



July 16, 2025

Family Violence

Core Concepts for Newcomer-Serving Organizations

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts





Thank you for joining today's training!

We will begin momentarily.



Today's Speakers



Jess Dalpe, LMSW

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Safety & Wellness, IRC



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LPC**

Training Officer,
Switchboard



This training will explore sensitive topics related to violence and abuse in relationships. We encourage you to prioritize your well-being during the session and to engage with others with care and respect. Please take breaks whenever you need to.



Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

DESCRIBE

the core concepts of family violence within newcomer populations

2

APPLY

a survivor-centered approach to family violence during service provision

3

DEVELOP

foundational skills to effectively assess and respond to disclosures of violence and refer clients to appropriate services



Core Concepts of Family Violence

Supporting Newcomer Populations



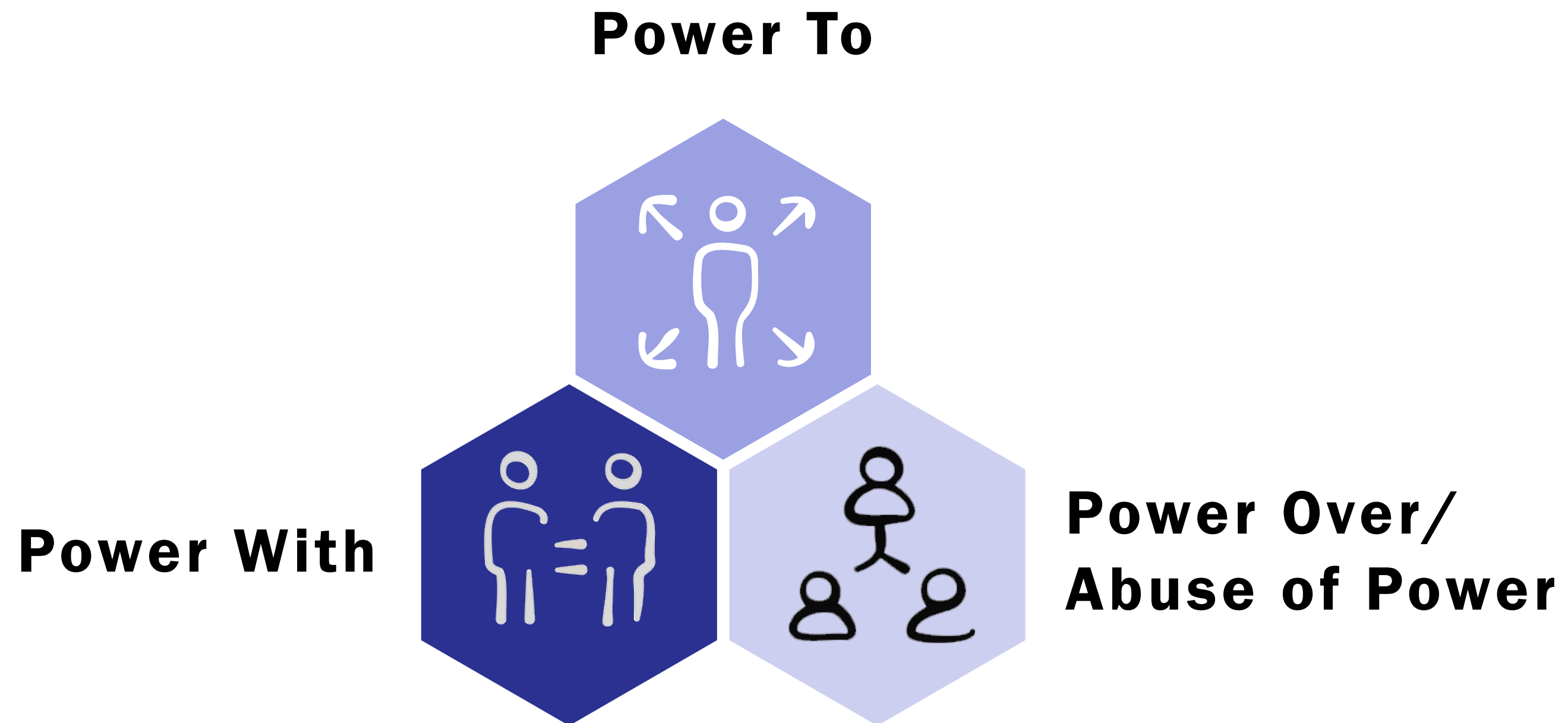
What comes to your mind when you hear the words “family violence”?



Family Violence

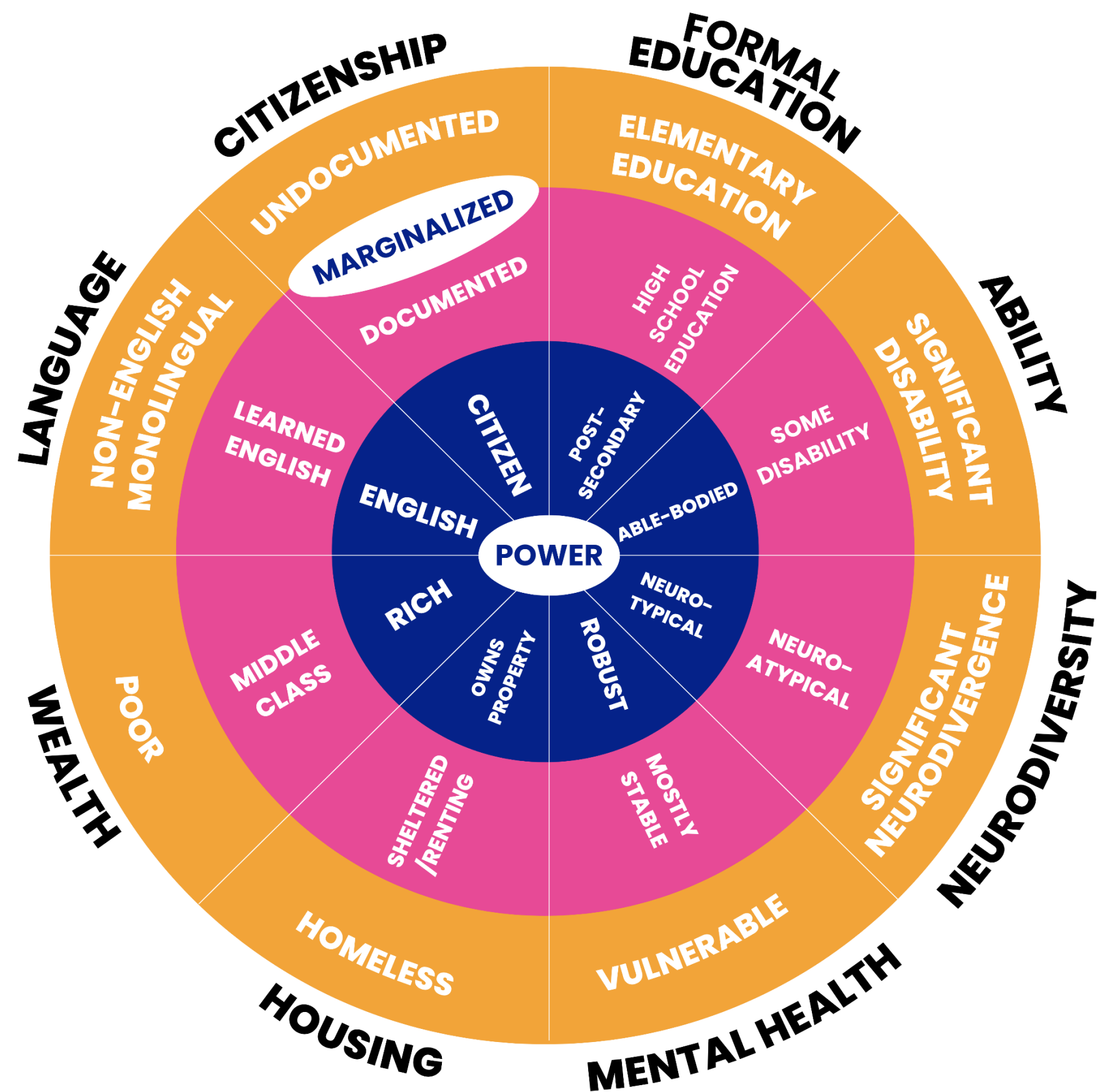
A **pattern of abusive behavior** in a **family relationship** that is used by one person to **gain or maintain control** over the other person.

Understanding Power





Wheel of Power & Privilege



Violence or Conflict?



Marital Conflict

Can occur between two partners in their efforts to figure out how to negotiate, compromise, or share power

Intimate Partner Violence

Pattern of abusive behavior within a former or current intimate relationship

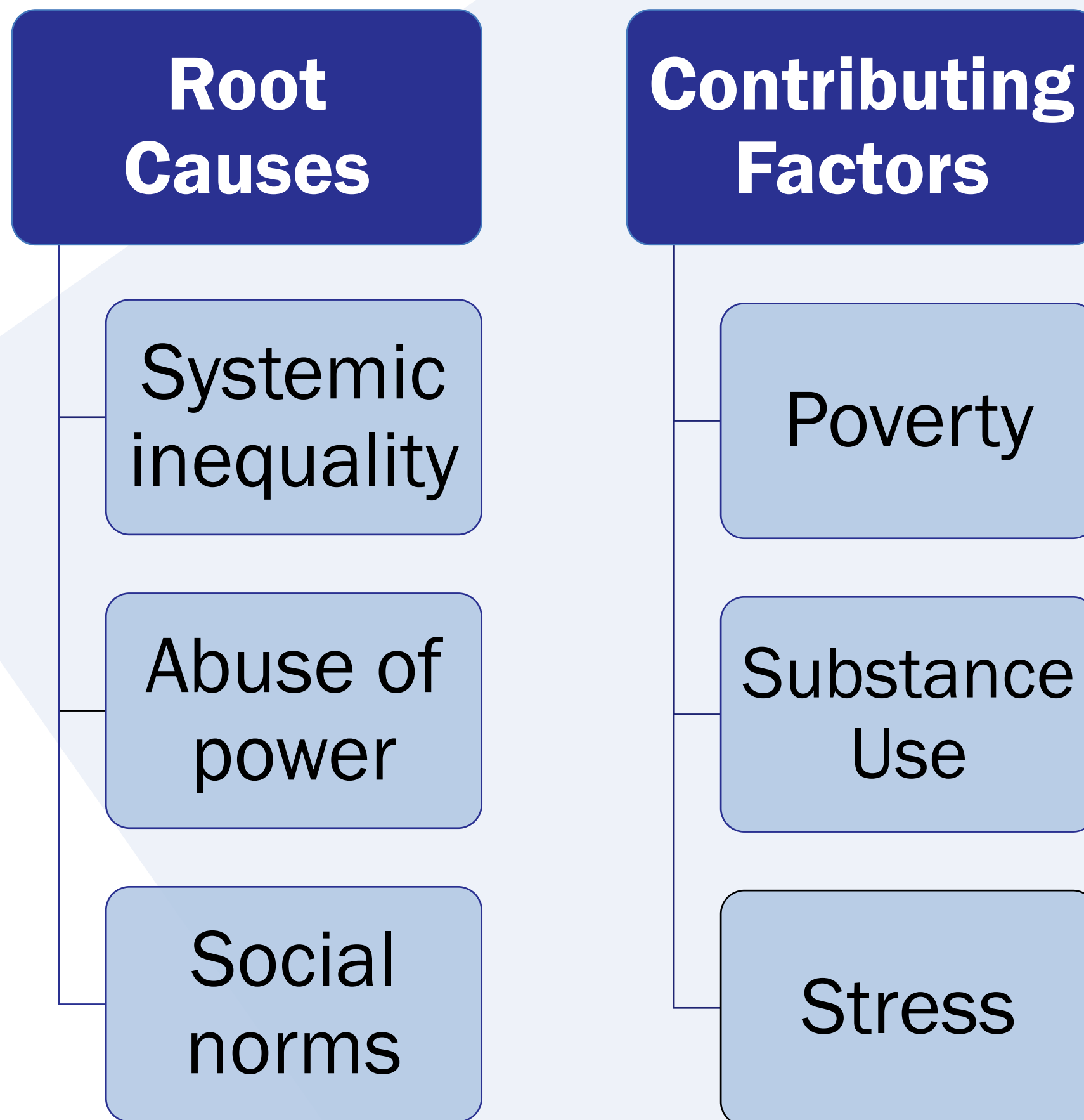
Family/ Domestic Violence

Pattern of abusive behavior within a family relationship

Power and Control in Newcomer Relationships



Violence in Relationships



Case Scenario: Maria

Maria is a 35-year-old mother of three who arrived in the U.S. within the past year after fleeing war and conflict in her home country. She is residing with her U.S. tie, who is her boyfriend. In a routine meeting with her caseworker, she mentions she is having “a difficult time.” She says she is thinking about leaving her boyfriend, who she states “has a temper.”

Maria continues to explain that her boyfriend threatens to report her to ICE and gives her \$50 a week to cover her expenses, which is not enough. She says he tells her that she is a bad mother to her children and that they would be better off without her. She says she feels grateful for all he has done to help her and her children, and she is ashamed to be complaining about him.



What are some signs of family violence you notice in this case study?



2

Applying a Survivor-Centered Approach

Addressing Family Violence with Newcomers

The Cycle of Intimate Partner Violence

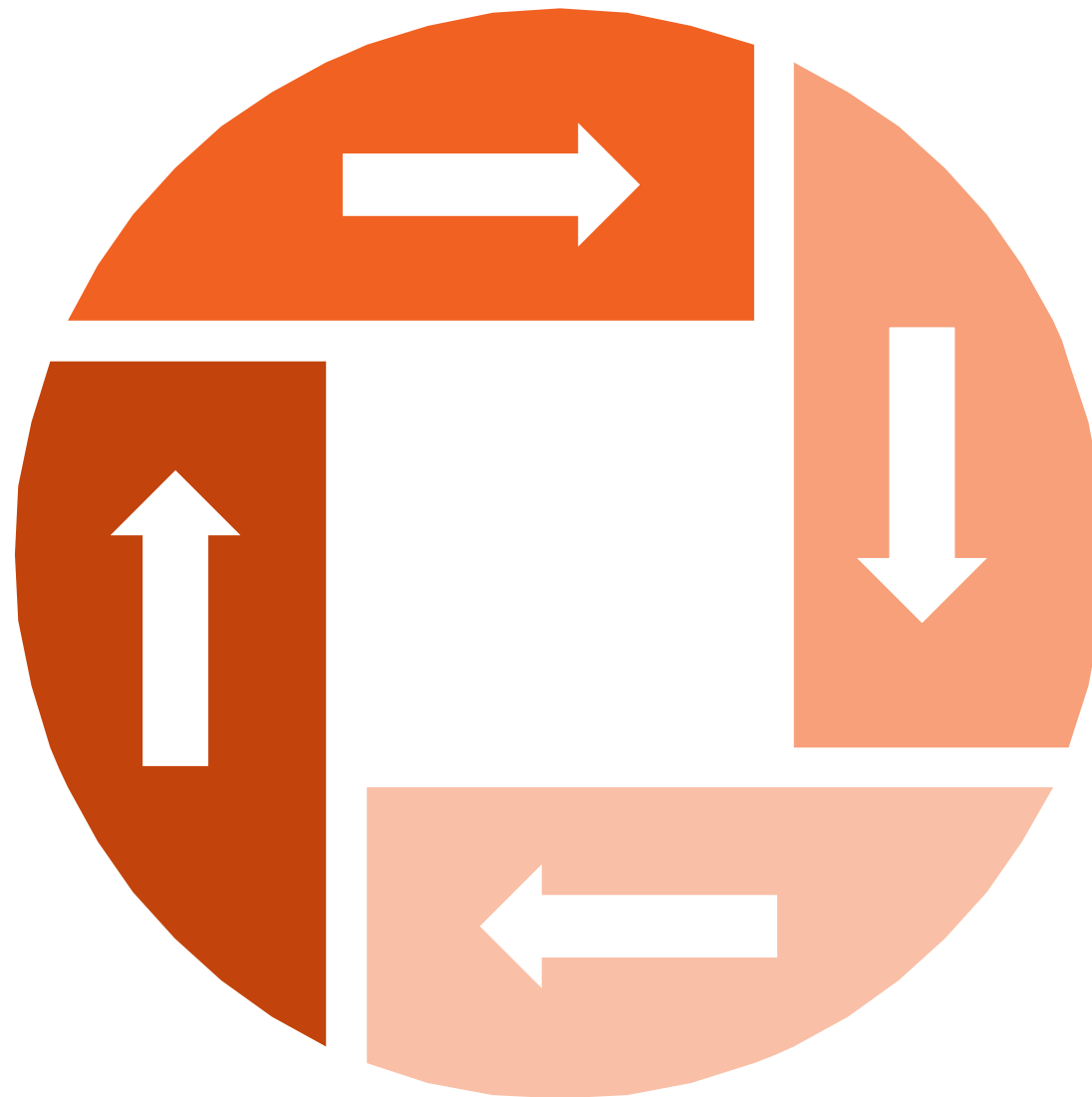


Tension Builds

Stress in the household builds.

Calm

Things feel peaceful and calm.



Incident

The abuser lashes out through physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual abuse to control the survivor.

Reconciliation

The abuser makes excuses, attempts to apologize, or acts as if the incident did not happen.

Why Do Survivors Stay?



It takes an average of 7 attempts for a survivor to successfully leave an abusive relationship

Situational

- Isolation
- Financial and other dependence on abuser
- Family and community pressure
- Unaware that help is available
- Fear of law enforcement/immigration implications

Emotional

- Belief that abuser will change
- Attachment to partner
- Concerns for children
- Feeling responsible for the abuse
- Feeling hopeless, trapped



What does being survivor-centered mean to you?

Survivor-Centered Attitudes



People have the right to live a life free from violence



Applying a Survivor-Centered Approach



6 Key Practical Considerations

1

Consider gender-matching interpreters with survivors

2

Keep your body language open and engaged

3

Use open-ended questions

4

Validate survivors' experiences and normalize their feelings and emotions

5

Ask permission from survivors before taking any action

6

Approach with respect and patience

Case Scenario: Recall Maria

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Which of these next steps are survivor-centered?



3

Assessing and Responding to Disclosures

Appropriate and Safe Service Provision



What is your role in supporting survivors of family violence?



Caseworker Role

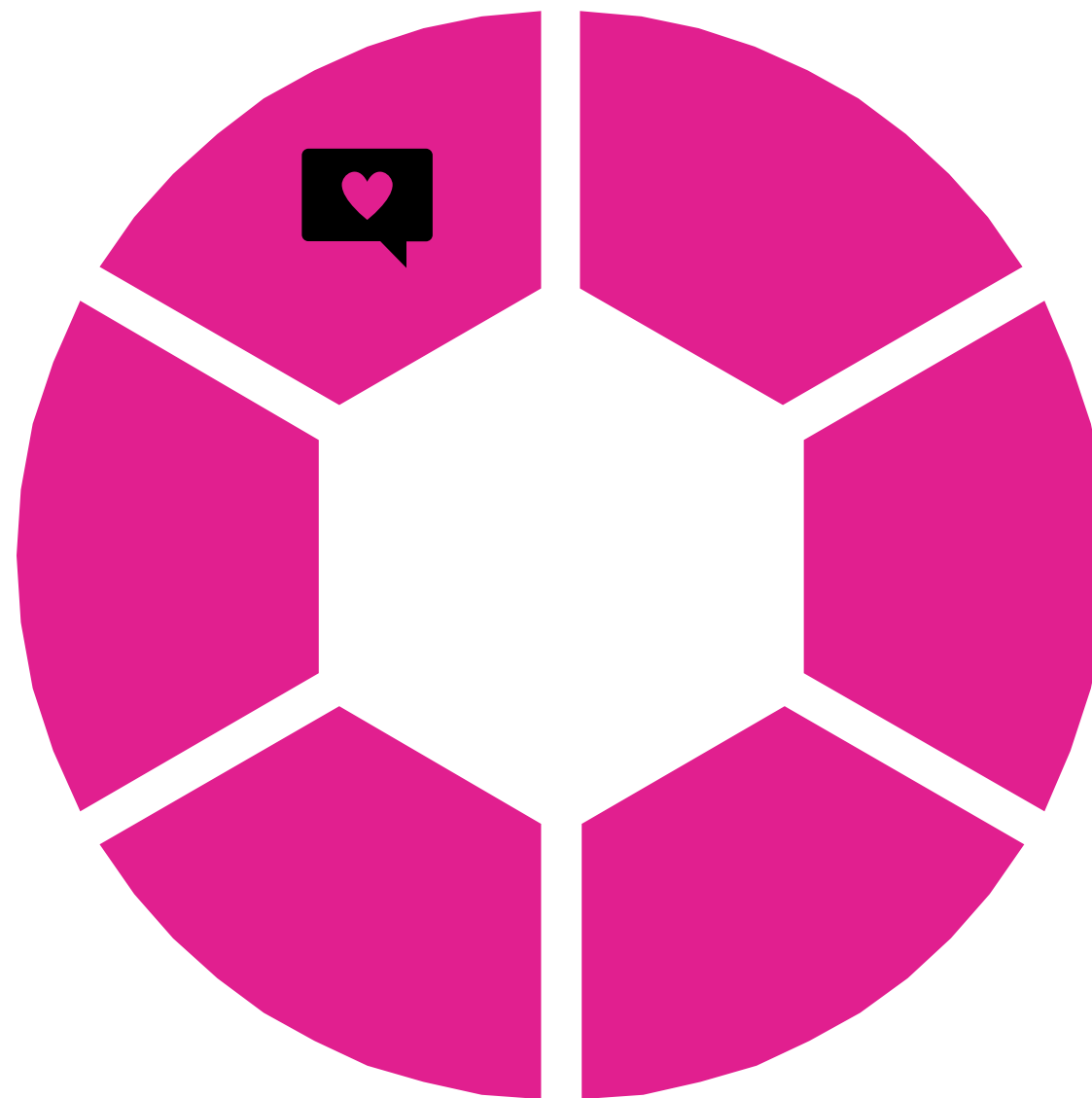
- Pay attention to safety
- Engage in open, nonjudgmental, non-discriminatory conversations
- Believe the survivor—we're not investigating
- Follow the survivor's lead

Assessing & Responding to Disclosure



1. Empathy

Use supportive communication
and healing statements



Healing Statements

- “I believe you.”
- “I’m glad you told me.”
- “I’m sorry this happened/is happening.”
- “This is not your fault.”
- “You are very brave to talk with me.”
- “You are not alone.”
- “This is a very difficult situation and must be hard for you. We’re here for you when you’re ready.”



Assessing & Responding to Disclosure



1. Empathy

Use supportive communication and healing statements

2. Confidentiality

Reaffirm confidentiality and give control

3. Assess

Identify needs and share options



4. Plan

Collaborate with the survivor

Basic Safety Planning

- Warning signs
- Prevention
- Safety & coping
 - What can you do?
 - Who can you call?
 - Where can you go?



Introduction to Safety Planning

Newcomers face unique risks and vulnerabilities due to their experiences of forced displacement, exposure to potentially traumatic experiences, and the complex stressors of resettlement. Safety planning can be a necessary or helpful intervention to maintain newcomers' overall safety and wellness. This short guide provides an overview of safety plans and the safety planning process to assist refugee service providers in effectively serving newcomer clients. It accompanies Switchboard's Low-Risk Safety Plan Template, which is intended for low-risk situations.

What Is a Safety Plan?

A **safety plan** is a personalized, structured plan for how someone can manage unsafe situations, crises, or difficult moments in their lives, as well as stay safe or avoid dangerous situations. Safety plans are practical action plans for clients to follow when they are feeling overwhelmed to help them navigate through difficult emotions and dangerous situations.

When creating a safety plan, service providers can use a template or develop a plan from scratch. Templates can provide a helpful structure and ensure that important details are not omitted. They are most useful when they are editable or leave room for flexibility to address each client's unique needs. See Switchboard's Low-Risk Safety Plan Template as an example.

Why Use a Safety Plan with Clients?

Safety plans are essential tools for clients and service providers. They empower clients by providing clear steps they can take when they are unsafe. By helping clients create a safety plan, you offer them a sense of control and a pathway to safety. Safety plans are essential for:

- **Preventing crises:** Identifying and addressing warning signs early
- **Managing risk:** Reducing the risk of harm by having a plan in place
- **Empowering clients:** Providing clients with coping strategies and support networks

Assessing & Responding to Disclosure



1. Empathy

Use supportive communication and healing statements

2. Confidentiality

Reaffirm confidentiality and give control

3. Assess

Identify needs and share options



4. Plan

Collaborate with the survivor

5. Refer

Facilitate warm referrals

6. Follow up

Check in regularly

What if Support is Declined?

- Manage your own expectations
- Engage in case consultation
- Follow up regularly
- Maintain regular contact with the client
- Reduce risk





Case Scenario: Responding to Maria

You thank Maria for having the courage to share her experience with you and remind her that your conversation is confidential and that you won't tell her U.S. tie anything you have discussed. You then ask Maria what is most important to her right now. Maria explains that she wants to find a job to have more financial independence.





What is your next step to support Maria?



Case Scenario: Maria – Next Steps

Maria states that she wants to work with a financial coach and gives consent for you to make the referral. You connect her to your colleague, and they begin working on a financial independence plan. You then ask Maria if she would be open to creating a brief safety plan with you so that she knows what to do if she needs help. Maria agrees.





What should be included in Maria's safety plan?

Key Takeaways

- Understand the dynamics
- Apply a survivor-centered approach
- Attend to safety and self-determination
- Build long-term solutions





Questions?



Type your question in the **Q&A**

Learning Objectives



We hope you are now able to:

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Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat to access our feedback survey!

- Five questions
- 60 seconds
- Helps us improve future training and technical assistance





Recommended Resources

Switchboard

- **Tool:** [Family Violence Safety Plan](#)
- **Guide:** [Safety Planning for Family Violence: Guidance for Service Providers](#)
- **Guide:** [Family Violence: Core Concepts for Refugee and Newcomer Serving Organizations](#)
- **Evidence Summary:** [What Works to Prevent and Respond to Intimate Partner Violence Among Refugees?](#)
- **Webinar:** [Fundamentals of Gender-Based Violence \(GBV\) for Refugee Service Providers: The What, Why, and How of Safety Planning](#)

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

- **Guide:** [Gender-Based Violence](#)

Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS)

- **Webinar:** [Refugee Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence: Doubly Vulnerable](#)



Safety Planning for Family Violence: Guidance for Service Providers

Safety planning is essential when supporting clients at risk of family violence, which is used as an umbrella term for domestic violence and intimate partner violence. This guide will explore the fundamentals of using safety plans with newcomers to help them manage these dangers and stay safe. Switchboard's editable [Family Violence Safety Plan Template](#) accompanies this guide.

Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic violence (DV) is a pattern of abusive behaviors within a household, which can include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial abuse, between two or more individuals who share a domestic or interpersonal relationship, such as spouses, partners, family members, or cohabitants. DV may have legal implications based on the type of relationship and behaviors involved.

While DV covers abuse that occurs within any household relationship, **intimate partner violence (IPV)** refers to abuse or aggression in a romantic relationship, including both current and former



A safety plan is a personalized guide with practical steps to help clients manage crises, avoid dangerous situations, and navigate difficult emotions. See Switchboard's [Introduction to Safety Planning for more information on safety plans and the safety planning process.](#)

spouses or partners. IPV can vary in frequency and severity, ranging from isolated incidents to reoccurring



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