



Survivor Engagement Safety Plan

Hand-out: Safe Speaking Engagements



STEP 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK SITUATION: PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

THREATS

Being confronted with or asked difficult questions during a public speaking engagement.

People at the engagement do not respect your boundaries.

Threats of physical attacks by traffickers, pimps, sex buyers, pro-sex work lobbyists, opponents or other people in the community.

RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THE THREAT

Psychological harm, re-traumatization and re-exploitation due to stress, triggering questions, speaking about past trauma, etc.

Being injured as a result of physical attacks.

VULNERABILITIES/ PRACTICES WHICH GENERATE VULNERABILITIES

Lack of experience speaking in public.

A person living with trauma is vulnerable to being retraumatized and is more easily triggered.

Having difficulty setting boundaries.

CAPACITIES/PRACTICES WHICH GENERATE CAPACITIES

Being supported by an organization or a mentor / consultant who can provide training on public speaking and help to prepare the talk.

Having access to mental health services.

GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Being exposed to additional and specific threats due to age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disabilities (psychological/ physical) and/or sexual orientation.

STEP 2 - RISK MITIGATION

SAFE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

PREVENTION

Objective: Reduce the risks of physical and psychological harm when planning and participating in speaking engagements.

- Recognize the increased public exposure during public speaking engagements and lectures.
- Analyze if any possible previous experiences with similar activities, consider any threats that have occurred, and how to avoid such threats.
- Participate in media training and adhere to guidelines to safeguard your integrity while speaking publicly.
- Assess the psychological impact the speaking engagement might entail.
- Consider your general level of threat: Should your name be presented beforehand? Are your appearance triggering a higher level of threat? What do you do if someone approaches you in a threatening way at the venue?
- Prepare the speech and practice it properly beforehand. Prepare answers to certain questions you might get from opposing parties or people.
- Anticipate potential reactions from people listening - What reactions might be triggering? How should one prevent being harmed by those reactions?
- Always be accompanied by a colleague with sufficient training and previous experience of public speaking.
- Mitigate risks regarding psychological threats at the speaking location: *What do you do if you experience flashbacks or feel bad during the speech? Do you have someone supporting you?*
- Understand legal considerations specific to public speaking and lectures.
- Request question approval before speaking engagements to better prepare for interviews.
- Anticipate potential backlash or negative coverage and prepare accordingly for public speaking events.
- Set the boundaries for the information you want to share prior to the event.
- Consider if you want to be filmed or photographed, and set it as a condition for the engagement before the event.
- Provide guidance to event organizers to ensure respectful interactions.

DURING INTERACTIONS

Objective: Take adequate measures in order to ensure the safety and well being of all meeting participants.

During interactions

- Make sure to be at the speaking venue in time in order to take a look at the place. Is there a person in charge you can talk to and express eventual concerns you might have?
- If experiencing anxiety: Let your colleague and the person in charge know. Come up with a plan where you can step out for air or a glass of water if you need to.
- Agree a subtle and simple signal to alert your colleague that something is wrong and that you should remove yourself from the situation.
- You might feel obligated to share more of your story when on stage and people might expect that from you. But remember that it is your story and that you do not need to.
- If you do not want to be tagged in a video or have people post material from your speaking engagement, let them know.
- Set boundaries: People might approach you after the speech. Be aware of your boundaries and what you feel comfortable with and what not. Practice the phrase "I am not comfortable talking in detail about that" or "I don't want to answer that".
- Train staff or volunteers to assist with interactions and handle any security concerns that may arise.
- Coordinate with local authorities or security personnel to enhance safety measures during lectures and presentations.
- Regularly assess and update safety protocols to address evolving risks during interactions at speaking engagements

After interactions

- If any threats or security incidents have occurred, implement immediate security measures to address the specific threat. Review your risk assessment in light of these threats and incidents. Develop long-term strategies based on the analysis to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- Implementing follow-up procedures to address any safety vulnerabilities.
- Debrief with someone and/or check in with yourself to analyze any difficult feelings you might have afterwards.
- If experiencing anxiety about having been public, talk with your colleagues about why you feel that way.
- Make sure you get the time afterwards to recover. What makes you feel recharged? Take the right measures you need to feel rested and recovered.
- Maintaining open communication channels with attendees to address any safety-related feedback or concerns raised post-interactions.
- Collaborating with support networks to provide additional assistance or guidance for individuals impacted by safety issues during interactions.

- This guide is developed by Beyond Survivors in cooperation with Protection International. Beyond Survivors is a cluster of survivor-led organizations and its **overall goal is to strengthen, structure and safeguard survivor engagement in the field of trafficking and exploitation of children.**

For more information please visit www.beyondsurvivors.org.