Assessing for Physical Abuse: Video Disussion Guide

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July 2024, Remediated 2026.
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APSWI
Adult Protective Services Workforce Innovations

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Assessing for Physical Abuse: Video Discussion Guide

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, she/her visits the home of Goldie Rosenberg, she/her 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, Person-Directed, and Trauma-Informed 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.

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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 what 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 it at first
  - seemed receptive to explore options offered

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

Person-Centered, Person-Directed, and Trauma-Informed Approach

Terminology:

Person-Centered: Focuses on respecting the views of the person and their loved ones. Emphasizes quality of life, well-being, and informed choice (Administration for Community Living [ACL], 2020).

Person-Directed: Planning and services are driven by the person receiving them, based on their unique needs, strengths, preferences, and experiences (ACL, 2024).

Trauma-informed approach: Uses six core principles-Safety, Trustworthiness and Transparency, Peer Support, Collaboration and Mutuality, Empowerment Voice and Choice, and Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022).

In what ways did Alejandra demonstrate a person-centered, person-directed, 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

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.

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.

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.*
    - For example: "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.*
    - For example: "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 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 intimate partner violence. Include any on-line options.

Safety Planning

How did Alejandra approach safety planning?

- Alejandra asked Goldie what steps she'd be willing to take to feel safer in her home.
    - For example: 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

What elements of safety planning did she cover with Goldie?

- 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 increase 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? (e.g. 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 intimate partner or 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

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