10 Things to Know About Violence against Women Migrant Workers

▪ What do I need to know about women migrant workers?
▪ Do I have what I need?
▪ How do I keep technologies safe?
▪ What are DO’s and DON’Ts to follow survivor-centred principles?
▪ How do I speak with survivors?

bit.ly/10tips4wmw
1. About survivors of violence

- Survivors may be impacted in many ways from the abuse they have experienced.
- They may be feeling afraid, ashamed, stigmatized, powerless and even blame themselves for what has happened to them.

Avoid Judgement and Build Trust

2. About women migrant workers

Additional challenges and worries of women migrant workers

- Isolation from informal support (e.g. family and friends)
- Lacking knowledge of their rights
- Fear of reporting to police due to possible deportation
- Language barriers
- Fear of being discriminated by service providers
- Fear of losing jobs and incomes
- Fear of being separated from and/or losing custody of children
- Fears of being rejected by her home community if she returns
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<th><strong>3. Do I have what I need?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A reference guide</strong> on migrant women workers to help understand her situation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health fact sheets</strong> tailored to migrant women (language considerations and no mandatory reporting) that can refer her for medical needs</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge and connections to social-emotional support groups for migrant women survivors</strong>, such as peer-networks</td>
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<td><strong>A list of partners to deal with common labour violations</strong>, such as labour attachés, trade unions, embassies, or migrant resource centres</td>
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<td><strong>A safety planning</strong> template for migrant women workers: where she can go w/o reporting to authorities; if she is isolated/trapped in a home; etc.</td>
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<td><strong>A sheet with details on laws and regulations related to migrant women workers</strong> who arrived through both formal and irregular channels</td>
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<td><strong>Referral pathways and protocols</strong> that are updated with information friendly to women migrant workers</td>
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<td><strong>A roster of interpreters</strong> and cultural mediators and their contact information</td>
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4. How do I keep technologies safe?

**Employ multiple options** (phone, SMS, website chat, apps) for survivors to access support using languages spoken by migrant women workers.

**Use methods that are used by women migrant workers** that are free or affordable, easy to access and that do not require multiple steps (e.g. app downloads with system requirements; creating an account; signing/logging-in or authentications).

**Do not use automatic translation**, which can be problematic.

**Test, monitor and adjust the methods** being used on a regular basis to ensure you are meeting survivor’s needs with the highest standards of privacy and security available.

**Use equipment supplied by the organization/agency and receive training on their use. Do not use personal devices and do not download personal items or software on work devices**.

**Ensure you/your agency has control over the technology being used to maintain the highest standards of security and privacy to avoid interception. Third parties should not have access to information transmitted (e.g. databases, files, saved chats or images, recordings, etc.)**.

**Provide information to survivors** on how to erase communications, strengthen privacy settings, improve their safety and security and best methods to document abuse.
5. Survivor-centred principles do’s and don’ts

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<th>DO’s</th>
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<td>✓ Explain to her how you will maintain privacy and confidentiality</td>
<td>✗ Share any information without the survivor’s consent</td>
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<td>✓ Explain to her how to reconnect if the call drops</td>
<td>✗ Call her back if the call drops</td>
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<td>✓ Ensure privacy when interacting with survivors</td>
<td>✗ Work in a space where others can see or hear your communication</td>
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<td>✓ Keep records in a locked cabinet or in an anonymized database with password protection</td>
<td>✗ Leave paper records in places that are visible or accessible</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Respect women’s individual circumstances and their right to make their own informed decisions</td>
<td>✗ Tell survivors what to do or coax them into any decisions</td>
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<td>✓ Reflect on your own biases and learn from the survivor’s cultural and social experiences</td>
<td>✗ Assume you know her background and circumstances</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Take steps to maintain self-care. This is critical for you and in service to other women</td>
<td>✗ Neglect your own well-being</td>
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6. Active Listening

- **Paraphrase and summarize** what the survivor says, as needed, to show that you are listening and understanding.
- **Clarify** when necessary.
- **Reflect** content and/or feeling. Help the survivor focus if they drift into another topic.
- **Use non-verbal communication techniques** and allow time for silence and thoughts.
- **Focus on what the person is saying**, rather than guess, or prepare what you yourself will say next.

- Let me see if I have this right....

- It sounds like you were very scared in the moment when he yelled and raised his fist.

- When you say he was threatening, can you tell me more about what he was doing?

- You said earlier that you were walking home, and then ... he surprised you on the path...
7. Effective Questioning

Three types of questions:
1. **Open questions**: these motivate the survivor to talk and expand on what she is saying. Use these questions often.
2. **Closed questions** (yes/no): these can inhibit the survivor from talking. Use these questions only when specific information is needed.
3. **Questions starting with ‘Why’**: These can sound like blame to a survivor. **Avoid** using these questions.

If there is an interpreter, make sure they follow these points as well. Be cautious of sentences such as why didn’t you seek support in the destination country? Why didn’t you get official documents? These sentences will blame her.
8. Validate Feelings

Allow the survivor to feel what they are feeling – and let them know that it is okay and that it is normal. This helps the survivor feel safe with you.

It’s okay to cry; crying is an expression of emotion.

Many women in your situation would also feel angry.

“It is normal for you to feel so upset after what you have been through; many people who have had similar experiences as you also feel upset.”
9. Challenge Self-Blame

- As we have heard, survivors will often feel guilty and blame themselves for the abuse.
- **It is never the fault of the survivor.**
- If someone is feeling guilty or blaming themselves, state that this is a normal reaction, but assure them that it is never the fault of the survivor.
- Always be respectful in challenging self blame and avoid arguing with the survivor.

- Make sure that she knows her legal status and migration are not a cause of violence. It is never the fault of survivor no matter her circumstance.
- Acknowledge the challenges related to seeking support in a destination country (new place).
10. Healing Statements

- Builds relationship
  - Thank you for telling me

- Validates and empowers
  - You are very brave for telling me

- Builds trust
  - I believe you

- Reassurance and non-blaming
  - What happened was not your fault

- Expresses empathy
  - I am sorry this happened to you.
The Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN Region Programme, is part of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls by 2030, a global, multi-year initiative between the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN). Safe and Fair focuses on ASEAN countries and is implemented through a partnership between the ILO and UN Women, in collaboration with UNODC, and is delivered at both local and national levels through governments, trade unions, employer organizations, civil society organizations and women’s organizations, and at the regional level through ASEAN institutions.

The Spotlight Initiative is the world's largest targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls. Launched with a seed funding commitment of €500 million from the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative represents an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a demonstration fund for action on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Spotlight Initiative is demonstrating that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and ending violence can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls.

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