decide to do. Sometimes it can be helpful to think about anyone (and everyone) who could possibly play a helpful role in an intervention, and to separate them into groups such as the following:

1. People who seem like they can be active members of a core team now;
2. People who can be pulled in for specific contributions later depending on what the team’s goals become;
3. People who are well positioned to support and communicate with the survivor;
4. People who are well positioned to engage the person who did (or is doing) harm;
5. People who could have a good impact on the intervention but who need some guidance, encouragement, or education in order to become allies;
6. People who might sabotage the team’s efforts.
PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION

We may build our initial team based on who is naturally involved in a supportive way right now, and do initial goal-setting with those few people that maps out who else to bring into the team. For example, a small initial team may form and make an immediate plan to build for allies or create a team. As the intervention progresses, it might become necessary to find new allies. Or we may find that new allies have entered the picture.

PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION

When we take action, we might be taking action to build more allies, or we might be taking action with allies to support survivors and engage people who are using violence. When we take action we may discover any or all of the following:

1. Some of the allies we mapped are not ready to be allies;
2. Someone we thought was a barrier may actually be more ready than we thought to take a positive role in the intervention;
3. A team member or ally who thought they could take the agreed upon action decides it is too hard and they can’t take that kind of action again;
4. In the pressure of the moment, one or more allies does not act according to plan, or takes action on their own in a way that affects the trust of others on the team and their opinion of the person as an ally;
5. An ally playing a specific role has a positive experience and wants to join the team in an ongoing way.

PHASE 4: FOLLOWING-UP

When we follow-up on how the action went and how it affected everyone involved, we learn a lot about our map of allies and barriers.

Sometimes we learn that potential allies are not participating in the way that we’d wanted or hoped. Sometimes we need to re-assess the situation, identify and plan for the next best step toward our goal, and then map and engage a second set of potential allies who can take that next step.

RELATED TOOLS

Tools to help pass on necessary information to allies are in the section Section 4.A. Getting Clear.

Tools to help allies work better together are in Section 4.G. Working Together.

Tools to help the collective group look at your goals or what you want to achieve are in the Section 4.D. Goal Setting.
C.3. MAPPING ALLIES & BARRIERS TIPS

#1 READ SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW.

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

#2 WATCH OUT FOR EXTREMES "NOBODY CAN HELP" OR "EVERYONE SHOULD HELP" IN MAPPING ALLIES AND BARRIERS.

Extreme #1 can look like this: “There is absolutely no one who can help.” Revisit goalsetting so that existing team members can brainstorm allies who can help with specific goals. Many more resources may appear when you focus on the intermediate steps, instead of thinking of a total transformation as the only or the immediate goal of an intervention.

Extreme #2 can look like this: “Let’s make this team huge! Let’s get everyone on board! Let’s call a community meeting!” Be sure you have considered whether you are ready, and have clear goals and clear examples or ideas of how people can engage and contribute. Have you thought through the medium-term and long-term impact of team-building actions? Can you bring people in at different stages?

#3 BE CREATIVE IN FINDING ALLIES AMONG THOSE WHO MAY LOOK LIKE BARRIERS NOW.

Most of us are not taught how to be a good ally – especially in situations of violence. But learning the skills to become a good ally can come about through useful information and helpful support from others. Think about how your information, support and tools found in this Toolkit could turn those “swing” people who now look like barriers or poor allies into good allies. Think about who is best to deliver this information and how best to use these or other tools.
#4 PRIORITYIZE SAFETY.

If there are truly no allies who are positioned to engage the person doing harm to make positive changes, or if the risk for the survivor(s) or victims or for the people involved in the intervention is too high, pause and pay attention. If there are no safe allies, reassess the goals and scope of your intervention. Think about whether it is safe to wait until more allies are available. Think about whether you might need to seek more traditionally available anti-violence resources that do not rely on other friends, family, or other community members.

#5 WATCH OUT FOR COMMON ALLY PROBLEM AREAS.

a. Look out for allies who have supported the survivor or victim (or perceived survivor or victim) and who come to feel so much anger, disgust, impatience, or desire to “get even” with the person doing harm that they cannot step outside of those feelings. These allies may have difficulty considering the success of the bigger picture goals of the intervention, or belittle all positive steps made by the person doing harm. Help people understand that while these are common and understandable responses, they may not be the best responses. People who cannot step out of these extreme reactions may find different roles to play or may step back for awhile.

b. Look out for allies who have supported the person doing harm and who start to: 1) protect that person from the intervention; 2) sabotage the intervention; 3) argue that the survivor(s) were equally responsible for the situation of violence and need to be held equally accountable; or 4) influence others to believe that the survivor or victim is “crazy.” Ask questions to understand what is going on for the ally. Ask them to look at tools in Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims or 4.F. Taking Accountability that might be helpful.

c. Look out for team members or potential allies who are or become too deeply and personally affected by the situation of violence to be able to contribute in a constructive way, or to have any separation between their own personal experiences and reactions and the way they participate in the intervention. Consider ways to integrate self-reflection into all meetings or conversations about the intervention. See Self-Reflection tools in Section 4.G. Keeping on Track for help.

#6 TRY TO INCLUDE AT LEAST SOME ALLIES WHO ARE NOT HEAVILY IMPACTED BY THE VIOLENCE.

It can be helpful to include people who have some distance from the violence and who can bring fresh new perspectives to the group. Don’t only think of those closest to the situation as possible allies or team members. If you allow some space for creativity, you may think of people who are not obvious — but who may be a very good fit.
C.4. MAPPING ALLIES & BARRIERS SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Allies can play many different roles for different people involved in a violence intervention. Some allies may be particularly helpful for supporting the survivor or victim. Allies can also be there to support others who are working on the situation of violence – that is, allies can be allies to each other. It may be especially important to think about who makes sense to be an ally to the person or people doing harm. Below are questions that can be useful for thinking about who can be a good ally and how we can make good use of allies.

As interventions get complex and long, it is easy to isolate the survivor or victim if this person is not centrally involved, blame the survivor or victim or rely so much on the survivor or victim that they are carrying the burden of the intervention.

It is good to have people who the survivor or victim trusts to make sure that they are supported through the entire process, that their humanity and needs for compassion and healing are attended to. Interventions do not always lead to healing directly. They can leave survivors or victims raw and hurt. While this may at times be unavoidable, strong allies who not only take care of tasks but also warmth, comfort and understanding is important.

If you are the survivor or victim, you can think of some of the following questions. Who do you go to for support? Who listens to your experience? Who can help you recenter yourself during times when you start spinning into negative patterns of feelings or actions?

As more allies are brought into the team or engaged to play a specific role in the intervention, think about what personal information about your experience you want to share or not share with them? What is necessary? If it’s hard on you to share that information over and over again, who else could share it for you? (See Section 4.A. Getting Clear for some tools to help you figure out what information is important and how to document it so that you do not need to keep repeating it.

When others start talking about who could be an ally to engage the person who has done harm, be prepared for what might be some hard conversations. Allies who can help support the person who has harmed you to take responsibility might not be the best people for you to consider as your personal allies. How will you prepare for those difficult conversations? Do you want to be part of all of them? Take some time to be specific about what you want to be part of and what you don’t.
As this is a collective model, think about how you can respond if others disagree with what you want. Get support to help you through these difficulties.

During times when you are having a really hard time and need a break, is there an ally on the team with whom you could share your concerns and insights so that they could share it with the rest of the team or group of supporters.

**Some things to think about are:**

1. **Are there specific requests you have of the allies working on the intervention?**
2. **Do you need support to voice your concerns with the group along the way? Who could support you to voice them?**
3. **What friends or supporters do you have outside of the intervention that can help you with personal healing and rebuilding that is separate from the intervention?**
4. **Use the Tools in this to help you think about allies (and barriers) and how to make good ally relations.**

---

**COMMUNITY ALLY**

Community allies are generally those who provide support and play an ally role. Most of this section is focused on how to identify and get strong community allies. Allies may also need their own allies for support. Getting people who can look out for the well-being of everyone is important.

If you are the community ally, think about the following. Who do you want to build a team with? How can you contribute to building a team culture and team experience that makes you want to stay involved? How can you avoid bringing in people who do not have collaborative skills and/or easily become argumentative, antagonizing, or fixated on one approach being the only “right” one?

Use the Tools in this section to help you think about allies (and barriers) and how to make good ally relations.
Getting allies for the person doing harm is a very important part of the process. Allies are not people who will excuse violence, feel sorry for the person doing harm, and see “their side of the story.” They are also not there to humiliate and punish the person doing harm to make sure that “justice is done.” They are there to support accountability or that person’s ability to recognize, end and take responsibility for their violence.

If you are the person doing harm or are the person accused of doing harm, think about allies as people who can support you to take responsibility or accountability for the harm – and not those who will protect you from having to take responsibility. This may be a very different way for you to think about allies or friends.

Think about who can help you feel seen and understood, without supporting you to continue the behaviors and patterns that you are trying to change. Who can you imagine going to when you mess up, fall back into an old pattern, and use violence again? How can you see their reminders of your responsibility as helpful rather than attacking or blaming?

Remember to remind yourself that someone can support the person you’ve harmed without becoming your enemy. Though it’s easy to see people as “taking sides,” try to push yourself into viewing allies as people who will help you turn away from using violence and experiencing the negative consequences of using violence.

Use the Tools in this section to help you think about allies (and barriers) and how to make good ally relations.
People are rarely 100% allies or 100% barriers. Try supporting the group to think creatively and to expand out of “black and white” and “either/or” thinking. When we think of people as 100% allies, we can overlook ways in which they are not the best fit in to certain roles. When we think of people as 100% barriers, we can miss ways in which they could be well suited to a specific task. It is possible for participants in an intervention to be allies to one goal and barriers to another.

**#1 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PEOPLE TO LEARN FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION FIRST IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY.**

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.

**#2 SUPPORT PEOPLE BY GOING THROUGH THESE MAPPING ALLIES AND BARRIERS INFORMATION AND TOOLS THAT SEEM USEFUL.**

You may be helping people through the process of mapping allies and barriers, and then choosing allies. When supporting the group through the intervention, you may need to help the group map allies and barriers over and over again. As you do so, look out for the ways in which allies and barriers can change over time. Pay special attention to the following patterns that are also described in Tips, #7.
Pay special attention to if you are bringing together ‘people who were supporting the survivor’ with ‘people who are friends or supporters of the person who harmed.’

a. Find ways to help people focus on the goals of the intervention and of stopping violence. Steer people away from convincing each other about what version of the story is true or false, accurate or exaggerated, or what dynamics in the situation or relationship were messed up or unhealthy.

b. Help the team remember that they are not there to evaluate every last aspect of the situation or relationship. There is no way that any one of them knows the full story of what happened. They are there to reduce and stop violence, not agree on an explanation for why the violence happened. They are not there to design a therapy plan for everyone involved.

Make sure new allies brought into the process are given the necessary information — make good use of the Harms Chart or Harms Statement described in the Section 4.A. Getting Clear.

a. Find ways to help people focus on the goals of the intervention and of stopping violence. Steer people away from convincing each other about what version of the story is true or false, accurate or exaggerated, or what dynamics in the situation or relationship were messed up or unhealthy.

b. Help the team remember that they are not there to evaluate every last aspect of the situation or relationship. There is no way that any one of them knows the full story of what happened. They are there to reduce and stop violence, not agree on an explanation for why the violence happened. They are not there to design a therapy plan for everyone involved.
Story C. My Husband Is Hitting Our Daughter: Who Can Help?

My husband’s abuse toward our first daughter started even before she was barely a year old. He clearly had lots of problem managing his own frustration and didn’t seem to know how to discipline kids appropriately. He often yelled at her and spanked her when she was little. This sort of violence continued until my daughter was in sixth grade.

One incident that comes to my mind is when my daughter was about five or six years old. On the living room couch, my husband was trying to pull out one of her teeth which was shaking badly. My daughter was obviously scared and didn’t want to do it. Although I knew he was getting impatient with her, I decided not to intervene at that moment since it usually made things worse. I heard my daughter crying and my husband’s frustrated voice. And suddenly my daughter started to cry even louder. I remained in my bedroom. My husband went out shortly afterwards, so I came out to see if my daughter was okay. When I asked her what happened, she simply said, “Dad hit me.” “Where?” I asked. She pointed her finger to her face. When I saw the mark of his hand across her face, I became furious.

The pattern was always the same. He would tell our daughter to do something or bring him something. If she didn’t do it immediately, he would get upset. Then, he would shout and tell her again. If she complained or tried to explain why she couldn’t do it, he got angry and accused her of talking back to him. Then he hit her. It tended to get worse if I tried to intervene or if my daughter even looked at me.

One evening, my husband and I were having an argument about the time he hit her when he was trying to pull her tooth. We were arguing in the car on the way back from church. He kept insisting that he didn’t hit her at all. I became so angry that I got out of the car and walked away. I later called my friend to come and pick me up. In the meantime, I later found out that he told my oldest daughter that everything was her fault. He blamed her for my leaving the family that evening. This had a serious impact on my daughter; she still remembers his exact words years later.

I returned home that night and again got into an argument with my husband who shouted that he didn’t hit her. I thought about next step, and I started to break things in the kitchen. The next day, I cut all of his shoes with scissors.

I then decided to call my father, my husband’s older sister, and one of a mutual good friend/mentor. I called my father and my husband’s older sister in order to reach out to the person in authority on each side of the family. They called him separately and confronted him. This was my attempt to make him somehow accountable for his behavior. I also called our mutual friend/mentor whom he respects, hoping that this might have an impact on him in the long run.
My father called my husband and told him that it was wrong to hit a child and that it shouldn’t happen again. When our friend/mentor heard what had happened, he came over to our home right away. He saw my daughter’s face and confronted my husband about his hitting. My husband was clearly upset and embarrassed to the person in authority on each side of the family. They called him separately and confronted him. This was my attempt to make him somehow accountable for his behavior. I also called our mutual friend/mentor whom he respects, hoping that this might have an impact on him in the long run.

My father called my husband and told him that it was wrong to hit a child and that it shouldn’t happen again. When our friend/mentor heard what had happened, he came over to our home right away. He saw my daughter’s face and confronted my husband about his hitting. My husband was clearly upset and embarrassed.

In the meantime, I told my daughter that it wasn’t her fault and told her and my son not to worry if they hear loud voices. My goal that night was really making him feel sorry for what he did so that any future abuse can be prevented or greatly reduced.

It wasn’t like I had a plan for that sort of situation. I had to think hard and fast to do all the things I could so that his behavior would stop. Although the people I called were supportive and did what they could to let him know how wrong it was to hit a child, I doubted that it would have a long lasting effect on him. I acted on my instincts and attempted to involve more people. What I was thinking all along, however, was that it is necessary for him to experience a more profound change within him to really change.

When my father, his sister, and our friend/mentor called, my husband initially denied hitting our daughter. He was angry with me for telling other people. He said I was “making a big deal out of nothing.” As they continued to confront him, his denial slowly disappeared. He was upset at the fact that I had contacted several people, but became more embarrassed over time.

The intervention helped. He did stop hitting our daughter after that time, but the profound changes didn’t come until later. Two things seemed to make the deepest impact. First, one of his friends shared his own story about how his grown up daughter wants to maintain distance with him because of his verbal and physical abuse toward her while growing up. This personal sharing had a big impact on my husband who always wanted to have close relationships with his kids. Second, my husband experienced a spiritual breakthrough, and he began to look at different parts of his life. He has changed so much since then.

Looking back, I think that one of the major impacts of my interventions was that my oldest daughter felt more secure and safe at home knowing that I would never overlook her dad’s violent behavior. Although it took many more years before my husband was able to control his temper and stop violent behavior, my husband did realize that I will not stand for it if he treats our children in an abusive way.

I think that any kind of intervention is important. It may not stop the violence from happening again, but it almost always helps children.
Section 4. Tools to Mix and Match

4.0. Introduction

Section 4: Tools to Mix and Match contains sets of tools organized around activities that can be useful in planning and carrying out community-based interventions to interpersonal violence. They follow basic concerns that many or most groups interested in violence intervention have faced.

These sets of tools are organized in the following categories:

4.B. Staying Safe. How Do We Stay Safe?
4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. Who Can Help?
4.D. Setting Goals. What Do We Want?


In This Section:

- Tool C1. Mapping Allies & Barriers: Snapshot/Quick Guided Questions
- Tool C3. Ally Roles Checklist
- Tool C4. Good Ally Checklist
- Tool C5. Allies to Work with the Person Doing Harm Chart
- Tool C6. Barrier Checklist
- Tool C7. Allies and Barriers: Summary
- Tool C8. Invitation to Help with an Intervention
You can use this Snapshot/Quick Guided Questions to help to get started thinking about allies and barriers and as a way to make snapshots along the way. This just asks some possible basic questions to start thinking about who can get involved – and who should be avoided.

- Who can help (when and how, or toward which goal)?
- Who can potentially hurt the situation?
- Who is in a good position to offer support to the victim or survivor?
- Who is in a good position to offer support to the person or people doing harm?
- Who can become an ally or become a stronger ally with a little bit of help?
- What kind of help do they need and who can give it?
What is it and how can we use it?

Here are some exploratory questions related to mapping allies and barriers and doing initial team-building. Skim through them and answer the ones that stand out as clear and helpful to you! You do not need to get bogged down in thinking that you must answer all of them. You can get more specific later.

These are some basic questions:

• Who can help?

• Who do you usually turn to for help? Would they be helpful in this situation?

• Who can be helpful to the survivor?

• Who can be influential with and helpful to the person doing harm? Who can help support person doing harm to stop using violence, take accountability, repair harm, and/or learn new behaviors?

• Who is connected to the situation and could help out in some way?

• Who is disconnected from the situation but could still help out in some way?

• Who might seem good at first glance, but actually could pose some problems or challenges to the intervention?

• Who might be great if they had the right information and got some support?

• Who do you know who is good at working in groups or is a good team player?

• Who do you know is good at thinking through complex situations without jumping to conclusions or leaping to take action on their own?

• Who do you know who is a great communicator?

• Who do you know who is skilled at bringing together people with strong differences of opinion?

• Who do you know who can cheer people on, appreciate what others are good at or have accomplished, and build team morale?

• Who do you know who is not afraid of conflict or confrontation, or who can stay calm in stressful situations?
• Who do you know who has resources they could share—a car, a living room, flip chart paper and markers, a safe place to sleep, a temporary cell phone, etc.?

• Would these people be good allies to help in this intervention? Why? Why not?

• If not or you’re not sure, is there anything that can be done to make them a better ally? What?

• What kind of role can they play?

• Can you see them being a key person on a team that meets regularly? Or for a long time?

• Would they be willing to meet together to talk about this intervention?

• What would they need to make this meeting possible?

• Would they benefit from reading any part of this Toolkit – or have someone go over it with them?

• Which parts would be important? Who could do that?
This is a checklist that can help you focus your thinking and assessment of individual people who might be able to help out as community allies and the roles they might play. Go through the checklist. What do your responses reveal to you?

Some potential ally roles (If you are considering if you might be a good ally, then check the roles with yourself in mind):

- Act as a facilitator for the intervention
- Coordinate logistics like where are we meeting, when, what do we need
- Take notes
- Keep track of goals
- Keep track of decisions
- Keep track of timelines (including start and end times for meetings)
- Make sure next steps were followed by checking in with people
- Make sure to think about risks and safety planning (See Section Staying Safe)
- Be a good reality check
- Defuse or reduce physical conflict
- Defuse or reduce emotional conflict
- Offer useful information about the dynamics of violence – may include their own experience if they are comfortable to share
- Be emotionally supportive to the victim or survivor or other people directly affected by violence (for example, children)
- Be emotionally supportive to people taking action in the intervention
- Be emotionally supportive to the person doing harm
- Offer resources (money, food, rides, shelter, storage, etc.) to the victim or survivor or other people directly affected by violence (for example, children)
- Offer resources (money, food, rides, shelter, storage, etc.) to support people taking action in the intervention
- Offer resources (money, food, rides, shelter, storage, etc.) to the person doing harm
- Be a person who can communicate well with the survivor or people affected by violence (for example, children)
- Be a person who can communicate well with the person doing harm
- Be a person who can communicate well with others involved in the intervention
- Drive if/when necessary
- Pick up supplies if/when necessary
- Hold meetings in their home or office or other space if/when necessary
- Cook or provide food for meetings
- Provide for spiritual needs (for example, hold a prayer, bless the space, provide spiritual counseling for anyone involved in the intervention, etc.)
- Other: ____________________________
Think about a potential ally and check the box if this person: (If you are considering if you might be a good ally, then check the box with yourself in mind)

- Is a good listener
- Has a good understanding of dynamics of violence or is willing to learn
- Will not blame the survivor or victim or will be open to understanding that blaming is not helpful
- Can think about the person doing harm with compassion (even if they are outraged, angered, disgusted, etc.)
- Does not always have to be right – can be part of group decision-making
- Does not always have to be the center of attention – can be a good team player
- Is not a gossip or at least will not gossip about this situation
- Is a good communicator or is willing to learn how to be better
- Is good at follow-through or would be for this situation
- Has some time to be available for conversations, meetings, etc.
Looking at the boxes, would you say...

☐ This person would be a good ally:

Good qualities:

Potential roles:

Next steps:

☐ This person could be an important good ally, but:

They could use help with:

Good ways to provide this help are:

Good people to provide this help are:

Next steps:

☐ This person is most likely not a good ally and is even a danger to the intervention (see Mapping Community Barriers)

☐ This person is most likely not a good ally but is not a danger — we can keep them in mind for the future
Right from the start, you may want to think about allies whose special role is to engage the person doing harm. This is a particularly important role but one that can be a difficult role to play.

Generally speaking, it is hard to take responsibility for and to change harmful behaviors (think of the last time you were successful in meaningfully changing something about your own behavior!). It is especially hard when others openly demand it of you. It is pretty much impossible when we are left to do it alone without support and in the face of judgment, criticism, and contempt.

So when working toward goals that involve supporting a person doing harm to take accountability for violence, mapping allies and barriers is critically important.

When planning to help support accountability or make it possible, it is important to think through who in the community is best positioned to help make it possible, and who in the community might get in the way, or make accountability less likely to happen. To do so, look at the community contexts surrounding situations of violence. They can be very diverse.

1. Sometimes there is a natural community surrounding the situation. It might be neighbors, family members, witnesses in a workplace, a friend group, etc.

2. Sometimes the person doing harm has very few social relationships and/or has burned bridges (destroyed relationships) in their past, leaving no people who are willing or well-situated to provide them support.

3. Similarly, survivors can also be extremely isolated, and/or have lost friends and supporters as a situation of violence and its impact in their life has progressed.

4. In still other situations, especially those in which the interpersonal violence happened outside of any kind of ongoing relationship, there might be very little (or no) overlap between people who know the survivor and people who know the person who did harm. Mapping allies and barriers will look different in these situations.
Overall, there are a few basic trends:

1. It is often easier to engage allies to provide support to the survivor or victim, to team members, or to the intervention overall, than it is to find support for the person doing harm.

2. Unfortunately, it can also be easy to engage allies to protect the person using violence by making excuses for them, justifying their behavior or criticizing those who are trying to stop or address the violence.

3. It is harder to find and nurture allies who can and are willing to engage people who are using violence and support them to reduce, stop and transform it.

Helping your friends, family members, or acquaintances take accountability for their violence and practice new coping and communication strategies and behaviors is hard. How do you tell who can help and who might hurt? Tips on mapping allies and barriers related to supporting accountability are below. Remember to think creatively! Sometimes people might not be who we first expected.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability allies can be people who...</th>
<th>People who might be barriers to accountability and transformation (but who might still support the intervention in other ways) can be people who...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matter to the person doing harm.</td>
<td>Have no connection or have a negative connection to the person who did harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can see the person doing harm as a human being deserving of basic respect and compassion.</td>
<td>Feel anger, disgust, disdain, rage, or contempt to the point that their approach to the person doing harm would be overwhelmed by judgment, criticism, harshness, etc.</td>
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<td>Understand the harmful impact(s) of the violence, even when met with anger, tears, defensiveness, or emotional collapse (etc.) from the person doing harm.</td>
<td>Minimize or deny the harmful impact(s) of the violence, especially when they see any sign of anger, tears, defensiveness, or emotional collapse (etc.) from the person doing harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be clear and specific in their communication.</td>
<td>Get thrown off easily by other people’s responses, make huge generalizations or are unclear and unspecific in their communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a sense of when to back off and give someone some space or time to take in new information.</td>
<td>“Go for the jugular” or go for the extreme point at all costs or who push their point and do not notice when 1) the other person is unable to hear more; or 2) when their communication is having a negative impact on reaching their goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can get support to sustain the hard experience of being rejected by the person doing harm, or becoming the (perhaps new) target of that person’s anger or criticism.</td>
<td>When rejected or targeted by the person doing harm, either 1) responds with anger in a way that escalates the situation; or 2) does not get support and ends up incapable of sustaining themselves as the other person struggles against accountability; or 3) buckles to the intimidation, critique, or other form of retaliation from the person doing harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can develop understanding and compassion for the person doing harm’s emotions and experience, but keep that separate from condoning or supporting the person doing harm’s uses of violence.</td>
<td>Develops understanding and compassion for the person doing harm’s emotions and experience, and connects that with 1) justifying the person doing harm’s uses of violence; and 2) an increased questioning and criticism of the survivor’s imperfect behaviors or imperfect attempts to stop the violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can help motivate the person doing harm to withstand community involvement or exposure, resist pushing everyone away, and make a positive change.</td>
<td>Can only “say my piece” or “tell the truth” and leave it to the person doing harm alone to figure out how to change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can assess that how the person doing harm behaves with them (during times of calm, with people who are not the targets of their controlling or violent behavior, etc.) is not reflective of how the person behaves in all situations.</td>
<td>Experience a positive connection or moment with the person doing harm and decide that their behavior can’t have been “that bad” based on their own experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can communicate clearly and regularly with other team members, even when there might be disagreement or conflict in the team.</td>
<td>Avoid conflict or disagreement by withdrawing from communication or potentially sabotaging the intervention.</td>
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</table>
This tool is to help identify people or organizations who are barriers or roadblocks to an intervention. Key questions are: Who should not know about this intervention? Who should not be involved? Can anything be done to change them to become an ally or a neutral person (and not a barrier)?

Think about potential barriers to the intervention. (If you are considering if you might be an ally, then check the box with yourself in mind.) Check the box if this person or organization:

- Will tell people who should not be told about the intervention – even if trying to be helpful (this could include person doing harm, others who will tell person doing harm, police or other authorities you do not want to get involved – at least for now, etc.).
- Benefits in a significant way from the violence or thinks that they do.
- Could suffer negative consequences by actions taken to address, reduce, end, or prevent violence.
- Believes that the violence is okay.
- Is dependent (financially, emotionally, due to immigration status, etc.) on the person doing harm.
- Is likely to feel threatened if people try to address, end or prevent violence.
- Will “blame the victim.”
- Could otherwise harm the survivor or increase their vulnerability.
- Is likely to harm the person doing harm if they find out or know that others are taking action.
- Gossips in a way which will threaten the success of an intervention.
- Would try to get in the way of an intervention if they know about it.
- Not sure why – but just have a sense that they would be harmful to an intervention.

### BARRIERS CHECKLIST SUMMARY

If this person or organization seems to be a potential barrier, what are next steps? Look at the following suggested steps and see whether they make sense in this situation.

1. **Make sure that they do not find out**
   - Get people to agree that they will not tell this person
   - Make sure that this person does not have access to communication (like emails, notes, able to overhear conversations, etc.)

2. **Create some distractions to decrease their chances of finding out or creating harm**

3. **Make some safety plans in case this person finds out or creates harm**
   - (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe)
OTHER ROADBLOCKS TO AN INTERVENTION: CHECKLIST

It’s not just people who can be barriers or roadblocks. We can think of other things such as time, resources, laws, etc.

This Tool is to help you identify other possible roadblocks and make plans to work around them.

RESOURCES

☐ No transportation to get to a meeting

☐ No place to meet that is big enough, private enough, warm enough, cool enough, etc.

☐ Need babysitting or childcare to be able to meet

☐ Financial needs so urgent that nothing else can be done

☐ Other:

LAW OR SYSTEMS

☐ Dealing with child abuse but don’t want to report -- need to think about who is a mandatory reporter to child welfare such as teachers, social workers, doctors

☐ Want to or need to use medical care but know that clinics are mandated to report known abuse of adults and children to police

☐ Someone involved is undocumented so run the risk of authorities reporting and getting someone deported

☐ Someone involved is in trouble with the law so run the risk of getting arrested

☐ Want to tell workplace but not sure what their policies are around violence or potential violence – what do they do regarding victims/survivors; what do they do regarding people doing harm/perpetrators

☐ Other:

TIME

☐ Timeline or deadline coming up: (for example, we need to help someone escape during the time that her partner is out of town – the partner is returning in 2 days) Benefits in a significant way from the violence or thinks that they do.

☐ People can’t find the right overlapping time to meet.

☐ People don’t have time to meet at all (for example, I just can’t meet; email me or text me but I can’t do anything else)

☐ People can be active but only for a short time (for example, I can be available for the next week/month but not after that)

☐ Other:
### Mapping Allies & Barriers Tool C7: Allies & Barriers Summary Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Ally</th>
<th>Strengths/ Possible Roles</th>
<th>Risks/ Possible Challenges</th>
<th>Point of contact</th>
<th>Are they on board? (yes, no, need more info)</th>
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**Next Steps Regarding Allies:**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Barriers: Name of Person/Situation</th>
<th>Why Harmful?</th>
<th>Strategies to Reduce Harm</th>
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**Next Steps Regarding Barriers:**
**INVITATION TO HELP OUT WITH AN INTERVENTION**

(This can be handed to a potential ally or used as a “script” to talk to a potential ally)

**HELLO, I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...**

(Insert brief description of the situation)

**WE ARE ASKING IF YOU WOULD CONSIDER BEING PART OF OUR GROUP AS WE...**

(Insert brief description of the possible intervention)

**WE THINK YOU WOULD BE A GOOD PERSON FOR...**

(Insert brief description of possible role or roles)

**WE THOUGHT OF YOU AS A POSSIBLE PERSON TO HELP BECAUSE...**

(who you know, skills, knowledge, resources, etc.)
WE ASK YOU TO AGREE TO RESPECT THE FOLLOWING (EVEN IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO JOIN):

Who it’s okay to talk to:

Who it’s not okay to talk to:

Requests made by survivor:

Special considerations regarding person doing harm:

Other considerations requested:

THINGS THAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT MIGHT INCLUDE:

NEXT STEPS FOR PARTICIPATION:

CONTACT PERSON IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS.

OTHER INFORMATION TO HELP PREPARE YOU

Information about violence (Could include: Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know)

Information about this approach to violence intervention: (Could include: Section 1. Introduction & FAQ; Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know; and Section 3. Model Overview: Is It Right For You?)
4D SETTING GOALS
WHAT DO WE WANT?

D.1. What Is Goal Setting
D.2. Goal Setting Across the 4 Phases
D.3. Tips
D.4. Special Considerations
D.5. Facilitator Notes
D.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
D.7. Goal Setting Tools
D.1. WHAT IS GOAL SETTING?

Key Questions

- What do you want?
- What do you not want?
- What would you consider a success?

What Is It?

Goal Setting includes the steps the individuals and group take to move towards a single outcome or set of outcomes that could result from their action. Goal Setting is the process used to name a goal or set of goals that:

- 1. Can be agreed upon enough for everyone to move forward;
- 2. Help to guide next steps and actions;
- 3. Create ways which can help everyone measure success;
- 4. Can guide the person or people doing harm to steps and actions that would show themselves and others that they are taking responsibility to address the violence, repair the harm, and change their attitudes and behavior away from violence and towards responsibility.

Why Is It Important?

Goal Setting sets a clear direction in which you are headed. It gives a guide to lead the way during times of confusion. It also lets others who are involved in the intervention get a better picture of what they are working towards and what is expected of them. This may also include the person doing harm.

While everyone may agree that they want violence to end, we at Creative Interventions have found that agreement often stops there. What different people mean by this and how they think that should happen can be the points of conflict that make an intervention break down. The Goal Setting tools help you to understand that you as individuals may come into an intervention with different ideas about goals but that these differences can be discussed and group agreement can be reached. It also helps you turn vague goals into something more concrete – so that you can have a better idea when goals are actually met.
Goal Setting in Six Basic Steps:

Goal setting can take various steps including:

1. Name goals. Get concrete about the outcomes an individual or group wants and does NOT want – we call these desired outcomes “goals.”
2. Name bottom lines. Get concrete about any limits that an individual or group might have, things that they will not agree to, a line they will not cross – we call these “bottom lines.”
3. Create group consensus. Come together to form a group consensus or agreement regarding their goals and bottom lines (individuals may have to make compromises in order to reach agreement).
4. Separate short-term and long term goals. Separate immediate or short-term goals from goals that are more long-term.
5. Prioritize most important goals. Prioritize goals by naming one or two that are the most important goals. An alternative may be to also think about the goals most easy to achieve at least at the beginning.
6. Turn goals into action plans. Turn these goals into a plan of action – a plan that can be revised or changed over time.

Different Situations May Call for Different Types of Goals:

When setting goals, it might be helpful to also categorize the type of relationship in which the violence took place and what the relationship outcome might be. Goals may include something defining the desired relationship that you would want as an outcome of an intervention. For example, do you want to stay in close relationship with the person who did harm? Do you want to co-exist but not stay in close relationship? Do you not want to be in any kind of relationship? The different situations that violence may involve include:

1. Violence within ongoing intimate or close relationship – have the intention to stay together.
   - Goal may include staying together in a healthy relationship
2. Violence within ongoing intimate or close relationship – have no intention to stay together.
   - Goal may include separating safely
   - Goal may include being able to co-exist in the same community without staying in a close relationship
3. Violence from former relationship – have no intention to stay together or to reconnect.
   - Goal may include separating safely
Ongoing non-intimate relationship (coworker, friend, member of same organization) – may not stay closely connected but may still share the same community, same space or same circles.

• Goal may include co-existing peacefully in the same community

Violence caused by an acquaintance in the community – not a close relationship and do not share the same space or circles.

• Relationship may not be part of goal

Stranger – don’t know – cannot identify the person.

• Relationship may not be part of goal

What Could Goals Look Like?

In Section 3.5. What Are We Trying to Achieve: 3 Intervention Areas, we introduced three basic areas of interventions. We could also say that this represents three types of goals:

1. Survivor or victim support. This focuses on providing for the health, safety and other needs and wants of someone who has been the survivor or victim of harm. This may also extend to children, family members, pets, and others who rely upon the survivor or victim and their well-being.

2. Accountability of the person doing harm. This focuses on support for the person doing harm to recognize, end and take responsibility for the harm one has caused, regardless of whether or not that harm was intended. It also includes changing attitudes and behaviors so that the violence will not continue.

If accountability or responsibility is not possible, then this may be less about accountability and more about taking steps to make sure the violence stops and will not continue.

3. Community accountability or social change. This focuses on working with communities to recognize the ways in which they are responsible for harm and to make changes so that harm will not continue. This might refer to harm directly caused by communities or harms that were allowed by communities that did not do enough to make sure that these harms do not happen.

Goals may be organized under one, two, or all three of these areas. This may be a useful way to think about goals.

You might also want to think of goals in more specific ways that address a particular need and that more closely match your own situation – in your own words. The following is a list of some possible areas of goals. Some of these goals may overlap – goals of ending violence may overlap with safety and so on. Some of these goals may come from the survivor of violence. Others may come from friends, family, and community members of the survivor. Goals may also be defined by the person who has caused harm as some of these examples show.
### Goals about taking first steps in changing the situation of violence may include:
- Want to tell at least one trusted person about what is happening.
- Want to contact and find out about one crisis line I can call in case of emergency.
- Want to share this Toolkit with my close friends.
- Want to make my first intake appointment with batterer intervention program to get help ending my own violence.

### Goals about violence may include:
- Want the physical violence to end completely.
- Want all verbal abuse to end.
- Want my children to free from violence.
- Want to be able to argue without fearing physical violence.
- Want to be able to say “no” to sex without fear.

### Goals about freedom from control:
- Want to be able to go out without having to report to my partner.
- Want to be able to get a job without threats or being called a “bad mother.”

### Goals about safety:
- Want an emergency plan and at least two people I can call in case of emergency.
- Want my children to feel safe.
- Want to be able to live without fear most days of the week.

### Goals about relationship:
- Want to feel like I can be in this relationship without my partner fearing me.
- Want to end this relationship completely.
- Want to end this intimate relationship but remain friends if possible.
- Want to end this relationship but be able to co-parent our children.
- Want my friends to understand the dynamics of violence and be on my side.
- Want to have some people who I can trust.
Goals about the way the intervention is carried out:

- Want to meet person doing harm face-to-face.
- Do not want to meet person doing harm face-to-face.
- Want the person doing harm to be dealt with in a compassionate way.
- Do not want the police to be involved.

Goals about what you want from the person who caused harm:

- Want them to stay away and stop all contact.
- Want them to stay away and stop all contact until safety is established.
- Want them to understand and admit what they have done.
- Want a sincere apology.
- Want repair in the form of ________________________________.
- Want them to respect safe space by staying away from the following places: ________________________________.
- Want them to seek and follow through getting the following help __________ ________________________________.

Goals about what you want from the community (might be family, friends, an organization):

- Want the community to understand how they supported violence and admit what they have done.
- Want a sincere apology from the community.
- Want the community to adopt guidelines regarding safety and violence so this does not happen again.
WHAT ARE LIMITS OR BOTTOM LINES?

Bottom lines may be a limit that you draw for yourself in order to stay involved in the intervention. They might be personal limits such as the amount of time you can spend.

They might be limits to how the intervention takes place.

This Toolkit suggests that you think about whether you have any absolute limits to participation, and if so, that you make these clear so that other people know.

For example:

- I can be involved in this intervention, but I will not be meeting the person who did harm face-to-face.
- I can only meet about this on weekday evenings.
- I want to hear about the intervention so I don’t get in the way of what they are trying to achieve – but I do not otherwise want to be involved.
- I will be involved but only as long as we do not commit acts of violence against the person doing harm.
- I will be involved but I do not want to report to the police.

USING THE TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

The tools in this section offer guides to help you as individuals and as a group to get clearer about what you want and what you hope to get from your intervention. To begin, Tool D1. Dealing with Strong Negative Feelings and Fantasy helps you sort through what you really want from what is really do-able.

Tool D2. Goal Setting Guiding Questions and Chart can be used by individuals or groups to think through that person’s goals for the intervention. Once individuals come together as a group, Tool D3. Mapping Combined Goals Chart and Tool D4. Shared Collective Goals Charts can help you move forward from individual goals to group goals that you can all stand behind. Since goal setting can at times be a complicated process, especially when you are working together as a larger group, Tool D5. Collective Goals Summary Checklist and Next Steps can help you put all of these goals together into one list.

Finally, Tool D6. Turning Goals into Action in this section helps you to move from broad goals to the concrete steps to make these goals a reality.
D.2. GOAL SETTING ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Goal setting is an important step in violence intervention. Over time, goals might change. Check in regularly with your goals to make sure that they are still what you want, to see if they are realistic and to let people you are working with stay on the same page.

PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED
As you get started, your most important goals may be short-term goals, including getting immediate safety, gathering people together to help out, or finding someone to call for support.

Long-term goals can be important to set your direction and to revisit in order to see how the situation may have changed – or how your feelings about what you want may change.

If only one or two people are involved as this intervention starts, then goals may be

PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION
As you plan an intervention and possibly bring more people together, then your goals may begin to expand. You may need to get more concrete about long-term goals in order to better guide your plans. You may need to have a group process to come to consensus about goals. If you started off setting goals on your own, then the goals might expand to include the group or you may need to share your goals with others and make sure that they understand and agree with these goals.

PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION
By the time the group starts to take action, it is good to have a solid set of goals with which everyone understands, agrees and remembers.

PHASE 4: FOLLOWING-UP
As your group begins to close an intervention process or a phase of the process, you can return to goals to measure your success, to celebrate those goals you were able to achieve, and to remind yourselves of what you need to keep doing in the future.
RELATED TOOLS

The process of Section 4.A. Getting Clear may involve getting clear about what someone’s goals may be.

Tools to help with decision-making including setting goals are in Section 4.G. Working Together.

Tools to link goals with ways that you expect the person or people who caused harm to take responsibility for violence are in Section 4.F. Taking Accountability.

Tools to help you take action towards meeting goals are in Section 4.H. Keeping on Track.
D.3. GOAL SETTING TIPS

#1 READ SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW.

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

#2 GOALS MAY BE STATED IN TERMS OF WHAT PEOPLE WANT AND IN TERMS OF WHAT PEOPLE DON’T WANT.

Ask both what you want and what you don’t want to get a more complete picture of goals.

#3 DO NOT ASSUME THAT PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER SHARE THE SAME GOALS. MAKE THE PROCESS OF SHARING GOALS A CONCRETE ONE.

Many people agree that they do not want violence – but may not agree on the details. It is important to make sure that people are clear on what their own goals are, what others name as their goals and how they can come together to agree on these goals.

#4 SEPARATE FANTASY GOALS FROM REALITY GOALS.

There’s room for people to dream of what they would want in an ideal world, including fantasy worlds of revenge or the fantasy of a perfect ending. This may be an important step towards getting to more realistic goals, goals that will not lead to more harm, or goals more fitting with our higher values. Take time to separate fantasy goals from reality goals. See Tool D2. Dealing with Strong Negative Feelings and Fantasy During Goal Setting for help.
#5 GOALS CAN BE AND SHOULD BE REVISITED.
At some point, you want to settle on basic goals that you all agree to and remember. Even if these goals stay the same, it is good to keep checking in to make sure that they still make sense as the situation changes.

#6 REMEMBER TO SHARE GOALS WITH NEW PEOPLE AS THEY GET INVOLVED.
It is easy to forget to share goals or assume people have the same goals as new people get involved. Remember to carefully go through the sharing of goals to make sure that new people are aware of them – and agree to them.

#7 SEPARATE GOALS EXPECTED THROUGH THE INTERVENTION FROM GOALS THAT MIGHT BE MET IN ANOTHER WAY.
It is easy to forget to share goals or assume people have the same goals as new people get involved. Remember to carefully go through the sharing of goals to make sure that new people are aware of them – and agree to them.

#8 ANTICIPATE CONFLICTS IN GOALS.
While people will generally want a good outcome, specific goals and bottom lines might differ and even clash. The tools help individuals think about their own goals and to come together and see if people’s goals: a) do not conflict; or b) can be agreed upon through compromise. If there is too much disagreement, it is possible that someone will decide to leave the intervention or the group may even disband. There are tools to help to work through these steps.

#9 THINK ABOUT WHAT GOALS WOULD BE “GOOD ENOUGH.”
It is good to aim high in terms of goals – to think about what you really want. It may also be important to think about what is “good enough.” What could you consider a success – even if you do not reach all of your goals?
D.4. GOAL SETTING SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Goals can come from different individuals or groups involved in a situation of violence.

For example, goals may come from a:

- Survivor or victim
- Community allies
- Person or people doing harm
- A team of people made up of any of the above

Goals can also be directed towards different individuals or groups involved in a situation of violence. For example, goals may be:

- About survivor safety or well-being
- About safety of children or other vulnerable people
- About community safety or community sense of responsibility
- About person or people doing harm taking responsibility
- About person or people doing harm being supported and being safe

It can be expected that goals can be reached through the intervention. But goals may also be met through things that happen outside of the intervention.

See the Tool D1: Dealing with Strong Negative Feelings and Fantasy during Goal Setting, for ways on separating fantasy from reality. The move towards goals that are more in line with group values and that can realistically be reached.

Many interventions will base their goals on those stated by the survivor or the victim.

Many anti-violence organizations have a philosophy of being survivor-centered. This means that they believe that the survivor should be the person determining goals and what should be done to reach these goals.

This Toolkit does not assume that interventions will necessarily be survivor-led, although this is one possibility. Survivor or victim goals, however, are an important part of interventions. They need to be seriously considered because the survivor or victim often has suffered the most serious harm.
Survivors or victims often understand the dynamics of violence the most. The harm has often left survivors or victims with a loss of control of their lives, making control of the outcomes or goals of intervention an important part of the solution to violence.

It is important that the group not create a situation in which the survivor or victim becomes isolated and has her or his goals judged by a group that may have clearly distinct goals. At the same time, an environment in which communities allies can state their goals even if they are different or even conflict with that of the survivor should also be allowed in the space. Goal setting is ultimately a negotiating process. Community allies may easily and naturally come to recognize survivor-driven goals as their own. Or the process may lead to dialogue and discussion in which everyone's goals shift towards mutual agreement (or consensus) in which the group process actually creates collective goals that are actually better and more solid that those of any one individual.

If you are a survivor or victim, you may want to go through the process of thinking about your goals on your own before stating them in a group setting. You might want to ask someone to support you in that process so you can reflect on whether they really represent what you want and so you can prepare for disagreements or challenges from the group. You can think about what is very important to you and what you could open to compromise from others.

The community-based approach of this Toolkit also recognizes that communities are also harmed by violence and have a responsibility to challenge violence. Therefore, it is possible that goals defined by the survivor or victim may be understood and respected by community allies while also being balanced by community goals.

If you are a community ally, you may feel that it is most appropriate to follow the survivor or victim's goals. You may also want to think about your own personal goals and goals that might address something that is more of a community-level concern. The important piece is to be clear about what goals are important to you as an individual and be aware of how you feel about any compromises that might come about in a group process. In that way, you may be able to move forward with a good feeling about the group process and not let differences get in the way of your ability to move forward as a solid team member or part of a solid group process.
The group may also have an opportunity to support the person doing harm in a goal-setting process that may end up happening in a separate space than that with the survivor but can ultimately come together as part of the collective goals. If it is the beginning of a process, then supporting and allowing the person doing harm to name goals that may be the opposite of taking responsibility such as “having the process be quick,” “wanting the survivor to take equal or greater blame,” “being able to say sorry and move on” or not wanting this process at all can be stated but in a space where these lead towards more productive goals that are in line with the process that may include their accountability.

If you are a person doing harm or are accused of doing harm, the goal setting process may be challenging. Group goals including those of the survivor may at least at first feel unfair or oppressive. You may feel judged and feel that you have little control. You may be handed a list of group goals that you were not a part of creating but which may include things that you need to do. It may be a very difficult and yet important process to see how your own personal goals can change throughout this process. You may think about how you can name personal goals such as reflecting on why people perceive your attitudes or actions as harmful, thinking about its impact on others, taking responsibility, remaining connected to people you care about, or stopping your own pattern of violence as goals that you can achieve. It is useful to ask for and get support to help you in that process.

#1 THINK ABOUT HOW PEOPLE CAN REFLECT ON INDIVIDUAL GOALS IN PREPARATION FOR AGREEING ON GROUP GOALS.

Have a process either outside of the group setting or allow for individual time to reflect on goals within a meeting where people can think about and write out their individual goals.

#2 UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUENESS OF SURVIVOR GOALS.

Special consideration of survivor goals are important in any intervention. This is true whether the survivor is leading an intervention, is at the center of an intervention, or is taking more of a back seat.

If you have a survivor-driven process or one where the survivor is actively involved, you may facilitate in such a way that the survivor’s goals are first stated and written down or shared in a way that everyone can easily understand and remember what they are. Make sure that people understand what these goals are and do not have further needs for clarification.
**#3 HELP PEOPLE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FANTASY.**

Coming in with fantasies about goals is normal. This can include fantasies of revenge or fantasies of a quick and perfect ending. You want to end up with things that are realistic and do not cause greater harm. See Tool D1. Dealing with Strong Negative Feelings and Fantasy during Goal Setting for help.

**#4 CONSIDER A PROCESS WHERE EVERYONE CAN EXPRESS THEIR INDIVIDUAL GOALS AS A STEP TOWARDS REACHING GROUP GOALS THAT EVERYONE CAN AGREE ON.**

a. A process can then follow where people reflect on their own goals and see how they go along with, add to or are maybe even in possible conflict with these goals. You can then have each person share and/or read out their goals. People can always pass if they feel uncomfortable.

b. Get all the goals together in a way that everyone can see them. You can ask each person write goals on a board or easel paper; or ask participants to write goals on post-its and put them up on the board or on the wall – you may think of other creative ways to put them up in a way that everyone can see them.

c. Help the group figure out what goals are overlapping (you can mark them with a check mark or a star).

d. Help the group identify which are individual, but not necessarily collective goals. Help identify which are non-negotiable, bottom-line goals.

e. Help the group see that individual goals and bottom-lines can be maintained without getting in the way of the overall goals (you can mark with plus).

f. Help the group see how conflicting individual goals and bottom-lines can be let go of to keep a set of goals that everyone can agree to (you can mark with question mark).

g. Help the group to identify and clarify collective group goals. Expect that there will be some changing of minds and explanations to help convince others.

h. Double check to see if the group can agree to the goals. See if there are remaining question marks and whether these can be crossed off or reworded into pluses or checks.

i. Make sure to write down these collective group goals/bottom-lines and any questions or concerns that arise. You can return to these later.
Story D: Community Responds to Domestic Violence

Two years ago, I was married to a man who I’d been with for ten years prior, and our relationship had troubles. Over the last year of our marriage, my former partner was going through training as a police officer, and at the same time, we had just relocated to a new state. We were struggling with some large issues in the marriage, and things had gotten more difficult. I just became increasingly afraid of someone that I used to feel really safe with.

I have three kids who were ten, six, and four, and they were witnessing a lot of arguments, a lot of loud screaming, a lot of doors being slammed, a lot of things that I felt were really unsafe for them to see. My home just felt more and more dangerous. I felt scared to leave the house. I felt scared to come home. I felt scared to sleep in my bed.

The last straw came one night when I had gone to a friend’s house and my partner followed me in his car. And when I arrived at my friend’s house, he pulled up and got out of the car and was yelling and screaming horrible things at me. I felt very afraid, but I didn’t know what to do. I knew wherever I went, he would follow me. So I decided I would go to my office which was nearby, and it was night time so there wouldn’t be anybody there. When I finally got inside, I waited for a few minutes and he left.

I called a friend, who came and met me at my office, and she suggested that I call another friend who had a house I could go to while we figured out what to do, so that’s what I did. When we got there, everybody sat around in the living room and just reassured me that it was safe for me to be there, that they were welcoming of it, that they understood. I was at this point on the run from someone who was furious and had a gun, and I still felt bad. I felt like I was exposing people to something that I couldn’t control, something I was terrified of. But I didn’t know what else to do at that point, and they were saying it was where they wanted me to be.

My friends asked me if there were any people that I could gather up, that I could call, that might be support from in this time. I guess I should say that being part of this, this community organization which is committed to ending sexual violence which meant that we had a way of responding that I knew people would come together. I knew if I needed help, people would come and talk to me and we could work it out together. So it didn’t feel strange to meet, to call people and say, “Hey, I need help, and this is what’s going on.”
And at the same time, experiencing these things in my home felt like people would see me differently; people would judge me; people would think I was a hypocrite; people would think I was weak. And I remember being really troubled by that the first few days. But I got reassurances from folks that that was exactly what the point of the organization was, and that experiencing harm is not about being strong or weak, that experiencing harm just is. It’s what we choose to do about it that’s important.

So we made phone calls, and asked people to come over. We had seven or eight people come over and just started talking through what to do. At that point it felt totally overwhelming. I was still on, “Is this really happening to me?” and, “What can I do to make it okay?” rather than thinking of anything beyond tomorrow, or next week.

But I think my wants were something like: I want to be in my home; I want my kids to feel safe; I think I said, “I want him to leave.”

I think those were basically it at that moment, and then we just brainstormed what needs to happen right now in the next hour, in the next day, in the next week, for those wants to happen. We walked through it so if I want to be in my home, how do we make that happen? How do we make sure that that’s a safe space? And, I think one of the answers to that question was, at least in the near future, having folks be there with me.

So we eventually set up a schedule. We put out an email with a schedule for the week, and blanks for people to fill in, and I was amazed that people did fill it in. And they did come by. They came by every day and they came and sat in my living room, and they brought food, and we just sat together. I was amazed at that. That was how we got home to be a safe space for me again.

When we were thinking about whether to call the police or not, I did feel like I needed some help in calming the situation down, but I didn’t know what to do, because if I can’t call his friends on the job, and I can’t call them in…It doesn’t seem right to call them in an unofficial way, because who knows what’s going to happen with that. And calling them in an official way doesn’t necessarily seem like it’s going to produce any certain results either.

So we tried to think about who could talk to him. And we figured out some people in the community that he could talk to, if he was open to doing that. My mom talked to him, and she was willing to deal with him. He was totally raging, and for whatever reason she was not intimidated at all and just was able to talk to him really calmly.

I had people checking on me, people staying during the daytime hours, sometimes overnight for the next week, and it just felt good. It felt so good to have this full house, you know, this busy house of people coming by, and, you know, people were playing with the kids, and we were making art in the kitchen, and someone was always making tea, and it felt not alone.
In terms of talking about successes, I guess the biggest one is that I did get all three things that I wanted, that I identified as wants to happen. That my kids went through that time feeling safe; that he did leave the house; that I was able to return home; and that all that happened in a fairly short amount of time. So in terms of success, I’d say, ultimately for me as a survivor, those were the most meaningful successes.

Another success in terms of communication was that we made a phone list immediately. That was one of the first things we did so I always knew I had someone to call. And people would call and check on me. At that time, I think it was hard. I was worried about people burning out. I was worried about people feeling overwhelmed by me and my stuff.

So I didn’t have to constantly, hour by hour, be reaching out for needs to be met because we’d identified them beforehand and there were enough people involved. It felt like no one was carrying all of it, or more than they could. It certainly wasn’t that things didn’t feel hard. It felt really bad. I think what was helpful was this wasn’t an intervention where it was like, “How are we going to get him away from me? It was like, “How are we going to make sure that there’s not harm happening in our community? How are we going to make sure that we’ve done our best to address that? The problem was consistently the harm. The problem was consistently the events or the behaviors, or the things that were harmful that were happening, but not him that was a problem – not that my choice to stay as long as I had was a problem.

That made it possible for me to feel like I could come into the space and say what I needed which at that time really included not being someone who was perpetrating harm against him by engaging the power of the state whether or not it would have benefited me in that moment. It could only have had negative effects on him.

And then I got to make a decision about what do I really need right now to do my work, to take care of my kids, to get through this day, to heal.

We need to trust people to be the experts on their own lives and to take them seriously and have faith in people to set the course for working from harm to transformation. I think that comes best from people who are experiencing harm and have a vision for themselves about what they want. And to give people time to identify what that is and be willing to sit with the discomfort of not being able to rescue somebody in a simple or quick way. I think that those values were ultimately the most healing for me.

(Adapted from the transcript from Community Responds to Domestic Violence available from StoryTelling & Organizing Project (STOP) www.stopviolenceeveryday.org. The story is also available in downloadable audio mp3 on the same website)
Section 4: Tools to Mix and Match

4.0. Introduction

Section 4: Tools to Mix and Match contains sets of tools organized around activities that can be useful in planning and carrying out community-based interventions to interpersonal violence. They follow basic concerns that many or most groups interested in violence intervention have faced.

These sets of tools are organized in the following categories:

4.B. Staying Safe. How Do We Stay Safe?
4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. Who Can Help?
4.D. Setting Goals. What Do We Want?
4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims. How Can We Help?
4.F. Taking Accountability. How Do We Change Violence?
4.G. Working Together. How Do We Work Together as a Team?
4.H. Keeping on Track. How Do We Move Forward?


In This Section:

A.1. What Is Getting Clear?
A.2. Getting Clear Across the 4 Phases
A.3. Tips
A.4. Special Considerations
A.5. Facilitator Notes
A.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
A.7. Getting Clear Tools

• Tool A1. Getting Clear Snapshot: Short Question Guide
• Tool A2. Getting Clear Worksheet
• Tool A3. Naming the Harm Chart
• Tool A4. Harm Statement Worksheet
• Tool A5. Getting Clear: Intervention Factors At-a-Glance

4.D. Goal Setting: What Do We Want?

Tool D1. Dealing with Strong Negative Feelings and Fantasy during Goal Setting
Tool D2. Goal Setting Guided Questions and Chart
Tool D3. Mapping Combined Goals Chart
Tool D4. Shared Collective Goals Chart
Tool D5. Collective Goals Summary Checklist and Next Steps
Tool D6. Turning Goals into Action
It is common for people to have strong negative feelings, fantasies or unrealistic expectations linked to goals about situations of harm. At some point during the goal setting phase, it is good to let a full range of feelings be expressed no matter how far fetched they may seem to you. Considering the entire range of goals generated in response to a situation of harm may help people to be able to express strong negative feelings and fantasies – as well as other goals that may be more realistic.

For example, the survivor may express goals such as:

- I wish the person doing harm were dead or experience the same harm they did to me.
- I wish the person doing harm could be publicly humiliated or hurt so that they would know they could never do this again.
- I wish this had never happened to me.
- I wish that I would feel the same as before this ever happened.

Allies may express:

- I wish the survivor would have walked away.
- I wish the survivor would cut off all contact with the person doing harm.
- I wish the survivor would just move on.
- I wish someone else would deal with this.

The person doing harm may want things like:

- I wish everyone would just forgive me and forget about this.
- I wish everyone would understand that I was under a lot of pressure and cut me some slack.
- I wish everyone would know that the survivor deserved it – anybody would have done the same thing if they were in my shoes.
- I wish this had never happened.

While extreme responses and fantasies may be normal, we ask you to think about the following in assessing whether or not you want to pursue a goal:

- Values. Does this goal fit your values?
- Risk assessment. Will pursing this goal lead to more harm to yourself or others, retaliation, and so on?
- Realistic or achievable. Is it actually possible to achieve this goal?
These are some basic questions you can think through in moving towards goals. They can be asked individually or as a group.

If this process is survivor-driven, that is, if the process will prioritize the goals of the survivor, then this may be focused around the survivor’s or victim’s needs and desires. Others can also look at this and think about these questions for themselves as individuals and also focus on the needs of the survivor and the community.

**GUIDED QUESTIONS**

What do I want?

- For myself
- For the survivor or victim (if I am not the survivor or victim)
- For other important people (children, other family members, friends, organization, etc.)
- For the person doing harm (if I am not the person doing harm)
- For the larger community (it may be useful to name who we mean by the community)

What do I NOT want? (You can use the categories above)

What is important to me? This can be values or ways in which things will happen or people.

What are the most important wants (or goals)?

Is there anything that is an absolute “must have” or “must do”?
Do these goals fit with my values? Is there anything I would add or leave out after thinking about this?

Are some more achievable than others? Which are most achievable? Is there anything I would add or leave out after thinking about this?

Will pursuing any of these goals lead to more harm to myself, the survivor or victim, the person doing harm, or others, retaliation, and so on? Is there anything I would add or leave out after thinking about this?

What goals might be fantasies? Is there anything I would add or leave out after thinking about this?

What would I consider a success?

What goals would I consider “good enough?”

Can I divide these goals into long-term and short-term? (If that makes sense, you can do that)
After answering the guided questions, see if you can write your goals in the following chart. The chart will be easier to refer to and share with others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals/Wants (or don't wants)</th>
<th>For Whom?</th>
<th>Is this goal realistic? (yes, no, maybe)</th>
<th>Short-term or long-term?</th>
<th>Anything else?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want:</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don't want:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Limits or bottom lines</td>
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</table>

**REMEMBER:** Limits or bottom lines may be a limit that you draw for yourself in order to stay involved in the intervention. They might be personal limits such as the amount of time you can spend. They might be limits to how the intervention takes place. (See What Is Goal Setting? for more about Bottom lines).
After the individuals involved in the intervention have had a chance to complete their goals worksheets, this chart can be used to help compile the individual answers and help begin to develop shared goals as a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals Brainstorm</th>
<th>Individuals Goals</th>
<th>Goals specific to the survivor</th>
<th>Goals specific to the person doing harm</th>
<th>General goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>list everyone's goals here</td>
<td>list things that seem like an individual's goals (add name/initials to show whose)</td>
<td>list goals that are specific to the survivor</td>
<td>list goals that are specific to the person doing harm</td>
<td>list goals that are related to the intervention rather than a specific person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom-Lines Brainstorm</th>
<th>Individuals Bottom-Lines</th>
<th>Bottom-Lines Specific to Survivor</th>
<th>Bottom-Lines Specific to the Person Doing Harm</th>
<th>General Bottom-Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List things that are must-haves about the results or the process (can mark with +) or must-not-haves (can mark with -)</td>
<td>List things that seem like an individual's bottom lines (add name/initials to show whose)</td>
<td>List things that are specific to the survivor</td>
<td>list things that are specific to the person doing harm</td>
<td>List things that are specific to any other person, group, organization, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**GOAL SETTING TOOL D4: SHARED COLLECTIVE GOALS CHART**

After mapping the group’s goals, you can use the chart below to document the “final” goals that the group agrees to collectively for the situation of harm. This chart should be used as a reference point and should be revisited often, as changing conditions or participants may cause the initial set of goals to change over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreed-Upon Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreed-Upon Bottom-Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/Bottom-Lines Conflicts/Disagreements/Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/Bottom-Lines Need More Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the group has gone through the process of coming up with collective goals, you can use this checklist to figure out next steps. The key question is: Do we agree enough to move forward?

Check the box if you as a group:

☐ Have enough agreement on goals to move forward

☐ Can live with any goals or bottom-lines that might be essentially important to one person but not to everyone in the group

☐ Do not have conflicts or disagreements in goals so serious that you cannot move forward

☐ Do not have conflicts or disagreements in bottom-lines so serious that you cannot move forward

☐ Do not need more information which is likely to significantly influence goals or bottom-lines
If you check all boxes, you can move ahead and fill in next steps, who is responsible and timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Who is Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline &amp; Other Conditions</th>
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<tbody>
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If you DO NOT check all boxes (You do not have agreement or consensus right now), you may consider the following options:

**OPTION 1.** Plan another meeting (people reflect in-between):

- **Yes**
- **No**

If “yes”, where is the next meeting, when will it be? __________________________________________________________________

Who will be able to make it? __________________________________________________________________

Who cannot make it? __________________________________________________________________

For those who cannot make it, how can they give their input? __________________________________________________________________

What should everyone be thinking about before the next meeting? __________________________________________________________________

What if anything should people bring to the next meeting? __________________________________________________________________

**OPTION 2.** Plan another way to continue building agreement or consensus:

- **Yes**
- **No**

If “yes”, what means will you use to communicate (email, phone, in-person meetings, etc.)? __________________________________________________________________

Who will coordinate results? __________________________________________________________________

Who will make sure everyone gets the results? __________________________________________________________________

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How will you know when you can move on? __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

**OPTION 3.** Someone with goals or bottom-lines which block full agreement decides that they can live with the group goals and bottom-lines even though they do not fully agree.

- Yes  
- No

If “yes”, are there any requests or ideas about revisiting these disagreements later? If so, what are they? ______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

- Yes  
- No

If “yes”, what information do you need? __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

How will you get it? _________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Who will get it? _____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

How will they communicate that information back to the group? _________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What are the next steps? ____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

**OPTION 4.** Need to get more information.

- Yes  
- No

If “yes”, what information do you need? __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

How will you get it? _________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Who will get it? _____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

How will they communicate that information back to the group? _________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What are the next steps? ____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

**OPTION 5.** This group disbands at this point.

- Yes  
- No

If “yes” and you disband, will a different team be formed (may still include some of the same people)? If so, how? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

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www.creative-interventions.org
If “yes” and you disband, agree upon ways in which people will leave the process without creating more harm. (For example, it could cause more harm to tell certain people that agreement could not be reached – this could give an impression that no one will address, stop or prevent harm. It could also increase harm and/or increase vulnerability for the survivor or victim or others involved in the planning of this intervention)

Safety and confidentiality questions to ask:

Who can know about this process so far? ______________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Who cannot know about this process so far? ___________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Any other safety measures that should be followed? ______________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Any other considerations that should be followed? _______________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

List agreements:

If “yes and you disband,” acknowledge and recognize ways in which some of you may continue to address the situation independently. If so, are there ways in which you can still remain in contact and offer support? Or conditions under which you may come back together?

List ways some of you may continue to address the situation:
A key to making an action plan is to turn goals into action. Take each goal which the group has agreed to. You can include goals which are more personal or individual as long as nobody disagrees with or blocks that goal (See earlier Goal Setting section for creating collective goals). Some goals may also be broken up into more than one action step.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
<th>Who is Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline &amp; Other Conditions</th>
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SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OR VICTIMS: HOW CAN WE HELP?

E.1. What Is Supporting Survivors or Victims?
E.2. Supporting Survivors or Victims Across the Four Phases
E.3. Tips
E.4. Special Considerations
E.5. Facilitator Notes
E.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
E.7. Supporting Survivor or Victims Tools
E.1. WHAT IS SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OR VICTIMS?

Supporting Survivors or Victims: Key Questions

• What violence or abuse did the survivor or victim experience?
• What harms have resulted?
• What do they think will be helpful to them?
• Who can best offer this support?
• How are they getting ongoing support?

What Is It?

Survivor or victim support focuses on providing for the health, safety and other needs and wants of someone who has been or is the survivor or victim of harm.

The needs and wants may extend to their children, family members, pets, and others who rely upon the survivor or victim and whose own health and safety may be affected by the harm affecting the survivor/victim. It may also extend to others because if others’ needs are taken care of, this frees up the survivor or victim to be able to better focus on their own important needs and wants. For example, helping a survivor or victim take care of children, elderly parents, or job responsibilities may be very supportive to a survivor or victim. And it may also allow some relief so that they can devote some time and energy to take necessary steps to move forward.

Note: Throughout this Toolkit, we use both the words survivors and victims. Some people experiencing violence prefer to think of themselves as survivors, and others will identify as victims. Many people will simply want to be referred to by their name and not feel comfortable with either term. However, because this Toolkit needs to use some kind of language that will clarify how someone is related to the situation of violence, we have chosen to use both terms, survivors or victims, whenever possible. If space only allows for one term, we mostly use the term “survivor.”

Why Is It Important?

Supporting Survivors or Victims can be the first step in addressing the harms that interpersonal violence brings. This includes physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual and financial harms. Some survivors or victims make the claim that it is the emotional harm that can hurt even more than the physical. Direct emotional harm can be brought about through constant fear, humiliation, put-downs and attempts to make someone doubt their own judgment and self-worth. This can be made even worse by isolation, shame, self-blame and blame by others that often accompany victimization by interpersonal violence.
Since interpersonal violence often involves people we know or even care deeply about, this can be confused by mixed feelings of love for the person doing harm or fear that coming forward to find help may also cause unwanted consequences to the person doing harm. We may fear that we risk losing someone close to us, that we will hurt the parent of our child, that they might end up in jail, that immigration authorities may take them away if they are undocumented, that they might lose their job, or that others will look down both on the person doing harm and on us for being victims of violence.

Even though people are generally much more aware about domestic violence, sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence, misunderstanding and blame of victims still run very deep.

**Note:** Support for the survivor may not result in “healing.” Healing is a deeply personal process. Healing may not be a goal or a desire of the survivor or victim, person doing harm or anybody else involved in this intervention process. Or it may be a goal that is unrelated to this intervention, but rather pursued in another way. While healing may result from any aspect of this intervention and may be chosen as a goal, Creative Interventions does not assume that healing will necessarily result from violence intervention. Therefore, we leave it to those using this Toolkit to choose whether the term “healing” is useful to you.

**What Survivor or Victim Support Can Look Like**

Survivor or victim support may include such things as:

- Believing the survivor.
- Listening to the survivor’s story, concerns and needs.
- Putting yourself in the survivor’s shoes – empathizing.
- Holding back before telling the survivor what to do or offering your advice.
- Holding back when you feel yourself becoming judgmental or impatient or having other negative feelings.
- Offering advice or feedback if the survivor wants it and being humble enough to see that your advice or feedback may not be right.
- Being patient with repetition.
- Being a sounding board to help the survivor get clear about what they want and need.
- Being patient with and helping the survivor or victim sort through mixed feelings and confusions such as confusion about:
  - Whether one is really in danger.
  - How they about the person doing harm.
  - What they want to do about the harm.
  - Whether or not they to stay with the person doing harm (if this is someone they are in a close or intimate relationship with)
• How the survivor feels about anyone addressing or confronting the person doing harm.
• Whether they want other people to know about what happened.
• Helping think through your role in providing things like:
  • Emotional support
  • Safety
  • Companionship
  • Help going to necessary meetings or appointments
  • Help thinking of who is a safe and trusted ally
  • Help with shelter, childcare, transportation, food, money and other needs
  • Help contacting other allies
  • Help educating other allies
  • Help building a network of support
• Being an ally through other aspects of a community-based intervention such as:
  • Acting as the facilitator
  • Engaging with the person doing harm
  • Playing other roles as listed in Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers or Section 4.F. Working Together
  • Engaging with the community to organize support, educate the community or challenge dynamics that contribute to violence
• Being an ally in active and consistent ways
• Finding your own support to prevent burn-out and resentment – this can be done with other allies as you form a team
• Keeping this story only among safe people
• Stopping yourself from telling their story in a gossipy way
• Helping them use this Toolkit and other useful resources
• Making your way through this Toolkit and other useful resources
USING THE TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

The Supporting Survivors or Victims section highlights the importance of supporting survivors or victims and offers tools to think through what types of support might best meet their needs.

Every person and every situation is unique. Tool E1. What Does the Survivor or Victim Need? Checklist offers a list of possible types of support a survivor or victim might want or need. It is good for allies to see this list especially since it might include things that a survivor or victim is unable to express or afraid to ask for.

Survivors or victims can use Tool E2. What Does the Survivor or Victim Need? Guiding Questions to think more carefully about the kind of support that might be helpful to them, what they could ask for and what allies or resources might be able to offer this support.

Finally, survivors or victims may be involved in interventions at very different levels, from taking an active lead role to no involvement. This Toolkit works best with at least some level of involvement in the intervention by the survivor or victim. In fact, receiving support from allies willing to work together towards addressing, reducing, ending or prevention violence (violence intervention) can be a powerful form of support. Tool E3. Survivor or Victim Participation in an Intervention Chart helps a survivor or victim and the intervention team to better understand possible types and levels of survivor or victim participation. It also offers tips about how support can still be offered even if the survivor or victim is not at all involved in the intervention or even if they disagree with an intervention.
E.2. SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OR VICTIMS? ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Supporting Survivors or Victims will likely change throughout an intervention. It is difficult to determine how because survivors or victims have such a wide range of ways in which they are involved in interventions.

PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED

Very often, a survivor or victim of violence is the first person to initiate an intervention. This may be done in a very subtle way – he or she may hint that there is a problem of violence or they may tell someone but quickly take back the story or minimize the violence. Survivors or victims of violence often want help but may be reluctant to reach out to others because of shame, fear or prior experiences of being dismissed or blamed.

Some survivors or victims may not want to talk about the violence because of these and other reasons. An intervention may get started because other people recognize the violence and want to do something about it – even when the survivor or victim is not ready or perhaps not even aware of what is happening.

Survivors or victims may want to talk about the violence – but only if they are encouraged and feel like they might actually get sympathy and help. The risk of speaking out may be weighed against the support that someone can expect to receive.

Yet other survivors or victims may be very vocal whether or not they get support from others. It is impossible to generalize how a survivor or victim will feel, express themselves or get involved in a community-based intervention.

The phase of getting started may be a time when the survivor or victim makes beginning attempts to reach out to others or when others reach out to the survivor or victim to offer help. The model of community-based intervention presented in this Toolkit can be a way for survivors or victims to express what they have experienced and what they want in their own words. If handled with care, it can offer them some sense of control – something that is usually destroyed in the experience of interpersonal violence. Getting the solid support of people they are close to like friends, family, neighbors, co-workers or other community members may be a good first step in changing their situation of violence.
PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION
Again, it is difficult to generalize about how active a survivor or victim will be in the planning or preparation of an intervention. Survivors or victims may lead the planning and preparation. Or a group of allies may take leadership and make sure to support the survivor or victim in playing an active role in this phase.

If the survivor or victim decides to take more of a back seat or is less involved – for example, if they are a child, then it may be important to stay connected and check in with the survivor or victim regularly to make sure that they are aware of what is happening and can voice concerns, ask questions or adjust their level of involvement. It is important to keep up any and all levels of support, particularly since it may be easy to turn focus away from the survivor’s or victim’s needs as people get more involved in other aspects of the intervention.

PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION
Similar to the planning and preparation phase, the survivor or victim may be taking a lead or very active role in taking action. If not, it may again be important to make sure he or she is aware of what is happening and are able to voice concerns or change their level of participation. As the intervention team takes action, especially if this involves addressing, reducing, ending or preventing the violence of the person doing harm, it is easy to lose focus on support for the survivor or victim. It is important to make sure that at least some allies remain connected to and supportive of the survivor or victim throughout the intervention.

PHASE 4: FOLLOWING-UP
As the intervention moves into a phase of following-up, the survivor or victim may be in many different situations. They may have already moved on and be satisfied that an intervention took place. It is possible that a survivor or victim may feel like they can move on if the intervention was ultimately unsuccessful. For some, the fact that an attempt was made can seem like a success. The team may only be responsible for giving an update on a follow-up plan.

On the other hand, the survivor or victim may be actively involved and be the central person determining whether or not the intervention has reached the point where there is some closure. Following-up may be a phase during which period checking in regarding survivor support and safety may be planned to make sure that the intervention has long-term effect.

RELATED TOOLS
Tools to identify the dynamics of harm experienced by the survivor or victim are in Section 4.A. Getting Clear. Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers can be used to find the right people to help offer survivor or victim support. Tools to help coordinate support of survivors or victims with the other aspects of the intervention are in Section 4.F. Working Together. Tools to think more deeply about safety as a form of support are in Section 4.B. Staying Safe. Getting more specific about other ways that supporting survivors or victims might look like as an intervention goal is in Section 4.D. Goal Setting.
E.3. SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OR VICTIMS TIPS

#1 READ SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW.

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

#2 UNDERSTAND THE MANY BARRIERS TO SURVIVORS OR VICTIMS ASKING FOR SUPPORT.

Survivors or victims may not always be straightforward in stating their feelings or their needs. Fear of judgment from others, fear of retaliation from the person doing harm if they find out, self-blame and shame about being a victim — these and many other factors can make it difficult to talk about violence and to ask for support.

Many survivors or victims may have reached out to others for help and received a negative response or no response at all. They may be reluctant to try again or may fear that they will again get a reaction that might make them feel even more helpless and alone.

It may be easy to blame survivors or victims for not asking for what they need, for changing their minds, or for asking for too much. It is easy to think that it is the survivor’s or victim’s fault. We have many ways of and words for blaming the victim.

Supporting survivors or victims asks us to be patient, forgiving and non-judgmental. It asks us to have some understanding of the many barriers they face in seeking help.

#3 DO NOT PROMISE MORE THAN YOU CAN GIVE. TRY TO GIVE WHAT YOU PROMISED.

It is also easy to promise many things if or when a survivor or victim tells us their story of violence. Think about what you can do — your time, your energy, your ability, your own safety. Work with others so that together you can offer support that none of you can do alone.
If you did promise something that you cannot deliver, talk honestly with the survivor or victim and take accountability for your inability to follow through. See if you can find other ways to offer support.

If you find yourself starting to blame the survivor or victim or others for your inability to follow through with your promises or commitments, take a step back and be honest with yourself about how it feels to let somebody down. Again, it is better to be honest with yourself and with the survivor or victim rather than cover up feelings of guilt, shame or embarrassment with blame.

**THE TYPE OF COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION INTRODUCED IN THIS TOOLKIT WORKS BEST WHEN THE SURVIVOR OR VICTIM IS INVOLVED.**

Although many interventions will likely begin with and be led by a survivor or victim, this is not always the case. Survivors or victims may not want to be involved for many reasons. They may be young children or otherwise not in a position to be directly participating in an intervention. They may not recognize themselves as survivors or victims of violence. They may not want any changes to their situation. They might fear retaliation or losing their relationship. They may fear that an intervention will call attention to their victimization and associate that with shame, embarrassment or fear of judgment.

In other situations, the survivor or victim may want an intervention, but not want to be actively involved. They may think that it is the responsibility of others to finally step in and do something. They may be completely tired of and over the situation of violence and want to step away from any involvement. They may find it too emotionally difficult to be directly involved. They may simply think that the intervention would be more effective if they were not involved.

Allies may also not want the survivor or victim involved because they find that survivors or victims appear too emotionally involved or seem overly biased. They may not agree with the wishes or the perspective of the survivor or victim. They may want to protect the survivor or victim from any further involvement.

In this approach to violence intervention, Creative Interventions found that it is helpful if the survivor or victim is participating in some way in the intervention. The levels of participation may be that they are:

a) Leading the intervention;

b) Actively involved;

c) Checking in on a regular basis to get information and give feedback;

d) Getting information about what was done and how the intervention is going very infrequently; or

e) Finding out about the final outcome of an intervention only.

Any of these levels is all right as long as there is some level of discussion and agreement to this level of participation by everyone.
#5 HELP TO KEEP UP SURVIVOR OR VICTIM SUPPORT THROUGHOUT AN INTERVENTION.

It is easy to forget survivor or victim support once an active intervention moves forward, especially if people focus on the person doing harm. Make survivor or victim support a central part of the intervention plan. Make sure at least one person has a primary role to keep connected with the survivor or victim, see what the survivor or victim wants or needs. Offer a space for survivors or victims to voice fears or concerns. Make sure that survivor or victim safety is maintained, or make sure that others connected to the survivor such as children or other dependents are also supported.

#6 OFFER HONEST SUPPORT TO A SURVIVOR OR VICTIM.

You may not always agree with the values, opinions or goals of the survivor or victim. This Toolkit offers a variety of tools for people to discuss and reach consensus on the values guiding the intervention and the goals of the intervention. It offers information and tools regarding common situations in which people disagree with the survivor or victim and with each other (See Section 3.4. Values to Guide Your Intervention and Section 4.D. Setting Goals) The Toolkit also address situations in which people may be unclear about who is the survivor/victim or the person doing harm (See Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know). It promotes a holistic approach that takes into account the well-being of everyone involved in violence including the person doing harm.

This Toolkit encourages people to hold back when they experience feelings of judgment, blame and frustration with regard to the survivor or victim. It encourages people to self-check on where these feelings are coming from and whether or not they are coming from a personal bias against that particular person or some other aspect of that person such as their gender (male, female or other), race or class. It also acknowledges that working with violence and accompanying feelings of anger, fear, disappointment, shame and so on can easily turn people against the survivor or victim. Once you get clearer about your own feelings, it may be easier to separate these feelings from important opinions that you may have about the intervention process. As much as possible, step back and use the tools in this Toolkit to tackle differences and reach consensus. Honesty is an important part of this process.
#7 OFFERING SUPPORT CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT.
MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR OWN SUPPORT.

Offering support can be difficult. It can be exhausting, frightening, and disappointing. It can bring up painful memories of our own histories of violence or other related experiences.

At times, our efforts to support may be unacknowledged and unappreciated. The survivor or victim may find that the support you offer is not they asked for or are comfortable with. You may make a mistake. You attitudes or actions may cause harm – however unintentional. You might disappoint or anger the survivor or victim.

Understand that disappointment or anger can come from the stressful situation of violence and intervention. It can also be a very real response to shortcomings in the way you offer support.

Be willing to learn from these experiences. Forgive yourself for mistakes that you may make. And rely upon other intervention allies or your own allies to support yourself. Encourage an intervention team process that allows for time to step away, reflect and offer helpful feedback and support to everyone involved in the intervention.

#8 SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OR VICTIMS CAN BE COMPLICATED
IF YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON DOING HARM.

Some of us who offer support to survivors or victims will also have a relationship to the person doing harm. We can be in a particularly good position to care about the person doing harm and also support the survivor or victim. Having people who can play both of these roles can help the team act in a more holistic way.

Having a relationship with the person doing harm can also bring about conflict. We might feel that our support for the survivor or victim is betraying the person doing harm. We might feel protective of the person doing harm and interpret the intervention as unfair or overly harsh. We might question our own loyalties and wonder whose side we are on.

It might be helpful to remind ourselves that supporting survivors or victims, in the long term, can also be beneficial to the person doing harm. Thinking about how to maintain an intervention process that feels like it supports the survivor or victim and is connected to and supportive of the person doing harm can help to drive a holistic intervention.

You may also find that you can play a better role actively supporting the person doing harm while lessening your direct role in supporting the survivor or victim or vice versa. Or you may have such difficulty playing these dual roles, that you decide to step back a distance from the intervention altogether. Use the tools in this Toolkit to help you figure out a way to offer support that minimizes your sense of conflict and makes best use of the compassion that you might feel for survivor or victim and the person doing harm.
Supporting Survivors or Victims may be a central part of many interventions to violence. However, the dynamics of supporting survivors or victims can vary greatly depending upon many factors.

One of those factors is the degree to which the survivor or victim is leading, participating in or agreeing with the intervention. Although many interventions will likely begin with and be led by a survivor or victim, this is not always the case. The following are some special considerations on supporting survivors or victims.

The relationship that the survivor or victim of violence has to support can be very different depending upon that person’s personality, their experience in receiving help in the past, and their relationship to the person or people offering support.

Generally, most people experiencing violence will want that experience to change, whether it is addressing something from the past, ending violence in the present, or preventing violence in the future. It is also common that survivors or victims may not trust that the process leading to change will make things better. In fact, it is true that interventions to violence are not necessarily positive. They can lead to backlash.

They can lead to more violence. They can expose the survivor or victim to gossip, judgment and possibly further harm if people start to blame the survivor or victim for the violence. Aspects of the intervention that people do not agree with could further expose the survivor or victim to blame for the intervention. It is no wonder that a survivor or victim may not trust that they will get the kind of support they need.

Sensitive, consistent and non-judgmental support, on the other hand, even if distrusted or even rejected at first may be accepted if it is extended over time. Trust can take a long time to build. Patience and understanding can go a long way.

If you are the survivor or victim, you may have difficult trusting that you will receive the support you need. You may find support inconsistent and, at times, disappointing.

Because this intervention approach relies upon a community of people – even if that community is only made up of you and one other person, this Toolkit encourages you to start with at least one person you can trust. Use the information or tools in this Toolkit to think about what kind of support you most need and to identify the best people to offer at least some pieces of support. Use the Toolkit to help your friends, family or other allies to know how best to offer their support to you.

Trust your own feelings about the kind of support you are getting. Is it helpful or not? Does it make you more confused or more clear-headed? Do you feel cared for? Does it make you feel even more helpless?
Try to identify the feelings that you have regarding the support you are receiving. Use this as an opportunity to speak honestly about your feelings, make changes regarding who you are receiving support from or what kind of support you are requesting from them.

You may also find that you need to make peace with the shortcomings of others or with the reality that no amount of support feels like it is enough. This does not mean that you have to reject the support coming your way, but that you can make wise use of this support, even if it is not exactly right.

Creative Interventions also found that survivors or victims may want an intervention to happen but may not want to be involved in any way. As much as this is understandable and may be agreeable to the people involved in the intervention, it may also make it difficult for them to make an effective intervention. The situation of violence may be complicated and difficult for them to understand even if they are supportive. They may come up with an intervention that you think completely misses the point based upon what happened. While this may seem to put a burden on the survivor or victim to make too many decisions or expose you to what can be disturbing details of an intervention that does not always go well, your participation can be helpful to the overall goal.

On the other hand, people involved in the intervention may not want the survivor or victim to actively participate due to differing opinions about what should be done or a feeling that they are being too closely watched for doing the right or wrong thing.

These two extreme situations can be difficult to manage. If possible, it is best to be somewhere in the middle and able to be flexible enough to talk about and deal with any tensions that come up if the intervention moves to one side or the other.

See Tool E.3. Survivor or Victim Participation in an Intervention Chart

The community ally (family, friend, neighbor, co-worker, community member) is likely to be offering support to the survivor or victim in some way. In some interventions, supporting survivors or victims may even be the focus of all or most of the intervention, especially if for whatever reason, the intervention does not address or engage the person doing harm at all.

If you are a community ally, supporting survivors or victims can look a variety of ways. The survivor or victim may be a close family member or friend and be someone that it is easy to support. You may know exactly what this person needs. They may be a person close to you but be difficult to support. You may know them well, but not be so good about knowing how to offer support. Or this situation of violence and intervention may be bring up new challenges.

Sometimes community allies do not know the survivor or victim well but may have been brought into an intervention because they are somehow connected to them or perhaps are introduced by others on the team. At times, this can be an easy match. At others, it will take some time to figure out the best way to play a supporting role.
Supporting survivors is often a key aspect of an intervention and can be complicated. See Section 4.A.1. Supporting Survivors or Victims What Is Supporting Survivors or Victims and 4.A.3. Supporting Survivors or Victims Tips for more suggestions on how allies can help to support survivors or victims.

In this Toolkit, we allow for the perspective of the person doing harm to enter the situation. This is different from many anti-violence organizations that often automatically dismiss this perspective as an attempt to manipulate the situation or blame the victim. Creative Interventions has found that people doing harm have very different approaches to supporting survivors or victims.

On one extreme, some people doing harm wish only to continue harming the survivor or victim. An intervention may be the greatest threat and may bring on desires for retaliation in any way possible.

Other people doing harm want to support the survivor or victim because they hope that it will lead to a continued relationship. If the survivor or victim desires a continued relationship, then this can form the basis for some kind of co-existence or even closeness. If the survivor or victim does not desire a continued relationship, then support can look more like manipulation to get what the person doing harm wants.

Efforts to support survivors or victims may also be genuine. It is important to take the lead of survivors or victims to sense whether or not this is the type of support they want. It may also be important for allies to watch to make sure that efforts by the person doing harm to support survivors or victims are not used to get out of accountability or to gain access to survivors or victims in order to continue an abusive relationship. This may seem like a cynical interpretation of a positive effort. However, in the experience of Creative Interventions, such outcomes happened frequently enough to raise caution.

If you are the person doing harm or are the person accused of doing harm, the greatest support you can offer the survivor or victim may be your ability to take accountability for the harm you have caused. This includes stopping all forms of harm, acknowledging the harm, recognizing and acknowledging the consequences of harm even if you did not intend them, making repairs for harm, and changing attitudes and behaviors that have been harmful and that have contributed to your harm.

If you have been in a position of causing harm, then it is very possible that your interpretation of support may not be the same as that of the survivor or victim you have harmed. Much of accountability is about shifting from a me-centered perspective to an other-centered perspective. This is not an easy shift to make.

See Section 4.F. Taking Accountability and other parts of this Toolkit to get a better idea of how you can take accountability, offer appropriate and welcome support to the survivor or victim and others affected by your attitudes and actions, and reach outcomes that are truly beneficial to them. Be open to how taking accountability is helpful to you, as well.
People are rarely 100% allies or 100% barriers. Try supporting the group to think creatively and to expand out of “black and white” and “either/or” thinking. When we think of people as 100% allies, we can overlook ways in which they are not the best fit in to certain roles. When we think of people as 100% barriers, we can miss ways in which they could be well suited to a specific task. It is possible for participants in an intervention to be allies to one goal and barriers to another.

**#1 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PEOPLE TO LEARN FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION FIRST IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY.**

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.

**#2 MAKE SURE TO RETURN TO THE SURVIVOR OR VICTIM AS AN ANCHOR TO THE INTERVENTION PROCESS.**

If the survivor or victim is part of or at least connected to the intervention process, then you as a facilitator may be in a good position to make sure that people are considering the perspective of the survivor or victim, their needs and wants, and their safety. This may be done by regularly checking in with the survivor or victim during a discussion to make sure the process is working for them.

If the survivor or victim is not in the room, you may help support them by reminding people that someone needs to connect with the survivor or victim, see how they are doing, see what they need, and keep them informed about the progress of the intervention. Perhaps this will be part of your own role as the facilitator.

This may be by making sure that at least one person has a role of supporting the survivor directly by staying connected to them and making sure that their needs are being met, they are staying safe, and any fears or concerns are being addressed. This support may be extended to their children, family members, friends and pets.
#3 MAKE SURE THAT SURVIVOR OR VICTIM SAFETY IS ADDRESSED.

The survivor or victim may be in an especially vulnerable position with regard to safety. Actions taken by the intervention team may lead in anticipated and unanticipated ways to retaliation against the survivor or victim as they have been a central target of violence by the person doing harm.

While the possibility of retaliation may not stop you from going ahead with the intervention, all risks must be examined and explored before moving forward. Safety plans need to be established so that the survivor or victim as well as allies or others involved in the intervention are not further harmed as a result of the intervention. This concern may also extend to other vulnerable people such as children, family members, friends, pets or anyone that is involved in or close to the intervention.
Story E. Getting Support from My Co-Workers

So we’d been married for a year and a half. We were both very involved politically. I had a new baby, I was at home. I know that I started feeling like my life was kind of slipping away.

But his world started to change. And he started to become much more community-involved and I was less and less community involved. And it led to a lot of tension in the relationship, and a lot of tension around me being at home and he being sort of out in the world. I think the arguing and the fighting and the challenging verbally started. And it just escalated. And became very contentious, you know. The relationship was very contentious.

So I remember he came home one night, and he had been out. And I remember he came home one night and we just started fighting. I picked up a glass and threw it at him and it hit him in the side of his face and that was it. He chased me in the living room. We have this brick fireplace in the living room. He chased me in the house and grabbed me, threw me on the floor and just pounded my face into the brick wall. I mean, when thinking about it now, I’m thinking, “How did I survive that?” I felt like he was going to kill me. I mean, I felt like this man has lost his mind, and I’m dead. I remember that he just kicked me, pounded my face into the brick wall, into this fireplace, and…and then he left.

The first assault was one thing. That was shocking to me. The second one was more shocking. Because the first one felt to me like he just lost it, and he just wasn’t aware of what he was doing, and he just responded so violently because he lost control of himself. And that to me was not as shocking as the second time because I felt like the second time was almost more being very much more intentional. So I was much more shocked that actually happened after we got back together. I still felt like I was in a lot of shock, and I was very depressed.

You know, I was depressed after this happened. I was depressed for probably about three or four months. I was just in a deep, deep depression. And mostly because I felt like you know this was a person that I just didn’t know. I just didn’t see this side of him.

I couldn’t go to work. My supervisors were very supportive. I mean my whole face was...I couldn’t go to work because my face was so damaged that there was no way I could leave the house looking like I was looking. So my co-workers were very supportive and gave me the time I needed to be off.
I don’t think we called the police. And I wasn’t going to. I mean, police to me was never an option. I don’t think I felt like they would have done anything at all. I wasn’t necessarily opposed to the police, but I just didn’t feel like I knew what their role was. So I didn’t call them, but there was plenty of other support. And I don’t think I ever, I don’t think I felt like there was anybody who was not supportive of me. I never heard anybody say things like, “Well, you need to leave the motherf****” or to say, “What did you do to provoke him?” I don’t think I heard those kind of comments from anybody. I got a lot of support and affirmation and people wanting to be helpful.

I think the first level of support was concern for my physical well-being. And you know, really making sure that I felt safe. And where I was, was I safe? And did I feel like I needed some support to make me safe? And I don’t think there was much of a sense from my friends of any sort of like domestic violence shelters or anything like that. I think it was, “Do you feel safe here in your house? He’s not here, he’s gone, do you feel safe? Do you feel like he’ll come back? And if he comes back do you feel safe about that?” And so I think there was a lot of concern about my safety.

There was also a lot of concern about my mental health and what that meant in terms of just taking care of myself physically. People brought me food. “Are you eating?” “Do you need somebody to be here with you?” I mean, I think the fact that I was depressed was really scary for people. “Do you need us to be here to make sure you’re eating?” “Make sure you’re not sort of thinking about suicide or anything like that.” So there was a lot of that. “Do you just need someone, do you just need someone to come and cook you some dinner or lunch or whatever.” I had people that bought groceries for me, and brought food to me, and offered to come and help clean the house. And it wasn’t at all patronizing. It was like, “You know what, we understand that right now you might not have the energy to do all of these things, so let us take care of you.”

Even to the point where – I just, I never will forget this. We had hardwood floors at the time. And I remember one person saying, “Do you want me to come in here and paint your walls?” I mean, it was like, “We’ll paint for you!” You know, I think they wanted to change the environment or create an environment where I felt comfortable. “Is there something different we can do here in your house.” So I remember that a couple people came and painted my living room and dining room, and I remember getting new rugs on the floor.

So my friends were more concerned about my well-being and I had a little nine month old. They were concerned about “Was I able to take care of her and did I need some support in taking care of her?” So people were providing tangible things for me. And then, people were just willing. “You need to call us in the middle of the night, call me.” I mean I just had people who were like, “Just call me.” “You need to talk, just call me and talk.” I felt like I was a burden, and I felt like I didn’t want to impose this on my friends, but I felt like they were there. “You want to talk ad nauseum, talk ad nauseum.” So I felt like there was just kind of listening, they were able to listen to me.
Section 4: Tools to Mix and Match

Section 4. Tools to Mix and Match contains sets of tools organized around activities that can be useful in planning and carrying out community-based interventions to interpersonal violence. They follow basic concerns that many or most groups interested in violence intervention have faced.

These sets of tools are organized in the following categories:

4.B. Staying Safe. How Do We Stay Safe?
4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. Who Can Help?
4.D. Setting Goals. What Do We Want?
4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims. How Can We Help?
4.F. Taking Accountability. How Do We Change Violence?
4.G. Working Together. How Do We Work Together as a Team?
4.H. Keeping on Track. How Do We Move Forward?


In This Section:

A.1. What Is Getting Clear?
A.2. Getting Clear Across the 4 Phases
A.3. Tips
A.4. Special Considerations
A.5. Facilitator Notes
A.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
A.7. Getting Clear Tools

• Tool A1. Getting Clear Snapshot: Short Question Guide
• Tool A2. Getting Clear Worksheet
• Tool A3. Naming the Harm Chart
• Tool A4. Harm Statement Worksheet
• Tool A5. Getting Clear: Intervention Factors At-a-Glance

Tools to Mix and Match

4.E SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

Tool E1. What Does the Survivor or Victim Need? Checklist
Tool E2. What Does the Survivor or Victim Need? Guiding Questions
Tool E3. Survivor or Victim Participation in an Intervention Chart
Supporting survivors or victims can look many different ways to many different people. This tool offers ideas of possible types of support that survivors or victims have said have been helpful over time.

POSSIBLE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT A SURVIVOR OR VICTIM OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

- Make a human connection
- Let them know you care
- Listen to their story
- Ask them what they need
- Help them get what they need
- Let them know that interpersonal violence happens to many people
- Praise them for anything and everything they do to address their situation of harm – including talking to you
- Let them know that they are not alone

Things you can offer:

- Listening ear
- Patience – through what may be their inability to make a decision, confusion, changing minds, repetition
- Someone to lean on or hand to hold – through fear, shame, confusion, depression, embarrassment
- Sounding board – to listen and offer feedback, not necessarily to give advice
- Safety (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe)
- Medical care
- Mental health care or counseling
- Religious or spiritual support
Companionship

- Help supporting children or other dependents – childcare, child pick-up, activities with children, emotional support for children who may be going through hard time through violence or intervention
- Help taking care of pets or other beings or things that the survivor or victim usually cares for
- Help educating and informing others to be good allies – trusted friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, community members
- Help protecting from people who may bring risk or harm – including those who mean to be helpful but who are not
- Help support the person doing harm to take accountability – if you are in a position to do so (See Section 4.E. Taking Accountability)
- Help finding and connecting them to resources
- Help with housing or safe shelter if needed
- Help moving, storing things, packing, unpacking
- Help with accompaniment, rides/transportation, access to telephone or internet
- Help with other necessary things – (example, clothes, food, money, bus card)
- Help figuring out how they want to talk about their situation, what they specifically need, and what they want to prioritize
- Help with translation, interpretation, for non-English or limited-English speakers or hearing or visually impaired and explaining of factors such as culture or immigration status to services providers
- Help figuring out way around “systems” such as police, criminal justice, immigration, or child welfare if these systems might present risk or harm (for example, if they are an undocumented immigrant)
- Help them use the Toolkit
- Become familiar with this Toolkit
- Introduce them to Toolkit in a way that is useful (and not overwhelming) – may include reading pieces, photocopying pages, translating useful information
- Introduce other allies to the Toolkit in a way that is useful
- Play a role as an ally as presented in this Toolkit (See Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers)
If you are a survivor or victim of violence and think you might want the support from others that you trust about your situation of violence, here are some questions to think about:

**WHO CAN SUPPORT YOU?**

1. Who are the people you usually turn to?

2. Who has been helpful – and what is it that made them helpful?

3. Who do you think could be helpful in supporting you with your situation of violence?

4. If you are not sure you want to turn to those you usually turn to, why or why not?

5. When you think about people to support you with your situation of violence, what is important to you?

6. Who are some other trusted people you might be able to talk to (if this is different than the list of people you usually turn to)?

7. If you cannot think of anybody right now, what are some types of people you could look for who might be able to help?
WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO YOU WANT?

1. When you think about what kind of support you want, you think of the following (make a list):

   (See the previous tool, Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims Tool E1: What Does the Survivor or Victim Need? Checklist for a list of ideas that might be helpful)

2. When you look at the list above, the most important are (or list them in order with the most important on top):

3. What are some things that you definitely do NOT want?

4. Think about how to use this exercise to ask for help. You can practice asking for these things. You can meet with someone you trust and have them help you figure out how to find more support. You can use these lists to write a letter about what you want (and what you don’t want).
While Creative Interventions encourages active survivor or victim participation, this can happen at different levels. This chart helps you sort out what level of survivor or victim participation best describes your intervention process – or – which level best describes what you would like your process to look like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Survivor or Victim Leadership in the Intervention</strong></th>
<th><strong>Survivor- or Victim-Centered Intervention Goals</strong></th>
<th><strong>Survivor or Victim Coordination and Decision-Making</strong></th>
<th><strong>Communication with Survivor or Victim</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Level of participation and priority</strong></td>
<td>Survivor or victim is leading and directing the intervention</td>
<td>Survivor goals = intervention goals</td>
<td>Survivor is making all key decisions and coordinating individual allies or leading a group of allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority but consideration of others is important</strong></td>
<td>Survivor or victim is leading the intervention but others may act in other important roles such as facilitator, coordinator or other key roles</td>
<td>Survivor or victim goals are the priority but there has been group input into and group agreement with goals</td>
<td>Survivor or victim is involved in all decision-making but there is also a process to get input from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important but consideration weighed with others</strong></td>
<td>A group has agreed to some process of shared leadership – even if survivor may have actively started the process – or if there is a main facilitator or coordinator</td>
<td>Survivor or victim goals are central but they have also been taken into consideration with key input from others including ally or community goals – group consensus has been reached</td>
<td>A group is coordinating decision-making that includes the survivor or victim as a key contributor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important but role is mostly to give feedback</strong></td>
<td>Survivor or victim has some distance from the intervention – agrees to a process to give feedback</td>
<td>Survivor or victim has participated in and agrees with the overall goals – may or may not be involved in changes in goals depending on prior agreement</td>
<td>Survivor or victim has some distance but has agreed to a process for giving feedback that is given special consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survivor or victim agrees but is not involved</strong></td>
<td>Survivor or victim agrees generally with the intervention but will not be involved</td>
<td>Survivor or victim may have participated in and agree with the overall goals – may or may not be involved if goals change depending on prior agreement</td>
<td>Survivor or victim is not involved in coordination or decision-making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survivor or victim disagrees and is not involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survivor or victim disagrees with the intervention and is not involved</th>
<th>Survivor or victim disagrees but group considers known or likely survivor goals including safety</th>
<th>Survivor or victim is not involved in coordination or decision-making</th>
<th>Survivor or victim disagrees and may or may not be given at least some information to let them know what is happening with the intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survivor or victim is not at all involved*</td>
<td>For some reason, survivor or victim is completely unavailable</td>
<td>Group considers known or likely survivor or victim goals including safety</td>
<td>Survivor or victim if known or reachable may or may not be given information to let them know what is happening with the intervention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*WHAT IF THE SURVIVOR OR VICTIM IS NOT INVOLVED?

The last three rows show a situation in which the survivor or victim is not involved in the intervention process. Again, Creative Interventions has found that survivor participation is best. However, it may be possible to carry out a community-based intervention that minimally involves the survivor or victim or does not involve them at all.

For example, this may happen in cases where an organization or a community group has a policy to always deal with known situations of violence that happen within the organization or among its members. In this case, the organization or community group may have come to know about a situation of violence and even have been told by the survivor or victim. It is possible that the survivor or victim would request that nothing be done about it. An organization or community group might have a policy that is more “survivor-centered,” meaning that it would go along with whatever the survivor or victim requested. In this case, a request to do nothing may be followed even if the organization or community group wanted to take action.

On the other hand, the organization or community group could have a policy that they will take some type of action whenever they learn about a situation of violence or abuse, perhaps depending upon the level of abuse or the type. They may let the survivor or victim know that it is their policy and their responsibility to address the violence, preferably with the participation of the survivor or victim.

The survivor or victim may then decide to become involved even though they were hesitant at first. They may become involved at various levels of participation such as those outlined in the chart above. Or it is possible that they will still disagree with this decision, may ask not to be involved, or may even be actively against an intervention.

If the survivor or victim does not agree with the intervention or does not want to participate, then the organization still has the responsibility to support the survivor or victim as best as it can given the circumstances. In a holistic intervention, the well-being of all is taken into consideration – even among those who are not participating or willing to participate. While this usually refers to the person doing harm, this can also include the survivor or victim.
If the survivor or victim is not participating, then a community-based intervention still has the responsibility to support the survivor or victim as best as it can. This can include:

- Leaving an open door to the participation of the survivor or victim and process by which they can check in
- Finding a way to include their known goals or their likely goals into the intervention goals
- Offering support through the many options listed in Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims Tool E1: What Does the Survivor or Victim Need? Checklist.
- Offering an occasional update on the intervention which can include:
  - Requests made of the person doing harm and/or the community that did or allowed harm
  - What kind of follow up that the person or community doing harm has committed to and completed
  - Results of the intervention at some certain points of the intervention (for example, weekly, monthly, after certain key meetings or events or at the end/closure of an intervention)

In other situations, the survivor or victim may be completely unknown or unavailable. They may be in safe hiding and may need or request complete confidentiality. They may be too young to actively participate. They may be too injured or ill. They may not be alive. In these cases, a known person who can represent them such as a partner, a parent or guardian, a family member, or a close friend may serve as someone to connect to this person or to represent them as best as they can.
F.1. What Is Taking Accountability?
F.2. Taking Accountability Across the 4 Phases
F.3. Tips
F.4. Special Considerations
F.5. Facilitator Notes
F.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
F.7. Taking Accountability Tools
F.1. WHAT IS TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY?

Taking Accountability: Key Questions

- What could make the violence stop?
- What could prevent further violence?
- Who/What does the person doing harm care about?

What is Accountability?

In brief, accountability is the ability to recognize, end and take responsibility for violence. We usually think of the person doing harm as the one to be accountable for violence. Community accountability also means that communities are accountable for sometimes ignoring, minimizing or even encouraging violence. Communities must also recognize, end and take responsibility for violence by becoming more knowledgeable, skillful and willing to take action to intervene in violence and to support social norms and conditions that prevent violence from happening in the first place.

Note that this Toolkit and this section focuses primarily on the accountability of the person doing harm. However, this information and these tools can also apply to communities that have directly caused harm and/or communities that have allowed harm to happen.

Also note that a beginning step of accountability may be getting violence to stop. Depending upon the willingness and openness of the person doing harm to take accountability, the ability of the survivor or victim or the allies to push for these changes, and such factors as how serious the level of violence, the step of stopping violence may be the result of pressure or even force. This Toolkit encourages a process of accountability that relies upon changes that the person doing harm (or the community) actively participates in making. The level of participation and willingness of the person doing harm to take accountability, however, may change significantly as the intervention process moves along. And the direction of change, positive or negative, can differ widely and shift dramatically over time, even within a single intervention and with a single individual.

Accountability Means Many Things

Accountability involves listening, learning, taking responsibility, and changing. It involves conscientiously creating opportunities in our families and communities for direct communication, understanding and repairing of harm, readjustment of power toward empowerment and equal sharing of power, and rebuilding of relationships and communities toward safety, respect, and happiness.
While it would certainly be a simpler world if accountability were one concept and one conversation, the reality of accountability is complex. Many different people have different ideas about what accountability is and what it looks like. Accountability is a many-sided word. What we mean by accountability shifts depending on whether we are looking at the short term, the long term, how we take accountability ourselves, and how we support others to take accountability.

The word “accountability” can also bring up all kinds of images and feelings for different people at different times. Often, we think of accountability as linked to punishment, “paying” for what someone did, or even going to prison.

For Creative Interventions, we are trying to have a different way of thinking about accountability – one that is more positive, that is tied to responsibility and change, but not to punishment and revenge. One that can be driven by connection and care rather than fear and anger alone. This is not to take away from the fact that violence and abuse cause fear, anger and outrage. It does. And such emotions have their place.

But the change from violence to compassion, safety, respect and health also needs to come from the values that we want to see even if these might be difficult to feel when we are facing violence.

Interpersonal violence primarily takes place within our families, friendship networks, neighborhoods and communities. They happen among people we know and sometimes among those we are closest to. Therefore, we are promoting accountability as a way to 1) stop violence; 2) acknowledge violence; 3) acknowledge the harms resulting from violence – even if unintended; 4) repair those harms; and 5) fundamentally change those attitudes and actions responsible for the violence.

We are promoting accountability as a way to keep our communities whole, safe and healthy, rather than a way to punish, separate and send away.

This does NOT mean that survivors or victims need to forgive the people who do harm, or that we simply ask for an apology and everything is fine, or that relationships and families need to stay together. None of these fit the definition of accountability, although it is possible that forgiveness, apologies and even staying together may be part of what some people decide that they want and may even be able to reach.

A person’s choice to make a change is key. Toward that goal, “taking responsibility” or even “taking accountability” work better as approaches and phrases than “holding someone accountable.” When we say ‘people need to be held accountable,’ we are likely to come across sounding punitive and controlling. The person who is expected to be accountable is not ever going to choose to want to be held accountable. Who would choose that? Anyone would struggle against it. And if we want success, we need that person, someplace in themselves, to want to make a change. They have to be and feel active.

It can just mean supporting someone to learn something new and change out of old patterns.
ACCOUNTABILITY AS A PROCESS

We can think of accountability in several ways.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY CAN HAPPEN OVER A CONTINUUM OF TIME.

Accountability is something someone can take in the short term. We might:

• Stop using violence.
• Slow down and listen to understand how our actions have impacted those around us.
• Take action to repair the harm that our actions have caused others.
• Identify and try out new ways of thinking and behaving.
• Get support and encouragement for our efforts and successes.
• Taking accountability or accountability is also a long-term and life-long process. We might:
  • Grow our confidence to face our imperfections and turn away from patterns that harm others (and ultimately ourselves).
  • Grow our ability to feel our emotions without acting them out.
  • Practice and promote behaviors that honor ourselves and others.
  • Humbly support others around us to do the same.
  • Learn from and move beyond mistakes and set-backs.
  • Practice self-awareness and self-reflection to build mutually supportive and enjoyable relationships.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY CAN HAPPEN ALONG A CONTINUUM OF DEPTH.

Any of the following can be thought of as elements of accountability:

• Being confronted at all, even just once about the violence that was done.
• Experiencing and understanding that violence has natural negative consequences (for example, recognizing that one’s violence caused their friends to be shocked and scared – finding that friends began to avoid them).

• Stopping or reducing violence – even if doing so is a response to social pressures from friends or community, or to a threat of losing relationships due to continued use of violence – and not because of deep change.

• Listening to the person who was harmed talk about their experience of violence – without being defensive, interrupting or reacting against this story.

• Acknowledging the reality of the experience for the person who was harmed – even if this is not at all what was intended.

• Acknowledging that the use of violence was ultimately a choice – not something caused by someone else.

• Expressing sincere apology, taking responsibility, and showing care to the person who was harmed.

• Giving financial repairs (or reparations) to the person harmed.

• Giving other significant repairs, perhaps in the form of service, replacement of property, and so on, to the person harmed.

• Agreeing and taking every step possible to assure that these harms will not be committed again.

• Knowing and agreeing that any future acts of harm will result in certain negative consequences.

• Telling others about one’s own uses of violence not in order to gain followers or sympathizers, but to stop hiding private interpersonal violence.

• Telling others about one’s own uses of violence to ask for support in changing.

• Telling others about one’s own uses of violence to show that taking accountability can be an act of honor and courage.

• Making it one’s own choice, commitment and goal to address root causes of violence, to learn new skills, and to deeply transform violent behaviors.

• Showing actual changes in thinking and behavior in good times.

• Showing actual changes to thinking and behavior in hard and stressful times.

• Supporting others who have used or are using violence to take steps to take accountability.
ACCOUNTABILITY AS A STAIRCASE

In this Toolkit, we talk about accountability as a staircase. You can start one step at a time, and you can measure progress each step of the way.

Although we use this staircase to show steps towards accountability and a vision of positive and transformative change, an intervention may never reach any of these steps. Intervention goals may only anticipate reaching Step 1 as a measure of success.

And, rather than walking up the staircase one step at a time, one might consider the progression as more of a dance -- one may be dealing with more than one step at a time and at times may move from one step to another and back again.

Staircase of Accountability

1. Stop the immediate violence
2. Recognize the violence
3. Recognize the consequences of violence without excuses, even if unintended
4. Make repairs for the harm
5. Change harmful attitudes and behaviors so that violence is not repeated
6. Become a healthy member of your community
Accountability Looks Different With Each Situation

There is no blueprint for accountability. People are different. Situations and types of violence or risk are different. Some processes do well with lots of time and intense involvement. Other processes work best when they are short, to the point, and are allowed to show their impact over time.

Accountability does not have to be punitive, painful, terrifying, or retaliatory. We can make it clear, encouraging, firm, and practical. We can make aspects of it feel like a relief. Accountability can help us be seen and understood by those around us. It can help us not be and feel so alone, and can help us develop the kinds of relationships we want in our lives.

At the same time, accountability does not make sense as a primary goal for every violent situation or intervention. Sometimes a community does not have the resources, time, or opportunity to engage a person to take accountability for their violence. Sometimes people doing harm are not ready or willing to make any acknowledgement of or effort to change their viewpoints and violence. Sometimes the violence committed is so morally heinous to us or so progressed and long-standing that we feel hatred, anger, and disgust, and cannot find anyone who might engage the person doing harm with intent free of aggression or vengeance. Sometimes the most thoughtful, open, non-penalizing, and supportive invitation to accountability from a friend, community member or leader does not result in most of the levels of accountability listed earlier. And sometimes people doing harm show that any confrontation or request for accountability results only in escalating their harmful behaviors.

But these efforts are something.

Though resulting positive changes might not be immediate, visible, “enough” or lasting, these efforts to intervene in violence are a big deal. They rise above silence, passivity, and inaction, and make peace and wellness in our families and communities something we work, not wait for.

Why Is It Important?

This Toolkit is based upon the belief that communities working together can overcome violence, and the vision that each of us as individuals are capable of meaningful change towards that end. Our vision of accountability as a process or as a staircase of change means that we value any step leading towards the end of or reduction of violence and that we also see each small step as one that can lead to our bigger vision of community well-being and, ultimately, liberation.
USING TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

This section has lengthy tools to use for the process of Taking Accountability. Tool F1. Staircase of Change introduces the concept of accountability as a process. It offers a way for you to see your own situation through the lens of these steps and allows for you to adapt them to your particular circumstances.

Tool F2. Level of Participation for Survivors or Victims Chart acknowledges that survivors or victims may have very different levels of involvement in a process of taking accountability. It breaks these possibilities down so that you can more clearly keep in mind how survivors or victims have chosen to stay involved and what kind of communication you will need to keep up. Tool F3. Self-Reflection and Guiding Questions for Survivors or Victims and Allies offers special tools for survivors or victims to think about their involvement in the accountability process.

Allies also have special needs regarding their involvement in the accountability process. Tool F4. Self-Reflection and Practice for Allies. Practice Questions offers some practical guiding questions and statements to help with what can be a difficult process.

Taking Accountability can be particularly challenging for people doing harm. Tool F5. Breaking through Defensiveness. Guiding Questions for the Person Doing Harm and Tool F6. Preparing for Direct Communication. Affirmations and Guided Questions for the Person Doing Harm offer some constructive support for people doing harm as they deal with the common pattern of defensiveness.
F.2. TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Taking Accountability can look very different depending upon the phase of intervention.

**PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED**

Interventions generally begin with some need to address, reduce, end or prevent violence. Interventions will likely follow along one, two, or all three of the following areas (See Section 3.5. What Are We Trying to Achieve: 3 Key Intervention Areas):

1. Supporting survivors or victims (See Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims).
2. Accountability of person doing harm,
3. Community accountability or social change.

Accountability of the person doing harm or of a community that was responsible for allowing harm may never be part of an intervention. It may seem to too dangerous: the person doing harm may not be known, or people may simply be unable to think of any way in which they could possibly participate in a process of change. On the other hand, accountability may be a primary goal from the very beginning. It is even possible that an intervention begins with the person doing harm wanting to change and starting a process of taking responsibility for that change.

While it is impossible to generalize about how taking accountability might factor into an intervention at the beginning stages, it is likely that taking accountability, if pursued at all, will begin with some kind of difficult communication with the person doing harm. This may look like energetic resistance to violence, a confrontation, a challenging conversation. Even if this initial communication takes place with love, compassion and support, it is likely to be a difficult connection with perhaps uncertain results. It may be met with resistance, denial, minimization, victim blaming, or even violence. It may be welcomed, only to be denied later on. The process of taking accountability, in most cases, is a difficult one. We need a process that takes into account this difficulty while staying firm enough to support increasing levels of responsibility or accountability.
PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION
If taking accountability is part of the intervention, then there may be a period of planning and preparation to effectively communicate with and work together with the person doing harm. Some of this planning and preparation may involve deciding what are your goals that you expect from the intervention, what specific harms you want to address, what specific things you expect the person doing harm to do, and what will be the consequences if the expectations are not met. It may help to identify the person who is best to directly deal with the person doing harm, who has enough confidence to handle what may be a very difficult process; who does the person doing harm respect; how can the process be safe for the people intervening, the survivor or victim, and the person doing harm; what is the best process for talking with and supporting the person doing harm.

PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION
Taking action may refer to time spent with the person doing harm; discussions regarding the intervention, the expectations, and the possible outcomes; support for the person doing harm to move through a process of change; connection with helpful resources; and a process to give feedback to the person doing harm regarding these changes.

PHASE 4: FOLLOWING UP
If the intervention reaches a point of closure because goals have been met, then taking accountability may move towards a process of maintaining the positive changes reached and checking in to make sure that there is not a return to violent attitudes or behaviors. Systems may be set up to check in regularly.

It is also possible to bring closure even if goals are not met. The group may run out of resources to continue, the survivor or victim may move on and choose another pathway or strategy, or the person doing harm may resist involvement. In all of these situations, the intervention may still be considered a success in some way. Closure in this case may include some process where people can identify the areas of success and what aspects of the intervention may need following up. Plans can be made on how to make those steps happen.

RELATED TOOLS
A process of taking accountability is often accompanied by or a part of supporting survivors or victims. See Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors and Victims for information and tools. Section 4.B. Staying Safe has tools to help determine risks and plan for safety. These may be important steps to make when working with a person doing harm throughout an intervention. In order to think through which people or organizations may be helpful in directly communicating with and supporting a person doing harm, see Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. These tools can be helpful in thinking about which people might be particularly good to positively communicate with and work with a person doing harm. This section may also identify who is likely to continue to support or excuse their violence and who, therefore, may be barriers to an intervention.
F.3. TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY TIPS

#1 ACCOUNTABILITY IS A PROCESS; IT MAY TAKE MANY TYPES OF STRATEGIES ALONG THE WAY.

In this Toolkit, we present accountability as a staircase. The first step on that staircase is stopping violence – or stopping it enough to be able to take the next step. It is difficult for someone to take responsibility in the middle of violence or in the middle of a cycle of violence that keeps continuing over and over again. It is difficult to ask for change and expect change to be lasting within a pattern or cycle of violence.

This Toolkit encourages us to take resistance to accountability into account. As we will repeat, we need to create systems flexible enough to allow for the expected process of dodging and delaying accountability and strong enough to withstand and diminish these tactics over time.

Strategies may include:

a. Communicating and showing connection and care.

b. Gathering people and power to widen the community net, shift community norms, increase leverage, and increase caring connection and support.

c. Using some measure of pressure, threats, force or coercion if no other means are possible or if necessary to prevent further violence. By this we do not mean the use of physical violence, but acts such as asking someone to stay away or leave, letting someone know that there will be consequences if violence continues, or physically restraining someone from acting out violently at that moment.

No matter what the strategy or level of resistance, create options and leave an open door to the possibility of someone becoming a “participant” in an intervention, and not just a “target.”

There are times that violence must simply be stopped before any other meaningful action can take place. There are times that violence must be stopped immediately to prevent any further harm, injury or even death. There are times that taking accountability does not begin as a voluntary act. Sometimes, it begins with force.

But we urge caution. If force or any of these acts are used as punishment, vengeance, a way to get even, to let them know how it feels, to hurt them for the sake of making them feel the pain, then this may not be a justifiable form of force. However, if some level of force is the only reasonable and available way to get someone to stop their violence and to try to prevent further violence, then this can be considered a form of self-defense.

In some cases, people doing harm may be ready and willing, from the beginning, to take responsibility for their actions and change their behavior. This, however, is not often the case. More commonly, change and accountability are resisted, at least at first, and often over time.
Orienting attitudes, values, and options towards compassion and connection rather than punishment and revenge can help to keep an open pathway to a holistic solution — one that takes into account the wellbeing and participation of the survivor or victim, the community allies and the person doing harm.

#2 REMEMBER CONTEXT; IT MATTERS.

It is important to think about the relationship context of the violence through the lens of accountability. Remember to ask yourself: What kind of violent situation are you addressing?

In our experience, we have seen 4 common contexts for relationships. They are listed below. As you think with others about how to support a survivor, engage a person using violence to take responsibility, and/or involve a community in increasing safety and reducing or ending violence, remember always to bear in mind the context of your situation and how it impacts your approach and your goals.

4 Common Types of Relationship Contexts

a. The survivor or victim and the person doing harm are in an intimate or close relationship and are both trying to stay in a relationship which has been and may continue to be violent. Changing violence and shifting power dynamics over time might be the primary goal. A goal may also be that they live peacefully, or peacefully enough, with each other.

b. The survivor or victim and the person doing harm are not in an intimate or close relationship but do live in close shared community. They need to build understanding, responsibility, and repair to a degree that allows both to function in shared community, but not in the context of an ongoing intimate or close relationship. A goal may be that they co-exist in the same shared community without conflict.

c. The survivor or victim and the person doing harm are not living in shared community and/or are no longer in an intimate or close relationship. The violence happened a while ago and there is no intention to rebuild a relationship, or need to find a way to function well in shared community spaces. A goal may not include anything about their ongoing relationship — or may just want to put closure on a previous relationship.

d. A stranger or distant acquaintance commits an act of interpersonal violence. Perhaps neighbors or community members saw and did not intervene or create safety and support for the person harmed, or worsened some dynamics of interpersonal violence in their treatment of the harmed person after the violence. A goal may be that the community takes accountability for not doing enough to provide safety, for not taking action to stop the harm or to take responsibility to make sure that kind of harm does not happen again.
#3 Make sure that people keep “connected” to the person doing harm.

If the intervention seriously takes on the process of taking accountability, then it is important to keep connected to the person doing harm. Because people are often uncomfortable dealing directly with the person doing harm, that person can be kept out of the loop and left hanging. Because people may be unsure about how to handle accountability, things can move slowly.

People can easily forget to update them on what’s going on and can want to handle communication through the least personal forms of communication – like email. The person doing harm who is willing to participate can begin to build up anxiety especially if no communication is made or the only communication is vague and seemingly impersonal.

Keep connected. You may need to choose someone whose role is to keep the person doing harm informed, to keep connected to them, and to let them know that while stopping violence is important – supporting the person doing harm towards long-term change is also important.

#4 Keep an eye on safety.

If the group is working with the person doing harm, then safety may be a major concern. The person doing harm could react with violence to a process of accountability. This could be directly when being pressed to make changes. This could also happen behind the scenes. For example, they could be trying to turn other people against the survivor or victim in retaliation; they could be trying to damage the reputations of the people working on the intervention; they could be getting their own supporters to do some kind of damage.

In some situations, these safety concerns may be minimal. In others, even if the person seems to be cooperating with the process or has not shown a high level of violence in the past, they may still be capable of significant harm.

It is easy to be too concerned about safety – so concerned that no action is taken. It is also easy to forget that safety is an issue – and act carelessly, perhaps exposing oneself and the survivor or victim to harm.

Harm may also be an issue for the person who has caused harm. Others may be out to get them, hoping that the process of accountability will be hurtful and punishing – or thinking that it is not punishing enough. People may be targeting the person doing harm for punishment or revenge.

#5 Remember that communities are also responsible for violence — pay attention to the community’s responsibility.


Community accountability reminds us that interpersonal violence is a community problem, not just an individual problem. It reminds us that communities have the responsibility to address, reduce, end and prevent violence, and that they have both the responsibility and the power to change violence.

It also reminds us that communities (including those who are actively working on this intervention) have had a role to play in allowing violence to happen.

Holding a process of accountability for a community to recognize the ways we have caused violence or allowed violence to happen, to recognize consequences even if unintended, to take steps to repair the harm, and to change community attitudes and actions is an important part of taking accountability.

This process of community accountability can serve as an important model of accountability for the person doing harm. And it can show the broader community (this may be at the level of family, friendship networks, organization, local community and so on) the big changes that communities need to make in order to prevent violence in the future.

#6 FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VIOLENCE, NOT FOR “EVERYTHING I DIDN’T LIKE OR JUDGE NOW AS A PROBLEM.”

When working to make accountability and movement away from violence possible, remember that we are encouraging a community standard around violence, not dictating or micro-managing people’s lives and relationships. There may be tons of things you don’t like about the person doing harm, or that you don’t like about the other person’s or people’s responses in the situation. There may be numerous actions or behaviors that you find frustrating, unhelpful or problematic in the person doing harm. You may also feel this way about the survivor or victim of violence.

If you find yourself or other involved people starting to list out all of the things you don’t approve of or can’t stand or want to look different, find a way to step back from being self-righteous; remember humility; and refocus on intervention goals.

Expecting people to change their core personalities as a result of a single community intervention is unwise and unrealistic. Expecting people to relate to other people in radically different ways after one conversation is very unlikely. Remember that there are thousands of different ways to be in relationship with other people that are not violent, but might not be a perfect model of clear communication, conflict resolution, love, and equality. We as community members do not need to “answer” to each other for our differences. We have to answer to our community about the violence we use, and then continue on our journey of learning how to relate to others in respectful, responsible, fulfilling, and sustaining ways.
#7 SEEK OUT THE MIDDLE GROUND.
When working to support people in taking responsibility, it can be easy to move toward the extremes: to have either extremely high (unrealistic, rigid, etc.) demands for accountability or to have very minimal expectations and to think that the smallest of actions show that they must have changed. It is helpful to check in with oneself and whoever else is involved, so as not to expect too much or too little about the response we want to see from a person doing harm.

#8 ACCOUNTABILITY GOALS; CONSIDER MAKING THEM ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO.
Sometimes we get so focused on other people and what we want them to do or stop doing, we forget that the accountability goals we can be sure to achieve are the ones that involve what we will do to make accountability and change possible. When working toward engaging people to stop violence, take responsibility, and make new choices, stay away from making all of your goals reflect how you’d like other people to respond to you and your requests. Avoid thinking of success as only what you get the other person to stop doing or start doing or change. You can never guarantee someone else’s response. And you can never monitor someone’s every move. Remember that you can make some of your intervention’s accountability goals reflect your own efforts to make accountability and responsibility possible. These can have positive ripple effects across your community.

#9 ACCOUNTABILITY GOALS; BIGGER IS NOT USUALLY BETTER.
If our accountability goals are small or contained, it is not because we are weak, not demanding enough, not fierce enough, or not allowing room for transformation. It is because we are matching our actions to fit the situation. It is because we are not basing a plan on magical thinking. Small change that really happens is transformational! In community-based interventions that include efforts at accountability, we want to take thoughtful risks that allow for the possibility of lasting change—not take wild risks (for the sake of risk-taking or for the glory of quick, righteous action) that might open our intervention and the people involved in it to serious vulnerability and danger.

If we set a giant or all-inclusive goal that we can’t realistically achieve, we risk losing our sense of accomplishment, direction, and hope. If we set a small goal and achieve it, we can set a next one, and then a next one after that. Our momentum grows.

#10 BE PREPARED; FIGURING OUT WHO IS THE SURVIVOR OR VICTIM AND WHO IS THE PERSON DOING HARM CAN BE COMPLICATED.
Sometimes violent dynamics are very clear and obvious. Being able to tell who is the primary person using violence and who is being harmed can be pretty obvious. Of course, we know from Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that even when it is obvious, some people still choose to deny the violence or blame the victim – this is still true even though people are much more aware about domestic violence and sexual assault.
Other times the dynamics of violence can be confusing and cause intense debate. Two (or more) people can tell their sides of the story to their friends and community and get two sides to be in opposition to each other on their behalf. Both sides might be crying out that they are the victim of the other person’s wrongdoing and that the other person needs “to be held accountable.” Especially in domestic violence situations, sometimes the person loudly calling the community together for support is actually the person doing harm. Sometimes they are doing this to make sure that the survivor or victim of their violence does not have access to any community support or resources. Sometimes they are calling for a huge response to an act of violence or resistance that their partner finally used in self-defense, in retaliation, or to finally say “no” to the violence by using violence as self-defense.

Often times, it is easy to tell who is responsible for the violence in the beginning when people come together to support their friend or family member who has told them about their experience of interpersonal violence. But later when those same people think about engaging (communicating with) the person who used the violence to take responsibility or accountability, they might decide to bring in other allies who may develop another perspective.

For example, bringing in an ally who can make a positive, influential connection to the person doing harm can be helpful to the intervention. However, once this ally talks with the person doing harm, they may hear another story – perhaps a story that the person doing harm is making up or exaggerating in order to blame the victim or get out of accountability. This is very common.

The community member might then have a different opinion than the other people who started the intervention or who invited them. They might think that the intervention is unfair or is even targeting the wrong person. Sometimes that is when assessment gets more complicated—when people tell another side to the story.

A list of some possible scenarios is below:

a. People carrying out an intervention are clear about who is the survivor or victim and who is the person doing harm. Even though others in the community might argue especially if they do not have an understanding about interpersonal violence, the key people doing the intervention are clear and agree upon how they view the basic dynamics of violence and who is responsible for accountability.

b. It is clear who is the survivor or victim and who is the person doing harm. However, people also have questions about or problems with the survivor or victim. They are not the “perfect” victim. They may have behaved in ways that are annoying or even seem abusive. Perhaps they carried out an intervention in a way that people disagree with. Even so, people are still clear about who is the survivor or victim and who is the person doing harm.

c. The group is split. Some people think there is a clear pattern of violence and a clear survivor or victim and person doing harm. Others think that both people or parties are significantly or equally accountable for the violent situation.
Because it is unclear, people use the questions in Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know:

- Who is more afraid?
- Who starts the violence?
- Who ends up getting harmed?
- Who is changing and adapting to meet another’s needs or moods?
- Who is more vulnerable?
- Who is using violence for power and control (abusive violence)? Who is using violence to try to maintain safety or integrity in an already violent situation (self-defense)?
- Who always has to win?

This can play out in the following ways:

- After more discussion (and re-reading Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know), the group sorts through victim blaming and concludes that the violence is or was being used by one person against the other.
- The group reaches the conclusion that the situation really does involve a pattern of unhealthy behavior in which both people have significant patterns of using intimidation, control, manipulation, and/or use violence against each other.
- Sometimes the situation will be too hard to figure out. Sometimes you’ll make a mistake that you’ll learn about later, as you encounter more information about the situation or the people involved.

If you’re trying to help everybody learn not to use violence and control tactics in their interpersonal relationships, what will you do if both people are using violence against each other? You may end up working with two or more people. Maybe you’ll be supporting one person to address and repair from violence in ways that do not involve the use of retaliation. Maybe you’ll be supporting another person to realize that they cannot use controlling or abusive attitudes and behavior against others in order to deal with their feelings of insecurity or need to feel powerful and in control.

Just be prepared to discover that figuring out or agreeing on who is the survivor or victim and who is the person doing harm is not always simple. This can add to complications when you need to find allies who can engage the person or people using violence.

**#11 REMEMBER, IMPERFECT BEHAVIOR BY THE SURVIVOR OR VICTIM DOES NOT EXCUSE VIOLENCE.**

Even though it’s possible that both (if this directly involves two) people could be using violence as a control tactic against each other, this is not the norm. In relationships that involve violence and abuse, there is usually a pattern in which one person does this more than the other; one person starts abusive behavior more than the other; one person has to win or be right; the other person feels more afraid.
It is common that the survivor or victim also acts aggressively, seems manipulative or does not appear like a completely “innocent victim.” We cannot expect survivors or victims to look like pure, innocent victims like puppy dogs or helpless children on TV. Even so, they may still be survivors or victims of interpersonal violence, deserving support and interventions to violence that primarily ask the person harming them to be the one to take accountability. (See Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know).

#12 BEWARE OF CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AS A WAY TO AVOID DIRECT COMMUNICATION.

What we have also found is that in communities in which the ideas about community accountability have become common or popular, community accountability and processes for accountability sometimes become a substitute for direct communication. We live in a world where we are regularly insensitive, where we make mistakes, where we are unaware of our impact over others. While some of these attitudes and behaviors calls for the types of interventions we are talking about in this Toolkit, there are times when people can begin with direct communication. They can think about the attitudes or behaviors that were hurtful and speak directly to the person who caused harm. They can get help and support to think more clearly about what they want to say in order to prepare for this communication. They can bring somebody with them to stand by in order to support them and to make sure that someone else is there to hear and see the other person’s response – or to provide for emotional or physical safety. They can state the harm, talk about how they felt, and ask that the other person listen without excuses, interruptions, or arguments. They can ask the other person to think about what was said and come back at another time for continued discussion.

This may be an intervention on a small scale. And in some cases, this is a good starting place. Even with these small-scale interventions, getting allies to help support you to carry it out, make sure you think about safety, and make sure that this is an appropriate way to move forward are important steps to take. Looking through and using tools in this Taking Accountability section, may be helpful and appropriate.

You may want to see Section 2.B. Seeking Safety to find tools to figure out whether direct communication is a reasonable and safe enough approach to take and to take precautions just in case. Staying safe is reasonable and wise. However, in some situations, nervousness about doing something difficult and discomfort with conflict may not be so much about safety. It may call for us to move beyond our comfort zone and take healthy risks that can lead to positive change – and live with the real possibility that the changes we want from other people may not result.
Strategies to create accountability are more successful when they meet the people doing harm “where they are at.” Though it is common that people can use surprisingly similar tactics to hurt, control or manipulate the people they choose to harm, people who use violence are not all the same. Some differences matter more than others, and examining them can help us make our efforts at engaging people doing harm to unlearn violence more likely to succeed.

The statements below are examples of general mindsets or starting points for a person doing harm. They reflect possible points of “where they are at” with regard to relating to others and to their own violent attitudes, values, and behaviors.

- “My closest friends, my community and I find my violence acceptable and normal. I see no problem with my violence but see a problem with someone who challenges it.”
- “I find my violence acceptable and normal. Maybe others don’t, but I don’t care about them or what they think.”
- “I do not have enough emotional capacity or level of maturity to acknowledge or handle feelings of discomfort or healthy shame without self-destruction and/or violent destruction of others. Because of this, I will destroy you before you have a chance to hurt me.”
- “I blame my violence on other people. Although somewhere deep inside, I may feel embarrassed and know that my violence is not okay, I will never admit this or show this to anyone. I have never done so and will not do it now – even if sometimes I wish I could.”
- “I always or almost always blame my violence on other people, although I have at rare times expressed embarrassment or shame about my use of it. Even though I blame others, I sometimes wonder if it is my fault, but I would never admit this to others.”
- “I usually blame my violence on other people. But sometimes I can see that it is my fault and can even admit it. But I hate that feeling of it being my fault and really hate it when somebody else starts blaming me – so sooner or later, I blame other people again. I only change for a short while and, over time, never really change.”
- “I have a fundamental belief that violence is not a good thing. I take some responsibility for my violent actions but am quick to get defensive. I want to change but the thought of what it might take to change makes me uncomfortable.”
- “I don’t want to have a harmful impact on others, and I have some healthy shame around what is happening (or I would if I understood it just a bit better). I need some help, but I don’t know how to get it or don’t believe that anyone knows the right way to help me.”
- “I realize that my behavior has a cost that is higher than I’d like to pay. I’d like to change.”
- “I have done things that I never thought were possible – and are against my values. I may be afraid of change, but I am willing to take the challenge and do whatever I need to do to make that change.”
Looking at patterns of mindsets such as these can help us decide whether or how to engage someone using violence. They can impact how we think about what short term change can look like, what steps we can plan, and how we can ground our discussions and expectations about accountability in reality. It can also help us understand what might be important to the person doing harm and what might be most effective in reaching out to them.

**Figure out the level of “engage-ability” — how likely is it that you can make a positive and effective connection with the person doing harm.**

Remember that community interventions should engage (communicate with, work with, and support) the person doing harm to the degree that makes sense based on the situation you have to work with. While this model values engagement of the person doing harm, it is NOT a requirement. In some cases, it will simply be too dangerous; the person may be too unwilling or too difficult to reach; or we may not have the right people or right conditions to be able to connect with and engage with the person doing harm.

The level of violence that the person doing harm has committed in the past may or may not affect their ability to change. Their level of danger is obviously influenced by this but is not always equivalent to their level of danger. For example, someone who has used weapons or used a high level of violence against someone in the past can reasonably be considered capable of a high level of danger. However, this does not necessarily mean that that person is less capable of change. Situations vary greatly, and one’s values and the quality of one’s social connections can say a lot about one’s “engage-ability.”

As you assess “engage-ability” in your own situation, consider the presence or absence of the following factors.

**Factors Related to the Engage-ability of the Person Doing Harm**

- The person doing harm has no friends or social connections – engage-ability may be low.
- Issues related to substance abuse and/or mental illness impair the person doing harm’s ability to have meaningful social connections – and/or make them unable to figure out and follow through with positive change – engage-ability may be low or may change depending upon their state of mental illness or substance use.
- The person doing harm has some friends but they all collude with the violence by directly supporting it or encouraging it, or by excusing it or doing nothing about it – engage-ability may be low.
- The person doing harm has some friends but disengages with anyone who challenges them – they turn against or cut off from any person who challenges them – engage-ability may be low.
• The person doing harm’s only connection is with the survivor or victim of harm and not with anybody else. This may be positive if their care and connection for the survivor or victim becomes a motivation for change. But it also can simply mean that their connection is also based upon the dynamic of violence. This may put survivors or victims in an impossible situation of being responsible for changing the violence that they never caused in the first place – engage-ability may be low.

• There are people who support accountability who are not necessarily the close friends of the person doing harm, but whom the person respects and whose opinions matter – engage-ability may be moderate or high.

• The person doing harm has close relationships with community members who are willing and able to engage the person doing harm to stop using violence and use new behaviors; the person doing harm has the ability to talk about difficult things and to be vulnerable with people – engage-ability may be moderate or high.

The more interpersonal connections the person doing harm has and cares about, the more likely you are to find a point of access or leverage for using community to support a person to change. Usually when people have nothing to lose, they have no motivation to change.

#15 BE THOUGHTFUL ABOUT FINDING THE BEST PEOPLE TO ENGAGE WITH THE PERSON DOING HARM TO TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY.

In this model of violence intervention, it is easier to take accountability with the support of others. Who can support the person doing harm to make choices toward accountability for violence and change? This may be a very different set of people than those more directly supporting survivors or victims.

Taking accountability is challenging. It may take changes of the most fundamental ways that people think about things, make decisions, and take actions. People may be asked to take accountability in a situation where emotions are heated. People may be angry or fearful. They may feel disgust or even contempt for people who have caused harm.

And the person doing harm may feel cornered, ashamed and exposed. It may remind this person of other situations that may have felt threatening. Or this may be the first time that someone has ever faced a situation in which they have been named as someone causing harm which can also feel threatening.

It may be important to make sure that we look deeper for opportunities (and people) to engage the person doing harm to learn and change, and not back away when accountability gets hard.

See Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers, Tool C.5. Allies to Work with the Person Doing Harm Chart for tips on finding allies to work with the person doing harm.
Most of us struggle with accountability and experience it as a rejection, a threat, and an unjust imposition. We need to create responses that take this struggle into account.

All of us have experienced occasions when we have needed to be accountable. Even if we apologize and are accountable at first, we often want to slip out of full accountability using a series of tactics such as the following:

- Leaving the community, relationship, organization to avoid accountability
- Showing change early on in hopes to get people to stop holding us accountable – then going back to old behavior when there’s less pressure
- Hoping people forget
- Hoping people feel sorry for us so they leave us alone or blame others
- Making people scared of us or scared of our anger
- Making people depend on us so that they feel too guilty or scared to challenge us
- Creating delaying tactics
- Creating distractions
- Blaming others
- Blaming our past
- Blaming the survivor or victim
- Blaming those who are trying to hold us accountable
- Making the accountability process be the problem, not our own harmful attitudes, behaviors and frameworks for thinking and acting
- Wanting our own version of accountability to be the right one – controlling the accountability process
It is unrealistic and a recipe for frustration and failure if we expect change to happen with one conversation or one meeting; if we expect a pattern of attitudes and behavior to change quickly; or if we believe that positive changes early on mean that changes will be long-lasting. While this is not impossible, this is rarely the case.

Instead, we need to create systems flexible enough to allow for the expected process of dodging and delaying accountability and strong enough to withstand and diminish these tactics over time.

We need to rely upon ourselves and the support of others who understand interpersonal violence and who understand the nature of accountability (which can be helped through this Toolkit) to keep up a system that can support change over time.

#17 IT’S OKAY TO REMIND SOMEONE OF COMMUNITY CONSEQUENCES TO USING VIOLENCE.

To guide someone toward taking responsibility for violence, it is sometimes necessary to point to or allow for the consequences of violence. While this Toolkit does not support the use of punishment, revenge and humiliation as a way to support accountability, it does recognize that violence can lead to negative consequences.

This can involve the loss of respect, the loss of status, the loss of trust, the loss of a position of responsibility, and the loss of relationships and friends. In some cases, this can lead to the loss of a home and community. Even if we do not support punishment and revenge, we also cannot force others to continue to like us and respect us. We may never gain someone’s trust even if we change. These are some of the possible consequences that we may have to realize are the costs of our harmful attitudes and behaviors.

Pointing out social or community consequences of using violence is not the same as holding a threat over someone’s head. Sometimes people doing harm are in denial or just plain unaware of the consequences of their violence. Sometimes they might blame the consequences on everyone else (the survivor, the survivor’s family members, the other people in the community, people involved in the intervention, etc.). Sometimes they believe people will just forget or care less about the violence over time. Sometimes they have convinced themselves (seriously) that they are invincible – and unlike ordinary human beings, are not subject to repercussions or consequences.

And oftentimes communities will protect people using violence from ever experiencing community consequences of their actions. People cannot take responsibility for their violence and make new choices if they are protected from the consequences of their own behavior. It is important to help them make the connection that they risk losing others’ respect, compassion, trust, favors, relationships, friendships, their job, etc. when they hurt people with violence. When their violence causes them to lose something, it is important not to protect them from ever having to feel regret, sadness, fear, or loss. Again, these are not necessarily punishments. These are the possible human costs for causing harm and suffering.
For some people, facing these possible consequences of violence may make them feel like change is not worth it. If they lose everything, then why bother? They may only try to change because they think that there will be certain rewards that they will be able to keep relationships, trust, a job, or respect. While these things may be possible for some people, there is simply no guarantee that this will be the case.

When taking accountability, one must eventually accept those losses that one cannot control and try to create new attitudes and behaviors that will lead to self-respect, trust in oneself and the potential for new, meaningful relationships.

**#18 LOOK OUT FOR SHIFTING TARGETS...WHEN AN ALLY BECOMES THE NEW ENEMY.**

Be prepared that after being engaged by an ally to take responsibility for violence, the person doing harm might shift their anger toward that ally and away from the survivor or victim. Look out for attempts to make the ally the new “enemy” and to re-make the relationship or history with the survivor or victim as if it is problem-free, or not the real problem. Plan for how to support allies and create safety for them after they engage the person doing harm.

For the survivor or victim, be aware of your vulnerability to also make someone else the problem if this dynamic comes about. A shift from yourself to another person as the target can be a huge relief and bring about positive feelings that you may have experienced in the past with the person doing harm. Think about how long this experience of closeness or relief will last – and how your alliance with the person doing harm may eventually cost you your own allies. Even if you take a moment to benefit from a period of relief, beware of accepting this as a new reality and take care to get real about the pattern of violence or harms that you experienced in the past.

**#19 REMEMBER THAT WE CAN ONLY CONTROL OURSELVES.**

We cannot control or guarantee anyone else’s response. Our intervention may have specific goals concerning the types of attitudes and behaviors we expect from the person doing harm. However, attempts to tightly control someone else or demand very exact verbal or behavioral responses may be unrealistic. In community-based interventions and especially in conversations inviting someone to self-reflect and take responsibility, we have to be persistent and patient to help someone take small steps in the right direction.

If you are the survivor or victim and are trying to maintain a relationship with the person doing harm, then it is important to be aware of the basic types of attitudes and behaviors you expect and deserve. Expressing this and being specific about this with the person doing harm as a part of accountability is important. It can be difficult to tell the difference between being patient and letting someone cross the line. Get help from your allies to keep you on the right track regarding your goals and whether or not they are being met.
#20 STAY SPECIFIC. THEN GIVE IT TIME.

Community interventions that include efforts to invite someone to take responsibility and make positive changes can be exhausting, and it is important to make every effort to stay specific, focus on behaviors that we want to address and behaviors that we want to see in the future, and then give things time. Take care of yourself and your loved ones! A 100% focus on the intensity of pain that violence causes, the stress of confrontation, the distress of rejection, the hardship that comes when we see things differently within our communities is unsustainable for any person or group. When you encounter moments, hours, and days that feel unbearable, know that they will change with time. Persistently seek out opportunities to remind yourself of the good things—the strengths, the opportunities, the fun, the resilience, and every other bit of joy in life. They are as important a part of community interventions as any other effort.
F.4. TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The process of taking accountability is a difficult one. It can be a long and complicated process. It can move forward and backward and can easily confuse and wear people down. It can also look very different depending upon the position you have to the situation of violence.

No matter who you are in relationship to accountability, it is useful to read this entire section on taking accountability in order to get information that might be particularly useful to you.

Again, the process of taking accountability is not a one-time event. It often requires creating systems flexible enough to allow for the expected process of dodging and delaying accountability and strong enough to withstand and diminish these tactics over time.

This system involves supporting a person doing harm through a process of accountability that may begin with elements of force and coercion that move towards self-reflection and deep levels of change.

This system supports the survivor or victim to address and begin to repair the harms committed against them – to take collective action and break from the isolation of victimization – and to participate in and benefit from a process that may support a process of accountability from the person doing harm.

This system supports the community to take a more active role in recognizing individual and interpersonal levels of violence as a community problem. It organizes community power to support survivors or victims and actively support people doing harm to become agents of positive change rather than perpetrators of harm.

Again, an intervention may not have taking accountability as a goal. But if it does, then these are some special considerations.

The survivor or victim may be in very different positions regarding taking accountability. One factor to look at is the relationship of the survivor or victim to the person doing harm. If this is an intimate or close relationship, the survivor or victim may wish to stay in relationship with the person doing harm. The survivor or victim and the person doing harm may never have been in a relationship and may even be strangers. They may have once been in relationship but are no longer connected in any way. They may be sharing community even if not in relationship, thereby making some form of co-existence without conflict a goal (See F.3. Taking Accountability Tips).
The survivor or victim may have very different positions regarding his or her level of participation in the intervention. He or she may be taking a lead role in every aspect of the intervention; the victim or survivor’s goals and directions may be prioritized over all others but with the input of others. The victim or survivor may have a high level of participation but with goals and directions shared with others. Other times, the survivor or victim may take a back seat and only give feedback, may not be involved at all, or may even disagree with the intervention (See Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims).

In all of these cases, the Toolkit encourages the intervention to give special consideration to the goals and safety of the survivor or victim. Even if they are strangers or are no longer in relationship, the intervention and steps towards a process of accountability could provoke resistance, retaliation or other forms of harm from the person doing harm and others who may not agree with the intervention. It can also involve strong emotions that can impact the survivor or victim and affect their well-being and ability to concentrate or deal with their daily lives. Because each situation is different and each survivor or victim will experience their intervention in different ways, the impact on and necessary support for the survivor or victim needs to be considered throughout the intervention.

For example, if the survivor or victim is in a current relationship with the person doing harm, then taking accountability can be complicated by strong emotions tied to the experience of violence and harm and emotions regarding the promise of change. It can be common to feel anger and fear about the violence or the memory of violence. It can also be common to feel guilt about putting someone through a process of accountability. Failures to follow through with accountability or perhaps return to abusive attitudes and behaviors – all common events – can bring about feelings of anger, frustration and fear. Often the person doing harm is keenly aware of the survivor or victim’s emotions and vulnerabilities. It is easy for them to take advantage of these emotions and use them to get their way or to dodge accountability, even if they are not completely aware that they are doing so.

This is to say that there can be powerful and confusing emotions for a survivor or victim who is also interested in the changes that accountability promises to bring. Having no hope for change or not caring about change can, in fact, at least protect one’s emotions from the ups and downs that can go along with emotional ties to change. If one’s safety and survival depend on positive change, then what one has to gain or lose can be even more serious.

It can be difficult to tell whether one is expecting too much, expecting changes that are unreasonable in a short amount of time or for any human being to possibly achieve – or if one is expecting too little, seeing every small positive change as proof of transformation or excusing every set-back or returning act of violence as something that will eventually change.

If you are the survivor or victim, you may consider some steps to help you stay steady and not tie your present and your future to every up and down that the person doing harm may take in the accountability process.

If you are still closely connected (physically and/or emotionally) to the person doing harm, the process of taking accountability can be particularly confusing. Some steps you can take are:
1. Setting your goals and your bottom-lines in a process with allies and separate from the person doing harm (See Section 4.D. Goal Setting).

2. Writing these goals and bottom-lines down and returning to them on a regular basis with the support of an ally or group of allies.

3. Working on including other important people or activities separate from the person doing harm in your life.

4. Making sure not take on the responsibility or burden of accountability for the person doing harm. Make sure that their process of taking accountability is supported by people other than you and a process outside your direct involvement even if you are somewhat involved.

5. Getting support so that you can work through confusing feelings that can include cycles of hope, fear, anger, guilt, and disappointment.

6. Watching out for a situation in which the intervention process and/or allies in the intervention process become the new enemy shared by you and the person doing harm. This is a common dynamic that can bring about relief, shared perspectives and even pleasure as you and the person doing harm find a common enemy. But this can also jeopardize their process of accountability and your safety. If you cannot resist, then see if you can take this relief in a small dose, enjoy the brief sense of rest or pleasure it may bring, and then get real quickly – most importantly, with yourself. If you know you are doing this, then ultimately, this is your dynamic to control. Do not rely upon the person taking accountability to do this for you. Resistance and testing on their part is in some ways to be expected. Part of the accountability process for the person doing harm is to recognize resistance tactics and to stop using them. But it is also your responsibility not to give in to these dynamics – once you understand them for what they are.

Of course, it is also possible that you really disagree with the intervention process, and you are starting to see them as the enemy. If so, think about the following: 1) Are you frustrated that change is not happening quickly and so you are taking it out on the intervention? 2) Are you frustrated that the person doing harm is not being accountable and so you are taking it out on the intervention? 3) If you are really having problems with the accountability process, can you meet with the group or a particular trusted person or support people to make these issues known? Can you give this as feedback to the process – to let the intervention team know what’s working and what’s not?

In this intervention approach, community allies may be very actively communicating with and working together with the person doing harm to support their process of accountability. In particular, the survivor or victim may take a less active role in face-to-face communication because it may be unsafe. They may not be able to feel or express any level of positive connection to the person doing harm, or it may well be the community’s responsibility to take on this aspect of an intervention.
Supporting a process of accountability works best if it includes a person or people who have the respect of the person doing harm – who can both apply the “push” of community pressure and also the “pull” of positive role-modeling and community connection. They may know the person doing harm and understand the personal experiences and values that might make it easier to connect accountability to what this person thinks is important – what the person doing harm could gain and strengthen by taking accountability and also what they could lose if they do not.

It is important for the people working together to support accountability to share goals and values, or at least agree enough to not work at cross purposes. It is important for them to share some level of care and even respect for the person doing harm – even if what this person has done offends them greatly.

And it is important for those working most closely in direct communication with the person doing harm to actually be connected to them and to have a long-term commitment to supporting their change, whether or not they are able to achieve this change.

If you are a community ally, you may be taking a very important role in supporting the process of taking accountability. This can be a very difficult role. The process of taking accountability can be long. It can move forward and then backwards. It can get you very emotionally involved in hoping for change, being frustrated, trusting and not trusting the person doing harm, or perhaps feeling frustrated with the survivor or victim or other allies.

As community allies supporting the process of accountability, you may need to form systems of support for each other, including ways to prepare and then debrief after meeting with the person doing harm, and ways to check in during difficult times, so that you can keep steady and stay healthy.

If you are actively participating in the process of taking accountability, you may think about the following:

1. **Return to the goals and values of the intervention and use them to guide the process of taking accountability.** If these goals or values do not seem to fit or seem to steer you in ways that do not feel right, then go back to the group and request that you as a group look at these goals and/or values again.

2. **Do not do this alone.** At times, we seek a lone hero to confront the person doing harm and make things right. Even if there may be times that you meet with the person doing harm or take on some aspect of the intervention yourself, make sure that you have the support of the group, some people within the group or other useful resources for preparation and check-in as you move forward.
3. Think about safety for the survivor or victim, yourself, other allies, and for the person doing harm. This may include immediate physical safety, things that could jeopardize the safety of the survivor or victim and feed into acts of retaliation, or things that could throw off the intervention. Think about what information you will share, what should remain confidential, and back-up support for safety. Make sure that your ideas regarding these points are consistent with other people who are involved in this intervention. See Section 4.B. Staying Safe and use the safety tools for help.

4. Remember that support does not always look like you are “taking the side” of the person doing harm. It may mean that you are challenging their sense of reality, calling them out if they lie, or checking to see if they followed up with demands or what they said that they would do. Supporting someone to take accountability rests on the belief that stopping violence and harm is, in the long run, beneficial not only to the survivors or victims or the community, but also to the person doing harm.

5. Watch out if you find the process of Taking Accountability splitting off from the process of Supporting Survivors or Victims. It is easy for the process of taking accountability to begin to take a life of its own. It can become the full focus of an intervention, sometimes leaving the survivor or victim isolated and alone – without any active support or with support that is completely unconnected with the rest of the intervention. It can begin to take on different goals than a holistic intervention that would also prioritize or take into account the needs and goals of the survivor or victim.

People working directly with the person doing harm may begin to hear their “side of the story.” They may start feeling more sympathy for the person doing harm than for the survivor or victim. They may hear new stories that seem to present a different picture than the one they had. They may begin to feel like they’re on the “team” of the person doing harm and start working for them rather than working on behalf of the entire intervention.

The terms for engagement may start to be set by the person doing harm who may use pressure, coercion or emotional pulls such as crying, pleas for sympathy, telling the worst stories about the survivor or victim to get allies to go easy on them, throw them off, or even begin to view the person doing harm as the survivor or victim rather than the other way around. They may completely believe this story. It may reflect their sense of truth. They may be completely manipulative – using anything possible to get out of accountability and “get back” at the survivor or victim.

These dynamics are very common aspects of interventions to interpersonal violence. They should be anticipated and become part of the process of intervention and taking accountability – as much as is possible. And if these come up along the way, these are the very points that community allies should look at, reflect upon, and share with others in order to keep on the path to accountability and keep systems flexible enough to allow for the expected process of dodging and delaying accountability and strong enough to withstand and diminish these tactics over time.
6. **Prepare and make space for reflection and follow-up with each step of taking accountability.** The process of accountability is usually a winding road. Figuring out what has moved forward, what are barriers and possible ways to move forward can be an important part of reaching your long-term goals. Use tools in this Section 4.F. Taking Accountability and Section 4.H. Keeping on Track for help.

Concerns that the person doing harm raises or concerns that you yourself have may simply be part of the normal “dodging and delaying” tactics around accountability. But they may also reflect real concerns.

Listen to these concerns if they are raised by the person doing harm, and watch out not to show reactions that may look like you agree with them. Note these concerns and share them with the group. Use tools in the Toolkit and other resources to see if any of them can help you respond to these.

You can bring these concerns back to your team which may include the survivor or victim for reflection and responses. They can be used to figure out how far someone is in the accountability process; they can help you better respond to the person doing harm. They can be used to reshape an intervention.

7. **Be prepared for how personal relationships with the person doing harm affect the intervention and vice versa.** Sometimes close friends are the best people to engage with a person doing harm. They may care the most about change, may know the person and their values best, and may be respected by the person doing harm.

At the same time, an intervention process, particularly one that goes on for a long time can seriously affect a friendship. Does your friendship turn into a series of disappointment, and sadness that may accompany this process.

Sometimes, finding out about violence committed by someone you care about makes you question the friendship. If you question your friendship but can find a way to continue your care through participating in this intervention, it can be a true act of friendship. Find support to help you figure out feelings of confusion, anger, disappointment, and sadness that may accompany this process.

If you simply cannot continue your relationship with this person (including being part of the intervention), figure out if you can express your feelings about why. This may end up being helpful information for the person doing harm – even if it may be difficult to say and to hear.

If you cannot continue your friendship but can still be involved in the intervention, think about an appropriate role for you to participate in so that the strong feelings that accompany the end of a friendship (on your side and theirs) do not become a barrier to the intervention.
In this Toolkit, we allow for the perspective of the person doing harm to enter the situation. This is different from many anti-violence organizations that often automatically dismiss this perspective as an attempt to manipulate the situation or blame the victim. Creative Interventions has found that people doing harm have very different approaches to supporting survivors or victims.

In this approach to intervention, we aim to include the person doing harm as a positive participant in an intervention to violence. We also recognize that this may take a series of steps – and that in some cases, this may be a goal that we never reach.

Because we are talking about interpersonal violence, the survivor or victim and the person doing harm may also love and care about each other or move back and forth between powerful feelings of love and hate.

The person doing harm is not simply and exclusively someone who is violent. This is why this Toolkit does not use labels such as batterer, rapist, perpetrator, perp, abuser, predator, offender or other words usually used by the criminal justice system. They are people who are part of our families, friendship networks and communities.

At the same time, we take interpersonal violence seriously and believe that this is not simply a problem among individuals, or an unimportant problem that we can ignore. Interpersonal violence is a serious problem. Violence committed among those we care about can be extremely damaging, causing injuries at the deepest levels of our being.

This Toolkit invites the person doing harm to participate in change. It also recognizes that change is difficult – it is a long-term process. Change requires the person doing harm to accept change as a goal. Because we are not isolated individuals (although we may feel like it at times), but are people in relationship with family, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and neighbors, we need the support of others to help us reach long-term change.

If you are the person doing harm or are accused of it, this Section 4.F. Taking Accountability offers a lot of information and tools for you and others to use in this process.

If you are reading this or someone is giving you this information, then we hope that you have others to support you to change.

We also know that support can be difficult to find. We ask that you at least use the tools in this Toolkit (also found at www.creative-interventions.org) to help you reflect on and figure out a process towards change. If someone is already asking you to change or is offering support, then you can use this Toolkit along with that support to take accountability and transform yourself.
If no local help is available, then refer to this Toolkit and use the tools to help guide you. Go to a local library and look up books on violence and changing violence to get whatever help you can find.

If you are able to find other people who may be having the same problem, or local spiritual leaders or community leaders, you can let them know about this Toolkit in order to give them some basic information to guide them to help you better. They can become a “facilitator” – another person that serves as an anchor – to help move this process along.

Changing your violence may not bring back relationships you have lost. You may never be forgiven for your actions – at least, not by the people you may have harmed. You may never regain their trust.

However, you may be able to make deep changes as someone who has the ability to honor and respect yourself and others – and to contribute to your community.

For the facilitator, the process of Taking Accountability can be particularly challenging. The process can be long and consuming. It can become the focus of everyone’s attention and energy, perhaps leaving the survivor or victim isolated and without adequate support. And resistance by the person doing harm is commonplace, making the process of taking accountability confusing and frustrating.

As the facilitator, you may be taking the role of keeping things on track and making sure that people do not start working at cross purposes.

If your intervention includes the process of taking accountability, some of these tips may be helpful:

#1 READ THIS SECTION 4.F. TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY CAREFULLY AND OFFER INFORMATION OR TOOLS THAT MIGHT HELP THE PROCESS.

Taking accountability is a very difficult process. People most involved in supporting this process (including the allies, survivor or victim, and the person doing harm) can easily become confused along the way. You may be in a good position to notice when questions or problems come up that could be helped with the information or tools in this process.

#2 KEEP AN EYE ON SAFETY.

The process of taking accountability can appear threatening to the person doing harm. Depending on their “mind set,” they may see admitting a wrong and making a change as something to be challenged. Shows of cooperation can go along with plans to threaten survivors or victims, intimidate allies, or undermine the entire accountability process.

See Section 4.B. Staying Safe for more tools that people can use to increase safety as they move forward in the process.
#3 REMIND PEOPLE OF THE GOALS AND VALUES AND MAKE SURE THEY GUIDE THE PROCESS.

The process of taking accountability can take many twists and turns along the way. The progress of the person doing harm to take accountability is ultimately not in the control of any single person or group of people. Things can change dramatically along the way, making a return to simple guidelines helpful. See Section 4.D. Goal Setting for more information.

As facilitator, you may be able to remind people of the goals and values that guide the intervention. If the goals or values are no longer helpful or no longer fit, then you might help the group come back to reconsider what goals and values may make better sense.

#4 MAKE SURE THAT SUPPORT IS AT THE CENTER.

The process of taking accountability can be difficult and energy-draining. A supportive environment for everyone is necessary if the process is going to continue for the long time that may be necessary for it to stick.

Help people find support through their own loved ones and through each other. Help create a positive environment so that people can counter frustration with appreciation. And make sure that the survivor or victim does not get forgotten as the group begins to put energy into the process of accountability.

#5 KEEP A HOLISTIC PROCESS.

The process of taking accountability can become the focus of the whole intervention. It can be easier for this process to split off from the process of providing support for the survivor or victim and to find the people working on one aspect of the intervention separated from those working on another. It is easy to forget about the needs of the survivor or victim or to leave them out of the process of accountability. It is easy to put all attention on the person doing harm and forget to pay attention to the community context.

As the facilitator, you may be able to see the bigger picture and make sure that people are communicating with and connected to each other. You may need to think about what aspects of the intervention are being forgotten and make sure that these pieces are picked up.
F.6. TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY
REAL LIFE STORIES & EXAMPLES

Story F.1. A Cultural Organization Deals with Sexual Assault

In the summer of 2006, a drumming teacher from South Korea was invited to teach a week-long drumming workshop at a Korean cultural community center in Oakland, California. After an evening of singing, storytelling and drinking, several students stayed the night to rest and recover for the next day. For over two decades, the cultural center had developed a safe space for the teaching of Korean drumming and dance, community performance and cultural and political exchange. That night, safety was shattered when the drumming teacher sexually assaulted one of the students.

People staying at the center immediately heard what had happened, and center leaders quickly pulled together a direct confrontation involving the members and their community-led board. The next day, members and board members gathered at the center to denounce the sexual assault and support the victim. In this situation, the victim refused to name herself as a “survivor” – finding “victim” a better description of her experience of violence.

Liz, the president of the Oakland cultural center at that time, recollects the next day’s meeting. “When we got there, the teacher got on his knees and knelt in front of us which is the deepest sign of respect. And then he asked us, begged us, not to tell his organization back home. We said we couldn’t do that. ‘We’re not here for your apology. We’re here to tell you what happened, what we’re going to do, and that’s it.’ He made a big sign of remorse, taking his drumming stick and breaking it. He put it on the ground like ‘I’ll give up drumming for this.’ Most of us were disgusted.”

What followed was a series of actions, including a set of sexual assault awareness workshops for the center members and members of other local drumming groups. The board made an immediate telephone call to the head of the drumming center in Korea. Their leader expressed his profound shock and unconditional apology. This call was followed by a letter with a list of demands. The Oakland organization demanded that the Korean institution establish sexual assault awareness trainings for their entire membership ranging from college students to elder farmers in the village, a commitment to send at least one woman teacher in their future exchanges to the U.S., and a request that the teacher step down from his leadership position for an initial period of 6 months and attend feminist therapy sessions directly addressing the
assault. Even though it was culturally difficult for the Korean American group to make demands of their elders in Korea, everyone decided this was what needed to be done. The group in Korea also did not question these demands. They respected them and did not make any complaints.

The Korean American organization also made contact with a sister drumming group in Korea, one that had dealt with their own experience of sexual assault in the past. That organization had organized their one hundred members to address a sexual assault that had occurred among their membership. In that situation, the person who had committed the assault went through an extensive process with the leaders and members of the group, leaving the organization but following through with a public apology posted on their website and retained relationships with drumming group members.

Inspired by this story of community accountability, the fact that it had been made public and a process in which the person doing harm took responsibility and offered a public apology, the Oakland organization followed with a series of events that reversed the usual silence and victim-blaming accompanying sexual assault. The annual October festival was dedicated to the theme of healing from sexual violence. Facts regarding the incident were printed in the program and shared as a part of the evening’s festival, not as a shaming act although it may have indeed shamed the teacher, but as a challenge to the community to take collective responsibility for ending the conditions perpetuating violence including collusion through silence.

This story reveals other painful lessons about community violence and the limitations of our community-led processes. The Korean cultural center came together with a unified response to violence but grew divided as the process continued. What became a long drawn-out period of institutional reflection and engagement sapped the energy and spirit of the organization and the friendships that had held it together. The victim never returned. The continued presence of the teacher at community festivities in South Korea were viewed with resentment and suspicion by Korean American visitors who participated in drumming events in Korea. His eventual removal from the institution did not necessarily lead to the sense of justice that people desired.

Liz, the center’s president, reflected on this set of events and the uncertainties accompanying the process of community accountability.

“Some people asked us later why we didn’t call the police. It was not even a thought in anybody’s mind. I know that a couple folks, her close friends, tried to break in, to kick his ass, but they couldn’t find him. Luckily they didn’t. Luckily for him and the organization, too, because I think if they did that we would have just been in a whole
world of fucking mess. Well, I don’t want to say luckily because the victim even felt at some point, ‘maybe we should’ve just kicked his ass. Now, I feel like I’ve got nothing. I don’t have the police report. We didn’t throw him into jail. We didn’t kick his ass. We didn’t do nothing.’

We talked to her and said, ‘We didn’t move forward on anything without your consent.’ We asked, ‘What else can we offer you?’ We offered her to go to counseling and therapy. We offered her whatever we could do at the time. In retrospect, I wish we could have spent more time to just embrace her and bring her in closer.”

The story further explores the role of force and violence in our response to violence. Frustration over a long and complex process of accountability spurred discussions among the members of the Oakland organization over the potential benefits of violence. Liz reflected on a member’s remark as they considered retaliation. “That’s what the teacher wanted. He wanted that. When he was making that apology, he wasn’t necessarily saying ‘beat me up,’ But he was saying, ‘do anything you want to me, I deserve it.’ That way, once you do, he can walk away and say, ‘Okay, now I’m done, wipe my hands and walk away. They’ve done everything they can already.’” While some may most fear a violent response, some could also welcome a quick but symbolic pay back. “Kicking ass,” can also substitute for a process of repair and change.

I got a story for you, and it’s about community accountability. This Hmong woman in Wausau – she was killed by her husband and then he killed himself. He shot her boyfriend, too, and now he’s in the hospital in critical condition.

The reason a lot of Hmong women don’t leave violent relationships or go back and forth is because when you’re married, you belong to your husband’s clan in the spirit world. When you die, they bury you and you have a place to go. If you’re in-between places, then nobody’s gonna bury you, nobody’s gonna pay for a funeral, and you have no place to go in the spirit world. That’s why so many women stay or don’t do anything.

So this woman, her husband’s clan wouldn’t bury her because they said she’s a “slut.” Then her boyfriend’s clan said, “she doesn’t belong to us so we’re not going bury her.” And her parent’s family said, “if she listened to us, this wouldn’t have happened.” So they wouldn’t bury her either. So nobody’s claiming her and nobody’s going to bury her or pay for the burial. This is three weeks later.

So this woman’s been working with an advocate from Women’s Community in Wausau up there. She’s been working with this woman who was killed, and she calls me. We’d been talking with the advocates up there for awhile trying to figure out what to do. I’d already been planning to go there to talk about domestic violence and community accountability to a big group of Hmong people at a conference they were planning.

So I say, go back to that clan and say that if they don’t bury her and pay for the funeral, we’re going to publicly shame them. They have until Wednesday, and if they don’t do it, then we’re going to go out nationally and write an article and tell everyone that we don’t even bury our dead. We’ll go to all the women’s organizations and shame the community. We’ll let them know that there’s eighteen clans up there, and nobody buried her.

I said, we always gotta go back to the problem which is that this is why women don’t leave or go back and forth – because they’re afraid they’re going to be left with nobody to bury them when they die. You bury him first, and he’s the one who killed her. And you leave her and say that she died because she’s a slut. She didn’t die because she’s a slut, she died because this guy was abusing her and you all knew that. She died because the Hmong considered her somebody’s property, and now she gets killed and can’t even get buried. She’s not a slut. Hmong men go out with other women all the time, and nobody dies.

Everybody knew that she was getting treated like s*** by this guy. If they don’t do something about this, then we’re gonna go out and tell everybody and shame the whole community.

So one of the advocates working with the clan leader – she told them this, and you know what? They got the money together and buried her. Her husband’s clan took responsibility for her and buried her. That’s community accountability.
Story F.3. Stopping Violence as a First Step

I was in a relationship with Karen for 3 years. Even though I started seeing the warning signs, I agreed to live with her. Our fighting started getting worse and more regular. It got so every day I would wake up worried that my day would begin with a fight. I did everything to avoid her getting mad, but everything I did seemed to get her upset.

After every argument or fight, she and I would process about how she handled frustration. She had thrown a cup against the wall so hard that the plastic split and shattered. She had gotten out of the car that I was sitting in and slammed her hands on the roof of the car as hard as she could. She had hit her head against the bathroom wall and slammed the sink top with her hands. She had thrashed her legs around under the covers in bed and kneed the wall when she was mad that I hadn’t brushed my teeth. She would yell, curse, and literally sprint away during a disagreement or argument.

We had processed and processed about it and had moments of shared understanding about why she experienced things and behaved in the ways she did, how she had learned it, what she was reacting to, etc. She came to understand that although she never physically hurt me and wasn’t a “batterer” using threatening or controlling behaviors against me, her behavior made me anxious, uncomfortable, and eventually full of contempt.

She learned that it was hurting the relationship. But all of the talking did not result in actual change. Finally, a couple years later, after one incident, I told her that I would assuredly leave her if she did not change this aspect of her behavior. I asked her what she thought would work—what would make her change her behavior, since talking together about it wasn’t working. We had long passed the point where talking had any chance of stopping her from escalating her anger.

She didn’t want me to leave and knew that I was serious. She came up with something herself, and we agreed upon a rule. If she began to get upset, she would try to use calming, self-soothing practices for herself. And if she expressed her anger and frustration with physical violence even once – including throwing things against the wall or pounding on things without necessarily touching me – she would arrange for herself to stay in a motel that night, and cover the costs and transportation on her own. She would take a cab and not walk to a motel at night (even if she wanted to walk), because putting her as a queer woman on the street alone at night was not going to be part of the plan. She could get hurt. And even if she didn’t, I would worry so much that I would get no rest. She agreed that she would take the cab so that she would be safe and I wouldn’t have to worry. The whole decision around these consequences seemed like such a small thing, but it made a big difference in her behavior.
We eventually broke up. Her agreement to stop her abuse, and her plans to take steps to avoid further abuse made a difference. I think it also helped her understand that she really could take steps to control her abuse. It took years of me explaining to her how I felt and years of tolerating what I now find to be an intolerable situation. But she did finally admit that what she was doing was wrong or at least wrong to me. And she finally took steps to change her behavior. She stopped the most immediate violence and took responsibility to make plans to make sure that she would either stop or at least remove herself from our home if she couldn’t make herself stop in any other way. This was a first step and an important one. She could finally recognize with my insistence over and over again that her abusive behavior was wrong. We were for able to take a break from the continued cycle of violence for a while.

But she chose to go no further. She would not change her underlying attitudes and behaviors. She refused to admit how deep these problems were and how simply stopping the most immediate behaviors would not be enough for me to trust her and relax enough to enjoy our relationship together. We had a moment of relief, but without deeper changes, I knew it would be just a matter of time before her abuse would start again.

Stopping violence takes many steps. Changing violence and becoming someone who can truly enjoy human connection, love without control, communicate without having to make every conversation into an argument or a contest, and be open, curious and appreciative about one’s partner are things that I now seek.
Story F.4. Surviving and Doing Sexual Harm: A Story of Accountability and Healing

Introduction to Surviving and Doing Sexual Harm

The following is a story from the perspective of a person doing harm, a person who has also survived harm. In his story, these two dynamics are intimately interlinked. Because there are so few stories from the perspective of the person doing harm, we have included many details occurring over many years of struggle, believing that certain pieces may be important for people doing harm, survivors and allies to better understand the dynamics of accountability.

At this point in time, the public stories of people who have done harm and who are taking accountability seriously remain rare. This is only one story told in some detail. This person’s feelings and process may or may not be similar to those of other people doing harm. This person’s ability to find resources, political groups doing accountability with values that are non-punishing and non-criminalizing, may not be there for everyone although our goal is that these resources will become more and more commonly available.

Note that this story is shared by someone whose name remains anonymous. This is not only to protect confidentiality but also to make sure that this story does not become a means for this person to receive public recognition or a sense of heroism for his accountability. It is common for people doing harm who have made some movement towards change to be elevated above people who have survived harm – especially if they are men. The story teller has specifically asked to not receive recognition for any contributions they have made towards this project or Toolkit. Humbleness and humility are core parts of the accountability process. From the story, we can see that the process of accountability, itself, has been long and difficult. But, ultimately, it is accountability to oneself and to others that has made this person’s healing and transformation possible.

The story teller also asks that if people are able to recognize him or other identities through the details included in this story, that you please have compassion about who you share these identities with. If you recognize him, he asks that you please talk with him about this story, even if only to acknowledge that you know this part of his history; he does not want this story to be an unspoken secret among those that know him.

Surviving and Doing Sexual Harm
Why I Am Telling My Story

In all of my years trying to find resources, I’ve only come across three stories of people who’ve done harm and only one of them had enough information, enough of the person’s real story, to actually be helpful to me. I want to tell my story to help people who are trying to work on their sh** and also to help people who are supporting that process or who are mentors to have some idea of what might be going on for that person who still doesn’t understand themselves – to help folks be better support for accountability processes.
Naming the Harm
You know, for most of the harm that I’ve done, I’ve never really been called out for it, so I don’t really have other people’s names for it, just my own names. I consider myself to have sexually assaulted people, also crossed people’s boundaries in sexual ways that aren’t sexual assault, and just generally had patriarchal behavior. And then the last thing that’s always a little more difficult for me to talk about is that I also molested a relative of mine when I was young.

Accountability and Its Early Beginnings
My accountability process started in my early 20’s. The violence and harm I had been doing wasn’t just a one-time thing where I just messed up once, it was like an ongoing pattern that was chronic, and happening over and over again in my life. There were a couple of moments when I was able to stop myself in the moment when I was doing harm, like when I hurt someone I cared about very much, seeing her weep when I pushed her sexual boundaries, what I see as sexual assault, I said, “Sh**. I need to stop right now.” But even then, that kind of like horror wasn’t enough to let me intervene in the big, chronic patterns. It took a lot more before I could start changing, even when I was recognizing chronic patterns of harm I was doing in my life and hated that I was doing those things.

By that point in my life, I was a total wreck. For years and years of my life, my mind had been filled almost with nothing but images of doing gruesome violence to myself. I was having trouble just keeping my life together. I was just under huge amounts of stress, having total breakdowns on a fairly regular basis, and was just being ripped apart inside by everything. And also, being ripped apart by trying to keep myself from the knowledge of what I’d done. It was too much for me to even look at. At the same time, I really wanted to talk with people about it. I was just so scared to do it because of the particular sorts of thing that I had done. You know, like, people who sexually abuse are the most evil of all the monsters in our cultural mythology. And everybody is basically on board with doing nothing but straight up violence to them. And so much of my life had been organized around just trying to keep myself safe that it wasn’t a risk I could take. It wasn’t even a question of choice. It just wasn’t a possibility, even though wanted nothing more.

At some point, I started spending more time around people involved in radical politics and feminist politics. And so one person that I knew, I’ll call him Griffin (not his real name), one of their friends had been sexually assaulted. So I just happened to be at a table when Griffin was having a conversation about what people were going to do about it. And that was the first time that I had ever heard of Philly Stands Up. Where I was living at the time was really far away from Philly, so it was just basically a name and an idea. But, you know, that one tiny seed of an idea was enough to make me realize that it was possible. That there were people that I could talk to that weren’t going to destroy me.
It was a few months later. There was just a lot of stuff going on in my life where my history of doing violence to people and my history of surviving violence, they were coming up over and over and over in my life. But I still refused to acknowledge either of them. And it wasn’t like a conscious thing. I don’t know exactly what it was, but I hadn’t gained the moment of insight yet into understanding that that is my history. I ended up talking with that same friend, Griffin, who had mentioned Philly Stands Up, and just in this one conversation, my whole history came out. It was the first time I talked with anybody about either my history of being raped or my history of doing sexual violence to other people. That was a moment when I stopped running from my past. Those two things in my life, surviving violence and doing violence, are inseparable. I started coming to terms with both of them in the exact same moment. That was the first time I ever broke my own silence. And that’s when I started trying to find some way of doing accountability.

Part of what made this possible was the particular relationship with one of the people I had harmed, June (not her real name), a person that I loved tremendously, and somebody who, even though I haven’t seen her for years and probably won’t see her again in my life, I still love tremendously. And so the pain of hurting somebody that I love that much was part of it. And then I think part of it was that I had had someone to talk to. I’d never been able to communicate with people about anything in my life before. And part of it was that things got so bad at one point that I didn’t have the choice anymore of not seeking support. I had a breakdown where somebody came into my life and listened to me, and I couldn’t hold it in any more. And so I had started learning how to communicate from that. And then Griffin, the person I had the conversation with, really started off my own accountability process. I think for me, it was about that friend. I didn’t feel threatened by them. I had a trust with them that if I talked to them, they would still care about me and see me as a person. But it’s all part of this much larger context. It wasn’t just something about that one particular friendship that made the difference; it was like this whole arc of all these huge things that were happening in my life, all of these breakdowns and changes and new commitments and new understandings that were all developing together that brought me to that point.

Actually, now that I think about it, there was a moment a couple of years before that was really the first time I’d ever broken my silence, but in a very different way. For a few years before that moment, I’d started being exposed to feminist politics and things like that. And for the first time I knew that someone that I loved and cared about was a survivor of rape. I was in kind of a tailspin for awhile trying to figure out how to respond to that. I started seeking out more information about how to support survivors of sexual violence, but it hadn’t really been connected to my own life, really. I started to understand the importance of having the violence that was done to you being acknowledged and decided that I needed to step up in my own life. So the real first time that I ever broke my own silence about the harm that I had done was when I talked to the person who I had molested. I approached them and said, “Hey, I did this.”
But I didn’t have the capacity yet to actually engage with it. And so I talked about it with that person and totally broke down and put that person in a position where they were having to worry about caretaking for me, you know, the way that it happens so stereotypically. I gave them some resources, like a rape crisis number to call and things like that. That person asked me if they could tell a particular adult in their life, and I told them, “You can tell whoever you want.” But I didn’t have the capacity in my life yet to really work through everything that meant, and so I just brought the shutters down and the walls and everything else and cut that part off from my life again. After that, I shut down and I became totally numb, totally blank, for months.

By this point a couple of years later, I had two friends that I ended up talking with, disclosing this to, Griffin and my friend, Stephen (not his real name). And I didn’t tell anyone more than that because I was scared, I was scared of everything that would happen. The only thing before Griffin who had mentioned to me about Philly Stands Up, the only thing I’d ever heard in the scene that I was part of there was that all perpetrators should be ridden out of town on a rail. Just like that, along with my own fear of violence that I’d carried for at least a decade by that point, made me really scared to talk about it with anyone else. It was just Griffin and Stephen. Those two were the only ones that I had talked about any of this with for like a year.

The Accountability Process: A Difficult Beginning

Over the course of that year, I ended up finding out that I crossed two more people’s boundaries, even though I was committed to doing everything that I needed to do to make sure that I didn’t cross people’s boundaries. Like the first time it happened, I thought that I was asking for consent, but I wasn’t. Or I wasn’t able to communicate enough in order to actually have real consent. And so that person, when I crossed that person’s boundaries, they confronted me on the spot about it. They were like, “Was that sexual for you?” And I was like “oh damn,” but I was like, “Yeah. yeah, it was.” And they were like, “I didn’t consent to that, and that was a really difficult thing for me because of this and this and this.” And then later on, it happened again, when I thought I was doing everything that I needed to have consent.

Part of what was going on at that point, was that I still had a huge amount of guilt and shame and traumatic reactions to being vulnerable. But after the second time that I crossed someone’s boundaries, I realized what I was doing wasn’t working and I needed to take accountability a step further. I decided to do all of these disclosures to people in my life. When I was doing these disclosures, I wasn’t able to be present at all. I was forcing myself to do it, over and over again, and was just like totally emotionally overwhelmed and burnt out. I didn’t think about how I was doing them and how that would impact other people. Because I wanted to be 100% sure that I wasn’t going to cross anybody’s boundaries, I dropped out of everything and just socially isolated myself.
It also seemed like everyone was totally happy to let me become totally isolated and let me drop out of everything. Nobody reached out to me, or as far as I know, people didn’t really talk amongst each other or anything. I think it was just like people didn’t know what to do with the information, so they didn’t do anything. Griffin and Stephen had moved out of town, so they weren’t there to support me any more. In that period, the only two people who did reach out to me were people whose boundaries I had crossed. And they were offering support, but I was just like, “No, I can’t put you in the situation where you’re taking care of me.” Because by that point – during the year when I’d just been keeping quiet about things and trying to deal with it by myself, I started reading a lot of zines about survivor support, stories of survivors doing truthtelling and that kind of thing. By that point I’d learned enough to know that there is the pattern of survivors having to emotionally caretake for the people who had done harm to them. So I put up the boundary and I was like, “Thank you, but I can’t accept your support.”

I was doing all this stuff that was self-punishing, having no compassion for myself – just this combination of a desire to be 100% certain that I wasn’t going to be crossing anybody’s boundaries and this destructiveness that came out of intense self-hatred. And then it kept going, but I left town. I got way beyond burnt out; I wasn’t even running on fumes any more, just willpower. But, I didn’t cross anybody’s boundaries!

**Accountability: My Stages of Change**

What were the stages of change for me? The first stage, which isn’t one that I would really recommend that people generally include in accountability processes, was the self-destructive one where I would just step back from things. A component of this could be good, but not in a self-punishing, destructive way. But that was really the first step, isolating myself from everything. And then, doing some research and self-education at the same time. I was also going to therapy and was coming to understand my own history better, was able to articulate for myself that really what I needed to do was containment – figure out the boundaries that I needed to assert for myself to make sure that I wasn’t going to hurt anybody. It took me a while to understand that because of the ways that people who are socialized male in this society, they’re never expected to assert any boundaries on their own sexuality. Both in terms of, “I don’t want to do this,” but also in terms of actively seeking other people’s boundaries, seeking out to understand what other people’s boundaries are. So basically that whole first period was just tracking myself, figuring out in what sorts of emotional states I was most likely to cross somebody’s boundaries and what it felt like when I was getting there; what sorts of situations were likely to trigger it and also in day-to-day interactions, what kinds of boundaries I needed to be asserting for myself to make sure I wasn’t getting close to any of those things.

Then once I had that containment figured out and had the space where I was trusting myself not to be crossing people’s boundaries, then there was room in my life to be able to go inwards and start working on self-transformation and healing. Part of that, too, was that I was still crossing people’s boundaries on a regular basis. Every time it would happen it would be a crisis for me. Sometimes I would get suicidal. Sometimes I would just be freaking out and paranoid and have huge flare-ups of guilt and shame. So when I was crossing people’s boundaries, there wasn’t emotional room for that type of transformation.
and healing to take place. I needed to create this sort of containment not just for the worthy goal of not doing harm but also to make sure that I had the capacity, the emotional space, to be able to work on that healing and transformation. So that was the second phase, when I was working with an accountability group that I sought out for myself. There was a lot of healing and selftransformation.

Now at this point, I feel like I’ve gotten enough of that worked out that I feel like I’m getting to a place where it becomes an ethical possibility for me to start reaching back outwards again, and starting to work on getting involved in organizing or perhaps have relationships. Because for this whole time I’ve had a strict rule for myself around abstinence and celibacy, just not getting involved in people because – because I know that any time that would happen, that all these things that I haven’t dealt with would come up. And once all that unresolved trauma flares up, then the game is basically lost for me. So now, the potential for having intimate or sexual relationships starts to become more of a reality for me and at this point I feel like I’ve learned enough about where all that’s coming from, and I’ve healed enough that I can communicate about it enough to understand my limits and boundaries and to reach out at the same time.

Another shift that’s been happening, too, is that towards the beginning it was basically like I couldn’t have people in my life that I wasn’t able to disclose to. There were some people that were either an acquaintance or some sort of person that had power over me that were in my life that I didn’t really disclose to. But basically, every person that I was becoming friends with, at some point I’m gonna need to tell them, just as part of the process of being friends. When I decided that I wanted to be friends with them, I would have to tell them. At this point, as I’m getting to the point where I’m putting people less at risk, I feel like I’m gaining back more of the privilege of retaining my anonymity. It’s still really important for me to disclose with people, and there are some situations in which I’m probably always going to be disclosing to people really early on. For example, any time I want to get involved in anti-violence work, that’s going to be a conversation I have at the outset, before I get involved. But I feel like I’m regaining some of that privilege of anonymity now, too.

**Accountability and Healing: Moving through Guilt, Shame and a Traumatic Response to Vulnerability**

Now it’s been years of seeking support through political groups working on accountability and therapy and staying committed to the process. The things I now understand about healing, in the wholeness of my experience, as both a survivor and a perpetrator, look very different than the ones that I’ve read about or that people have talked to me about, where it’s healing only from surviving abuse or violence. I think that the three biggest emotions that I’ve had to contend with in that healing and transformation – and this is something that I’ve only articulated in the last, like, month of my life – I think the three biggest things that I’ve had to contend with are guilt, shame and a traumatic response to being vulnerable.
I think those three things – in myself at least – are the sources for the self-hate. It took me a long time trying to figure out even what guilt and shame are. What the emotions are, what they feel like. I would just read those words a lot, but without being able to identify the feeling. One of the things someone told me was that it seems like a lot of my actions are motivated by guilt. And that was strange to me because I never thought that I had felt guilt before. I thought, “Oh, well, I feel remorse but I don’t feel guilt.” It was years of pondering that before I even understood what guilt was or what it felt like in myself. Once I did, I was like, “Well damn! That’s actually just about everything I feel.” I just hadn’t understood what it felt like before, so I didn’t know how to identify it.

Now my understanding of guilt is that it’s the feeling of being worthy of punishment. That guiltiness crops up when I become aware of the harm that I’ve done. I might engage in minimization, trying to make that harm go away, so that I don’t feel that guiltiness for it any more, so that I don’t feel worthy of being punished. I might try denying it – same sort of thing. Maybe I’m going to try to numb myself so that I don’t feel that – so that I don’t have that feeling any more. Or maybe I’m going to make that punishment come to me – just being in that place where there’s this feeling that the other boot is gonna drop all the time, and that it should drop, trying to bring about a sense of resolution to that sense of impending harm by harming myself.

And another thing that I can see in myself is trying to get out of that sense that harm is gonna come to me by dedicating my life to amending the harm. But the thing is that it’s different from compassion, trying to right wrongs because of guilt instead of because of compassion. Doing it through guilt, I notice that I can’t assert any boundaries with myself. It’s like a compulsion, and it leads me to burnout. Because any time that I stop, that feeling comes back, and it’s like, the harm is gonna come. I’m learning how to stay present with that difficult feeling and breathe through it. It helps me a lot.

And then, as far as the shame goes, my understanding of shame is it’s like the feeling that I am someone who I cannot stand to be. I was at this workshop where somebody was talking about their experiences with addiction and said, “My whole life, when I was in the middle of this addiction, I had this combination of grandiosity and an inferiority complex.” You know, like this sense that I was better than everyone else and that I was the worst scum of the earth. I think when that’s the manifestation of shame – that this is who I should be and this is who I really am. When I’ve seen myself in that kind of place, then usually I’m reacting to the shame either by trying to drown out that awareness of the side of me that’s scum, and one of the primary ways that I did that was through finding ways of getting sexual rushes or something like that. And the other thing that I’ve seen myself do is trying to eradicate that part of me that’s the scum. And mostly that happened through fantasies of doing violence to myself, targeted at that part of myself that I hated, that part of myself that I couldn’t stand to be, and trying to rip myself into two. I think that’s a lot of what was fueling my desire for suicide, too.

One of the things that happened with the accountability process is that once I started talking to people about the things I was most ashamed about, and making it public, then that grandiosity went away. And instead I had to come to terms with this other
understanding of myself that wasn’t as caught up in illusions of grandeur and instead was this forced humbleness. Like, I’m a person and I’m no better than anybody else. I’m a person and I can also change. So through talking about the things that I’m most ashamed of, that shame became transformative for me. That was a really big aspect of healing for me. And it required a lot of grieving, a lot of loss. And that’s something that I was going through during that first year when I was talking with people about it.

As I was talking with other people about it, all these possibilities were closing off in my life. I’ll never be able to do this thing now. I’ll never be able to have this type of relationship now. The world was less open to me. Like, I can’t think of myself in the same way any more. A lot of times I didn’t really have the capacity to really face it. But in the moments of insight I had, where I was coming to terms with it, I was really grieving, weeping, over the things that I was losing because of the accountability. That was a big part of healing for me, finding and connecting with and expressing the grief. And also the grief over everything that I had done.

There are still some things that I probably will have to let go of but that I haven’t allowed myself to grieve yet, some possibilities that I’m still clinging to. I’ve found that a lot of time when I get on a power trip and find myself in this controlling sort of attitude, one of the things that resolves that is if I can find a way to grieve. The power trips, the controlling attitudes, tend to happen when I’m trying to control things that are changing. If I can just accept the change and grieve ways that possibilities are changing, then that brings me back. I mean, I’ve come to terms with a lot of the things that I was grieving when I first started talking with people about it. I’m starting to be able to find ways in my life now of different paths to some of the same things that I wanted for my life, but just paths that have a lot more humility in them. And I think that’s one of the really valuable things that accountability has given me. Any time I start that thinking big about myself, then I bring it back to this accountability that I’m doing and It’s helped me a lot in just like helping me find ways to stay connected to humility. That’s something that I really appreciate about it.

The third one’s a traumatic response to vulnerability. And this is one that I still don’t understand that well because I’m just now starting to have some understanding of it. But like I was saying before, because of the violence that I’ve experienced in my own life, a huge portion of my life has been dedicated to keeping me safe. And for me, those behaviors have been enforced in myself through that same type of self-hate and violence. So if I leave an opening where I’m vulnerable, then that self-hate comes to close it down. If I ever mess up in a way that left me vulnerable, then I find that I start having all these fantasies of doing violence to myself. It’s a way of enforcing in myself to never let that happen again. I don’t really understand it that well. One of the things that I’ve been working on more recently is learning how to be open to vulnerability. And that’s the last part of self-hate that I’ve healed the least.
One thing that my history of surviving violence has created is a huge dedication in my life to making sure that I never allow myself to be vulnerable. In the past, it's been utterly impossible for me to allow people to see that I'm any sort of sexual being and has also made it impossible to talk about any sort of like emotions of importance. Or just asking for consent, there's a sort of vulnerability that's involved with that. So this created this wall that set me up to make it really, really hard for me to have consensual sexual interactions with anybody. In my family, we had no communication about anything whatsoever. I didn't have any models around communication. Now that I'm in a world where communication is possible, it's hard for me to convey to people what it's like to be in a world where that's not possible. For a huge portion of my life, there wasn't even a glimmer of possibility. These things that I was feeling, they weren't in the realm of talkability. It meant that I couldn't ever be present enough with the emotions to learn how to intervene. Any time they would come up, I would just try to eradicate them with all this violent self-imagery, without even realizing what I was doing.

**Accountability as a Gift**

I have a friend that's been involved in a lot of accountability work, and he's insisted to me that what I’m doing isn’t accountability because there's not survivors somewhere who are issuing a list of demands or that kind of thing. But for me, that's only one aspect of accountability. There's another aspect that's being accountable to myself, making sure that I’m living the values that are important to me in the world. Ultimately, accountability for me is a commitment to do what I need to do to make sure that I don’t repeat those patterns, that they stop with me. Part of that has been the work around creating boundaries for myself. Part of that has been the healing and transformation. And part of it is also engaging with the world, to not see it as an individual thing, but to see myself as part of a social struggle. I need to be engaged with the world to be part of ending all of this sexual violence that’s everywhere.

The accountability has this gift of humility. One of the things that is really valuable for me about that humility is the amount of compassion that it’s allowed me to have for other people. I still have superiority complexes, but nowhere near like I did. At this point in my life, I’m able to understand myself as being the same kind of human as so many other people. I don’t put myself on a different level from them. And so I feel like I have a much greater ability to understand people's struggle and pain, and to learn from it, and to love people, coming out of that compassion and shared struggle.

That ability for real, authentic love is something I never had. I thought that love was this obsessive thing. And when I realized that I needed to stop that, I had this moment of grieving and loss and doubt, because I thought, “Well, if I stop this, will I ever feel love again?” It required this huge shift. Once it quieted down, once I stopped it, then the whole landscape was just silent. It took me awhile to re-tune my hearing so that it wasn’t just the roar of this obsession, but that I could hear the birds, and the insects, and the breezes. From there, learn a sort of love that's based in resilience, and shared commitment, and sacrifice. So that's been a real gift that it's given me.

Another thing too, is that I can bear to live with myself. I never could before. Most of the time I'm okay being in my own skin. It's been huge – even though I went through
some extremely dark and difficult periods where the basin of depression that I’d lived in for so long in my life dropped into an abyss. Coming out of that abyss, through a continuing commitment to accountability, it’s like the first time in my life when I’m starting to feel I’m free of this sort of depression and this crippling anxiety and paranoia. I have emotional capacity now; like I can feel things. I’m still not in a place where joy is a big part of my life, but it seems possible now. Through all this grieving and everything that I’ve done, I’ve also had a couple moments of clarity and lightness that I’d never experienced before in my life.

I think something else that has been a real gift for me, in terms of accountability, is the possibility for having lasting intimate relationships with people, whether sexually or not sexually. And having some capacity for pleasure – sexual pleasure, even, because before it was so caught up in shame and guilt and feeling triggered that I only ever felt horrible. Now I don’t feel like I’m consigned to that for the rest of my life. I feel that there’s a possibility of being liberated from it.

(This story is available at the StoryTelling & Organizing Project (STOP) website at www.stopviolenceeveryday.org.)
Section 4. Tools to Mix and Match

4.0. Introduction

These sets of tools are organized in the following categories:

4.B. Staying Safe. How Do We Stay Safe?
4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. Who Can Help?
4.D. Setting Goals. What Do We Want?
4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims. How Can We Help?
4.F. Taking Accountability. How Do We Change Violence?
4.G. Working Together. How Do We Work Together as a Team?
4.H. Keeping on Track. How Do We Move Forward?


In This Section:

A.1. What Is Getting Clear?
A.2. Getting Clear Across the 4 Phases
A.3. Tips
A.4. Special Considerations
A.5. Facilitator Notes
A.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
A.7. Getting Clear Tools

- Tool A2. Getting Clear Worksheet
- Tool A3. Naming the Harm Chart
- Tool A4. Harm Statement Worksheet
- Tool A5. Getting Clear: Intervention Factors At-a-Glance

4.F. Taking Accountability. How Do We Change Violence?

Tool F1. Staircase of Change
Tool F2. Level of Participation of Survivors or Victims Chart
Tool F3. Self-Reflection for Survivors or Victims and Allies
Tool F4. Self-Reflection and Practice Questions for Allies
Tool F5. Guiding Questions for Person Doing Harm
Tool F6. Preparing for Direct Communication, Affirmations, and Guided Questions for Person Doing harm
Our vision of accountability is one that:
• Believes that transformational change is possible even for those who commit the most serious acts of violence.
• Focuses on responsibility rather than punishment.
• Understands that it is not only individuals that are responsible for change – it is our communities.
• Sees accountability as a process of change.

Process of Change as a Staircase
This Toolkit refers to one way of understanding the process of change as a staircase. The image of a staircase tells us that:
• Change may come one step a time
• Each step is significant
• We can aim for the top of the staircase, but we may not be able to reach it
• For every situation, each step will mean different actions and different changes
• Any one of us may not be able to see the next step until the step just below is reached

Staircase of Accountability
1. Stop the immediate violence
2. Recognize the violence
3. Recognize the consequences of violence without excuses, even if unintended
4. Make repairs for the harm
5. Change harmful attitudes and behaviors so that violence is not repeated
6. Become a healthy member of your community
STEP #1: STOP IMMEDIATE VIOLENCE

For some interventions, Step 1: Stop immediate violence may be the ultimate goal of the intervention. The approach in this Toolkit aims for intervention results that may transform the person doing harm and/or a community that may have done harm or allowed harm to happen. However, Step 1 may be the first step necessary to reach these larger aims.

Step 1 can mean many things and can be reached a number of ways.

Sometimes the first step of accountability is stopping a specific act of violence from happening or stopping violence enough so that we can even discuss what the next step might be. (See Story F3. Stopping Violence as the First Step)

Although we have grander visions of accountability and change – leading to equality, mutual respect, and shared power – the pragmatic steps may begin with something very simple. Stop violence.

Sometimes we cannot reach any type of agreement from the person doing harm that violence should stop. Sometimes we need to use some manner of pressure, threats, force or coercion to make sure it does (See Section 4.F.3. Taking Accountability Tips for more about the use of force). By this we do not mean the use of physical violence, but acts such as asking someone to stay away or leave, letting someone know that there will be consequences if violence continues, or physically restraining someone from acting out violently at that moment.

We may need to act immediately. We may be facing a situation of serious harm, injury or even death. We may be protecting children. We may not be able to get any form of agreement from the person doing harm to stop – or may not have time to see if this is possible.

Sometimes stopping violence means that we need to get out of harm’s way. For some, escape from the person doing harm may be the only way to stop violence – at least in the short term.

STEP #2: RECOGNIZE THE VIOLENCE

Step 2 is to recognize the violence.

For some people who have caused harm, this step can be significant. They may not want to admit the things that they did. They may not even be aware that they were violent. They may be aware but deny or minimize the fact that these actions had ever happened.

Recognizing the violence means to say, “Yes, I did do these things.” (See Section 4.A. Getting Clear for a section on naming the harms).

“Yes, I did hit you.”

“Yes, it’s true. I didn’t let you go to work.”
Step 3 moves from recognizing violence to recognizing the results or consequences of violence – without excuses. This includes consequences that were not intended by the person doing harm.

The person (or community) doing harm that reaches Step 3 has stepped back and thought about what they’ve done. They’ve listened to other people share their experience of the violence and are starting to understand the full impact of their attitudes and actions on others, and perhaps on themselves.

They’ve stopped making excuses or stopped asking for us to make excuses for them. They can now accept the violence and abuse as their fault and their responsibility.

They’ve stopped getting angry when confronted with what they’ve done. They’ve stopped going to other people to get their sympathy and to tell their side of the story.

They’ve started feeling sorry for what they’ve done – feeling remorse. They are starting to deal with whatever difficulties they may have regarding feelings of regret, embarrassment, and shame. They have begun to accept these feelings without fighting against it, making excuses, being self-destructive or destroying other people because they can’t handle being wrong or having to show their faults.

They are starting to understand that there are consequences to what they’ve done. They may have lost trust, relationships and more. They don’t blame others for losing these things – they see that it is the result of their own attitudes and actions.

The following are some examples of how someone may begin to take accountability.

• “Yes, I did hit you. I hit you with my fist and tried to hit you in a place where nobody would see the mark. I kept saying and thinking it was your fault, but I now see that I had a choice. It is my fault – not yours.

• I see that by hitting you, I caused fear. I caused you to hate me, to not trust me – maybe never to trust me again. I caused you physical pain, but most of all I can now see how much I hurt you at your very core.

• Now that I can admit what I did, I can remember the look in your eyes – how afraid you were, confused and then how angry. You had to hide your bruises so nobody would see them. We pretended like nothing happened. I wouldn’t let you bring it up, threatening to hit you again if you did. Sometimes I didn’t use the words, but gave you a look so that you would know that you’d better watch it or else.”
• “Yes, I called you names in front of the kids. I knew it would hurt you and humiliate you. Thinking back now, that’s why I did it. I felt angry and took it out on you. I didn’t care if the kids were around. In fact, maybe I wanted them to think you were a bad mother and turn against you.

• I didn’t see how much this hurt my kids. I didn’t care. I can now see how our son acts like me – terrorizing his sister and calling you a b****, just like I did. Now I can see how our daughter hates me. She won’t even look at me. I blamed it all on her or you or anybody but me. I never wanted to admit that it was my fault – even to myself. I was proud that my son didn’t take s*** from you and stood by my side. But now I see that he’s scared of me, too.”

**STEP #4: MAKE REPAIRS FOR THE HARM**

With Step 4, the person doing harm makes sincere attempts to repair the harm – these repairs are not just the ones they can do cheaply and quickly. They are repairs that are requested by the people that have been hurt or by the community. These may also be repairs that they have considered themselves after deep reflection about the harm they have caused.

These repairs may never be able to make up for the harm done. Often they cannot – nothing can. But they are real and symbolic attempts to do something significant to make the lives of those who have been harmed better.

**These repairs may be:**

• Sincere apologies:
  • With specific and full details of the harm (Step 1 and 2)
  • Without excuses (Step 2)
  • With full acknowledgment of the negative consequences they created for individuals and the community (Step 2)
  • With the intended repairs (Step 3)
  • With a commitment never to repeat these harms to the survivor or victim or any other people again (See Step 5)
  • With knowledge that repeating these harms will lead to negative consequences (See Step 5)
  • Without making this for the purposes of making oneself look like a hero or a martyr or any other form of self-gain except the gains of making repairs for harms done
  • In other forms such as: video conference or zoom (if transportation is an issue); written letter, letter published on a website, and so on
  • Without making this for the purposes of making oneself look like a hero or a martyr or any other form of self gain except the gains of making repairs for harms done
• Services such as: help fixing things that are broken; cooking; cleaning; making something useful; providing other valued services for the survivor or victim, the community or other people or organizations that are agreed upon

• Financial repairs such as: money for the needs of the people harmed; money for damages; money to pay for something valued by the people harmed; return of funds stolen, taken, gambled or spent carelessly; taking over credit card payments, mortgages, IRS payments or other forms of debt; money so that the people harmed can receive medical care or go to counseling; money so that the people harmed can enjoy themselves.

• A commitment to stop violence now and in the future -- and action to back it up.

EXAMPLE OF AN ACCOUNTABILITY LETTER

“I am letting L, her family and our friends know about my previous actions against her. Although she asked me to write this, I also agree that sharing this with all of you is my responsibility. This is just one step in being accountable for how much I had hurt her and in doing so, hurt all of you as well.

As you know, L and I met 8 years ago. I loved her and respected her and respect her to this day. But I acted in ways that were the opposite of loving and respectful.

My abuse began with my jealousy. I was jealous whenever she looked at anybody else. I was even jealous when she was with her friends. I began to control her behavior – making her feel uncomfortable whenever she went out without me. I questioned what she did, who she talked to, how she felt. I knew it was wrong, but I justified it in my mind – that this was my being a loving person or that I couldn’t lose her so I had to watch her all the time.

When she wouldn’t answer the way I wanted or she went out anyways or did what she wanted, I began to lose my temper. At first I yelled. Then I began to throw things and hit things near her. One time, I hit her, leaving the mark of my hand on her face. I begged her not to tell anyone and I promised never to do it again. She stayed home from work for a couple of days – and I did stop for awhile.

But it didn’t stop there. The next time I knew not to hit her where anyone would see the mark. I started to hit her on her head or body where people wouldn’t see. This happened about every 6 months at first. But it started to get worse, and I would hit her or threaten to every couple of months. I apologized every time and begged her to forgive me. I promised to change and go to counseling. But I never followed through. I never found any help and hoped that she would forget. I hoped I would just stop or things would change. I told myself that I didn’t hit her so hard – that it was understandable because she kept doing things I asked her not to do. I always made excuses for my behavior or blamed her.

She tried to talk to me about it, but I would never let this be the subject. I didn’t want to talk about it and would either threaten her or walk out of the house or tell her that she was crazy every time.

I didn’t think about how this affected her. I only thought about how I felt – about how everything and anything affected me.
She finally threatened to leave me and this time I believed it. I hit her and broke the things that were most important to her. I got so I didn't even apologize any more. I would just leave the house and come back later hoping that everything would be forgotten.

Some of you came to me then. I know that I lied at that time. I said it only happened a couple of times. I said that she was crazy and exaggerating things. I didn’t want to face up to what I had done. I felt incredibly ashamed and still blamed her for telling other people about our business.

This past few months have been my biggest challenge. But I also have to thank you for stopping me. I'm not sure what I would have done next.

You didn’t back down, and L, you didn’t back down even though I wanted you to. I now know that if you hadn’t stepped in – especially L’s sister and her husband, I would not have stopped. Somehow, I just didn’t know what to do and just kept doing the same thing over and over again.

I am hoping that L and I can continue our relationship. But I also know that it might be too late. I have come to accept that I cannot control our relationship but only control myself. I am going to counseling every week now and am starting to discover what it means to be an adult and take responsibility for my behaviors.

I am deeply sorry. I apologize to all of you. L, I apologize to you and know that I hurt you so many times in so many ways. I do hope that you will be able to trust people again and will heal from everything I have done to you. I know that trust is something I must earn and that it may take a very long time. I accept that responsibility and hope that I can honor that no matter what happens – even if you decide that you can no longer stay in this relationship. If that is the case, please know that I will not do anything to stop you or to hurt you. This is your choice.

I apologize to your family. I hurt your daughter. I made your sister suffer. I know that I have caused so much pain and suffering as you worried about L’s safety and dignity. I know that you saw her change from a loving person with confidence to someone living in constant fear. I also know that nothing can make up for that loss.

I have talked with all of you and as you know, I promise to do the following:

I will treat L with respect and kindness.

I will never ever threaten L with harm. I will not throw anything, hit anything. I will not touch her in any harmful or unwanted way. I will never insult her or call her names. I will not tell her what she can do or not do, who she can see or not see. I will communicate with her and discuss what she wants and needs. I will listen and not interrupt.

I will continue to seek help in order to change my attitudes and behaviors. I have a better understanding now than ever in my life and for that, I am grateful. And I know that change takes time. I will not stop getting help. I have found a group that has a program for people who are violent. I started going and will continue to attend through to the very end.

I will support L. to get what she needs in order to recover and have agreed to make sure that I pay for her counseling.

I will also talk about other things with L – how we share work around the house, decisions about what we do together, decisions about our finances. These are things that I know now that we must share together.

I believe I am a changed person and thank L and all of you for helping me stop my violence. And I know I have a long way to go.”
**STEP #5: CHANGE HARMFUL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS SO THAT VIOLENCE IS NOT REPEATED**

Step 5 brings the person doing harm to a deeper level of change. It moves beyond the specific harms to go to the deeper causes for violence. It makes one truly responsible not only for past harms but for future behavior, free from violence.

Changing harmful attitudes and behaviors involves a deep look at oneself and the types of attitudes and behaviors that are related to violence. This will be different for different people, but this could include fundamental changes such as:

- Shifting a sense of superiority over others to one of equality and humility.
- Shifting an expectation that one is to get whatever one wants to an expectation of shared giving and receiving.
- Dealing with issues of insecurity and low self worth to healthy self-confidence.
- Seeking support to change unhealthy relationships to alcohol and drugs that lead to abuse of self and others.
- Seeking support for problems of gambling or careless spending.
- Seeking support to deal with personal experiences with abuse such as child sexual abuse or physical abuse to look at their connection to violence.
- Letting go of controlling behaviors and opening to relationships of give and take, spontaneity and curiosity.
- Seeing other people as partners and companions, not as objects.
- Seeking community as a space for sharing and reciprocity.

**STEP #6: CREATE A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY**

Steps 1 – 5 are stages towards being a healthy member of one’s community. At some point, efforts to stay accountable may shift towards ease and confidence in one’s ability to be a healthy and respectful partner, family member, friend, co-worker, neighbor and fellow community member.

Someone who has been able to take accountability and go up the staircase of change may be in a position to help someone else who is causing harm and who could benefit from the support of another who has been through the same thing.

Finally, as a healthy member of one’s community, one may be a part of changing the process of taking accountability from one associated with shame to one of honor and courage. This is the task of all of us no matter what position we have in relationship to violence.
YOUR STAIRCASE OF CHANGE: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

This tool can be used for anyone to think about what a staircase of change would look like for this specific situation. What specific steps would show that someone is moving up and making progress with the process of taking accountability?

For the survivor or victim and allies, you can use this tool to figure out what specific things you can ask the person doing harm (or the community) to do. Remember that Step 1 is significant and may be as far as you get in an intervention. You may think that your goal with regard to accountability would be just getting to Step 1.

You may want to go further. You may set goals that include Step 2, that the person doing harm (or the community) need to specifically name the harms and recognize the specific attitudes and actions that were harmful.

You may want to go further to Step 3 and set an expectation that the person doing harm (or the community) fully account for all of the consequences of that harm without making any excuses, whether or not these harms were intended.

Step 4 may be an expectation, as well. You may want the person doing harm (or the community) to take action or provide resources or services that actually contribute to repairing the harm.

Processes of accountability as an expectation may stop with Step 4. It is easier to come up with concrete things that people can do to meet these steps.

Step 5 and 6 are important but harder to make specific measures. You may be able to tell, but explaining what that looks like is harder to do.

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**Staircase of Accountability**

1. **Stop the immediate violence**
2. **Recognize the violence**
3. **Recognize the consequences of violence without excuses, even if unintended**
4. **Make repairs for the harm**
5. **Change harmful attitudes and behaviors so that violence is not repeated**
6. **Become a healthy member of your community**
**STEP #1: STOP IMMEDIATE VIOLENCE**

What specific harmful, abusive or violent actions should stop? (See Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know and Section 4.A. Getting Clear)

Are there some that are absolutes or bottom-lines?

Are there priorities?

Are there some forms of harm, abuse or violence that are less priorities to stop – or that you could even let go of? Or come back to at a later time when things progress?

To what level do you expect these particular types of harms or violence to stop?

**STEP #2: RECOGNIZE THE VIOLENCE**

What specific harmful, abusive or violent actions do you want the person doing harm (or community) to name and recognize?

Are there some that are absolutes or bottom-lines?

Are there priorities?

Are there some forms of harm, abuse or violence that are less important to name – or that you could even let go of? Or come back to at a later time when things progress?

**STEP #3: RECOGNIZE THE CONSEQUENCES - WITHOUT EXCUSES - EVEN IF UNINTENDED**

What are the consequences of violence? (See Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know)

To whom – what individuals, families, groups or organizations have been hurt or negatively affected by the violence?

What were immediate consequences, for example, injuries, fear, lost days from work?

What are more long-term consequences, for example, inability to trust, nervousness, nightmares, flashbacks, loss of self-confidence, lost relationships with children, incarceration?
**STEP #4: MAKE REPAIRS FOR THE HARM**

What can be done to repair the harm? (understanding that there may be nothing that can repair it?) Financial repair? Services? Apologies? Public apologies or other responses?

To whom?

For how long?

**STEP #5: CHANGE HARMFUL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS SO THAT VIOLENCE IS NOT REPEATED**

What underlying or deep attitudes and behaviors have contributed to the violence?

What underlying or deep changes in attitude or behavior need to be made?

**STEP #6: CREATE A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY**

How can you contribute to a healthier, less violent community overall?

What are situations of violence in my community that I have witnessed or have been aware of but where I was unable to intervene?

What are some of the social or community dynamics that helped me to intervene? Or that were a barrier to intervening?

Who are other people in my community that could benefit from having a staircase of their own, and how can I support them?
Use your own words to describe what your steps to change or accountability look like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you are the survivor or the victim, you can choose how you want to be involved in the process of taking accountability.

You may already have a clear view of what you want from the process of goal setting. See Section 4.D. Goal Setting. As you move through an intervention, however, you may have different ideas of how you think about accountability or what specific things you want.

**Taking Accountability and the Person Doing Harm**

In this Toolkit, the process of taking accountability usually involves some level of connection with the person doing harm. This Toolkit offers the Staircase of Change as a framework for thinking about accountability as a series of steps, a process. It also relies upon the idea that accountability can best come about not through punishment or revenge, but from compassion, connection and support for the person doing harm. It aims to support an understanding that change can be a benefit not only to you and the community – but to the person doing harm, as well. This is not just so they can make some kind of calculated gains – getting status, getting out of punishment or prison, looking like a hero or a martyr. What we mean by benefit is that they can have better and more meaningful relationships, they can live better lives, they can create respect and healthiness rather than abuse and harm.

If you do not believe in this form of accountability, then you might consider a different approach to intervention – perhaps one that is not in this Toolkit but that may be found in other types of domestic violence or sexual assault programs. See Section 3. Getting Started: Is This Model Right For You?

**How involved will you be – or how will you be involved?**

This approach to violence intervention works best with the participation of the survivor or victim. However, the levels of participation can be very different depending on the situation and what the survivor or victim wants. For possible levels of participation in the intervention over all, see Section 4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims, Tool E3: **Survivor or Victim Participation in an Intervention. Chart.**

The process of Taking Accountability require some special consideration since this process is primarily involved in engaging the person doing harm. Exposure to danger, potential manipulation and a repetition of the dynamics of abuse and violence that bring us to this intervention in the first place can easily be played out in the process of Taking Accountability. For this reason, it may be important for the survivor or victim to consider how they can best be involved or not involved in this process. Their level of participation could be different in this aspect of the intervention than in others.
The following is a chart that marks out the possible levels of involvement and participation of the survivor or victim in the process of Taking Accountability. Please note also that these may be different depending upon where we are in the Staircase of Change. For example, a survivor or victim may want to be very involved in naming the violence and the consequences of that violence. But they may want the person doing harm to take the steps to figure out what repairs are most appropriate and give feedback once these are proposed.

They may want to be involved in guiding goals and thinking about repairs, but want the allies to be the ones who put the most energy into this process.

**Again, the Staircase of Change in this Toolkit is:**

1. **Stop the immediate violence**
2. **Recognize the violence**
3. **Recognize the consequences of violence without excuses, even if unintended**
4. **Make repairs for the harm**
5. **Change harmful attitudes and behaviors so that violence is not repeated**
6. **Become a healthy member of your community**

Think about each step (if this is useful to you) and think about how you want to participate.
There are a number of components to an intervention; remember, your participation can be high in one component of the intervention and low in another. The factors to consider are:

1. **Physical Presence.** Do you want to be there in person in any stage of engaging the person doing harm? Is there a particular time or way in which you (or the intervention) would benefit from you being there in person? If so, how? What is important in terms of your own safety—physical, emotional and other? If not, what other options are available?

2. **Leading or Directing.** How much do you want to be leading or directing? How much are you setting the terms? How much do you want to work with your allies to set the terms—or how much should you work with them even if it is uncomfortable? How much can you expect the person doing harm to actively participate in setting the terms?

3. **Engagement with the Person Doing Harm.** This approach has as part of its vision the idea that the person doing harm would have some level of initiation and participation in the steps towards accountability at least at some point in the process. At the same time, this may be an uneven path. We anticipate that there will be resistance. Our motto is that we are creating systems flexible enough to allow for the expected process of dodging and delaying accountability and strong enough to withstand and diminish these tactics over time. Even if an intervention necessarily begins with an act that involves pressure, force, or coercion, make space for compassion and connection with the person doing harm. This may lead to further steps that can bring in the person doing harm as a participant of an intervention, and not just a target.

4. **Information and Communication.** The final component we present with this tool is that of information and communication. This is especially important as the participation of the survivor or victim may become less direct and physically present. What kind of information and communication does the survivor or victim expect, want and need? This column offers a variety of options to consider.
While Creative Interventions encourages active survivor or victim participation, this can happen at different levels. This chart helps you sort out what level of survivor or victim participation best describes your intervention process – or – which level best describes what you would like your process to look like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Physical Presence</th>
<th>Leading or Directing</th>
<th>Engagement with Person doing Harm</th>
<th>Information and Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>I want to be there in person and actively involved as the main actor.</td>
<td>I want to be leading, directing and setting the terms.</td>
<td>I want my input and participation to be the most visible and prioritized. I want the person doing harm to listen and follow – but not make any decisions.</td>
<td>I want to decide and to know everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>I want to be there in person and prioritized with special consideration but not necessarily the main actor.</td>
<td>I want to be in a primary role and I want my perspective to be the priority. I do not always need to be leading.</td>
<td>I want my input and participation to be the most visible and prioritized. And the person doing harm can make suggestions and comments that may be taken into account.</td>
<td>I want to know everything but I will not always be deciding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>I want to be there in person but at a level similar to other people.</td>
<td>I want to be participating in a similar way to others.</td>
<td>I want my input and participation to be high, and I expect to have significant participation and input by the person doing harm. We can have some back and forth.</td>
<td>I want to know the most important pieces of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>I want to be there but I would like to be in a protected position.</td>
<td>I want to give input and feedback but I don’t want to actively participate.</td>
<td>I want the person doing harm and their allies to make a proposal for an accountability process and I will make comments and changes.</td>
<td>I want information at key moments or at some regular timing – but don’t need to know everything that’s going on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>I want to be there but via something like another room or communicating through phone, skype or other method of communication..</td>
<td>I want to give my input and feedback but then step away from any involvement.</td>
<td>I am leaving this to my allies to work together with the person doing harm to figure out how accountability will happen. I want to know what is going on and will give feedback.</td>
<td>Let me know what happens at the end or if there are significant changes. Otherwise, I don’t want to know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None - but you have approval</td>
<td>I don’t want to be there.</td>
<td>I trust the group. I don’t want to be involved.</td>
<td>I am leaving this to my allies to work together with the person doing harm to figure out how accountability will happen. I am stepping away.</td>
<td>I don’t need any further information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None - the survivor or victim disagree</td>
<td>Not there or there but disagreeing.</td>
<td>May be uninvolved or actively disagreeing or countering the intervention.</td>
<td>May be uninvolved; carrying out another intervention in a different way; working together with the person doing harm to counter the intervention.</td>
<td>May not be in communication; in communication in order to have more control over a process that I disagree with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The process of Taking Accountability can be particularly challenging for the survivor or victim of violence. Since this involves some level of engagement (communication, working with, supporting) the person doing harm, there is lots of opportunity for re-living the dynamics of abuse and violence that led the survivor or victim to this intervention.

If we consider the process of taking accountability as one that can lead to deep and transformational change, then it can be a long and difficult process with anticipated resistance from the person doing harm.

Again, we are creating systems flexible enough to allow for the expected process of dodging and delaying accountability and strong enough to withstand and diminish these tactics over time. Along the way, we can expect resistance in many forms that can be dangerous to or threatening to the survivor or victim, as well as others vulnerable to violence including anybody participating in the intervention.

This Toolkit attempts to reverse the kind of dynamics that feed interpersonal violence. It also attempts to provide more effective measures for communities to make meaningful change – and not simply rely upon escape and punishment as a means towards resolving violence. The alternative we offer, however, is still in its early stages of formulation. As we say in Section 3.2. What This Model Is NOT, this is not a guarantee of success.

For the survivor or victim, this approach offers promises. It allows you to name your goals, find your way towards them, and offers tools for you to bring together your allies to make this a possibility. At the same time, this approach has its risks and does not offer guarantees. It asks you, in particular, to take the risk of possibly participating in engaging the person doing harm if taking accountability is one thing you work towards.

This section offers some tools to help the survivor or victim, allies and the person doing harm to take the courageous and challenging set of steps leading to transformation and change. We offer some guiding questions for you to ask yourself and your allies in order to prepare you for some level of participation in the process of taking accountability.

If you do not feel prepared enough or have enough support to participate in this or to even propose it as an area of your intervention, then we ask that you reconsider this arena of the intervention. We have found that even asking yourself that question can be a powerful step towards gaining a sense of power and control in your own life.
YOUR SPECIAL ROLE AS A SURVIVOR OR VICTIM

If you are the survivor or victim of violence, you may be in very different relationships to the violence and to the person who has done harm. What you consider goals in relation to the violence and the person may differ depending on your relationship to each of them. For example, is this someone you are together with as a partner, and do you want to stay together? Is this someone you do not want to stay with? Is this someone you are separated from, and that you want to remain separated from? Is this someone with whom you may still need to share community? (See Section 4.D. Goal Setting for more support around these questions.

If you are reading this Toolkit, then it is possible that you considering a high level of participation in the intervention or are already participating at a high level. If you are the survivor or victim, you can play a very powerful role in driving this process. You may know best what happened, the nature of violence, the harms that have resulted from that violence and what needs to be done. Others may have some understanding of the situation but may not be able to formulate all of the strategies necessary to change the situation nor know all of the details that could come under question if and when they meet with the person doing harm.

At the same time, this puts a great burden on you to be the survivor or victim of violence and the person in a position of great responsibility to address it. This is a difficult position and one that you may choose not to take.

Working together with allies can lighten this burden and help you come up with better ideas and strategies than you would alone. This tool can help you get more specific about what you expect from the accountability process and how to best prepare.

This does not take away from your responsibility to weigh the costs and the benefits of your involvement, made even more difficult when you don’t know what the outcome will be. Keep this in mind as you make your way through this tool and through the intervention.
OVERALL QUESTIONS

• What are your goals? What do you want?

• How is any step in the accountability or any step in the Staircase of Change linked to your goals?

• What could bring about change in the person doing harm?

• What do they care about? This could be positive things such as care for other people or questionable things like their reputation. Anything could count but the strategies would need to change depending upon what these are.

• Have you seen their potential for change?
  • If so, could these moments of change be part of a cycle in which change including apologies or remorse seem to be simply parts of a cycle that includes a return to violence?
  • Are these moments of change including apologies or remorse a tool to get what this person wants such as your return to the relationship, control over the situation, sympathy from others, a belief in change from you?

• Even if things they care about are self-centered, are they things that could at least help you reach your goals?

• If so, what kind of strategies could use these points as anchors or leverage for you to reach your goals?

• Is there anything that the person doing harm could say or do that can jeopardize your credibility, your side of the story?
  • Is there important information that you have not shared with others in the intervention – things that the person doing harm could share?
  • Can you anticipate all of the accusations the person doing harm could make against you? Are you ready to handle these?

• Is there anything that someone else, including allies or potential allies, could say or do that can jeopardize your credibility, your side of the story?

• What can be the worst result of this request for accountability?

• How can you protect yourself from the worst results? Can you live with the worst results?
DO YOU WANT TO GO AHEAD?

There are many further ways to approach these questions. In this following section, we will go through the Staircase of Change and ask questions that accompany each step.

QUESTIONS USING THE STAIRCASE OF CHANGE

STEP 1: STOP IMMEDIATE VIOLENCE OR STOP IT ENOUGH TO GO TO NEXT STEP

As we have said, Step 1 may be the ultimate goal of the intervention. Stopping immediate violence can be a challenging step in and of itself. It may be the best some of us could hope to achieve. For others, this step may be one that is no longer meaningful. The violence may be long over. What we want now is a response.

By force or coercion, we do not necessarily mean an act of violence. But this may look like a demand that someone stop, yelling at somebody to stop, bringing a group of people to tell someone forcefully to stop, a threat that continuing violence could result in leaving a relationship, telling others about the violence, threats of retaliatory violence, threats of some unknown consequence that would be serious, and threats to call the police.

Stopping violence with force may look like: the confiscation of a gun, throwing someone out of the house, banning someone from being near or visiting children they had harmed, putting them on suspension at work, or grabbing someone who is beating their partner. It may be leaving a partner or a person doing harm, changing locks so they cannot re-enter the house, or preventing them from coming near you.

The goal of stopping violence may be straightforward or very complicated. It could deal with the person doing harm at the highest level of risk. They may never have been challenged before. They may be favored by people in your social circle, including those whom you might bring into an intervention.

An intervention that is able to accomplish Step 1 may be considered a success. For many, this will be the end goal. Moving beyond this step may simply not be possible at this time with the amount of resources you have. Moving beyond this step may come years later. Or it may not come at all.

Step 1 is a significant step on the staircase. The power of this first step should not be underestimated.
QUESTIONS

- What specific forms of their violence do you want to address, reduce, stop or prevent?

- Do you want to address it, reduce it, stop it or prevent it? What makes most sense?

- What could bring this about?

- How can this be brought about with the participation and agreement of the person doing harm? Is this possible?

- What kinds of pressure or force might be necessary? What would this look like?

- Is this pressure or force a punishment, revenge or pay-back? If pressure or force is necessary, can you imagine it without the elements of punishment, revenge or pay-back? What would it look like then?

- What does your role need to be in order to make this happen or at least to attempt it?

- Should you take this role? What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks?

- What are the particular dangers to you if you are physically present? How will you stay safe? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe)

- What are your goals and bottom-lines in terms of stopping the violence? (See Section 4.D. Goal Setting)

- Could you consider reaching Step 1 and only Step 1 a success?

- How will you feel if you are not able to reach Step 1?

- Will there be consequences carried out by you and others affecting the person doing harm if they do not reach Step 1?

- What would these consequences be? Would you communicate these consequences to them? By whom and how would this communication be delivered? How could this communication be done most safely and effectively? Would you in reality carry out these consequences? What are possible effects of these consequences if you carry them out? What are possible effects if you do not carry out these consequences?

- What would be other concerns if Step 1 were not reached? Think of safety, possible increases in their violence or ability to carry out violence, other possible results? How can you safeguard yourself and others? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe).
STEP 2: RECOGNIZE THE VIOLENCE

In this step of accountability, the person doing harm (or the community) needs to recognize and admit that they are responsible for a particular act or pattern of violence.

QUESTIONS

• What specific forms of their violence do you want to you want the person doing harm to specifically take responsibility for?
• What words do you use to describe this?
• What words do you expect the person doing harm to use to describe this? Do they need to be the same as the words you use?
• How important is it to you that the person doing harm be able to think about what these are on their own (or with an ally or supporter)? Is it okay if they accept your version of the harm and your words?
• What is the bottom-line in terms of what you would want the person doing harm to name?
• Could you consider reaching Step 1 and Step 2 a success if you got no further?
• How will you feel if you are unable to accomplish Step 2?
• What could possibly result from the failure to reach Step 2?
• Would you and others carry out consequences affecting the person doing harm if they do not reach Step 2?
• What would these consequences be? Would you communicate these consequences to them? By whom and how would this communication be delivered? How could this communication be done most safely and effectively? Would you in reality carry out these consequences? What are possible effects of these consequences if you carry them out? What are possible effects if you do not carry out these consequences?
• What would be other concerns if Step 2 were not reached? Think of safety, possible increases in their violence or ability to carry out violence, other possible results? How can you safeguard yourself and others? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe).
Step 3: Recognize the Consequences of Violence Without Excuses – Even If Unintended

This is a much higher level of responsibility in which the person is able to identify all of the different people and groups that the act of or pattern of violence has affected and how it has affected them – in the short term and long term.

Questions

- Who has experienced those harms that have resulted from the acts of or patterns of violence caused by the person doing harm?
- What are the harms? Short-term and long-term?
- What words do you and others who experienced harm use to describe this?
- What words do you expect the person doing harm to use to describe this? Do they need to be the same as the words you and others use?
- What kinds of excuses has the person doing harm used – and which they need to stop using?
- What is the bottom-line in terms of what you would want the person doing harm to name as the consequences of their violence?
- Could you consider reaching Step 1, Step 2 and Step 3 a success if you got no further?
- How will you feel if you are unable to accomplish Step 3?
- What could possibly result from the failure to reach Step 3?
- Would you and others carry out consequences affecting the person doing harm if they do not reach Step 3?
- What would these consequences be? Would you communicate these consequences to them? Who and how would this communication be delivered? How could this communication be done most safely and effectively? Would you in reality carry out these consequences? What are possible effects of these consequences if you carry them out? What are possible effects if you do not carry out these consequences?
- What would be other concerns if Step 3 were not reached? Think of safety, possible increases in their violence or ability to carry out violence, other possible results? How can you safeguard yourself and others? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe).
STEP 4: MAKE REPAIRS FOR THE HARM

Making repairs is offering money, services and other things that contribute to repairing the harm. Repairs are sincere and take effort. They are not only ones that can be done cheaply and quickly. See the previous Section 4. Taking Accountability, Tool 4.1. The Staircase of Harm for examples of repairs.

These repairs may never be able to make up for the harm done. Often they cannot — nothing can. But they are real and symbolic attempts to do something significant to make the lives of those who have been harmed better.

For many interventions and attempts to get accountability from the person doing harm (or the community), you may only reasonably be able to reach Step 4. Step 5 and 6 are more abstract and life-long processes that are more difficult to name as specific requests.

QUESTIONS

• Think about the harms that you, others and the community have experienced. What could the person doing harm do to have some sense of repair? (Money, services, apologies)

• Look at the list of repairs in Section 4. Taking Accountability, Tool 4.1. The Staircase of Harm. Which seem to fit your situation and what could possibly be offered?

• How important is it to you that the person doing harm (and their allies or support) be the ones to come up with the repairs?

• Would you prefer that they respond to your request for specific repairs? Would you prefer to respond to their offer of specific repairs? Would you prefer a process in which you make a request and they make an offer that you then try to agree to together?

• Are any parts of the repairs to be made public? For example, would one of the repairs be a public accountability statement or apology? If so, what aspects would be important for you to make public? Who is that public?

• It may be impossible to force someone to be sincere. Would a response that tries to meet your request but is not completely sincere be okay with you?
• What is the minimal form of repair that would seem like a successful outcome to you? Be specific about what this would look like – for example, how much, for how long.

• What is the bottom-line in terms of what you would want the person doing harm to offer in terms of repairs?

• How will you feel if you are unable to accomplish Step 4?

• What could possibly result from the failure to reach Step 4?

• Would you and others carry out consequences affecting the person doing harm if they do not reach Step 4?

• What would these consequences be? Would you communicate these consequences to them? By whom and how would this communication be delivered? How could this communication be done most safely and effectively? Would you in reality carry out these consequences if you carry them out? What are possible effects of these consequences if you do not carry out these consequences?

• What would be other concerns if Step 4 were not reached? Think of safety, possible increases in their violence or ability to carry out violence, other possible results? How can you safeguard yourself and others? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe).
STEP 5: CHANGE HARMFUL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS SO THAT VIOLENCE IS NOT REPEATED

It may be more difficult to make specific requests beyond Step 4. The changes in Step 5 and Step 6 require the person to have the motivation, long term commitment and necessary support that are fundamental for higher levels of change.

If you do not know the person doing harm well and are not planning to remain connected with them except perhaps as someone who will co-exist in the same community, then you may consider stopping at Step 4.

If you are in an intimate or close relationship with the person doing harm, thinking about Step 5 may be more important to you. This may be because you care more about and are more connected to the person doing harm. This may also be because these steps will be important in making sure that violence is not repeated and that this person is capable of a healthy, respectful relationship with themselves and with you and others close to you.

QUESTIONS

• What attitudes and behaviors do you want changed? These may be the same that you listed in Step 1.

• What would new, positive attitudes and behaviors be?

• How can you say this in specifics? Note that it is hard to know what it means if the request is, “You will be a kind person.” Rather, kindness may look like specific things such as, “You will never insult me – call me names like (you can come up with your own).”

• How would you know if someone reached Step 5?

• How will you feel if the person doing harm is unable to reach Step 5?

• Would you and/or others carry out consequences affecting the person doing harm if they do not reach Step 5?

• What would these consequences be? Would you communicate these consequences to them? By whom and how would this communication be delivered? How could this communication be done most safely and effectively? Would you in reality carry out these consequences? What are possible effects of these consequences if you carry them out? What are possible effects if you do not carry out these consequences?

• What would be other concerns if Step 2 were not reached? Think of safety, possible increases in their violence or ability to carry out violence, other possible results? How can you safeguard yourself and others? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe).
**STEP 6: BECOME A HEALTHY MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY**

Creative Interventions believes not only in healthy individuals but healthy communities. Therefore, we include Step 6 as a possible high aim towards accountability. Each step along the way (1 – 5) already move in this direction.

At some point, efforts to stay accountable may shift towards ease and confidence in one’s ability to be a healthy and respectful partner, family member, friend, co-worker, neighbor and fellow community member.

Someone who has been able to take accountability and go up the staircase of change may be in a position to help someone else who is causing harm and who could benefit from the support of another who has been through the same thing.

It may be unrealistic for other people to ask for this level of accountability from the person doing harm. This may become a personal goal for this person, one that they set along with their allies. It could be one that they choose to reach in dialogue with the survivor or victim. It may be one that every member of one’s community set as a goal for themselves.

**QUESTIONS**

• How can Step 6 be a healthy goal for everyone involved in the intervention – not only the person doing harm, but the survivor or victim, allies, and other community members?

• What does this mean? What does it look like?

• What are things you can do now that move towards this goal?

• How can the things you have learned and accomplished in moving from Step 1 to Step 5 and beyond be used to help others in the community to also move through this process of accountability?

• Can you share your story of success with others so you can be an example? For example, you can share your story through www.creative-interventions.org or www.stopviolenceeveryday.org.
Being an ally that supports the process of taking accountability can be challenging. This section includes self-reflection tools that may be helpful for allies.

Self-Reflection 1: How can I deal with my discomfort with conflict?

We all know of times when we have not wanted to speak up, to intervene, or to directly address painful realities—whether they involve people harming us or people harming someone else. We don’t want to get involved, or we just want to move on and tell ourselves things will get better on their own. We know that harm is being done, but out of discomfort, lack of confidence, and/or conflict avoidance, we say to ourselves things like the following:

• Who am I to judge?
• We haven’t heard the other side.
• It’s not that big of a deal.
• I don’t know all of the details, so I can’t really say anything about the situation.
• I think they’ll just work it out in their own time.
• The person doing harm won’t be able to handle the confrontation. I don’t think he’s ready. I think he needs a lot of support before he’ll be ready.
• You already talked with the person doing harm—I don’t see how bringing it up again will make a difference.
• Maybe this isn’t a good time.
• It was just a moment of crisis—it’s not a pattern. It’s not my place to say anything
• I’m too busy and tired to deal with this. People need to sort their own lives out.

If you notice these thoughts in yourself, you can ask yourself if:

• I am uncomfortable with conflict and could be thinking these thoughts because I am avoiding conflict. If so, be aware of your way of dealing with conflict and see if you can make a change.
• I am stressed out and need to step back a moment and take a rest. If so, take a moment to reflect, step out and catch a breath, or find support to help you take care of yourself. If your stress level requires more than a brief step out, then let the group know.
• I still have questions about what happened and would feel better if I have answers. If so, let the group know or see if you can talk to someone else in the group or the facilitator to see if you can get the answers. Other people may have similar questions, or you may find that you just have to feel comfortable with a situation in which there are still unanswered questions.

• I have so many conflicts with this situation and my role that I cannot play it in a good way. If so, let the group know or see if you can talk to someone else in the group and get support to figure out a better role.

Self-Reflection 2: How can I separate compassion from collusion – or making excuses?

This approach to violence intervention asks us to seek change through compassion. Anger, disgust, sadness and fear are commonplace reactions to violence and can motivate us to get involved in an intervention.

However, support for accountability requires compassion, understanding and a willingness to make a connection to the person doing harm.

There can be a difficult balance between compassion and understanding and colluding or making excuses for violence. We can think that supporting the person doing harm means that we can listen to their pain, their fear and perhaps even their blame of others, and try to see their side of the story.

Being able to see challenges to violence as a part of compassion can be difficult. The following questions can help by identifying positive parts of the person doing harm with possibilities of change.

• What positive connection do we have?

• How is my support in this process of taking accountability a gift to the person doing harm – even if it is challenging and difficult?

• How is this opportunity a gift to me – even if it is challenging and difficult?

• What kind of signs of health can I see in the person doing harm?

• What values have they shown that connect to their ability to change?
**Practice: What do I say to the person doing harm?**

Whether we are working together with just one person or a group of people, we can practice saying simple phrases to each other to help get comfortable in our role and help move beyond some of the frozen, tongue-tied experiences that we fear.

Face another ally or team member or involved person in your situation. Have one person read from this list, and have each person in the pair repeat the sentence aloud, while looking at the other person. Ask people to just use a normal speaking voice. We’re not angry, bored, threatened, or anything else when doing this exercise. You can come up with your own sentences that are helpful in your situation. There are shared as examples.

1. I care about you.
2. I’m not rejecting you.
3. I want you to have good relationships in your life.
4. I want to understand how you are feeling.
5. I want to support you to change your violence.
6. I want to support you to try new responses that might work better in your situation.
7. I want to understand what this is like for you.
8. How are you doing?
9. I think you’re blaming the process right now so that you don’t have to talk about what’s really hard. Is it possible that that’s true?
10. I don’t think this kind of violence is ever acceptable. How could you express what is important to you in a non-violent way?
11. I know it can be hard to say what is really going on for you.
12. Please lower your voice.
13. Do you need to take a break?
14. I’m sorry this is so hard.
15. I’m sure things can get better even though they’re hard now.
16. Let’s slow down.
17. What might that be like for ________ (the other person)?
18. Why do you want to make a different choice next time?
19. What are you scared of losing?
20. I hear you focusing on the other person and their faults again.
21. What are you responsible for in this situation?
22. How do you want me to share my thoughts and observations with you?
23. I need a break.
24. What is one thing you can do this week that feels like a move in a good direction?
25. Let’s hang out again. / Let’s talk again.
If you are the person being asked to take accountability, we know this process can be difficult. You are likely facing people who feel angry. You may feel all alone – in a sea of accusation.

It is easy to feel defensive – to try to protect ourselves by thinking things like:

- It’s none of their business.
- They weren’t there and have no idea what they’re talking about.
- Who are they to judge?
- What about my side of the story? I think I’m the victim.
- I can’t handle being blamed. I’m going to do whatever I can to get out of this.
- This is all _____’s (not my) fault!

We might get really defensive and attack them with words or actions. We might feel furious when we find out that people are talking behind our back, or that our friends or loved ones did not keep private what we think they should have kept private. We might want to withdraw from them entirely, build our own camp of supporters, or use violence to get back at them before they hurt us more.

Plus, this may all be an unknown. Taking accountability – using ways that don’t mean punishing us or locking us up – is just not usually done. We may not have any idea about what’s going to happen next. Fear, confusion, anger and defensiveness are understandable.

It takes courage and effort to slow down, realize that we are not going to die or be destroyed.

These questions are for self-reflection. They are meant to break through defensiveness so that you might actually be able to face this challenge, learn from it, and gain some new skills. See how answering these questions might help you.

This might be a good time to get together with someone who is supportive of you – but isn’t just supportive by agreeing that you were right and excusing your violence. Find someone who can support you and challenge you at the same time. See Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers for more help on how to find a good support person or ally for yourself.
TRY ASKING YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

1. When I’m feeling angry or defensive, I tell myself this story about why these people are talking to me or confronting me about violence…

2. Is there a more positive story I can tell myself (about why they are talking with me about this)? What is it?

3. Can I imagine myself as someone who can listen to what is being said without being defensive? What is that person like? When are times that I have been like this?

4. When I imagine or remember what it’s like for _______ (the person who was harmed) to be receiving my violent behaviors and actions, I see…

5. What can I share with the people confronting me so that they know me better, and can help me feel connected to them – instead of rejected? What can I share that isn’t making and excuse for myself or putting blame on other people?
This tool can help prepare the person who caused harm and who is being asked to take accountability for a direct meeting with the survivor or victim, or their representatives, or the community allies that may be communicating the kinds of changes that they are requesting.

It offers affirmations that can help to ground the person who caused harm to be in a more position. And it offers guiding questions that can also help the person doing harm to prepare.

The tool involves moving through 4 steps that can be repeated over time and can be done separately depending upon what discussions are coming up next. You can add or substitute your own words to make this more meaningful for yourself.

**STEP 1: I BELIEVE**

I will remind myself of the following messages. Thinking about these messages can bring me some sense of calm and peace – as I enter into a challenging situation.

1. I am a good person.
2. Like everyone, I am imperfect. I make mistakes.
3. I am stronger when I acknowledge both my strengths and my imperfections to myself.
4. I have the strength to listen to how I impact people (even when that impact is not what I intended) – without interrupting.
5. I have the strength to open my mind to another person’s way of thinking.
6. My mistakes do not define me. They only have power if I refuse to acknowledge them.
7. I know that (even when they are upset with me) others see some of my strengths and good intentions.
8. I am strong enough to understand others even if they are different from myself and to receive understanding from others.
9. I trust that I will be strong enough to let you tell your story and understand that that story is real to you.
10. I trust that I will be strong enough to stay calm even if my own story is not accepted or is questioned.

**Question:** Which three of these statements resonate most with me? How do they help me be more calm and more open minded? Are there other words that work better for me and still are in line with these statements?
STEP 2: I CAN LISTEN

1. I can listen with the intention to understand. If I find myself finding fault, wanting to defend myself or wanting to attack, I will remind myself to stop and listen.

2. Even if I have heard all of the things said before, I will listen with a new openness and see if I hear anything different.

3. I will relax and see what happens if I let what is being said enter into my own picture of what happened. This will not erase what I think or believe. It will add to it.

4. After I listen, I can take time to reflect and think about what was said. I can ask for support to help me to do this. I can use these questions to help me:
   • How has my understanding of the ‘________’s experience of me changed my own story or feeling about what happened?
   • From what I have heard, what is it that has affected ________ the most?
   • What 1-2 things are most important to ________________?
   • What struck me as most “real” in what ______________ said?

STEP 3: MAKE TRUE ATTEMPTS AT REPAIR

1. I am strong enough to admit the harm I have caused to others.

2. I am wise enough to see the impact of my harm, and understand who it hurt and how even if I did not intend it.

3. I am honorable enough to apologize for everything I have done without making any excuses.
4. I can offer my apology as a gift, expecting nothing in return.

5. I understand that repairs will take my energy and efforts. Apologies are important and are the first step in making repairs.

6. I will take time and get help from my allies if I need it to think of things I can do to offer repairs.

7. I understand that my idea of repairs and the requests from __________ may be different. We will be able to find a solution.

8. I understand that nothing I do can fully make up for the harm. Things were taken away that can not be given back.

9. Taking the step to make repairs is an important step to healthy change.

   Question: When being honest with myself, what are three things I can acknowledge about my role in this situation?

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**STEP 4: CHANGE MY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OVER TIME**

1. I commit to deep changes in my attitudes and behaviors so that I will not repeat my harmful behaviors.

2. I will stay connected to people, things, places and activities that support these changes. These include the following:
   
   People:
   Things:
   Places:
   Activities:
   Other:

3. I commit to reflecting on my attitudes based on what I heard from _________________ and seeing what attitudes I need to question and change.

4. I commit to reflecting on my behaviors and actions based on what I heard from _________________ and seeing what I need to question and change.

5. If I am finding it difficult to change or have set-backs, I will do the following things:

6. If I commit harm again, I will do the following things:

7. If I commit harm again, I expect the following consequences:
Question: What are 2-3 things I do (currently or in the past) during stress or conflict that the ____________________________ has found challenging (or that are challenging to the situation overall)?

What is one strategy for handling this in the future that I think I can do?

If you are staying connected to each other, you can ask yourself this question.

What are two things I’d like us to commit to as bottom lines for how we behave toward each other during future situations of stress and conflict?
HOW DO WE WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM?

G.1. What Is Working Together?
G.2. Working Together Across the 4 Phases
G.3. Tips
G.4. Special Considerations
G.5. Facilitator Notes
G.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
G.1. WHAT IS WORKING TOGETHER

Key Questions

• Who can work together?
• Does everyone know and agree with the goals?
• What are their roles?
• How will you communicate and coordinate?
• How will you make decisions?

What Is it?

Working Together involves the ways in which two or more people can work positively and cooperatively towards a common goal. In this Toolkit, the goal is to address, reduce, end or prevent interpersonal violence.

Working together rests on the belief that interpersonal violence is not just an individual problem, but is a community problem requiring a community level solution. For some of us, the community we can bring together is small, perhaps just a couple of people. For others, a community may be much larger.

This Toolkit offers some ways to think about working together as a group or a team and gives some tools to help us do it better. Working together consists of finding a good group or team, agreeing on goals, making group decisions, communicating well and keeping regular check-ins to make sure that everyone is taking action that is in cooperation with others.

This section attempts to correct tendencies to do nothing or to just do one’s own thing without regard for how this affects the bigger picture. It calls on us to be compassionate and patient with ourselves and others while doing the difficult work required to address, end, reduce and prevent violence.

Why Is It Important?

Working together – rather than alone or separately – can offer:

• Support for those most affected by the violence.
• Support for those involved in the intervention.
• Support for each other – counteracting the way that violence divides and hurts everyone in the community.
• More people with a larger set of skills and resources.
• More wisdom and knowledge about the situation of violence and opportunities for change.
• More people with various relationships of care and concern to the survivor or victim, person or people doing harm and others.
• A collective approach reduces isolation.
• More leverage for supporting positive change.
• Fewer gaps in the community for people to slip out of responsibility and accountability.
• Build a collective or community with new experience, skills and practices that may prevent violence in the future.

USING TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

These tools are to be used along with Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers, which may be helpful with starting a process of thinking about who allies may be.

Although you and your allies may never reach the size of a “team” and may be as few as just a couple of people, this section may help you think of the types of roles you may find yourself playing and help clarify other areas of working together such as communication and decision-making.

For an introduction to teams and a quick list of questions you might ask about how your team (big or small) functions, see Tool G1: Working Together. Snapshot: Short Question Guide.

Tool G2: Team Roles. Checklist names some typical team roles such as instigator, facilitator, nurturer, cheerleader and so on and what types of personalities might suit those roles well. It includes a checklist to help you sort out who might play these roles with the understanding that people will often play multiple roles.

Tool G3: Agreements for Sustaining over Time offers some basic agreements that can help move your group forward and can help when things get stuck.

Good communication is important for people to work well together. Tool G4: Communication Worksheet has a list of guiding questions to help you think through your communication guidelines to make sure that everybody gets the information they need.

Tool G5: Decision-Making Types and Models clarifies different ways a group can make decisions, so that you can choose what makes sense for your group, or you can clarify how your group is already making decisions. It gives a few suggestions about models of decision-making such as voting and consensus that may be unfamiliar to your group but may be helpful especially if your group is large.
G.2. Working Together Across the 4 Phases

In Section 3.6, Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Figuring out how to work together may look different at different phases or levels of crisis.

Phase 1: Getting Started

An intervention to violence might start with just one person, or a couple of people who identify a situation of interpersonal violence and feel that something should be done. It could start with the survivor or victim of violence. It could start with someone related to a situation of violence – the survivor or victim, a friend, family member, co-worker or neighbor or what we call “community ally.” It may be that the person or people doing harm begin to see that they want to change and need some support to make that happen.

Phase 2: Planning/Preparation

This Toolkit encourages the people who may first start thinking about taking action to look around and see if there are other people who can take a role in the intervention to violence. The team may get larger. People may take on particular roles that suit them. They may think of others that can join. As the group or team begins to plan and prepare to move forward, the team may need to begin to work more closely together – going through the other steps in this Toolkit, identifying allies, creating common goals, and coming up with action plans. Groups or teams may meet frequently or for longer periods of time as they create a stronger working relationship, struggle through differences that they might have and work towards a more common understanding.

Phase 3: Taking Action

Taking Action builds upon the plans and preparations that the group or team worked on together. As goals turn into actions, different members of the group or team may take more active roles. Some may take more supportive or advisory roles. Team meetings may turn from getting clear towards taking next steps. As the group or team takes action, it may become clear that others need to join or that you need to go back and look through this section or other sections to work better. It may be that people who were resistant at first, including those who caused harm will get on board as the intervention moves forward. The actions of the larger group or team may begin to bring them in to work together in a more cooperative way. As once-resistant people, such as the person or people doing harm, begin to understand the benefits of working together, they may begin to move into more active and cooperative roles.
PHASE 4: FOLLOWING UP

With success, there will be a time when the intervention moves towards closure or following up. The group or team or some smaller set may decide to keep meeting on a regular basis to follow up and make sure that change stays on a long-term basis. The team may stay together. Or they might decide that their active role is over and they can disband or change the nature of their group.

RELATED TOOLS

A group or team may start with the tools in Section 4.A. Getting Clear just to figure out what is going on and to make sure that they are on the same page.

A group or team may have started using the section Section 4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers and build more allies using this same section.

Section 4.B. Staying Safe is always important, but a growing number of people involved in an intervention may raise other safety concerns. In this case, making sure that people cooperate and have a common understanding regarding things like confidentiality and safety planning may be necessary.

A key to Working Together well is having the group or team work through the process of Section 4.D. Goal Setting. Differences of opinion within a group can be identified and worked out so that everyone can agree on common goals and cooperative ways to reach those goals.
G.3. WORKING TOGETHER TIPS

#1 READ SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW.

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

This dialogue can offer a chance for you to see how the group works together, offering an entry point to thinking, listening and learning together.

#2 TAKE THE TIME TO MEET IN PERSON.

Building a team takes in-person time. Most people are not taught how to respond to violence. There are few common understandings about how to do this well. It is useful to find out what people’s unique priorities might be, what they are concerned about, or what are their bottom-lines. Sometimes, these differences can only emerge when everyone is in the room, hearing what others are saying, and sharing their own opinions.

This is also useful for building group trust and relationships. This can be especially important when things go wrong and when it becomes easy to blame others or leave the group in frustration or anger. Things will likely go wrong. Trusting and understanding other people’s unique perspectives can go a long way in helping a group withstand the challenges of interventions.

We understand that you may have team members or people working together who may live far away but who play a very important role. Make sure that you communicate well with them. See Tool G4. Communication Worksheet for guiding questions that may help you decide what information will be particularly helpful to share with people who may not be able to meet in person. Creative solutions such as using Chat, or Skype or social networking programs can be one way to include people in meetings and processes. Think through confidentiality when using social networking tools.
#3 **TAKE THE TIME TO MEET ALL TOGETHER — ESPECIALLY WHEN IMPORTANT INFORMATION IS SHARED AND IMPORTANT DECISIONS NEED TO BE MADE.**

If the intervention seriously takes on the process of taking accountability, then it is important to keep connected to the person doing harm. Because people are often uncomfortable dealing directly with the person doing harm, that person can be kept out of the loop and left hanging. Because people may be unsure about how to handle accountability, things can move slowly.

People can easily forget to update them on what’s going on and can want to handle communication through the least personal forms of communication – like email. The person doing harm who is willing to participate can begin to build up anxiety especially if no communication is made or the only communication is vague and seemingly impersonal.

Keep connected. You may need to choose someone whose role is to keep the person doing harm informed, to keep connected to them, and to let them know that while stopping violence is important – supporting the person doing harm towards long-term change is also important.

#4 **EXPECT DIFFERENCES, TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY AND DO THE HARD WORK TO FIND COMMON GROUND.**

Addressing, reducing, ending and preventing violence is an important and challenging task. The dynamics of violence are complex and often hidden. Reactions to violence are often emotional. And people’s responses to violence can be very different.

Even if everyone has the same opinion about what happened and who is responsible, they often differ on what is to be done and how to get there. If these differences are not recognized, taken seriously and worked through to a common decision that everyone can agree with, they can cause mistakes and misunderstandings that can be not only be frustrating but also dangerous.

#5 **WORKING TOGETHER SOMETIMES REQUIRES MAJOR COMPROMISES.**

Finding common ground can mean deciding what is most important to move towards the group goal. It may require people to let go of points of disagreement for the common good. It is rare for everyone to feel 100% good about an intervention. People working together may need to find a common ground and decide whether they can live with the compromises. This section offers different models of decision-making that can help the group figure out how to make these difficult decisions.
#6 PEOPLE CAN BE INVOLVED AT DIFFERENT LEVELS — SOME PEOPLE CAN PLAY A SMALL AND SPECIFIC ROLE.

This Toolkit encourages in-person meetings that at times of information-sharing and decision-making need the participation of everyone actively involved. There are situations, however, when people can be brought in for a brief, specific role that just needs them to know enough to play that role well. For example, they may provide transportation, provide a meeting space or share specific information and just need to know enough to keep safety and whatever confidentiality is necessary.

#7 NOT EVERYONE MAKES A GOOD TEAM MEMBER.

Make use of the section Mapping Allies and Barriers to see who makes a good team member. You may find surprising allies where you would least expect it and may sometimes need to keep closer friends and family in smaller roles or out of the team entirely. People may also find that they cannot agree enough with your goals to stay on your team. They may need to step away.

#8 BE READY TO HOLD MULTIPLE ROLES.

This section highlights different roles that make a team run well. Most teams will not have the luxury of having the perfect person to play each of these roles. It is likely that people hold multiple roles, switch roles and jump in to play a role as it is needed.

#9 IF AN ORGANIZATION IS INVOLVED, THINK ABOUT WHO NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE INTERVENTION OR THE DETAILS OF THE INTERVENTION AND WHO NEEDS TO BE PART OF A TEAM.

This Toolkit encourages creative thinking about who might be on a team. However, when violence occurs within an organization, the organizational rules and culture might affect how a team gets put together. For example, it may be expected that the team is the board of directors or management or the human resources division or maybe the whole organization. It may be a group of church elders. If this happens within a collective, there may be another type of group that makes sense to work on an intervention. Often, however, an organization has not thought about how it will deal with violence or abuse. It may struggle to figure out what its role is.
This Toolkit encourages creative thinking about who might be on a team. However, when violence occurs within an organization, the organizational rules and culture might affect how a team gets put together. For example, it may be expected that the team is the board of directors or management or the human resources division or maybe the whole organization. It may be a group of church elders. If this happens within a collective, there may be another type of group that makes sense to work on an intervention. Often, however, an organization has not thought about how it will deal with violence or abuse. It may struggle to figure out what its role is.

We encourage organizations to take a look at this Toolkit and see how it can be useful in figuring out what members within the organization can best form a team. Organizations might also think about how to include other people from outside of the organization – such as friends and family of the survivor or victim or of the person doing harm.

It is also possible that people outside of an organization are coordinating their own intervention. It may be useful to coordinate to make sure that both are working towards the same goals, or at least are not in conflict with each other.

**#10 BUILD CARE, FUN AND SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE PROCESS OF WORKING TOGETHER.**

Interventions to violence involve hard work and difficult emotions.

In order to move towards the positive transformations we wish to make, it is important to build care, fun and sustainability into this work. These can be little things such as:

- Checking in at the beginnings and ends of meetings.
- Making room for spiritual practices that are meaningful to the group.
- Greeting people as they enter and leave discussions, making sure that new people are greeted and made welcome.
- Making sure there’s food and drink available to “break bread,” fill empty stomachs and bring another element of enjoyment to the meeting.
- Guarding against the overwhelming feelings of bitterness and disappointment. Laugh at oneself, recall larger goals and values, bring compassion and humor to the mistakes that everyone will make along the way.
- Noticing when people are burning out or have personal issues or crises to which they must attend. Acknowledging this and giving permission for people to take care of themselves when needed.
- Celebrating achievements, large and small.
G.4. **WORKING TOGETHER** SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout history, people have been involved in violence intervention. However, this involvement is too often based on misinformation on the dynamics of violence. People often take actions as individuals, without taking into account the opinions and actions of other people involved. Many people mean well, but lack of coordination and cooperation can lead to mixed messages, confusion and, at times, further harm.

Working Together tries to coordinate well-intentioned efforts into a system of more effective teamwork. This involves roles that suit the person, a good process for communicating and decision-making and matching these roles with well-thought out actions.

The survivor or victim is often the first or one of the first people to begin an intervention to violence. They often seek help – and in doing so, create the first steps towards working together and forming a group or team. This help-seeking may not look as obvious as some of the steps in this Toolkit. But it is these small first steps that, with some help, can lead to a process of Getting Clear, Mapping Allies and Barriers, Goal Setting and so on.

Unlike many other domestic violence or sexual assault program approaches, this Toolkit does not assume that the survivor or victim will be directly involved in the intervention. There may be other reasons that a community ally begins an intervention – sometimes without the knowledge or consent of the survivor or victim. If we think about the abuse of children, this may be the case. Children experiencing violence need help and support, but adults might need to take all of the responsibility in finding a solution to the violence children experience.

Survivors or victims may also begin an intervention but may choose to take a different, less active role once the intervention develops. They may already feel like they’ve carried the burden of violence and want others to take a more active role in making change. They may have left the situation and be unavailable for involvement. Or, in some cases, victims may be left unable to take an active role because of injury or even death.

Survivors or victims may choose to take active roles during some part of the intervention and not others. They may want to be active in some part of information sharing or decision making and not others. This Toolkit offers some guidance in making these decisions and working together with these special considerations in mind.
This Toolkit does not assume a survivor-centered or survivor-determined model, although this is one possible approach or path. It does, however, prioritize the consideration of the experience, knowledge and decision-making of the survivor and understands that the survivor or victim is often the person most impacted by violence. It also acknowledges that the impact of violence and the responsibility to address violence extends to other members of the community. This means that the process of Working Together may sometimes involve differences and even conflicts among the different people involved that need to be worked out towards common goals. Unlike the kind of survivor-centered model that is usually promoted within sexual assault or domestic violence programs, it does mean that while the survivor or victim’s needs and desires need to be taken very seriously and may even be at the center, they may also be taken into a larger set of considerations.

If you are the survivor or victim, you may have conflicting feelings about your involvement in the intervention and the decisions made among the group or team working together. Because this is a group model, you may sometimes be asked to share information that can be uncomfortable and repetitive. You can be creative about how you feel most comfortable sharing this knowledge. You may hear questions and responses from your allies that can be hurtful. You may not always get full agreement on what you think should or should not be done. This Toolkit offers different tools to make this process thoughtful and respectful of your experience, needs and desires.

If you are someone who wants to be in full control of the intervention process, you may find that other people’s considerations make you feel ignored or left out of the process.

If you are someone who wants others to take full responsibility, you may find that people are still making requests of you to tell them what happened, what you want or what they should do next.

Although you may be able to find a good match between what makes you feel comfortable and what others working together are doing, it is also likely that you will at least at times feel at odds with the process.

It may be difficult, at times, to tell the difference between a process that has gone wrong and a process that considers the needs of the community and even of the person or people doing harm. You may find it helpful to ask yourself whether the process seems to be moving towards a goal of greater change, over all.

Use the tools in this Toolkit, get support from trusted allies and see if you can express your needs and work through what may at times feel uncomfortable and even painful. Also know that you can choose to contact more mainstream or traditional domestic violence or sexual assault programs for resources that are available for survivors. You can call or visit them and ask them questions about their services if you think that you prefer this over the community-based intervention approach supported by this Toolkit. They might also be another source of support as you go through a more community-based intervention.
Unlike most other models or approaches to interpersonal violence, the community ally has an active role in Working Together. Whereas other domestic violence or sexual assault programs will usually only work directly with the survivor or victim of violence, this community-based approach assumes that the most effective intervention brings together at least some friends, family, neighbors, co-workers or other community members to work together with the survivor or victim and possibly the person or people doing harm.

This may mean bringing your knowledge, skills or actions towards helping this process. It may include regular in-person meetings to make sure that you are playing a role based on solid information and actions that are in cooperation with the rest of the group or team.

If you are a community ally, you may offer to help with or have been asked to be part of a community-based intervention process. You may even be the first person or among the first to take action to address a situation of violence and be using this Toolkit to bring others together to help out.

Use these tools including those in Mapping Allies and Barriers and in this section to determine some possible best roles and to work cooperatively with others.

It is possible that the person or people doing harm are the first to work actively to make positive change. They may have found this Toolkit or been given this Toolkit as a way to begin a process to take responsibility to address and end their violence and prevent further violence. Working Together may provide guidance towards creating a team to support a healthy process towards change.

It is also possible that the person or people doing harm are currently in no position to work as part of the team. They may be actively harmful and entirely resistant to change. A large part of this intervention may be in taking action to address and end their violence with or without their voluntary cooperation.

The aim of this Toolkit is to work together as a community in order to gain the cooperation of the person or people doing harm and to support a process of accountability and long-term change. The person or people doing harm may be resistant to working with the team at first or even for quite awhile. It is possible that they never cooperate or that their level of cooperation shifts back and forth. In Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons and In Section 4.F. Taking Accountability we state that most of us struggle with accountability. We urge you to create responses which take this struggle into account. We also know even with the good work of a team, accountability of those doing harm may not always be possible.
With this Toolkit, we approach the person or people doing harm with the intention of gaining their support and cooperation, but with the knowledge that this is very difficult and, in some cases, not possible. In Section 4.F. Taking Accountability, we describe an accountability process that creates a pathway to working together towards the common goal of ending, preventing and repairing violence. At the same time, we understand that we may not reach this goal. Reducing harm may be the best we are able to achieve.

If you are the person doing harm or are the person accused of doing harm, we urge you to consider how you can work together with this process. Even if you are the person starting this process or joined this process early on, you may find yourself in a position of being told what to do. You may have received a list of demands or feel forced into a position that does not feel like one where you are working together. You may not agree with what you are being asked to do or how it is communicated to you.

Working together may take a high degree of humility, something that may feel shameful or scary or may make you feel vulnerable, angry, and perhaps even victimized.

Your attitudes and/or acts of violence may have brought a great deal of distrust. Your may need to work hard and for a long time in order to get people to accept your change. The ways in which you harmed others may have been unintentional. The lists of harms may not totally fit what you think you have done. However, accountability may require you to consider another point of view or accept difficult compromises.

Working together is largely about working toward a common good and accepting compromises. Your compromises may be the highest in this process – in part because this process addresses harms that you imposed upon others – even if you did not mean to or did not realize their impact. Being responsible, taking accountability and making change may require big shifts of power in which your sense of individual power is greatly reduced. This may be completely uncomfortable, even devastating, and require a long period of reflection and acceptance. It may also bring relief and allow you to find compassion for yourself as well as those who were harmed. We ask you to work together to make that change.

See Section 4.F. Taking Accountability for tools to help you take accountability.
This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

#1 ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PEOPLE TO LEARN FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION FIRST IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY.

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.

#2 FIGURE OUT OR GET HELP FIGURING OUT THE EXTENT OF YOUR FACILITATOR ROLE.

This Toolkit understands that the fundamental role of the facilitator is to help guide the process to support people to use the tools in this Toolkit, and to make sure that everyone is getting the right information, is checking in with each other, and is working together in a coordinated way.

There are several other roles that might belong to you. You may also find yourself initiating the intervention (initiator), leading it (leader), writing everything down (note taker), being a primary supporter to someone else. There may only be a couple of you working on this intervention, meaning that you find yourself playing multiple roles.

If you have other people working together who can play these various roles, then you will more likely be a kind of bottom-line person, returning people to the tools in this Toolkit as needed, noticing what is not getting done and making sure that people work together to fill in these gaps.
If there are not enough people and you find yourself playing multiple roles that seem overwhelming, you may be able to pause the process and figure out what other allies can be recruited to play these roles.

#3 MAKE SURE THAT PEOPLE ARE OPEN TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.

The process of taking accountability can appear threatening to the person doing harm. Depending on their “mind set,” they may see admitting a wrong and making a change as something to be challenged. Shows of cooperation can go along with plans to threaten survivors or victims, intimidate allies, or undermine the entire accountability process.

See Section 4.B. Staying Safe for more tools that people can use to increase safety as they move forward in the process.

#4 SUPPORT PEOPLE TO WORK THROUGH THE TOOLS IN WORKING TOGETHER.

The facilitator will likely play a major role in figuring out the key roles that others can play, the decision-making process that makes the most sense for this group, and the communication process.

You may have people who have not worked in a coordinated way before. They may have a hard time understanding some of these group processes.

Note who is having a hard time and help support them to learn these processes and get more familiar with them. If someone simply is not and cannot become a team person even with support, then you and the team may have to find a way to ask this person to play a different role that does not require them to work within a team or to step off of the team if that is not possible.
G.6. Working Together
Real Life Stories & Examples

Story G. A Small Story (He Korero Iti)

We live in a town, but many of my husband’s extended family (whanau) live in the valley where he grew up about 40 kilometres away. My husband and his brother are renowned for a number of things – one being how they extend the life of their cars and vans using highly technical items like string and wire – another how they share these vehicles for a variety of tasks such as moving furniture or transporting relatives, building materials, tractor parts, traditional herbal medicines (rongoa), eels, vegetables, dogs, and pigs (dead or alive). They are renowned for being people of the people, the ones to call on in times of trouble and death, the ones who will solve the problem and make the plan. They travel to and from town, to the coast to dive for sea food, to endless meetings, to visit extended family (whanau) - along the many kilometres of dirt roads in and around the valley, through flood or dust depending on the season in those patched up, beat up, prized cars.

There are a number of things to know about the valley - one is that the last 33 children in the world of their small sub-tribe (hapu ririki) to grow up and be educated on their own lands go to school here, despite government efforts to close the school. Another is that the valley is known to outsiders and insiders as ‘patu wahine’ – literally meaning to ‘beat women’ and this is not said as a joke. The mountain for this valley is named as the doorway spirits pass through on their way to their final departure from this life. This valley is also the valley where my husband and his siblings were beaten at school for speaking their first language. It is the valley their mother sent them to so they would be safe from their father – back to her people. It is where they milked cows, pulled a plough, fed pigs but often went hungry, and were stock whipped, beaten and worse.

My brother-in-law still lives in the valley, in a group of houses next to the school. So it’s no surprise that one of our cars would be parked by these houses – right by where the children play. Perhaps also not a surprise that while playing that time old international game of rock throwing our eight year old nephew shattered the back window of the car. His mother is my husband’s cousin – and she was on the phone to us right away. She was anxious to assure us ‘that boy’ would get it when his father came home. His father is a big man with a pig hunter’s hands who hoists his pigs onto a meat hook unaided.
He is man of movement and action, not a man for talking. Those hands would carry all the force of proving that he was a man who knew how to keep his children in their place. Beating ‘that boy’ would be his way of telling us that he had also learned his own childhood lessons well.

So before he got home we burned up the phone lines – sister to sister, cousin to cousin, brother-in-law to sister-in-law, wife to husband, brother to brother. This was because my husband and his brother know that there are some lessons you are taught as a child that should not be passed on. The sound of calloused hand on tender flesh, the whimpers of watching sisters, the smell of your own fear, the taste of your own blood and sweat as you lie in the dust – useless, useless, better not born. This is a curriculum like no other. A set of lessons destined to repeat unless you are granted the grace of insight and choose to embrace new learning.

So when the father of ‘that boy’ came home and heard the story of the window ‘that boy’ was protected by our combined love (aroha) and good humor, by the presence of a senior uncle, by invitations to decide how to get the window fixed in the shortest time for the least money. Once again phone calls were exchanged with an agreement being made on appropriate restitution. How a barrel of diesel turns into a car window is a story for another time.

Next time my husband drove into the valley it was to pick up the car, and ‘that boy’ was an anxious witness to his arrival. My husband also has very big hands, hands that belong to a man who has spent most of his life outdoors. These were the hands that reached out to ‘that boy’ to hug not hurt.

A lot of bad things still happen in the valley, but more and more they are being named and resisted. Many adults who learned their early lessons there will never return. For people of the land (tangata whenua) this is profound loss – our first identifiers on meeting are not our own names but those of our mountains, rivers, subtribe (hapu) and tribe (iwi). To be totally separate from these is a dislocation of spirit for the already wounded. This is only a small story that took place in an unknown valley, not marked on many maps. When these small stories are told and repeated so our lives join and connect, when we choose to embrace new learning and use our ‘bigness’ to heal not hurt then we are growing grace and wisdom on the earth.

Di Grennell
Whangarei, Aotearoa-New Zealand
Section 4: Tools to Mix and Match contains sets of tools organized around activities that can be useful in planning and carrying out community-based interventions to interpersonal violence. They follow basic concerns that many or most groups interested in violence intervention have faced.

These sets of tools are organized in the following categories:

4.B. Staying Safe. How Do We Stay Safe?
4.C. Mapping Allies and Barriers. Who Can Help?
4.D. Setting Goals. What Do We Want?
4.E. Supporting Survivors or Victims. How Can We Help?
4.F. Taking Accountability. How Do We Change Violence?
4.G. Working Together. How Do We Work Together as a Team?
4.H. Keeping on Track. How Do We Move Forward?


In This Section:

A.1. What Is Getting Clear?
A.2. Getting Clear Across the 4 Phases
A.3. Tips
A.4. Special Considerations
A.5. Facilitator Notes
A.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
A.7. Getting Clear Tools

- Tool A2. Getting Clear Worksheet
- Tool A3. Naming the Harm Chart
- Tool A4. Harm Statement Worksheet
- Tool A5. Getting Clear: Intervention Factors At-a-Glance

4.G. How Do We Work Together as a Team?

Tool G1. Working Together Snapshot: Short Question Guide
Tool G2. Team Roles: Checklist
Tool G3. Agreements for Sustaining a Team over Time
Tool G4. Communication Worksheet
Tool G5. Decision-Making Types and Models
This Toolkit uses the language of building a team, but you may think of other ways of describing the creation of a group of people to work cooperatively towards common goals.

Some basic questions are: How will the team remain a team? How often will it meet? How do they meet? Where? Do they have to meet in one group or can meetings happen in pairs, over the phone, over email?

Teams can be different sizes:
  * Just me and the Toolkit for now – looking for more allies/team members
  * A couple of us helping each other out
  * Some helpful members of our family
  * A group of friends
  * Some people from our apartment building, neighborhood
  * Our organization, church, workplace
  * A group of us connected across cities
  * A bunch of people connecting in different ways

Teams can take different shapes or forms or structures:
  * We meet regularly and work together on everything.
  * One person coordinates the team to make sure we are part of the same plan – the rest of the team does their part but usually independently from the rest.
  * We have a lot of people working on this, but a small core group of us meets together regularly to coordinate.
  * We have a team working together – but we also have other people who we trust to play special roles.

Why and when is it helpful to have a big group meeting?

The steps of Getting Clear, Staying Safe and Goal Setting may take the biggest group of people who are affected by and who will take part in the intervention.
These steps often work better when there is a high degree of common knowledge such as Getting Clear and a high degree of consensus such as Goal Setting.

Times it may be critical to have a big group in-person meeting:

1. Getting Clear (Section 4.A.)
2. Staying Safe (Section 4.B.)
3. Goal Setting (Section 4.D.)
4. Regular or semi-regular big meetings to update, review goals and actions, and offer support and feedback to one another – either by time period, for example, monthly, or after an important milestone or event.
5. Special meetings necessitated by any big changes, emergencies or opportunities.
6. Closure meeting either set by time period or after a significant portion or all of the action steps and results have been met.

Maintaining the group between big group meetings:

It may be that carrying out an action plan can be best carried out with smaller core committee meetings or by smaller one-on-ones. People carrying out the action or people who are most affected by the intervention should always have regular support people to meet with and check in with even if the larger group does not meet for awhile.
WORKING TOGETHER TOOL G1:
SNAPSHOT/QUICK QUESTION GUIDE

This list is to help you figure out what kind of team you are, who’s in your team, and how often you expect people to meet.

1. Who’s on your team (or other word you may want to use instead)?
2. How often do you expect to meet?
3. Who needs to be part of that regular meeting?
4. Is there a smaller core group that meets more frequently? Who? How often? Where? What is their role?
5. Are there other key supporters – people who you can count on but who may not meet regularly?
6. Where do you meet?
7. What do you need at the meeting – can be supplies, food, beverages, spiritual supplies?
8. How is an agenda made for the meeting? By whom?
9. What are types of discussions or decisions that require everyone to meet together?
WORKING TOGETHER TOOL G2: TEAM ROLES CHECKLIST

When thinking about teams, we are matching team roles with people who have the skills, knowledge and resources to play that role well.

Working Together well requires:

- Ideas about what are good roles to fill.
- Thought and reflection about the qualities you and your community allies have.
- Identifying gaps of what else is needed and who could fill that role.
- Invitation of other possible people and organizations.
- Coordination of all team members either in group meetings or coordinating separate conversations.

Some Basic Team Roles:

The following are some roles into which people naturally fall. Think about whether someone is already playing this role, if they are right for the role, and if someone needs to be recruited to play this role.

Instigator – The One Who Gets Things Started

If you are reading this now, you may be the Instigator or someone may have already gotten things started. The Instigator may be the primary survivor or victim or may have been the first person motivated to start a process.

The Instigator may only have this role at the beginning – they may only kick things off but may take on a different role as things move forward.

Good people for Instigator:

- If you kicked this process off, then you are likely a natural Instigator.
Facilitator – The One Who Holds the Process

The facilitator is a key role in this Toolkit. Some may prefer to call this role the “holder” because the facilitator keeps things going by “holding” the process and making sure that the people working on the intervention can be supported by and guided by the tools in this Toolkit.

Good people for Facilitator:

☐ Trusted person
☐ Not too involved in the situation of violence – but knowledgeable
☐ Level-headed person
☐ Able to see the big picture and keep details moving along
☐ Has a somewhat good memory or a good way of recording things

Coordinator – The Glue

There may be a coordinator in this process, not necessarily making all of the decisions but making sure that everyone on the team is on board, working well together, getting the right information and playing their role effectively. This may also be a role taken on by the Facilitator.

Good person for Coordinator:

☐ Trusted person
☐ Able to see big picture and keep things moving along
☐ Sensitive to others
☐ Good at being inclusive and not leaving people out
☐ Good at working with different types of people and personalities

Logistics Person – Dealing with the details of time and place

There may be one person who makes sure there’s a place to meet, there’s food and drink at the meeting, there’s paper, kleenex, and other supplies as needed.

Good person for Logistics Person:

• Responsible
• Detail oriented
• Organized
Notetaker – Keeping the details

As an intervention moves along, it will be useful to have some notes or other ways to keep track of important points such as:

- Basic information about what happened (see Getting Clear)
- Goals
- Safety Plan
- Important communication sent to or received from survivor, person doing harm or others involved in the intervention
- Key steps along the way

Good person for Notetaker:

- Detail oriented
- Good memory
- Able to keep notes in an organized way and in a safe place

Nurturer – Keeps people feeling good

Violence intervention is difficult and exhausting work. The Nurturer keeps people in a caring, compassionate environment and encourages people to make sure that they are considering not only tasks to be done but the compassionate spirit underlying the task.

Good person for Nurturer:

- Trusted person
- Compassionate and caring

Reality Checker – Makes sure we are doing things that are realistic

It is easy to set up ambitious goals and ambitious timelines. The Reality Checker thinks about what is likely to happen and tries to prevent unrealistic expectations that could lead to frustration and burn-out.

Good person for Reality Checker:

- Has good understanding of the people and the situation
- Can bring people back to reality without losing the higher aims
- Gets real without wallowing in negativity
Communicator – Make sure we are listening to each other, checking in and following up

The Communicator is similar to the Coordinator or the Facilitator but the focus is on communication – verbal, written, email, etc. The Communicator makes sure that people share the right information, within a reasonable amount of time, and have good follow-up.

Good person for Communicator:

- Trusted person
- Understands that different people give and receive information differently
- Has good follow-up

Vision-Keeper – Helps us keep to the loftier parts of our goals

The Vision-Keeper keeps an eye to loftier goals and reminds people when morale sinks or when people begin to driven by hate, revenge or other negative motivations.

Good person for Vision-Keeper:

- Visionary
- High ideals

Cheerleader – Keeps people energized and positive

The Cheerleader can keep people energized and positive. The Cheerleader keeps a positive team spirit.

Good person for Cheerleader:

- Enthusiastic
- Inspirational
- Fun
Supporter – Supports, stands by and advocates for the key people within the group

A healthy team has people who are able to act as supporters for the survivor or victim, other vulnerable people such as children, an organization that may be suffering under the weight of violence and the process of intervention, the person or people doing harm, and other people on the team who may have a particularly stressful or difficult role.

The Supporter will be looking out for that person or organization, take special notice of their needs, and help to advocate for them when others are not paying enough attention. They can make sure that information is being adequately communicated, that they are participating in decision-making and that their emotional needs are being addressed.

Good person for supporter:

- Trusted person
- Compassionate
- Able to balance needs of one person within the needs of the whole group
- Supports certain individuals without adding to divisions within the group – works towards a healthy whole
Roles Checklist:

Do you have someone to play these roles? (Someone may play more than one role). If not, can you work together well without it? Do you need to find someone to fill in the gaps?

☐ Facilitator ________________________________
☐ Coordinator ________________________________
☐ Logistics Person ____________________________
☐ Notetaker _________________________________
☐ Nurturer ________________________________
☐ Reality Checker ______________________________
☐ Communicator ______________________________
☐ Vision Keeper ________________________________
☐ Cheerleader ______________________________
☐ Supporter for survivor or victim __________________________
☐ Supporter for children ______________________________
☐ Supporter for person doing harm __________________________
☐ Supporter for other ______________________________

Add your own:

☐ __________________________________________
☐ __________________________________________
☐ __________________________________________
Keeping teams together is difficult work. These are some basic agreements that others have used that may be helpful.

1. Check in to see what everyone is thinking and feeling about the situation you are working on – make room for confusion, doubts, and questioning
2. When in doubt, ask a question
3. Take notes – you won’t remember and things get more confusing over time (You may want to assign a Notetaker)
4. Review and clarify decisions – make sure you all agree on what you decided
5. Praise efforts and celebrate achievements – celebrating even the small things can take you a long way
6. When absent, follow up with someone
7. Forgive each other, cut each other slack – and – at the same time, find a way to get necessary steps done
8. Make sure steps and goals match the team’s capacity or what’s possible
9. Make criticisms specific and constructive
10. Move towards resolution. Move away from gossip.

Add your own:
One of the most important things about teams is to keep up communication. Communication helps the process of an intervention to go more smoothly. People can be reminded of goals and action plans. They can be informed to take a different course of action or to meet again as a team especially if things do not go as planned.

Communication can be particularly challenging when dealing with violence because the details of intervention are often confidential and teamwork is informal. Facebook may not be appropriate for communication because of privacy concerns. In-person meetings might be difficult because everyone is busy or lives in different places.

Emergencies can come up, or so can new opportunities. There may be key pieces of information that others need to make sure that they take action that fits the situation.

These are some guiding questions to create sound systems of communication:

1. **Is there a key person to direct communications or to check in to make sure that people know what is going on?**
   - You may think about the facilitator, a communications person, a notetaker
   - You may want to think about someone who has good communication skills

   - Direct and diplomatic
   - Careful and thorough
   - Has good judgment
   - Has enough time and access to resources like phone, email, etc. to keep up a good flow of communication
   - Has a good memory for details or can take notes
   - Has a solid understanding of the values, goals, bottom-lines and action plan well enough
   - Will inform but not gossip
2. Who gets to know what types of knowledge?
   - Think about key people or roles to consider. What can they know? What should they know? Are there things they should not know?
     
     - Facilitator
     - Survivor(s) or victim(s)
     - Person or people doing harm
     - Parents or guardians particularly if this involves a child
     - Everyone involved on this intervention
     - Regular team members but not necessarily other allies who are also helping
       - Sub-group, core group or steering committee
       - Everyone in the community

3. What are the key things to communicate?
   - Goals, bottom lines and updates
   - Action plan and updates
   - Action steps taken and results of those actions
   - New, unexpected changes arising such as:
     
     - Risk and safety concerns
     - New opportunities to take action or to add people as team members or allies
     - Major changes in people’s feelings about the intervention or steps planned – time to reflect and change course of action
     - Major changes in people’s ability to carry out the intervention or steps planned – time to speed up, delay or change course of action
4. What are the safety considerations and how does this affect communication? (See Section 4.B. Staying Safe)

- Can there be risks or dangers to anybody if certain people find out?
  - See risks and danger chart in Section 4.B. Staying Safe

- Can there be risks or dangers to the intervention – will it be jeopardized or ruined if certain people find out?

- Are there risks and dangers if the “system” finds out? Police, schools, mandated reporters, child protective services, ICE (immigration authorities)?

5. What are the best methods for communication among those who need to know?

- Think about convenience, accuracy of information and need for forms of communication that promote trust and team-building. There can be different methods for different people and situations.
  - In-person one-on-one?
  - In-person meetings?
  - Phone calls? Conference calls?
  - Written notes? If these need to be private, how can you insure that they do not get into the hands of people who might pose a risk or danger?
  - Emails? List serves? Do these need to be private and protected?
  - Blogs? Do these need to be private and protected?

- Is there a communication system to pass along information that will work with your group? Here are some alternatives:
  - Everyone communicates to everyone (easier if there are very few people)
  - One person communicates to everyone and oversees that everyone gets the information they need?
  - People on the team divide up who they communicate to – it may be based on how often they see certain people, how close they are to them, and so on
- Special considerations. Unless the survivor or victim and/or person doing harm have a key or leading role in the intervention, it can be easy to drop them out of the communication loop. They can start to feel isolated or anxious as they have to fill in the blank of non-communication with their imagination. You may want to make sure that someone they are comfortable with plays a special role in making sure that they get the information they need and want.

  - Survivor or victim: Do you have agreements on what information gets communicated to the survivor or victim, who communicates, how often and through what format?

  - Person doing harm: Do you have agreements on what information gets communicated to the person doing harm? Who communicates, how often and through what format?
Who gets to make decisions? How are they made? Are there key decisions made collectively while others can be made by certain individuals? Are there decisions made along the way that need to be brought back to others in the group?

Decision-making is closely linked to communication. Groups with good communication should also communicate about what kind of decision-making that it will follow. Even if it is decided that someone in the group has more authority to make certain decisions.

**DEcision**

**Types of Decision-Making**

1. Collective consensus
2. Executive Committee or Steering Committee
3. Authority-led (with collective input)
   a. Survivor-led or survivor-centered
   b. Group leader agreed upon by everyone because they are trusted, can be more neutral, or have leadership skills
   c. Group leader due to agreed-upon leadership role in that group or institution
      i. For example, in a family, it may be a parent, a grandparent, or an elder
      ii. In a faith-based institution, it may be the clergy or a church elder

**Different decision-making styles:**

Note: The different ways of getting collective involvement listed at the end of this section: 1) Five fingers; 2) Voting; and 3) Round Robin can all be used with any kind of decision-making method.

**Consensus**

Consensus decision-making means that everyone at least in the primary team is participating in a shared and equal manner to make decisions. This type of decision-making requires a trusting relationship among everyone or the need to work closely together to build a trusting relationship. Collective consensus can be helped by using the guides in this Toolkit which clarifies some of the considerations that should be made and some processes through which the whole group can work together towards collective decisions.

Sometimes this is also called modified consensus because there may be times that the group will let go of everyone feeling 100% good about a decision. See the Five Finger consensus tool below to see how groups can come to consensus without always reaching full agreement.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OR STEERING COMMITTEE

Sometimes a large group can come together and make certain key decisions such as goals, allies and barriers, action plans. It may be more efficient for a smaller team to make decisions along the way, including the decision to bring a particular issue back to the larger group. The large group can determine which decisions must be brought back to the big group and which can be handled by the smaller committee.

GROUP LEADER

Oftentimes groups have an official or unofficial leader, someone who weighs in more strongly on decision-making. Although groups can also have a leader who simply makes all of the decisions without much consideration of the group, this type of leadership does not work well with the community-based model. If this is a collective process, then even if one authority has more leadership and weighs in more strongly on decision-making, there must still be significant input and feedback from the collective group.

Some groups may choose a leader or a leader may naturally emerge. The leader should not simply be the loudest voice, the most outraged person, or the most aggressive or assertive person. The leader also does not have to be the traditional authority in the group. For example, even though many families traditionally have fathers or male elders as leaders, the leader may be someone who is well-respected but not necessarily the traditional head of a household. Or, even though churches often have the clergy as a leader, an intervention taking place within a church or being helped by church members, the intervention leader may be a trusted person who is not traditionally a church leader.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADERS

Good leadership skills and characteristics. A leader should be trusted, have good judgment, and consider well the opinions and concerns of everyone who is affected by the violence and by the intervention. The leader should be attuned to all of the opinions held within the team.

The leader should either have a good understanding of interpersonal violence or take time to learn more about violence by talking to the survivor who usually has expertise on the violence they have faced. The leader can also look on the internet for information or talk to someone at a local resource center. We strongly suggest that the leader and all key people participating in the intervention read the entire Section 2. The Basics.

Some groups may consider a “survivor-centered” or “survivor-led” process in which the group has decided that they feel most comfortable with the survivor driving the decision-making. This is often a political decision made for various reasons: 1) Since it is usually the case that violence has most impacted the survivor, it may be politically important for the survivor or victim to take primary leadership in the intervention. 2) The nature of interpersonal violence is often to leave the survivor or victim in a powerless position. Taking leadership and power in the intervention can be considered a key turn towards reversing this relationship of power. 3) The group may consider the survivor’s or victim’s leadership and self-determination as a primary goal of the intervention.
A useful tool for collective consensus is the five-finger approach. Following discussion of some aspect of the intervention, if a decision needs to be made, the facilitator can ask for consensus.

Using five fingers, everyone in the group can see how people weigh in on a decision, even if they’ve been silent. This helps decision-making to be clear and transparent rather than relying on someone’s impression of what others think. It helps to prevent people with strong opinions from dominating the decision even if they have dominated the discussion. It helps quiet people express their opinions even if they did not speak up.

Five fingers also helps get a group move more quickly through decisions. It reduces the need for everyone to repeat how they feel. While sometimes this is helpful and necessary, it may take up valuable time if this has to happen every step along the way.

Five fingers is preferable to voting since “majority rules” can mask huge disagreements – disagreements which may show up later on through dissatisfaction with action steps taken, splits within the group, breaking confidentiality and so on.

**HOW TO USE FIVE FINGERS:**

Make sure everyone understands the five finger consensus. It may feel awkward, but after getting used to it, it can really make decision-making quicker while still making it fair. After discussion of the situation that needs to be decided on, the facilitator or someone can ask for a consensus vote – you can use your own words for this procedure. For example, ask “are we ready to make a decision? Can we see if we have a consensus?”

Everyone has to hold up their hand and show their opinion. If the facilitator is not just a neutral outsider but is a part of the decision-making team, then they also need to show their opinion.

1. One finger (index finger) – I strongly agree
2. Two fingers (index and middle finger) – I agree
3. Three fingers (index, middle, and fourth finger) – I have some reservations, but I can go with it
4. Four fingers (Index, middle, fourth finger, and pinkie) – I don’t like it, but I’ll go along with it – I won’t stop the process by blocking
5. Five fingers (whole hand open) – I feel strongly enough about this to block this decision
6. Six fingers (whole hand plus index finger of other hand) – Wait, I have questions or need clarification
If everyone has one to four fingers up, then consensus is reached. If you feel comfortable with a stronger level of consensus (ones and twos), you could ask the threes and fours why they hesitated. This could lead to more discussion until a stronger consensus is reached or the request for some alternatives which could lead to a stronger consensus.

If someone has a five, consensus is blocked. This is a pretty strong stand to take, and it should be understood that fives are saying that they feel so strongly that they are willing to block decision-making. More discussion needs to follow until the person or people blocking can shift. If blocking happens often, the facilitator can help the group figure out if there is another dynamic going on. Is the team just moving forward without considering some important conflicting opinions? Are there certain people who simply cannot work within this team structure?

If someone has a six, consensus is halted until that person’s questions are answered. If your group often gets sixes, then it is likely that not enough discussion is taking place and decisions are being rushed.

For voting, people are asked to raise their hands if they agree. Votes are counted, and generally a “majority rules” (more than half raise their hands) moves that decision forward.

This collective intervention does not favor voting because voting can overlook significant conflicts within the group. If certain people do not agree with a decision, this can lead to factions breaking off, which may take a different or conflicting set of actions. It can lead to people breaking confidentiality to tell others what this group has decided because they are unhappy with the decisions. It can cause people to leave the group or drop off because they have serious disagreements.

Sometimes, a well-functioning collective simply cannot come to consensus on a certain decision and will agree that a vote is the only way to move forward. If the group has tried consensus and at least can come to consensus that they feel okay about resorting to a vote, then voting can make sense in these limited situations.
There may be certain times in discussion and decision-making where it is useful to get everyone’s opinion on a certain situation. Round-Robin is a way to ask everyone to share their unique opinion, concerns or questions. This can be a way to get a big picture of where everyone is at, to see where there are key commonalities and differences, and to uncover certain important points which others may not have even considered.

Round-Robin may be useful as the group is getting to know each other or may just be getting familiar with the situation of violence they are addressing. This is especially true during the goal-setting phase where it is important to make sure that everyone is in touch with their own ideas about what should be done and that they also understand other people’s perspectives.
4H KEEPING ON TRACK
HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

H.1. What Is Keeping on Track?
H.2. Keeping on Track Across the 4 Phases
H.3. Tips
H.4. Special Considerations
H.5. Facilitator Notes
H.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
H.7. Keeping on Track Tools
H.1. WHAT IS KEEPING ON TRACK?

Key Questions:

- Are we ready to take the next step?
- How did it go?
- What did we achieve?
- Did we celebrate our achievements (even the small ones)?
- What needs to change?
- What is the next step?

What Is It?

A process of violence intervention is likely to be made up of many moments when decisions need to be made, actions are taken and next steps are planned and reviewed. Keeping on Track makes sure that the overall intervention is going well, that goals are in place, and that the process is moving forward in a good direction. It includes self-checks both for groups and for individuals to make sure that everyone is moving towards the goals. It gives opportunities for adjustments to be made as actions are taken along the way and as situations change.

In short, Keeping on Track helps us to figure out:

1. Are we ready to take the next step?
2. How did it go?
3. What is the next step after this?

These steps can continue in cycles as in intervention process moves forward. So we can expect that these questions will be asked repeatedly along the way.

Why Is It Important?

Because the dynamics of interpersonal violence and those of interventions are complicated and often ever-changing, even the best initial plans require some degree of monitoring and evaluation. Having a regular way to continually check in can help us make the appropriate changes in our course as we move along.
USING TOOLS IN THIS SECTION

The tools in this section are organized around typical situations in which we might need to take a look around: 1) at the beginning or end of a meeting; and 2) before and after taking an action.

Oftentimes, a meeting about an intervention will end with next steps. Making sure that these are clear and having a plan for these to be carried out is an important part of keeping on track and moving forward. Tool H1: How Are We doing? End of Meeting: Guiding Questions can help to make sure that these next steps will happen.

To figure out next steps in general, use Tool H2. What Are Next Steps: Guiding Questions. As you are about to take these next steps, then you can use Tool H3. Are We Ready for the Next Steps: Guiding Questions.

After you take the next step, then Tool H4. How did we do? Reflecting on an Action: Guiding Questions can be useful in reflecting on how it went. Some people refer to this as an evaluation.

It may be useful for individuals or groups to occasionally step back and see how they have been doing as a group. Tool H5. How Are We Doing? Individual Self-Check: Guiding Questions can be a useful tool for individuals to think about the process and see how they are contributing. For groups, this can be done with Tool H6. How Are We Doing? Group Self-Check: Guiding Questions.

Finally, the group will come to a time when the intervention comes to a close and moves into a phase of following-up. This might be because goals have been reached. Or it may be a time to step even if goals have not been reached. Tool H7. How are we doing? Closing an Intervention: Guiding Questions can help your group move through this step.
H.2. KEEPING ON TRACK ACROSS THE 4 PHASES

In Section 3.6. Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases, the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Keeping on Track includes tools that can be used at any stage of the intervention.

**PHASE 1: GETTING STARTED**
As you get started, you may start putting the pieces together that will form the foundation of your intervention. Although things can change dramatically along the way, you may want to use the tools in this Section to return to the basics and make sure that you are following a steady course of action.

**PHASE 2: PLANNING/PREPARATION**
As you plan and prepare your set of actions, these tools can serve as good check points to move along. If you are primarily involved in planning meetings during this stage, the tools can help you make sure that you have clarified next steps at the end of each meeting.

**PHASE 3: TAKING ACTION**
This section also contains tools that are focused on preparing yourself for taking action. It has simple checklists and guiding questions that can help you get clear and prepared right before you are ready to take your next step. Once you take the next step, it can help you to determine whether that last action went well or if changes need to be made.

**PHASE 4: FOLLOWING UP**
These tools can help you to see what follow up work you may need to do as you move towards the end of an intervention, or if you decide that you can no longer move forward.

**RELATED TOOLS**
Tools to help teams or coordinated efforts are included in the Section 4.G. Working Together.

Tools to determine safety concerns before taking next steps are included in the Section 4.B. Staying Safe.
H.3. KEEPING ON TRACK TIPS

#1 READ “SOME BASICS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW.”
Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. Pay special attention to Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do.

#2 AS MORE ACTIONS TAKE PLACE, IT CAN BE USEFUL TO USE THE TOOLS IN THIS SECTION AS “CHEAT SHEETS” FOR A QUICK REFERENCE AS YOU PREPARE TO TAKE ACTION.
Even if you have a good understanding of your overall goals and direction, each action taken can have specific narrower concerns on which to focus, especially if actions might involve safety risks. These Tools can be used as a quick list to make sure that you enter an action situation with clearly defined do’s, don’ts and emergency back-up plans.

#3 AFTER TAKING ACTION, IT CAN BE USEFUL TO LOOK BACK TO SEE HOW YOU DID, WHAT YOU LEARNED AND HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE.
Interventions rarely take place exactly as planned. They often involve many unknowns about how people will react, how well teams prepare and communicate with each other, and emotional reactions that one might have when actually taking action. The tools to help look back and learn lessons are helpful in making sure that adjustments can be made.

#4 CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS.
Interventions are difficult. They can be painful, slow-moving and frustrating. There may be many interventions that do not result in the goals that were set out at the beginning.
This does not mean that there is nothing to celebrate. There is!

Simply calling together a meeting can call for celebration. Making a list of goals can be a reason to celebrate. Staying safe for a day, a week is cause for celebration. Stopping violence for one more month and noticing the change is worth celebrating.

For some people celebrating will be easy and natural. For others, this will be unfamiliar territory – criticism and negativity or silence may be a more common way to get through something difficult.

Even if you do not feel comfortable with celebration, try celebrating a little. Try praising someone else for something achieved. Praise yourself. Clap. Sing a song. Do a little dance. Or simply say, “good job.”

Celebrating achievements is a necessary step towards keeping on track and moving forward.
H.4. KEEPING ON TRACK SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

While the process of Keeping on Track may be different depending upon your relationship to the violence, these tools are the most general set of tools within this Toolkit.

They are useful for determining next steps whether you are the survivor or victim of violence, the people primarily intervening or the person who has done harm. There are no special considerations for these tools. They can be used by anyone for any part of the process of intervention.

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. Some Basics Everyone Should Know. An especially important section can be Section 2.2. Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

#1 KEEP THE GOALS IN MIND AND USE THE TOOLS IN KEEPING TRACK TO MOVE TOWARDS THE GOALS.

If an intervention goes for a long time, it can be easy to lose track of where you are going. These tools help you to move along to the next step. Keeping these tools in mind as you work towards the goals can be a useful way to stay on a path to progress.

#2 KEEP THESE TOOLS ON HAND AT EVERY MEETING OR EVERY STEP.

These tools can help you figure out the next steps after a meeting, after an action or just along the way. They can be used for an individual or for a group. You can think about how to use the questions to move you along as you facilitate a meeting. Or you can remind everyone that these tools are there to help each individual to keep on track.

#3 REMEMBER TO CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS.

You will likely find that an intervention to interpersonal violence is hard work. It is easy to feel confused, disappointed and wonder if anything will move forward. These tools help to figure out how you are doing and how to move to the next step. However, an important step will be to notice the small successes, however small, like the little steps forward, things somebody did well or led to some kind of positive feeling. Celebrating small and big steps along the way will be important in moving towards bigger goals.

It is possible that in an intervention, there will only be the small achievements. We at Creative Interventions have come to see each step and each gain as important. We urge you to do the same.
Put your story here.
Section 4. Tools to Mix and Match

### 4.A. Getting Clear. What Is Going On?

**In This Section:**
- A.2. Getting Clear Across the 4 Phases
- A.3. Tips
- A.4. Special Considerations
- A.5. Facilitator Notes
- A.6. Real Life Stories and Examples
- A.7. Getting Clear Tools
  - Tool A2. Getting Clear Worksheet
  - Tool A3. Naming the Harm Chart
  - Tool A4. Harm Statement Worksheet
  - Tool A5. Getting Clear: Intervention Factors At-a-Glance

### 4.H. How Do We Move Forward?

**Tool H1. How Are We Doing? End of Meeting: Guiding Questions**

**Tool H2. What Are Next Steps: Guiding Questions**

**Tool H3. Are We Ready for the Next Step: Guiding Questions**

**Tool H4. How Did We Do? Reflecting on an Action: Guiding Questions**

**Tool H5. How Are We Doing? Individual Self-Check: Guiding Questions**

**Tool H6. How Are We Doing? Group Self-Check: Guiding Questions**

**Tool H7. How Are We Doing? Closing an Intervention: Guiding Questions**
At the end of each meeting or phone call, email discussion, or other form of communication, you will have next steps. Various next steps may come up throughout the call, email discussion or meeting. It can be useful to summarize these at the end to make sure that you: 1) remember the next steps; 2) agree on the steps; and 3) have a clear plan to tackle each one.

To organize next steps, you can follow these guided questions:

TIP: If some steps are only for certain people, write their name or initials after that step.

1. Will you meet again or talk again? When? Where?

2. Will you communicate before the next meeting?
   - What will you communicate?
   - How will you communicate?
   - Who will initiate communication?
   - By when will you communicate?

3. What other “homework” or actions will happen before the next meeting?
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<th>Notes <em>(timeline, type of follow-up, etc.)</em></th>
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Sometimes it is useful to take a moment and make sure you are prepared for the next step in your plan. These are some questions you can ask yourself as you are about to take the next step.

1. **Are we clear about what the next step is?**
   a. What is it that we are about to do?
   b. What concrete steps does it involve?
   c. Who is going to do what?

2. **Are we clear about the reason or reasons we are doing this?**
   a. Why are we taking this next step?
   b. What do we hope to achieve?
   c. What larger goal is this linked to?

3. **Are we clear about how we want to do the next step?**
   a. How are we taking the next step?
   b. Are there any clear “do’s” or “don’ts” about how we take the next step?

4. **Are we clear about who is responsible for taking the next step?**
   a. Who will is responsible overall?
   b. Who will initiate it or get it started?
   c. Who else is involved and what are their roles?
   d. Who will serve as back-up if other people cannot do their part?

5. **Are we clear about when the next step should happen?**
   a. When are we starting the next step?
   b. Are there phases to the next step? If so, when do they start?
   c. Is there a time by which we want or need the next step to be completed?

6. **Are we clear about follow-up after the next step?**
   a. When the next step is completed, what is to happen? And who is responsible?

7. **When we complete the next step, what happens after that? What is the next step or steps?**

8. **Is there anything else that is important?**
These are good questions to ask at the end of a meeting. They can help improve your meetings as you go along so that they are productive, constructive and move you towards your goals.

1. Did we meet the goals of the meeting?
2. Did the meeting have a good feeling overall?
3. Were there disagreements or conflicts? If so, what were they about? (For example, different perspectives, different values, different communication styles, conflicting personalities?)
4. If there were disagreements or conflicts, were we able to reach a place to move forward?
5. Was there anybody who was taking up too much space? Too little space? What can we do about it?
6. Did we make sure to address any special needs of the survivor, person doing harm, or others?
7. Was the meeting well-facilitated? Did it move along smoothly?
8. Does anything need to change? If so, what needs to change? What is our system or plan for change?
9. What were the achievements (including small ones)? Did we celebrate the achievement?
10. Did we end up with clear next steps? What are the next steps?
Evaluation of the process is important at each step of the way. The following is a list of guiding questions to ask ourselves as individuals as we are working on an intervention.

1. How does this process relate to what is important to me?
2. What do I bring to this process?
   a. Things that I value or care about
   b. Things that I know or people that I know
   c. Things I have to offer – can include things like transportation, cooking, good listener, spaces to meet, etc.
   d. Other?
3. What are some negatives I need to watch out for?
   a. Attitudes (for example, negativity, impatience, tendency to gossip, tendency to fight or put people down, tendency to stay silent and not say what I think)
   b. Ways of communicating that put people off
   c. Ways of being in a group that can get in the way
4. This is about ending violence. Did I fully go through Section 2: Some Basics Everyone Should Know? How can I look through this thoroughly or have someone share it with me?
5. Do I know about the collective goals and action plan? If I do not, how can I ask for them?
6. This is a team or collective process. How is this for me?
   a. What feels good and supportive?
   b. What is difficult?
   c. How am I helping?
   d. What am I doing to get in the way?
   e. How can I make things better?
7. How have I contributed to the group process or to moving towards the goals?
8. What else can I do to contribute?
9. Is there anything I have a problem with or disagree with that I need to share with the group (and haven’t so far)? Are there any secrets or things people don’t know about that I need to share?
   a. What is it?
   b. Is there any difficulty in sharing this? Why?
   c. Does this need to be shared? If so, how can I do it in the best way?
   d. Who can I go to for support?

10. Is there anything else that is important?
These are general questions to ask along the way to help make sure things are working smoothly.

1. Do we have clear goals and bottom lines? What are they?
2. Are we guided by clear values? What are they?
3. Do we all seem to be on the same page? If not, who is on the same page? Who is not? What can we do to get everybody on the same page?
4. Are we working through disagreements or conflicts in a good way?
5. Are we all getting enough support?
6. Are we offering enough support?
7. Are we keeping connected to and supporting the survivor?
8. Are we keeping connected to and supporting the person doing harm?
9. Are we taking care of people who are vulnerable or need our extra care? (for example children, etc.)
10. Are we regularly doing risk assessment and safety planning?
11. Are we moving towards or do we have a clear action plan with the right people taking responsible for each piece, specific tasks or expectations, reasonable timelines?
12. Are we flexible enough to consider new opportunities or unanticipated roadblocks?
13. Are there things we need to change? What are they?
14. Do we have a good system or plan for change? If not, what changes need to be made?
15. What are the next steps?
An intervention will involve actions along the way. It is helpful to take a look back at an action to see how it went, what we can learn from that action, and what we should do in the future.

These questions guide us through helpful questions regarding an action.

1. **Was the action well-planned?**
   a. Specific enough?
   b. Did it involve the right people?
   c. Did it involve the right number of people? Too many? Too few?
   d. Did everyone work together well?
      i. If so, what made it go well?
      ii. If not, why?
      iii. What can be improved?
   e. Was the action appropriate for its goal?

2. **Were the possible risks and safety planning taken into account?**

3. **Did the action go as planned? If not, assess:**
   a. Why not? Could this be improved if you did it again? Or for the future?
   b. Were we able to make moves to correct for this?

4. **Did the action do what it was supposed to do?**
   a. Yes, no, maybe?
   b. How do you know?
   c. Do we need to get more information? What?

5. **What did we learn?**
   a. Positives
   b. Negatives

6. **Does anything need to change? If so, do we have a good system or plan for change?**
7. Does the action change anything significant in other parts of the intervention? What?

8. What do we need to communicate back to others? To whom?

9. What are the next steps?
At some point, you may come to the end of an intervention. This may be because the intervention went well and your goals were reached. It may also be because you need to end the intervention – even if you did not reach all of your goals.

These are some questions to ask yourself regarding the intervention as a whole.

1. How did the intervention go as a whole?
2. How did the group or team work together?
3. Have overall goals been met? If not all, which ones?
4. Have people’s individual goals been met? If not all, which ones?
5. Has the intervention process been guided by the team values and bottom-lines? Which were particularly followed? Which were not?
6. Did the team work well together?
   a. Was there enough/appropriate support?
   b. How was the communication?
   c. How was the decision-making process?
   d. Is the group sustainable or able to keep together for long enough to reach the group’s goals?
7. What changes have happened for the group or community? What is positive? What is unchanged? What is negative?
   a. How is the level of trust?
   b. How is the sense of community affected?
   c. How was the safety of the community affected? More safe? Less safe?
   d. Would we be able to do this again if necessary?
   e. Are we able to share these lessons with others?
   f. Anything else?
8. What changes have happened for the survivor or victim? What is positive? What is unchanged? What is negative?
   a. How is the level of trust for others?
   b. How did this affect one’s sense of safety?
   c. How did this affect one’s health (physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.)?
   d. Did this lead to a sense of repair from the harm?
   e. Did this person feel supported – feel a sense of community?
   f. Are we able to share these lessons with others?
   g. Anything else?

9. What changes have happened for the person doing harm? What is positive? What is unchanged? What is negative?
   a. How is the level of trust for others? How is the level of trust from others for the person doing harm?
   b. How is the sense of this person’s safety? How is this person now affecting the safety of others?
   c. How did this affect the health (physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.) of the person doing harm? And how did this affect the health of others who were impacted by the harm?
   d. How does this person now understand the harm that they caused and the impact of that harm to others – and to themselves?
   e. How did this change this person’s harmful attitudes?
   f. How did this change this person’s harmful behaviors?
   g. Did the person doing harm receive support for these changes – a sense of community?
   h. Are we able to share these lessons with others?
   i. Anything else?
10. What changes have happened for others ______________________? What is positive? What is unchanged? What is negative?
   a. How is the level of trust for others?
   b. How did this affect one’s sense of safety?
   c. How did this affect one’s health (physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.)?
   d. Did this lead to a sense of repair from the harm?
   e. Did people feel supported – feel a sense of community?
   f. Are we able to share these lessons with others?
   g. Anything else?

11. Would you consider this intervention a success?
   a. What was successful?
   b. What wasn’t successful?
   c. Is it overall a success?

12. Congratulations! Can you share your story (successes and limitations) with others? Think about sharing your story with the StoryTelling & Organizing Project (www.stopviolenceeveryday.org).