

# Video Discussion Guide: *Assessing for Physical Abuse*

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## **Video Discussion Guide: *Assessing for Physical Abuse***

### **Objective:**

This guide is designed as a complement to the APSWI video "[Assessing for Physical Abuse](#)" to enhance learning and develop a deeper understanding of concepts portrayed. In the video, APS Professional Alejandra Ruiz visits the home of Goldie Rosenberg who has been reported to APS for possible physical and emotional abuse by her daughter. Alejandra uses various interviewing skills to assess for physical abuse and safety plan with Goldie.

### **How to Use:**

- This discussion guide can be used by a trainer or facilitator during individual supervision and/or coaching, or in a group training session.
- It's helpful to add your own expertise and specific organization's protocols/practices to the feedback provided to the learner as well as local resources.

### **Learning Concepts:**

[Rapport and Trust](#)

[Person-Centered Approach](#)

[Interviewing Skills- Active and Reflective Listening](#)

[Information, Education, and Resource Sharing](#)

[Safety Planning](#)

### **Content Warning:**

We recognize that APS work is both challenging and rewarding and APS professionals are whole human beings who have their own experiences before and during APS work. Video content and discussion topics may activate feelings based on personal or professional experiences, including vicarious trauma. We encourage everyone to do what they need to do in order to safely engage in this video discussion.

## Rapport and Trust

### In what ways did Alejandra build rapport and trust with Goldie?

- *Alejandra:*
  - *Communicated slowly, clearly, and with enough pausing and silence to allow Goldie to process the questions, information, and concepts*
  - *Conveyed empathy for Goldie's painful experiences*
  - *Expressed concern that Goldie is experiencing emotional and physical abuse*
  - *Used a person-centered approach when talking with Goldie (more on [person-centered](#) approach below)*
  - *Asked about Goldie's feelings of safety and comfort level in sharing information, and specifically asked what would make Goldie feel safer to discuss the allegations*
  - *Was transparent about the allegations, assessment process, evidence gathering, and cross-reporting requirements*
  - *Related to Goldie when talking about the locks with the codes*
  - *Thanked Goldie for her participation in the assessment and expressed appreciation for Goldie's sharing of information*

### In ways did you notice that rapport had been built?

- *Goldie:*
  - *Let Alejandra in and was interested in what Alejandra was saying*
  - *Asked questions and wanted to know more information about the process*
  - *Offered a detailed explanation of the abuse (history and present) after minimizing at first*
  - *Seemed receptive to explore options offered*

*Facilitator note: Inquire about ways in which staff/learners know that rapport has been built.*

## Person-Centered Approach

**Person-Centered:** a theory based on human relationships, unconditional positive regard, empathy, and a belief in the possibility of change.

Using a person-centered approach with those served by APS also includes using the six principles of a **trauma-informed approach:** Safety, Trustworthiness and Transparency, Peer Support, Collaboration and Mutuality, Empowerment Voice and Choice, and Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues.

### **In what ways did Alejandra demonstrate a person-centered and trauma-informed approach?**

- Expressed interest and curiosity about Goldie's gender identity, encouraging Goldie to be her authentic self and perhaps increasing Goldie's comfort level with disclosing that she is in a relationship with a woman
- Shared an intention to focus on Goldie's safety and well-being
- Expressed her intention for Goldie to be safe, and used Goldie's words, to "have peace in her home"
- Empowered Goldie to make decisions about her safety and what steps she would be willing to take to address the situation
- Offered to collaboratively create a safety plan with Goldie's input
- Offered that Goldie can contact her at a later time if she changes her mind about steps she'd like to take, such as pursuing a restraining order
- Asked permission to take pictures of Goldie and her injuries, and explained the picture taking process before and during the process

Facilitator note: In this video, taking photographic evidence and cross reporting to Law Enforcement were depicted. Insert any policies and procedures around these.

- Review your program's policy and procedures around documenting using cameras and taking photos. In this video, the client was slightly hesitant and agreed after asking questions. Discuss what participant's next steps would be if the client does not agree.
- Review your program's policies on joint investigations and/or cross reporting to Law Enforcement.

## Interviewing Skills- Active and Reflective Listening

### In what ways did Alejandra demonstrate active and/or reflective listening?

- *Asked questions in an open-ended manner*
  - *Facilitator note: ask participants if they can recall any open-ended questions that they noticed or might want to use in their work.*
- *Gently asked for clarification*
  - *Facilitator note: ask participants if they can recall questions that sought to clarify what Goldie was sharing.*
  - *Ex.: "Can you describe what you mean by lost it" and "Can you tell me more about what happened?"*
- *Gently probed for more information*
  - *Facilitator note: ask participants if they can recall prompts or questions that sought additional or focused information.*
  - *Ex.: "And then what happened?" and "how often has Lisa treated you this way?"*
- *Absorbed sensitive information with patience, understanding, and acknowledgment*
- *Checked in with Goldie to ensure she heard the information correctly by reflecting back her understanding of the incidents that have occurred, and asking "am I getting that right?"*

## Information, Education and Resource Sharing

### **What types of resources, information and education did Alejandra provide?**

- *Provided psychoeducation about physical and emotional abuse and the effects of trauma*
- *Counseling for Domestic Violence with contact information*
- *Explained goals of and typical process for an APS investigation including documentation*
- *Explained cross-reporting requirements to Goldie before the picture taking process*
- *Safety Planning options (see more on safety planning below)*
- *Domestic Violence Advocates*
- *Restraining order information and contacts for Court*

### **What types of resources, information and education would you provide in addition?**

*Facilitator note: Discuss local resources available for older adults and adults with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence. Include any on-line options.*

## Safety Planning

### **How did Alejandra approach safety planning? What elements of safety planning did she cover with Goldie?**

- *Alejandra asked Goldie what steps she'd be willing to take to feel safer in her home.*
  - *Ex.: asked Goldie about her willingness to ask Lisa to stay away, change the locks, call 911, and pursue a restraining order.*
- *Emphasized throughout the visit that the safety planning would be a collaborative process*
- *Provided information about restraining orders and offered to connect Goldie with an advocate who can walk her through the process, including mentioning she works with them often which can normalize that Goldie isn't alone in experiencing this and possibly increasing the chance that Goldie will connect with them.*

### **What, if any, elements of safety planning would you consider in this scenario?**

- *Facilitator note: Explore the comfortability and experience of the learners with safety planning with older adults and adults with disabilities.*
  - *What does an APS professional need to consider when safety planning with older adults and adults with disabilities? (ex.: thinking through having assistive devices near and planning how to ensure they have them if there is a need to leave. Emergency services and shelters that will work with older adults/adults with disabilities).*
- *Facilitator note: There are both instructor-led and eLearning trainings available to continue supporting staff around investigating allegations of domestic violence.*
  - *The [Power and Control Dynamics Instructor-Led Training and Transfer of Learning](#) (APSWI)*
  - *The Power and Control Dynamics eLearning (NATC)*
  - *[Abuse Later in Life with Safety Planning](#) (NCALL)*

## References or Resources if applicable

Academy for Professional Excellence (2023). *Power and Control Dynamics Instructor-Led Training*. Retrieved from <https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/programs/apswi/core-competency-areas/power-and-control-dynamics-instructor-led-training/>

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THE WAY PEOPLE  
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