

Survivor Engagement Safety Plan

Hand-out: Safe Meetings with People Living in Exploitation



STEP 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK SITUATION: APPROACHING/MEETINGS WITH PEOPLE LIVING IN EXPLOITATION

THREATS

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

Being confronted with, or asked difficult questions.

People knowingly or unknowingly exploit your situation.

RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THE THREAT

Psychological harm and trauma due to stress, triggering questions, speaking about past trauma, etc.

Being injured as a result of physical attacks.

VULNERABILITIES/ PRACTICES WHICH GENERATE VULNERABILITIES

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

The location -
Being constantly surrounded by harmful people and situations.

Having difficulty or not even the possibility to set boundaries.

CAPACITIES/PRACTICES WHICH GENERATE CAPACITIES

Having knowledge about trauma-informed approaches regarding ways of working.

Having access to mental health services.

Working in teams to support and strengthen one another.

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 MEETINGS

PREVENTION

Objective: Reduce the risks of physical and psychological harm related to both planned and unplanned meetings.

- Analyze if any possible previous experiences with similar activities, consider any threats that have occurred, and how to avoid such threats.
- Assess the psychological impact the situation might have on all meeting participants, especially for survivors and victims.
- Before engaging with people living in exploitation, conduct a thorough analysis of the **setting**, whether it is a red-light district, streets, brothels, apartments, an office or online.
- Understand the specific environment's dynamics and potential risks.
- Anticipate potential reactions from people in exploitation, considering their vulnerabilities and the sensitivity of the subject matter. Plan how to handle these reactions and ensure the safety and security of people in exploitation.
- Always be accompanied by a colleague with sufficient training.
- Plan and implement safety measures for yourself and your colleague and the person being approached. What do you do if someone approaches you in a threatening way? What do you do if someone threatens the person you are meeting with? What do you do if you experience flashbacks or feel bad?
- If you make prior plans to meet with someone living in exploitation:
 - 1) Carefully choose the location of your meeting: it should be a place you know well and where you and the person you are meeting with are comfortable with: who will also be present? Will you be able to speak without being overheard? Will it be crowded? Would you look suspicious entering there?
 - 2) Have an alternative backup meeting place.
 - 3) Plan different scenarios: What will you do if you are late or if the person you are meeting with is late (or does not show at all)? What will you do if someone you don't expect turns up to the meeting? How will you safely bring back any documents you might be given? What will you do if a third party interrupts the meeting?

DURING INTERACTIONS

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

During interactions

- Try to get an overview of the situation and the area. Who are the various people around you? Is there anyone who could be a potential threat? Who can hear what you are saying?
- Try to place yourself where you can observe the whole area but still have your back to a wall, and be close to an escape route.
- Agree a subtle and simple signal to alert your colleague that something is wrong and that you should remove yourself from the situation.
- Ensure that you provide the person living in exploitation information about how to reach you at a later time and/or get help - if possible without having to write it down.

After interactions

- Try to remain in the situation/area for a while and check your surroundings to see if anyone is waiting to follow you.
- Transfer information/ notes to your computer (and encrypt them) and destroy any notes that you might have.
- Debrief with someone and/or check in with yourself to analyze any difficult feelings you might have after the meetings.
- 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.

• 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.