

Session: Using the Police Domestic Violence Handbook (2 hours)

Objective;

To enable police officers use the Handbook to guide them to effectively respond to cases of domestic violence reported at the police stations.

Materials needed

- **Preparations:** it is important that the facilitator reviews the table of contents to get an overview of the content of the handbook. The facilitator should then read the whole handbook before conducting the session. He/she should be able to give an overview about the handbook as follows:

Step 1 (5Min.)

1. Introduction

Explain the purpose of the handbook to participants. Include the following points:

- a. The Handbook is a simple guide for all police officers to effectively handle cases of domestic violence reported at the police stations.
- b. This handbook is a co-publication between the Uganda Police Force and Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP). It is aimed at providing basic information on domestic violence and human rights as well as providing simple guidelines on how to interview victims of domestic violence, children who are victims as well as witnesses of domestic violence and suspects of domestic violence.
- c. It also provides basic information on the kind of support the police officers can provide to cases of domestic violence.
- d. This handbook is a standardized protocol authorized by the UPDF for police officers to use to handle cases of domestic violence.

The Handbook is divided into two parts. Part one is comprised of information on the Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) its mandate and the ethical issues that govern police officers on duty. Part two concentrates on key principles and interview guides for interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects of domestic violence. It also includes important information on risk assessment, mediation and referrals. All police officers are advised to read through the whole book before using it to handle cases of domestic violence.

Step 2: Understanding the roles of the Child and Family Protection Unit and domestic violence (20 Min.)

The handbook provides information on the mandate and role of the Child and Family Protection Unit which should be quite familiar to all of you. This exercise, we will run a brief quiz to refresh our memory on the mandate and roles of the CFPU.

Divide participants into two groups. Read out each question; go from team to team offering them a chance to answer each question. If the team answers correctly they get 5 points, if they do not answer correctly, the other team gets a chance at answering and scores 2 points.

Questions:

1. Defilement should not be handled by the CFPU (False)
2. Theft of domestic property should be handled by the CFPU (False)
3. The mandate of the CFPU focuses mostly on children and their problems (False)
4. Domestic violence only includes physical beating (False)
5. Sex is part of marriage, there is no sexual violence in a marriage relationship (False)
6. Human rights are privileges that people enjoy (False, Rights are entitlements)
7. When a woman gets married her human rights change (False)
8. Women are the major victims of domestic violence (True)
9. Both men and women have equal financial decision making powers in a relationship (True)
10. Some women deserve the violence they experience because they provoke their husbands/partners (False)
11. Women and men have equal rights in the family (True)
12. A woman should not work if her husband does not want her to work (False)
13. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda provides for equality of men and women (True)
14. Domestic violence is not an issue in Uganda its an import from the western world (False)
15. A married woman has a right to education (True)
16. Extreme emotional violence can lead to death (True)
17. There is need for some violence to strengthen the relationship (False)
18. A man has a right to discipline his wife (False)
19. A man and woman can never be the same but are equal (True)
20. Women who want to become men in their homes are the cause of domestic violence (False)

Summarize and congratulate the winning team!

When all the questions are done, make a total of all points for each team out of 100. The team that gets the highest points out of 100 is the winning team.

Step 3: Key Principles (30 Min.)

Ask participants to brainstorm the key principles of handling domestic violence cases. Record their contributions on flipchart and discuss. Refer to page 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively, to ensure that all critical principles have been covered.

Key principles for the survivor of domestic violence (page 9)

- Tell her that there is no acceptable justification for violence.
- Remember that an abused woman has tried out other options and she has finally come to police
- I'm sorry you have to deal with this/experience
- Assure her of your support.

- Maintain the rules of confidentiality and disclosure which you agreed on with her.
- Do not make promises to her if you are not able to follow through.
- Interview the victim in private; do not allow other people to comment on the case.

Key principles for the child witness of domestic violence (Page 10)

- Help the child feel welcome.
- Introduce yourself and tell the child your role.
- Ask the child the language s/he is comfortable with
- Explain to the child that you are going to ask some questions. Assure the child that you want them to be safe and nothing they say will get them into trouble.
- Explain to the child that the violence is not their fault that they have a right to safety and that you are going to try to make sure their home is safe.
- Ask the child a few questions on neutral topics e.g. school, friends, who they live with, favorite activities to first make them comfortable
- Take special care of who should be present during the interview. Respect the child's wishes. The child may wish to have another support person with him/her during interview.
- Assure the child that it is okay to respond to any questions with "I do not know."

Key principles for child experiencing domestic violence (Page 11)

- Address the child at eye level.
- Be friendly and kind to the child.
- Use simple, direct and user-friendly language.
- Explain the role of the Police to the child in simple language.
- Do not interview a child in the presence of a parent who is the perpetrator
- Assure the child that he/she is not in trouble.
- Tell the child that police officers talk with many children about domestic violence.
- Assure the child that he/she is not alone, violence happens to other children in other homes. But its not o.k.
- Ask for the child's permission in case you want to use the information.
- Respect a child's love for an abusive parent.

Key principles for handling a suspect of domestic violence

- Calm down the suspect in case he is very angry, anxious or violent
- Use non-judgmental language when interviewing the suspect
- Get suspect's side of the story
- Avoid the question 'why did you use violence?' because it justifies the violent behavior
- Make sure the suspect is under your guidance and control
- Avoid telling the suspect what you discussed with his wife /partner
- Avoid revealing the person who called police in case the police carried out any arrest
- Do not allow the suspect to dictate over you.
- Tell the suspect that his arrest is a police decision not the victim's decision
- Tell the suspect the kind of offense committed
- Avoid being dragged into issues that are not related to the offense reported

Step 4: Handling Cases (1hour)

Ask the participants to form seven groups of about 3 or 4 people depending on the number of participants. Give each group one of the following topics:

Group one: How to interview a woman victim of domestic violence

Group two: A man who is a perpetrator/suspect of domestic violence

Group three: A child who has witnessed domestic violence between her/his parents

Group four: A child who is a victim of domestic violence

Group five: How to conduct a risk assessment

Group six: Helping women to create a safety plan

Group seven: Mediating a case of domestic violence

Ask participants to refer to the relevant page in the handbook and create a role play based on the interview guide. The role play should be between 3-5 minutes.

Each group should discuss the principles and come up with characters to act out different roles i.e. one should be a police officer handling the case and the other a client who is being interviewed.

After each group completes their role play, debrief it by asking the following questions:

- a) What went well?
- b) What could have been done better?
- c) How could using this interview guide help you in providing quality services?

Step 5: Concluding remarks by the facilitator (5 min.)

The facilitator winds up the session by emphasizing that this is a guideline that the Uganda Police and CEDOVIP came up with to enable police officers effectively respond to cases of domestic violence. Use of this standardized protocol will ensure that the police focus their interviews with the victims, offenders and witnesses and as such save time and also avoid blaming the victims for the violence they experience. The handbook also provides practical things that the police officers can do with minimal resources to provide the much needed support for those experiencing domestic violence. This directly fits in the Uganda Police Force's mission of protecting human rights and lives at all times and places. The handbook is a police working tool that all officers handling domestic violence cases should use.

The facilitator should also emphasize the importance of the last bit of the handbook which is aimed at giving information on the available institutions and the services offered for victims of domestic violence to enable police officers give appropriate referral in case the victim or person involved needs further support that is not available at that particular police Station.