

Safety Planning Lesson Plan

Using a Symbols-based Template

Participants will...

- Learn about different types of abuse and the words that describe abuse.
- Learn about some signs that violence could happen.
- Discuss reasons why people stay in abusive relationships.
- Make a personalized safety plan.
- Learn about community services to help him/her stay safe.

After Today's Session Participants will...

- Know at least 3 different words for abuse.
- Have a safety plan that is designed for him/her.
- Be able to list 5 people/places who could help him/her when he/she feels unsafe.

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How to Use this Plan



safety first initiative

This Plan was developed by members from the Safety First Initiative, Kansas City's Collaborative to End Violence Against Women with Disabilities. This plan is a guide for group facilitators or teachers to use when approaching the subject of unhealthy relationships and abuse with adults. It is designed to be inclusive of individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or those who prefer symbols-based materials. Following the lesson plan is a Symbols-Based Safety Plan Template that participants can develop on paper or keep in their head as a plan to keep safe or as safe as possible.

Adding this Lesson Plan to Existing Curriculum

*This lesson plan is not meant to be taught as a stand alone piece of curriculum. It works best as a part of a larger conversation around health, relationships, boundaries and communication. Unhealthy relationships and/or abuse are very sensitive topics, particularly for those who have experienced abuse. **It is important to cover the components of healthy relationships prior to using this lesson plan.***



Community Resources are Key

It is critical to be familiar with victim service resources in your own community in case participants would like to learn more and/or receive supportive services. Partner agencies involved with the Safety First Initiative are knowledgeable about serving survivors with disabilities. It is recommended that a victim services provider be on hand when this material is discussed. Meeting a service provider helps participants to identify the service agency as a viable resource.

Rose Brooks Center helps people who have been impacted by domestic violence. Rose Brooks Center offers shelter, support, counseling, and advocacy services.

24-hr Domestic Violence Hotline: 816.861.6100

www.rosebrooks.org

MOCSA helps people who have been impacted by sexual abuse or assault. MOCSA offers support, counseling, advocacy, and education services.

MOCSA's 24-hr Crisis Line: 816.531.0233

www.mocsa.org

Institute for Human Development (IHD) provides support and referrals to services for people with disabilities.

Contact IHD during business hours: 816.235.1770

TTY: 800.452.1185

First Things First

What Does Abuse Mean?

Abuse can take many forms:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, biting, squeezing, pushing, shoving, etc.
- **Verbal** – Yelling (yelling, raising voice is never acceptable) calling names, saying things that make you feel bad about yourself.
- **Sexual** – touching your body, forcing you to have sex, making you watch things that are sexual, someone showing you their private parts, etc.
- **Neglect** – Not giving you what you need. Like nutritious food or clothing.

Make sure you provide lots of examples. People who have had to rely on others for their basic care needs can become accustomed to poor care and see it as normal and not abuse. Discuss what neglect can look like when a personal care attendant or other paid caregiver is involved. (i.e. Leaving you on the toilet after you've stated you are finished, failing to get you out of bed when you request it. Not giving you the things you need to be as independent as you can be: communication devices, wheel chairs, adaptive equipment. Refusing to transport you somewhere when they are required to do so.) Help participants understand that there are basic needs that everyone has a right to have access to. When someone has a disability and has to rely on others to meet some of those needs they still have the same right to them. Someone withholding those rights is a form of abuse.



What other words have you heard that describe abuse or an abuser?

- Abuse
- Abuser
- Batterer
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Perpetrator
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Sexual Assault
- Neglect
- Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Rape
- Victim
- Survivor

Go through these words with the participants. Many of them have never heard some of this language before. In the disability community the terminology Abuse & Neglect are often used. Domestic Violence, Assault, Harassment and even Rape are words that may be unfamiliar to men and women with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities.

Who Can Be An Abuser?

You can have participants' list characteristics of abusers or the types of people that can be abusers. The idea is to get participants to understand that an abuser can be anyone including those who are suppose to be providing you support.

Incident

This is any type of abuse that happens (physical/sexual/emotional/neglect) see the list above.

Sometimes abuse just happens, there is no way to tell that it might occur. In some cases there may be some signs that an incident of abuse or assault might occur. *Remind participants again what an incident might be.* Here are some things that might occur:

- Abuser starts to get angry
- Abuse may begin
- There is a breakdown of communication (for example nothing you say is right, or you don't understand what is making the person angry and trying to talk about it only seems to make things worse or talking of any kind stops completely)
- You might feel like you need to keep the person calm (This is a feeling you have. What might someone try to do to keep someone who is upset calm? – You might try and leave them alone, you might try doing something nice for them, etc.)
- Tension becomes too much
- Victim feels like they are 'walking on egg shells'

After abuse happens sometimes:

- Abuser may apologize for abuse
- Abuser may promise it will never happen again
- Abuser may blame the victim for causing the abuse
- Abuser may say abuse never took place or say it was not as bad as the victim claims

You might even experience times when:

- Abuser acts like the abuse never happened
- Physical abuse may not be taking place
- Promises made during 'making-up' may be met
- Victim may hope that the abuse is over
- Abuser may give gifts to victim

When People Stay In Abusive Relationships

Ask participants to tell you why they think people stay in relationships where they are being hurt.

- They are so used to it – they think that is the way they should be treated
- They believe the bad things the abuser says about them (talk about low self-esteem)
- They feel trapped and don't feel like they have any other option
- They might stay thinking that it is better for their children
- They need the abuser for basic care like food, housing, caregiving, etc.

What would you do if someone were hurting you OR you felt like someone might hurt you?

Creating a Safety Plan

What is a Safety Plan?

A safety plan is just what it sounds like. It is a plan that you have in your head or that you have down on paper that is made to keep you safe or as safe as possible. Safety plans can be very simple and have just a few things in it while others can have lots of information that look at a lot of different situations you might find yourself in with an abuser.

When Do You Need a Safety Plan?

Ask participants to answer this question. Here are some answers that should be offered if the participants don't provide them.

- When someone is hurting you (significant other, parent, caregiver, personal attendant, etc).
- When someone tells you they want to hurt you or are going to hurt you.
- When you are being abused (see definitions).
- When someone who abuses you still stays in contact with you.
- For protecting yourself after you have ended your relationship with someone who is abusive to you.
- When someone is harassing/stalking you.
- When someone is taking away or keeping you from the things you need to be healthy, happy and safe. (This could be withholding food, taking away the things you need to communicate, not taking you to the bathroom, keeping you from your friends, family – trying to control you).
- When you rely on others for some or all of your personal needs and those individuals can get to you without other people being with you. For example, if people come and go from your home and it's just you and a care attendant. Particularly if you don't have control of who those people are. *This is an important issue for you to talk through if*



this is done in a support group format. Talk about what it means to be vulnerable and why it's important to think about how someone could hurt you even if you don't feel like you are in danger. Discuss ways that people can be hurt and ways to safety plan for when they find themselves in those circumstances. i.e. Have a cell phone on vibrate somewhere close to you but unseen.

Use What You Already Know!

If you've ever been hurt by someone or afraid of someone you've probably thought about a safety plan and didn't even know you were doing it. You may have thought "This person scares me, I'm afraid they might hurt me, I'm not going to be alone with them anymore. I'm only going to meet with them when I have a friend with me."

Be sure to pose the question: Why might it be hard for you to just stay away from someone who is abusive to you? (You can refer back to the list you created about why people stay in abusive relationships.)

- They might be a family member.
- They might be a care provider.
- They are someone you love.
- They are a friend.
- You are afraid the abuser might hurt people you care about including yourself, i.e. children, parents, friends, etc.
- They know you and your life so well that they make it really hard to get help from others.

Things to Think About

At what times am I most likely to be abused by an abuser? (i.e. times when I am alone, at home, etc.)

If I had to leave my house or work where are the exits?

What kind of help would I need to leave?

- Who are the people who can help me?
- Who are the people who are safe for me?
- Is there a safe place I can go to?
- If I needed to leave quickly, how would I do that?
- What would I need to have with me?
- Who would need to help me?
- What services in the community can help me?
- Are there things I must have to leave? I.e. transportation, medication, personal care attendant, adaptive equipment, communication aides, etc.
- Is 911 an option for you? Should you preregister with 911? If you will use 911 – how do you do that when your abuser is present?

What are orders of protection?

- How to get an order of protection?
- What if the abuser doesn't follow the order?

What if someone is stalking you?

How about staying safe at work?

What if I use devices to help me with tasks, how can an abuser use that to hurt me? And what can I do to keep my assistive devices safe?

How can I protect my child(ren)?



As you answer some of these questions it's important to keep track of information, especially of the phone numbers of places and people who can help you. Keep this in a safe place where your abuser can't find it. Think of as many different options as you can. Also think about the different times and places where the abuse might happen and how you can either leave or stay as safe as possible until you can leave.

Be Aware

When you are planning to leave or have already left or are attempting to get away from your abuser, know that abusers often get more abusive during times of separation. This means that this is a much more dangerous time for you. Having a safety plan can help lower your risk and that of your loved ones. Why do you think this can be a more dangerous time?



I feel safe when?

I feel unsafe when?

I need a safety plan when?

What kind of abuse am I worried about?

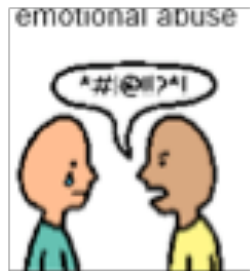
Physical



Neglect



Verbal



Control



Sexual

unwanted touch



If anyone is hurting me the people I can talk to are:

Name:

Phone:



Parent/Family



Friend



Case Manager



PCA

OTHER

What do I want the people listed above to do to support me?

The people in the community who can help me are:

Name:

Phone:



816.861.6100



816.531.0233



911

If I need to leave my home to get away from someone hurting me, what do I need?



Three horizontal lines for writing an answer.

I can get out of my house by:



going out a back door

crawling through a window



Other ways out of my house? _____

I can get transportation to a safe place using:



My car



Share a fare

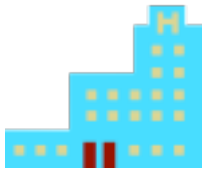


Bus



Friend

Safe places I can go?



Hospital



Fire Station



Library



Police Station



Friends House
