Today’s Presenter

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Supporting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivors at Your Library

Provided by: Miranda Dube
Self-Care Reminder

• This material can be difficult to talk about.
• Take breaks when you need to.
• As you are able, be present for one another.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Outline of the Day</th>
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<td>Recognize</td>
<td>potential signs of abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>what to do if you suspect someone is experiencing abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>best practice for responding to disclosures</td>
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<td>Learn</td>
<td>how to provide resources to someone who is not disclosing</td>
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Key Things to Know

Language use:
“victim” vs. “survivor” vs. “target”

Gender neutral

Nonheteronormative

DV=Domestic Violence

SA=Sexual Assault
SIGNS OF ABUSE
Adult Victims of Domestic Violence

What you might see/hear

- Lack of decision making
- Limited verbal communication
- Bruises/Injuries
- Lack of financial independence
- Self-blame for partner’s behavior
- Person gaslighting another
Children Who Have Witnessed Domestic Violence

What you might see/hear

- Expression of fear
- Anger at parent or other caregiver
What you might see/hear

- Sexual behavior inappropriate for age
- Bedwetting
- Not wanting to be alone with certain people
- Not wanting to remove clothing
- Nightmares or fears of being alone at night
- Regressing in behaviors
Teens/Adults Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted or Abused

What you might see/hear

- Depression or anxiety
- Self-harming behavior/suicidal thoughts or ideation
- Avoiding specific places or people
- Increase in drug/alcohol use
- Weight gain/loss

Photo taken by Miranda Dube at Clothesline Project
People Who Are Being Stalked

What you might see/hear

- Not the term stalking
- Heightened fight/flight/freeze response
- Security questions

https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-stalking.html
People Who Are Being Trafficked

Human Trafficking includes Sex and Labor Trafficking

- Lack of control over passport or ID documents
- Monitored by another person
- Living in dangerous/overcrowded, inhumane conditions provided by employer
- Live where they work or are transported by someone to and from work
- Child who lives with family member who is dependent on substances
DIVERSE POPULATIONS
Women with Disabilities

- Experience abuse for longer periods of time
- Experience abuse from a greater number of perpetrators
- More frequently at the hands of health care workers and personal care attendants
- Fewer options for leaving
- Less reporting options

(Lockhart, L. L., & Danis, F. S. (eds.), 2010; NHCADSV, n.d.)
LGBT+

- Homophobia and Heteronormativity
- Double closet
- Reduced access to traditional sources of support
- Institutional resources may be unresponsive or unavailable
- Perceptions of gender and abuse cycle
- Threats from abuser to out them
- Normalized abuse in LGBT relationships
- Interfering with hormone therapy if partner is transitioning

(Lockhart, L. L., & Danis, F. S. (eds.), 2010; NHCADSV, n.d.)
African American Women

- Don’t wish to participate in furthering the prison-industrial complex and associated criminal “justice” system
- Utilize family, friends, and faith-based community more often than institutional resources
- Police brutality, unfair treatment, dual arrest
- Find the term “victim” unrepresentative of their experience
- Geographically inaccessible services with lack of childcare or transportation

Immigrants and Refugees

• Often ineligible for commonly available services such as housing assistance, income assistance, health insurance
• Language barriers and lack of translation services
• Unaware of resources for crime victims (U-Visa, T-Visa)

Male Identifying Victims/Survivors

- Stigma
- Perceived failure to conform to masculinity
- Fear of not being believed
- Denial of victim status
- Lack of support from society, family, and friends

(NHCADSV, n.d.)
WHY DOES THIS MATTER?
“If you don't have a lens that's been trained to look at how various forms of discrimination come together, you're unlikely to develop a set of policies that will be as inclusive as they need to be.”

- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw
UNIQUE INFORMATION NEEDS
Six Information Seeking Stages

• Stage One: Initial consideration of a life change
• Stage Two: During shelter and/or criminal justice engagement
• Stage Three: Post-shelter/Post-police planning
• Stage Four: Legal concerns in making a life change
• Stage Five: Immigration-related information needs
• Stage Six: Prior five stages overlapping

Westbrook, L. (2009). Crisis information concerns: Information needs of domestic violence survivors. *Information Processing and Management, 45*(1), 98-114. [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2008.05.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2008.05.005) 2008.05.005
You can use these stages to evaluate your library services and collections...
Now what?
You may:

- Receive a disclosure of abuse/reportable offense
- Suspect abuse/reportable offense
- Provide support to patrons and community as a whole
Know of/suspect Reportable Crime is occurring

- Mandated Reporter: Must file report with designated agency
- Non-Mandated Reporter: May file report with designated agency
Knowing if you are a Mandated Reporter

The following websites should be used as a guide ONLY. They are not 100% accurate and you should consult your state's law (typically located on a local government website).

- https://mandatedreporter.com/child-abuse/
- https://mandatedreporter.com/domestic-violence/
- https://mandatedreporter.com/elder-abuse/
Reporting to Agencies

Ensure person disclosing knows your responsibilities PRIOR to disclosing

Ask if they would like to be involved in the reporting process
Active Listening

Focus on understanding what the person is saying.

Don’t think about your response.

Show that you are listening.

Ask clarifying questions if needed.
Responding to a Disclosure

- Be aware of disclosures of previous trauma
- Honor and acknowledge the strength it took to disclose
- Relocate if necessary
- Ask: “How can I best support you?”
You may:

- Receive a disclosure of abuse/reportable offense
- **Suspect abuse/reportable offense**
- Provide support to patrons and community as a whole
Ensure the person is:

- Alone
- Will not be put in harms way by talking to you (i.e., they are alone, but the potential abuser is in the building).
“I’ve noticed some changes and I’m feeling concerned. I’m worried about you because [insert thing(s) you have noticed]. I’m here for you if you want to talk about it. Let me know how I can support you.”
You may:

• Suspect abuse/reportable offense
• Receive a disclosure of abuse/reportable offense
• Provide support to patrons and community as a whole
Supporting Community and People Not Disclosing

Environment

Culture

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https://cheezburger.com/mypics/gloopy/librarian-cat
Environmental

- Approaching Patrons in the Stacks
- Displays
- Crisis Center Information
Don’t say “Can I help you find anything?”

Say “I noticed you browsing and in case it’s of any help to you, the bulk of information on X is here, Y is here, and Z is here. If you need anything, please don’t hesitate to ask.”
Displays

Create displays in both prominent and private areas.

Do not only put displays in areas with heavy traffic or lots of surveillance.

A small display in a private area with information a patron can take is better than no private display.
Crisis Center Information

Should be:

• Accessible to everyone
• In every restroom
• On every community bulletin board
• At every reference desk
Cultural

CREATE SAFE SPACE

COLLABORATE WITH CRISIS CENTERS

LANGUAGE USE
Create safe space

Do:
• Use a trauma aware approach with patrons and staff
• Ask crisis centers or survivors how you can improve your space

Don’t:
• Approach people from behind
• Touch someone who is experiencing dissociation or PTSD flashbacks
• Box someone into a corner
Collaborate with Crisis Centers

- Book Displays
- Programming
- Staff Trainings
- Policy Development
Language Use

Be aware of how you discuss issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Pay special attention to how you use linguistic avoidance—changing this can help reduce unconscious victim blaming and assist in reducing rape culture.
What We Say Matters
Librarians on Library Services for Survivors:

“I have been in my profession for 18 years, and never had a DV survivor come to the library for post relationship help.”

“In the small town that I am currently working in, it has not been a concern.”

“It isn’t a community that talks about things like this.”

“I appreciate your assuming that we do any of this but sadly no.”

“Yes. But never is a strong word. There are occasions when it is appropriate to reveal a book title to a family member but generally speaking we respect privacy.”

“I didn’t do [the survey] when your initial request came out because I frankly don’t understand your research model.”

“We have no information on any kinds of these topics.”

“Advocates should just reach out to the libraries if they want to help.”
You may:

- Suspect abuse/reportable offense
- Receive a disclosure of abuse/reportable offense
- Provide support to patrons and community as a whole
Informal disclosures of abuse to informal networks, such as a library, are only effective when the person within the informal network has prior knowledge of resources.
Your #1 Referral...

Your local crisis center!
What Survivors Want

• More brochures/guides
• More online resources
• Meeting space for support groups
• Better staff training/train staff how to assist survivors
• More flyers with Crisis Center information
• Hosting support groups
• Contact list of sources that can help
• Materials for children who witness domestic violence
• Confidential consultations with a reference librarian
• “Lend an expert” night with a crisis counselor
• Connect community resources in one spot
• Greater visibility of physical materials
Library Projects

Out of the Shadows
• San Diego Public Library Human Trafficking awareness program https://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/services/sex-trafficking-awareness

Creating Access for Violence Survivors
• Monroe County Public Library program that waives fees, provides library cards to patrons in shelter, and provides tablets with digital access to library materials to shelter residents https://mcpl.info/blogs/think-library/pioneer-grant-reduce-library-barriers-domestic-violence-survivors

BiblioUnderground
• Program creating “Book-it 2 Freedom Kits”: prepaid burner phones, uploaded with DV and Safety Planning resources, hidden within discarded library to assist those fleeing domestic violence https://www.bibliounderground.org/
Other Projects Include

- Rewriting policy to be inclusive of patrons living in shelter
- Developing programming that is trauma-informed but not trauma-focused
- Weeding materials and purchasing updated materials
- Changing online information request forms to allow for anonymity
- Developing a holding spot for people who cannot check out materials and bring them home
- Bookmarks at checkout with hotline numbers
Questions?
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