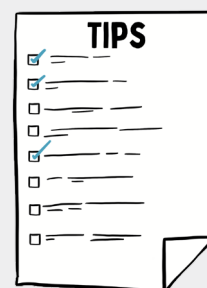


Disability Inclusive FDV Services

Women and children with disability experience a range of barriers when accessing FDV services. These tips have been developed by people with disability and parents of children with disability. It is based on their own direct experiences of family and domestic violence.



Accessibility

- If a mother is seeking help for themselves and their children, check if any of them have access or disability-related needs.
- Let women know if you can provide transport, as this may impact their engagement with a service.
- Make sure links and widgets on your website or apps are working.
- Easy read helps people feel confident and informed.
- Use images and drawings (like animation or cartoons) to provide information in visual formats.
- Ask the person about the best way to communicate with them and how to contact them.

“Let people know of other avenues so they don’t get so disheartened (if they have to wait for services). Give people the numbers they can ring if they feel they are in crisis”

- Modified Service Delivery pilot co-design member



Inclusive Environment

- Ensure the service setting is approachable. Take steps to ensure environments are not clinical or corporate by making them warm, friendly, homely and comforting.

 - Workers should be aware of the potential impact of language and body language, so they don't come across as asking a person "what's wrong with you," nor send the message "you are taking up space."

 - Talk directly to the person.

 - Don't touch the person or sit right next to them.

 - Be aware that when someone has escaped family and domestic violence, "it is still terrifying." People are scared and likely to be unsure if they are safe.

 - Understand that people might be at different stages or times in their journey.

 - There's no perfect victim-survivor and people can present in various ways. Understand they may not respond the way you would in the same circumstances and there is no right or wrong way for a victim to react. Every experience is different.

 - Provide information about waitlists or delays in accessing services to prevent women being disheartened or distressed. Provide an estimated timeframe.

 - When in crisis, documents and forms can be difficult. People may need support in filling them out.

 - Offer to provide information verbally or in writing. You may need to revisit conversations about options available as too much information can be overwhelming.

 - Understand trauma informed care and apply the principles across services.
-

"They were LGBT friendly... rainbows everywhere and I loved that. It was the kind of place where staff had buttons on their lanyards. They had fidget toys and low sensory or mood lighting. They had written information."

- Modified Service Delivery pilot co-design member

Safety and Privacy

- Discuss confidentiality and privacy with women and children with disability, including those with guardians.

 - Acknowledge women and children with disability's right to privacy without promising to keep a disclosure secret, particularly if the person is in imminent danger.

 - Protect the privacy of victim-survivors by not sharing information without consent.

 - Be mindful of the risks of sharing information with a person with disability's social supports.

 - Help women redirect mail to a PO box, if suitable.

 - Support mothers to update their children's emergency contacts and share custody information (including no contact court orders) with schools, daycare, doctors, and other places.
-

“The refuge was valuable to me: they had a good intake process. I felt safe, believed, and not judged. I was exhausted and running on adrenaline they provided “critical lifesaving support”

- Modified Service Delivery pilot co-design member



Communicating Options

- Ensure women and children with disability understand what services are available in a refuge and what can or cannot be done.
- Provide a key support person. Women describe this role as an anchor person who can provide consistent holistic support and coordination.
- Support the women and children with disability to collect evidence and document their experience so they don't have to keep retelling their story.
- Provide advice on other services such as disability, community, housing and legal supports.
- Allow tutors on site for children and provide referrals to charitable groups for food, clothing and other supplies.
- Recognise that children are just as at risk as women. They may need access to child health, early intervention services if they have a disability or require support for schooling.
- A parent should be present when working with a child.
- Victim-survivors and children may need help to reset their boundaries and unlearn maladaptive behaviours.


“Mentoring by women with experience, and the opportunity to be involved when women are brought together to provide peer support, were really useful”

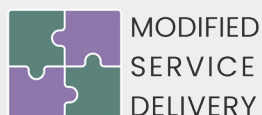
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