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4.A. Getting Clear. What Is Going On?

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A.1. What Is *Getting Clear*?

Getting Clear: Key Questions

- What is going on?

- What kind of violence or abuse has happened or is happening?

- Who is getting harmed?

- Who is doing the harming?

- What can be done?

What Is It?

Getting Clear means taking the time to look around, reflect and think about what is happening. It can be a quick snapshot taken at a single moment. What is going on – right now? Or it can be a more thoughtful, broad view of the big picture. What is going on – looking from many angles? How did we get there? Where are we going?

Why Is It Important?

Getting clear is especially important when you are in crisis and are confused. Having a clear understanding of the situation is helpful when you are first starting an intervention and a clear starting point from which to take action is needed. As things change, it may be necessary to continue to reassess the situation, taking snapshots along the way and noting changes as they unfold.

Piecing Together the Big Picture

Getting Clear often involves thinking about what **you** already know about the situation and learning from what **others** have seen or experienced in the situation.

Sharing information can create a fuller picture of what is going on. It is like the story of a group of people, each looking at an elephant from only one angle. One of person only sees the trunk, someone else the tail, someone else the rough hide of the elephant. However, only together can the group have a more accurate picture of the elephant. In the same way each of you may describe and understand the situation in an entirely different way. Only with each other can you put the pieces together and understand that you are seeing different angles of one larger reality.

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Highlighting the Important Points

Interpersonal violence can be especially confusing. These stories can be complicated because they involve close and sometimes long-term relationships, mixed emotions, the involvement of many people and dynamics of violence that unfold in multiple ways. Figuring out what is going on can thus be very difficult. Sometimes the process of *Getting Clear* requires us to sort through a whole set of details. It may be important to lay out all of the pieces first before figuring out what are the most critical points, and the patterns that are the most important to try to change.

Sharing Information without Constant Repetition or Rehashing

Getting Clear is helpful because it allows others to help. Taking collective action towards change often involves having other people's input on the process of *Getting Clear*. It may also involve sharing some details about the violent situation with the people you are asking for help. While not everyone needs to know every detail of the situation, out of concern for privacy, confidentiality or safety issues, many will want some basic information in order to decide if and how they want to get involved. Good information will also help everyone to make better decisions about what actions to take.

Finding a good way to write down, record or otherwise remember these details without making someone repeat the story over and over again is useful. It prevents those telling the story, especially the survivor or victim, from having to repeat and re-live the situation. It also keeps track of important details that can be lost as people get tired repeating the story or assume that everyone already knows the details.

Using the Tools in This Section

The *Getting Clear* section offers basic information and tools to help you get clear and figure out what is happening at any given moment. If you need simpler, shorter tools to help when you are in immediate crisis or have less time, refer to Tool A1. *Getting Clear Snapshot/Quick Question Guide*. If you need to do a full assessment at the beginning of an intervention, or when you have more time or more people involved, refer to Tool A2. *Getting Clear Worksheet*. You can also use these tools as you move across through different stages of what might be a long process.

Tool A3. *Naming the Harms Chart* and Tool A.4. *Harms Statement Worksheet* can help you get specific about what harms happened or what is happening and figure out how specific and what details are important for what purpose.

Tool A.5. *Gettingg Clear Intervention Factors-at-a-Glance* gives you more in-depth information about what type of violence situation you are dealing with, thoughts on communicating about the situation with others who may get

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involved, figuring out what strengths and weaknesses you have in terms of moving towards a successful intervention, and other factors that might be important as you move forward.

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A.2. *Getting Clear* Across the 4 Phases:

In Section 3.6. *Interventions Over Time: 4 Phases,* the Toolkit introduced the idea of 4 possible phases of interventions: 1) Getting Started, 2) Planning/Preparation, 3) Taking Action, and 4) Following Up.

Figuring out what is going on or *Getting Clear* may look different at different phases of an intervention process.

Phase 1: Getting Started

In this Toolkit, the beginning actions to *Getting Clear*, may be particularly important. It may be a key opportunity to really think about what is happening and what needs to be done. Getting clear on the details – by answering the questions in *Snapshot/Quick Question Guide* or *Worksheets* – can lead to actions that can really address the problem. Writing these details down or recording them in some way can help others understand all of the important points of the situation without having to tire everyone out by repeating the story.

Phase 2: Planning/Preparation

Intervention rarely ends with one action. It is helpful to keep assessing or *Getting Clear* of the situation as it changes over time. Things might look different as small actions or reactions take place, different events or factors enter the picture, or new people get involved. You may need to do quick snapshots of the situation at various times.

Phase 3: Taking Action

As you get ready to take action, big actions or small, you may need to continue taking snapshots and *Get Clear* on the situation as things continue to change or you find out new information.

Phase 4: Following-Up

As you move through the planning and action steps of intervention or perhaps as you reach its conclusion, you can continue to do quick snapshots of *Getting Clear* on the situation to figure out where things are at or what may have changed in the situation of violence.

Related Tools:

Tools to identify people who can help out or are connected to the situation are in Section 4.C. *Mapping Allies and Barriers* and Section 4.G. *Working Together.*

Tools to help you look at your goals or what you want to achieve are in Section 4.D. *Goal Setting.*

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Tools to look at how ready you are for taking action including what you need to be ready are in Section 4.H. *Keeping on Track.*

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A.3. *Getting Clear* Tips

1. Read Some Basics Everyone Should Know.

Interpersonal violence is complicated. Although we may hear more about domestic violence or sexual assault these days, many misunderstandings still exist and many misconceptions about what it is and how to approach it. Read Section 2. *Some Basics Everyone Should Know.* Pay special attention to Section 2.2. *Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know* in order to have a clearer picture of what is going on. The Section 2.3. *Violence Intervention: Some Important Lessons* also shares important basics about interventions based upon the experiences of Creative Interventions.

Share this information with others who may be involved in a situation of violence and may need some resources to help them know what to do. .

2. Focus on what and how. Beware of "why's."

It is normal to wonder "why" something is happening. Why is the person doing harm doing what he/she is doing? Why me – why am I the victim of violence? And so on. These "why" questions are often impossible to answer. They can keep us stuck in not-knowing and not-doing. Step away from "why" questions and move more towards "what" is happening and "how" do we change the situation.

3. Learn from the perspectives of others.

Do your assessment with other trusted people. You may learn that you only have part of the picture. You may be able to fill others in with important information. You may be able to step away from emotions that can be confusing. You may understand how you can work better together. Or you may find out that your differences are so serious and unchanging that you cannot work with each other.

4. Look out for the danger signs.

Although all forms of violence can be dangerous, including verbal abuse and other non-physical forms of violence, there are some signs that are particularly important. These are some signs linked to higher degrees of danger:

- Availability of guns or other weapons

- Previous use or history of violence

- Threats to kill self and/or others

- Choking

- Use of alcohol and/or drugs that contribute to violence

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- Person doing harm senses a loss of power and/or control (Examples: survivor/victim is about to leave or has left an abusive relationship; person doing harm senses that other people are finding out about the situation and may take action)

5. Understand the uniqueness of the survivor's or victim's experience of violence.

It may be particularly important to ask the survivor or victim of violence to name the violence if that person is not you. Why? First, they may be the only people who actually know the extent to which violence has taken place. Much of the violence may have been committed away from other people – or may take place in very subtle forms that others do not even notice.

Someone may have been violent once, but used that violence to show what could happen in the future. This threat may still be operating even if it is a one-time action. It can be hard for others to understand how something from the past can still have the power to cause fear for a long time afterwards.

Also, the survivor or victim may have been living with violence in isolation. Or others may have not believed that violence was taking place. Denial, minimizing the violence, and blaming the victim are very common when we look at interpersonal violence.

Having the survivor or victim name the violence and having others also listen, understand and validate this naming can be an important first step in taking action to repair the harm and stop future violence from happening. This may be an important step in an intervention in and of itself.

6. Stay focused on the patterns of abuse or violence.

Once you begin to name the harm, it is common to begin to closely analyze everyone's behavior. This is especially common when the survivor or victim and person doing harm have been involved in a relationship (intimate, family or other) that has gone on for a long time. If you know them well, you may be able to come up with a long list of grievances under the name of each person. While people may need to brainstorm or get these thoughts and feelings out in order to clear the air, come back to the main issue which is addressing and ending violence.

This Toolkit is not meant to create perfect relationships. It is meant to address and change fundamentally unhealthy, mostly one-sided patterns of behavior that cause significant and/or repeated harm to one person, a group of people or a series of people in situations where one person after another is being harmed.

7. Aim for common understandings – especially when it is unclear who is responsible for violence and what are those harms.

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We often find big differences in what people think about the situation of violence including who is more responsible for the harm, who did what, and who is the most harmed. In other words, the process of getting clear/assessment can reveal completely different perspectives that do not come together to form a whole. It is important to go back to Section 2.2. *Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know* to develop a common understanding about violence and interventions. This may help to bring these perspectives together.

One common situation is when the survivor or victim has also taken on attitudes or actions that are unhealthy or even abusive. This can cause you to look for ways in which a survivor or victim "asked for it" or contributed to the dynamics of abuse. You may want to protect the primary person doing harm by balancing the list with everything the other person did that was unhealthy. This can cause people to question who is really the survivor or victim in the situation causing divided opinions or questions about whether this is simply a bad and unhealthy relationship with equal blame on both sides. If this is the case, some questions to ask are:

- Who is more afraid?

- Who starts the violence?

- Who ends up getting harmed?

- Who is usually changing and adapting to meet another's needs or moods? (Some say: Who sets the weather in this relationship?)

- Who is more vulnerable?

- Who is using violence for power and control (abusive violence)? Who is using violence to try to maintain safety or integrity in an already violent situation (self defense)?

- Who has to win?

Also see Section 5.6. *Distinguishing between Violence and Abuse, by Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse* for more information.

8. Figure out who needs to get what information and for what purpose.

The process of *Getting Clear* is also one about gathering and recording information. It can serve different purposes for different people. As you record and share this information, you might want to think about different versions depending upon the purpose.

Below is a list of possible reasons for and results from *Getting Clear*.

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- Getting clear on the situation of violence

- Remembering details and sorting out for important information

- Getting clear on what you want to address and change

- Sharing information with those you want to help support you in an intervention

- Avoiding the tendency to deny and minimize violence

- Naming the harms as preparation for facing the person or people responsible for the harm

- Naming the harms as a way for someone doing the harm to start to take accountability

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A.4. *Getting Clear* Special Considerations

The process of *Getting Clear* may be different depending upon your relationship to violence and to the people most closely involved in violence. This Toolkit promotes a process that brings together different viewpoints to create a better picture of what is really going on. This can and should happen regularly throughout the intervention. It is also important to think about some special considerations depending upon the person's relationship to violence.

Survivor or Victim

The survivor or victim is often the person who best understands the dynamics and impact of violence. She or he is also likely to be the person most affected by violence. Especially when we are thinking about interpersonal violence, the nature of harm can be subtle or hidden. It may have developed over a period of time, beginning with small abuses that end up becoming a pattern of abuse. It may have been one particularly violent incident that gives the message that this can always happen again.

People on the outside may not see or understand these dynamics. For example, those in domestic violence relationships can come to understand that a certain look or glance can mean that a beating could follow. To others, they might not notice that look or may dismiss it as not very harmful. They may even accuse the survivor or victim of being too sensitive or exaggerating without realizing that the survivor or victim may know very well what such looks or glances mean.

At the same time, survivors or victims can minimize or deny violence in order to protect their relationship or to fend off feelings of shame or vulnerability. Their understanding of the dynamics may change as they begin to talk about the abuse and feel some safety as they are being believed and protected by others.

The survivor or victim may also be placed in the position of having to repeat what happened to them over and over again. This can put a huge strain on this person as they remember traumatic events and as they respond to people's questions about what happened, where and why. Many times they are asked questions that can sound victim-blaming. They can get tired and give shorter and less descriptive stories, sometimes giving people incomplete information that can make the intervention harder to carry out.

The process of *Getting Clear*, especially at the beginning, is important. It can be an opportunity to write things down or have them recorded so that these things do not need to be repeated over and over again. The Tools in this section can help to go through this process in order to be thorough and to prevent people from having to repeat things again and again.

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In this Toolkit, we do not say that the survivor's perspective is the only or always the most important perspective, although it can be. Some anti-violence and feminist organizations do say this as a part of their "survivor-centered" philosophy. We do, however, believe that the perspective of the survivor is unique and must be considered in a very serious way. In some cases, you may decide that this is the central perspective or the only one that counts. For more on "survivor-centered" decision-making, see Section 4.G. *Working Together.*

If you are the survivor or victim, the process of getting clear can be a difficult one. If you can, begin your part of *Getting Clear* by sitting down alone in a comfortable and safe place or with a trusted friend, family member, community member, counselor or advocate to get clear on the situation of violence. You can use the Tools in this section to help you make your way through the details – writing them on paper, saying them to someone else who may write them down or record your words.

Recalling details of violence and harm can take a long time and bring up memories, flashbacks, sleepless nights or nightmares. You may go back and forth about what really happened. You may feel regret and shame as you reveal the details, even to yourself. Be prepared for strong and perhaps confusing feelings. Know that this is normal.

Because this Toolkit is geared towards an intervention, this information is also meant to aid people in taking the right action at the right time. This allows for you to possibly share intimate details with people closest to you. You can then get support to figure out what other details need to be shared with other people depending on what you want to accomplish, who needs to know, and why. Possible audiences include loved ones, others affected by violence, those involved in the intervention, the person or people doing harm, and possibly a larger public audience.

The process for remembering details may be different than the process for figuring out what is most important to share and how. Questions to ask may be: What is important for right now? Who needs to know and why?

Find a way to get ongoing support during this process from people who you trust. Show them this Toolkit and other resources so that they can better offer support.

Take a breath, make your way through these Tools and find support.

Community Ally

The community ally (family, friend, neighbor, co-worker, community member) may also be in a position to see other important things that are going on. It may also be important for your ally to get information gathered from the process of *Getting Clear* to help them play a positive role in the intervention.

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If you are a community ally, you may see ways in which the survivor or victim has been harmed or is endangered that may not be noticed by the person being harmed. You may notice other aspects of the situation that are important to understand what is going on or what can be done. You may also learn important things from the survivor or victim or others involved in the violence. We urge you to learn about the dynamics of violence by reading *Section 2. The Basics* and by looking closely at the *Tips* in this section which offer some lessons from others who have been involved in interventions to violence.

Take a breath, make your way through these Tools and find support.

Person Doing Harm

In this Toolkit, we allow for the perspective of the person doing harm to enter the situation. This is different from many anti-violence organizations that often automatically dismiss this perspective as an attempt to manipulate the situation or blame the victim.

Experience shows that people doing harm often hold a perspective that attempts to dismiss the violence through denial, minimization or victim blaming. People doing harm have often continued and justified harm through a perspective that minimizes their role in violence, blames the victim and tries to convince others either to ignore the violence or justify it. This is especially true if the person doing harm is in a position of power in relation to the person being harmed or accused of being harmed.

While this is not necessarily the case, and the point of interventions is to try to change these tendencies over time, it may be important to keep this possibility in mind. The person doing harm may have a very different story to tell than the survivor of violence. Challenging unequal power and ending violence often prioritizes the voice of the person who has been harmed.

If you are the person doing harm or are the person accused of doing harm, we urge you to be open to the perspective of the survivor or victim of harm and to those carrying out this intervention. This openness may feel threatening at times, but a shift in your view of this situation and an understanding of the harm you may have caused can lead to positive change for you and others.

Take a breath, make your way through these Tools and find support.

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A.5. *Getting Clear* Facilitator Notes

This Toolkit works best with someone acting as a facilitator. This may be a friend, family member or community member. It may also be a helpful professional or someone working in an organization who is willing to work with the values and approach behind this model.

Please note again that this Toolkit contains a unique approach to dealing with violence and may be very unfamiliar to people used to working with violence. It may even be against their policies. You can share this Toolkit with people you might want to act as a facilitator and see if they are comfortable with this perspective and model.

If you are a facilitator or are willing to help out by providing a role in helping another person or a group to work through this Toolkit, then these notes are to help you.

1. Encourage and support people to learn fundamental information first if they have not already.

This Toolkit is long and can be overwhelming. Some important parts of this Toolkit are Section 2. *Some Basics Everyone Should Know.* An especially important section can be Section 2.2. *Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know* that discusses much more about the dynamics of violence and common misunderstandings that people have.

It can be useful for you to be familiar with the different sections of this Toolkit and to read more carefully through these sections. Also encourage people to read these sections. If reading is not the best option or they cannot read English or the language that this Toolkit is in, you can help by reading this and other sections to them in a language they understand or use other formats to pass on this information.

2. Support people by going through these Getting Clear information and tools that seem useful.

When people are in crisis, it can especially be helpful to break down this section into manageable parts. People may be able to glance through the whole section but then begin by working through the *What Is Going On? Snapshot: Quick Question Guide* or *What Is Going On: Worksheet.* You may be able to help by knowing what is available in this section and in the overall Toolkit but help guide people to bite-size next steps.

3. Support a collective or group process.

We encourage people to join together with other trusted people to carry out an intervention together. You may be collecting the information for *Getting Clear* by

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carrying out this process with a couple of people or even a small group. This may be done all together if this makes sense or by going to different people and gathering this information individually.

Be aware that any process that starts bringing together different people may also pose new risks or dangers. A group may already have formed or be an obvious group to work with. Or, you may want to read the sections on Section 4.B. *Staying Safe* and Section 4.C. *Mapping Allies and Barriers* first before expanding this group.

If you do this in a group, it can be helpful to organize this information visually on something everybody can look at. Some ways could include:

- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Easel paper
- Post-its or cut-outs you can put on the wall
- Objects you can move on a table or on the floor

4. Find useful and safe ways to document this information so that it doesn't get lost.

It is also helpful to document/or keep in some permanent way this information so you can refer to it later, compare it with changes that occur over time, and share it with people who were not at this meeting.

Ways to document include:

- Write notes
- Draw picture
- Take pictures of notes, post-its, objects
- Roll-up and re-use easel paper notes

Again, make sure that these documents are kept in a safe way. And make sure the people most affected by violence or involved in this intervention are part of deciding who and how this happens. This may mean that even if you usually share everything that happens with your partner, your close friend, your mother, and so on, you cannot do it in this case.

Remember that emails can easily be forwarded. Written notes can be found and read by other people who may endanger the people involved, even if they don't mean to. Think about how gossip could harm a situation and try to make judgments about who is safe to share information with and how to make stronger agreements to keep information safe. On the other hand, shared information can also be part of your plan to bring more people together.

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A.6. *Getting Clear* Real Life Stories and Examples

Story A: *I hear yelling in my apartment building. What is going on?*

I live in a small apartment building in a city in the South near the border with Mexico. We have several immigrants from different countries living in the building. Some of us keep to ourselves and some have made friendships with the other residents. There is not a lot of fighting and violence here. But if there is, at least someone will hear – the next door neighbor or the people directly upstairs or downstairs.

I was hanging out with some of my neighbors. We don't know each other too well but we like to get together once in awhile. Sometimes our conversations turn to gossip about other people in the building. One time, one of them talked about the neighbors who live right next door to them, a couple that has been fighting. The couple has a 5-year old daughter. The husband has lived in the building for a few years – a seemingly nice guy who tends to keep to himself. He married a woman who moved in about 6 years ago. His wife mostly speaks Spanish. She's friendly but communication is usually pretty limited if you don't speak Spanish which most of us don't. I'll call them "Marcos" and "Maria" although those are not their real names. My neighbor continued with the story saying that he has heard them fighting and that the husband was yelling at his wife, Maria, "Go ahead and call the police. You don't even speak f**ing English."

I had never heard any yelling, myself. But when I heard the story, I wondered why Marcos mentioned the police. Immediately, I thought he may have hit Maria and perhaps she threatened to call the police, but I wasn't sure. When I heard about his comment about her English, I was more worried. Why is he insulting her about her English? Is he telling her she can't seek help even if she wanted to? Why is he telling her that the police won't do anything? Why is he yelling like that about the mother of his daughter who probably heard everything he said? These are all abusive and pointed to signs of more serious abuse. I also know that this type of violence doesn't usually stop one time. It was likely to continue and could get worse. I figured this story wouldn't stop here.

We wondered what was going on but didn't make any plans for action.

Later, I was talking to people who lived upstairs from them. I'll call these neighbors Tom and Grace, although these are not their real names. They could really hear the yelling, which was mostly coming from Marcos. Maria's voice was much quieter or she seemed to be crying. They thought they heard things being thrown around and were getting worried. They could hear the daughter crying during these times. I told them about what I heard from the other neighbors. Since they seemed really concerned, too, we tried to make sense from the things we knew and we had heard.

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See *Getting Clear* Tool A1. What *Is Going On? Snapshot: Quick Question Guide* for how this Tool can be used in this story.

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A.7. *Getting Clear* Tools (Cover sheet)

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Getting Clear Tool A1: What Is Going On? Snapshot/Quick Question Guide

You can use this *Snapshot/Quick Question Guide* to help to get started and as a way to take snapshots along the way. This just asks some possible basic questions to start getting a clearer picture of the problem.

- What is going on?

- Who is getting harmed?

- What kind of harm?

- Who is doing the harm?

- What is the impact of this harm?

- Who knows about what's going on?

- What other people or dynamics are important in positive ways?

- What other people or dynamics have been harmful or made things worse?

- Any other important things to know?

- Are there any important changes?

- What's the next step?

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Example of *Getting Clear* Tool A1: What Is Going On? Snapshot/Quick Question Guide

This example is from:

Story A: *I hear yelling in my apartment building. What is going on?*

Read Story A in Section A.6. *Getting Clear Real Life Stories and Examples* for the full story and background.

For this exercise, the person telling the story has filled out the quick question guide by themselves. This is also something they can go through with the two sets of neighbors who have shared their knowledge of what is going on with Marcos and Maria.

What is going on?

Marcos has lived in the building for awhile. Some of us know him but not so well. Maria moved in about 6 years ago. Nobody we know in the building knows much about her. She speaks Spanish and very little English. From the yelling and the noise reported from different neighbors, we know that there is violence happening. It seems that this has started in the last few months.

Who is getting harmed?

Maria seems to be the one getting harmed. And so is their daughter, although it is not clear if she is directly getting hit. Their daughter is being harmed just by watching this happen and hearing the yelling and insults against her mother.

What kind of harm?

There are the kind of fights where there is at least the emotional abuse of yelling. Things are being thrown, which is physically threatening. We think that this could mean that there is also physical abuse or at least something that could lead to physical abuse. The reference to the police also makes us wonder if there is physical abuse, too. There is the kind of abuse where the mother is being insulted for not speaking English. There is harm against the daughter who must witness the yelling, insults, and things being thrown around.

Who is doing the harm?

The primary person doing harm seems to be Marcos.

What is the impact of this harm?

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I don't know this family well so I have to guess at some of the impact of this harm right now. I know that Maria is upset during the times that the yelling is happening. Their daughter is clearly crying and upset. I know that the impact of violence can go way beyond being upset during times of violence – it can cause a whole cycle of violence for this family.

As a neighbor, I feel upset that this family is experiencing violence. When I see Maria or their daughter, I think about the violence. I don't think that Marcos is benefiting from his violence. I feel like my own sense of peace is violated by violence in our building.

Who knows about what's going on?

So far, the next door neighbors who first talked about the yelling know. The people upstairs from Marcos and Maria know, and I know. I'm not sure who else knows.

What other people or dynamics are important in positive ways?

The neighbors who I talked to seemed at least concerned. Even though we were gossiping and not necessarily talking about doing anything about it yet, this could be positive. I don't have a strong relationship with either Marcos nor Maria but we have a friendly relationship. This could be a positive dynamic. Even though it looks like Marcos is being abusive to both his wife and at least indirectly to his daughter, he also appears to be a loving father, which is another positive dynamic. He has lived in the building a long time and probably would like to keep his home and keep a friendly relationship with his neighbors, which is another positive dynamic.

What other people or dynamics have been harmful or made things worse?

So far, we don't know much about the situation and what might be negative. But the fact that Maria seems to be a recent immigrant and we don't see other family members around makes us wonder if she is isolated. We also wonder about her immigration status, which would definitely make a difference if we decided to call the police. These days, the police might report her to immigration authorities and the results could be her arrest and her separation from her U.S. born daughter.

Any other important things to know?

There is definitely emotional abuse. And throwing things is a form of physical abuse. Is there also direct physical abuse? Has Maria been looking towards anybody for help? Is she open to get help? Is Marcos open to get help? What resources are there for them? We're not sure.

Are there any important changes?

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The most important change that we know of is that some of us as neighbors have started to notice and talk about what is going on.

What's the next step?

At this point, my neighbors Tom and Grace seem to be concerned enough to take some sort of action if needed. I feel this way, as well. But we aren't sure what to do. We just let each other know that we would keep each other informed and think about next steps. We also want to try to keep it inside the building and not involve the police because that could make things worse. This is especially true because we don't know if Maria is undocumented. We think that maybe our own internal actions can stop things at an early stage and at least we have each other for support.

The next step will be to talk to Tom and Grace and share this Toolkit with them. Maybe I'll just photocopy a couple of pages so they don't get overwhelmed.

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Getting Clear Tool A2: What Is Going On? Worksheet

You can use this *What Is Going On? Worksheet* when you have more time or when you can do this with the support of other people if that is helpful. It can help to identify what are the key issues of violence, abuse or harm you or someone you are close to are facing.

Please take some time to think about the following.

- How can you describe the harm that is happening?

- Who is getting harmed? In what ways?

- Who is doing the harm? In what ways?

- How long has the harm been going on?

- Is it happening all of the time? Does it happen in cycles?

- Has it been getting worse? More frequent? More serious?

- What is still happening now, might be happening now or could happen in the future?

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- Are there particular words or a term that best describes it?

- Are there certain people, things or circumstances that make it get worse? Or make it get better?

- Have people tried to get help before? Who? What kind of help? What happened?

- Who knows about the situation of harm?

- What are other important things to know about?

- Are there some key things you still need to find out? If so, what are some possible next steps for finding out?

- What else is important to do next?

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Getting Clear Tool A3: Naming the Harm Chart

If you are already getting started, at least one person has likely identified that there is some sort of violence, abuse, or harm taking place. This may already be named, or there may be a more vague feeling that some problem needs to be addressed.

Can you name the harm? How would you name it? What is important in naming it?

Even if the abuse, violence or harm clearly fits into the categories of domestic violence, sexual assault or another form of abuse, one may find it more comfortable or useful to use one's own words to name the harm.

Example: "My power was taken away." "He violated my boundaries." "She violated my sense of trust – Now I can't even trust myself." "He made me feel like I was nothing – worthless." "My community was destroyed – what felt like my safe home was turned into somewhere nobody felt safe."

While some of these sentences above may have resulted in an act or pattern of violence that could also be called *domestic violence* or *sexual assault*, the survivor or victim of violence may find it more powerful and accurate to use their own words to describe what happened and what the consequences have been.

Naming the harm can be a useful first step. For some of us, it can be uncomfortable or scary to put words to abuse or violence. It can make us feel embarrassed, ashamed, guilty or vulnerable. If you are the *survivor* or a *victim*, you may fear that naming the harm will bring more harm including retaliation. If you are the *person who did harm*, you may not want to admit what you have done. If you are *community members, friends or family*, you may feel that you do not have enough information to make a judgment or that it is not our place to name the harm.

To name the harm, you can use your own words. Or you can look at the information in Section 2.2. *Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know* to see if this information helps you to name the harm.

The following *Naming the Harm Chart* is another way to think about harms. It shows that harms can take many forms: emotional; physical; sexual; economic; using family, friends, children and pets; and using people's vulnerabilities such as their immigration status. It can include threats of harm.

Harms may also come from friends, family and community members who looked away while violence was happening, blamed the victim or participated in the harm.

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Below is a chart to recall the types of harms. They may be harms that have been committed in the past. They may be happening currently. Or we can use the chart to imagine what harms have been threatened or could happen in the future.

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Example: Naming the Harm Chart

Naming Harms from a Primary Person doing Harm

This is the list of possible harms that a person may experience from the primary person doing harm. It could answer, "I experienced these forms of violence or harm from you. You…"

Emotional	Physical	Sexual	Economic	Family, Friends Children & Pets	Other
• Isolated the survivor or victim • Kept friends or family away • Humiliated with looks and insults • Yelled • Tried to control what the survivor or victim did • Tried to control what the survivor or victim thought • Threatened or damaged the reputation of the survivor or victim • Stalked including constant texting, phone calls • Made survivor or victim nervous all the time causing them to "walking on eggshells"	• Physically harmed through pushing, slapping, hitting, punching, pulling hair, choking • Threatened harm • Physically threatened by throwing things or punching walls • Used or threatened with weapons* • Left survivor or victim in dangerous places or situations • Threatened or used self-harm or threats of suicide* • Didn't allow to sleep • Drove recklessly or dangerously	• Made unwanted sexual looks or actions • Created an unsafe sexual environment • Forced sex • Forced unwanted types of sex • Forced to have sex with others • Exposed to unwanted pornography	• Withheld money • Took away money • Threatened to or destroyed property or valuables • Didn't give enough money to survive •Threatened job • Didn't allow to work • Forced to work unfairly • Gambled or use credit cards recklessly	• Harmed or threatened harm to family, friends or others • Harmed or threatened harm to children • Harmed others in front of children • Caused fear in children • Caused children to devalue or disrespect survivor or victim •Threatened to take custody of children •Threatened to kidnap children • Harmed or threatened harm to pets	• Threatened to call or called immigration • Refused to support immigration papers • Threatened to "out" someone to others for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning • Forced to participate in unwanted acts such as stealing, violence against others, etc.

*Caution. **Note that the presence of weapons and threats of suicide are markers of serious levels of danger. Also note that dangers can heighten when a person**

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doing harm senses a loss of power and/or control. Previous forms of harm can escalate into more serious types and levels of harm. While we do not automatically consider threats of suicide to be a form of harm, we also note that threats to commit suicide or harm oneself can often be used to manipulate and to control others. For more, see Section 2.2. *Interpersonal Violence: Some Basics Everyone Should Know.*

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Example: Naming Harms from Friends, Family or Community

This is the list of possible harms caused by friends, family or community members. It could list how these community members should have been helpful but instead added to the harm. It could answer, "I wish I could have gotten help and support from you, but instead you..."

Emotional	Physical	Sexual	Economic	Family, Friends, Children & Pets	Other
• Did not believe stories of harm • Insulted or humiliated the survivor or victim • Blamed the survivor or victim for asking for or causing harm • Gossiped • Minimized the violence • Denied that the violence was happening • Only supported people in positions of power • Criticized the survivor or victim for leaving or wanting to leave • Criticized the survivor or victim for staying or wanting to stay	• Let the physical harm continue • Pretended not to notice physical harm • Told the person doing harm information that made things more dangerous for the survivor • Didn't allow survivor/victim to escape or find safety • Tried to get the survivor to minimize the harm	• Allowed sexual harm to continue • Made it seem like the survivor or victim wanted the sexual harm • Made it seem like survivor or victim had a duty to accept sex • Didn't want to hear about anything sexual • Enjoyed hearing about sexual harm	• Didn't help with affordable resources that may have been helpful • Let financial reliance on person doing harm get in the way of helping	• Made friends or family turn against the survivor or victim • Didn't help yourself, friends and family to understand the dynamics of violence • Didn't help the children with support	• Threatened to call immigration • Didn't understand how calling the police or systems could lead to further harm such as deportation

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Naming the Harm Chart

Look at each of these categories and use it to map the types of harms done. You can use the *Naming the Harm Chart (Example)* on the previous page as a guide.

The columns signify different forms of harm.

The rows signify who is being harmed. This may be direct or indirect harm. This may also be either individual people or they may be thought of as workplaces, organizations, neighborhoods and so on.

WHO IS HARMED ↓	Emotional (name calling, isolation; humiliation; threatening suicide; etc.)	Physical (pushing, slapping, pulling hair, beating, threats to harm, etc.)	Sexual (forced sex; unwanted sexual acts, etc.)	Economic (taking money; gambling; preventing from work; etc.)	Family, Friends, Children & Pets (threatening friends, family, children; etc.	Other (threatening to call immigration; threatening to "out" someone; etc.)
Name:						
Name:						
Name:						
Name:						
Name:						

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Getting Clear Tool A4: Harms Statement Worksheet

Once *a Getting Clear Worksheet* and *Naming the Harm Chart* is filled out, you may want to make a simpler **harms statement** or set of statements. These statements can serve different purposes. It can be good for one's emotional health to be clear about what harms were done. It may be to make sure this is clear and understandable to people helping to make sure that they understand what situation they are addressing. It may be useful for presenting either in writing or verbally to the person doing harm. You may be in the position of sharing this with the public.

Since there are different purposes and different audiences for harms statements, this Toolkit offers some possible categories of harm statements that might help you think about ways to write statements.

Harms Statement Uncensored - Might include strong language, cursing, things that were done and how they hurt people.

Harms Statement to share with others helping or possibly with a team. Can still be strong but include more specific details about what was done, for how long, changes in frequency and other things that you may have created when thinking about "What Is Going On" (See *Getting Clear Tool A3: What Is Going On? Worksheet*).

Harms Statement to share with the person doing harm. Can still be strong but may include more specific, concrete details about what was done and what you want the person to be accountable for.

Harms Statement for a person doing harm to write up. As a step towards accountability, should be specific, details and include what the impact of the harm has been to different people – even if not intentional. (See Section 4.E. *Taking Accountability*)

Harms Statement for the Public. Depending on the purpose, this may be used to let the public know about the situation of violence and the steps that have been taken to deal with the situation. It may be very detailed or general depending on what you think is the most positive way to share information with the public.

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Getting Clear Tool A5: Intervention Factors At-A-Glance

An intervention may include a number of factors. Below are some factors that may be significant in thinking about the harm, thinking about who you might involve in an intervention, thinking about your goals or what you want to have happen, and possibilities for connecting people to the positive goals of this intervention.

1. What is the relationship between people involved in the violence?

- Violence by a stranger
- Violence by a former partner or acquaintance but are not connected to now
- Violence by someone with whom we share community
- Violence in an ongoing relationship

2. What is the timeframe of violence?

- Pattern from the far past
- Isolated incident from the far past
- Isolated recent incident
- Emerging pattern of violence or abuse
- Long-standing pattern of violence
- Re-emergence or return of violent pattern

3. What is the visibility of violence?

- Public violence witnessed by one or more others (may also be situation where violence is private as well)
- Public and private violence witnessed or known about by others
- Incident of private violence with no witnesses
- Pattern of private violence with no witnesses

4. What is the level of danger?

- History and likelihood of use of weapons (guns, knives, explosives, etc. and/or other highly dangerous forms of violence)
- Threatened use of weapons and/or highly dangerous forms of violence
- Accessibility to weapons or possible highly dangerous forms of violence (even if this person has not acted in this way in the past)
- No shown willingness or ability to carry out highly dangerous forms of violence
- History of self-harm and/or suicide attempts
- Serious concerns related to substance abuse and/or mental illness
- Risk of retaliatory violence that is not necessarily life-threatening

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- Low likelihood of retaliatory violence

5. What is the degree to which survivor or victim might be involved in the intervention?

- Survivor or victim is the key person leading the intervention
- Survivor or victim is leading but has input from others
- Survivor or victim has high level of involvement but with others as primary people intervening
- Survivor or victim is "in the loop" but maintaining some distance from the details of the intervention
- Survivor or victim has little or no involvement in the intervention due to choice or other factors (for example, the survivor is a child)

6. How much can we expect to engage the person doing harm?

- Has no friends or social connections
- Has issues related to substance abuse and/or mental illness that seriously gets in the way of them having meaningful social connections
- Has friends or buddies but they all collude (contribute to) violence
- Has friends or buddies but fights them or disengages if they challenge this person
- Only connection is with the survivor or victim
- Knows people who the person doing harm respects or has opinions that matter even if they may not be close friends
- Has close relationships with people whom the person doing harm respects and whose opinions matter
- Has close relationships with community members who can help support them to stop violence and use new behaviors; the person doing harm is able to talk about hard things at least with certain people

7. How likely is it that we can involve community allies in the intervention?

- No connections or community
- There are connections or community, but they will excuse or even support violence
- One or two people who are connected to at least the survivor or victim and/or the person doing harm willing to get involved in positive way
- No close community, but belong to community setting (neighborhood, city, ethnic community) that has at least some people or an organization that would be willing to get involved
- At least one or two strong leaders and a group of connected people who would be willing to get involved

8. How much do the survivor or victim, community allies, and/or person doing harm share values?

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- No shared values and/or opposite values
- Some overlap of values
- Significant overlap of values
- Shared membership in a values-based community (for example, faith institution, community group, political group, etc.)

These factors related to interventions are also show in chart form below.

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Intervention Factors at a Glance: Type and Context of Violence			
Relationships between People in Violence	Timeframe of Violence	Visibility of Violence	Danger Level of Violence
• Violence by a stranger • Violence by a former partner or acquaintance but are not connected to now • Violence by someone with whom we share community • Violence in an ongoing relationship	• Pattern from the far past • Isolated incident from the far past • Isolated recent incident • Emerging pattern of violence or abuse • Long-standing pattern of violence • Re-emergence or return of violent pattern	• Pattern of private violence with no witnesses • Incident of private violence with no witnesses • Public and private violence witnessed or known about by others • Public violence witnessed by one or more others (may also be situation where violence is private as well)	• Low likelihood of retaliatory violence • No shown willingness or ability to carry out highly dangerous forms of violence • Risk of retaliatory violence that but level of harm likely low • Accessibility to weapons or possible highly dangerous forms of violence (even if this person has not acted in this way in the past) • History and likelihood of use of weapons (guns, knives, explosives, etc. and/or other highly dangerous forms of violence) • Threatened use of weapons and/or highly dangerous forms of violence • History of self-harm and/or suicide attempts • Serious concerns related to substance abuse and/or mental illness

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Intervention Factors at a Glance: Level of Engagement in an Intervention			
Survivor Involvement in Intervention	Likelihood to Engage Person Doing Harm	Likelihood to Involve Community Members	Danger Level of Violence
• Survivor is the key person intervening • Survivor has high level of involvement but with others as primary people intervening • Survivor is "in the loop" but maintaining some distance from the details of the intervention • Survivor has little or no involvement in the intervention due to choice or other factors (for example, the survivor is a child)	• Has no friends or social connections • Has issues related to substance abuse and/or mental illness that seriously gets in the way of them having meaningful social connections • Has friends or buddies but they all collude (contribute to) violence • Has friends or buddies but fights them or walks away if they challenge this person • Only connection is with the survivor or victim • Has people who the person doing harm respects or has opinions that matter even if they may not be close friends • Has close relationships with people whom the person doing harm respects and whose opinions matter • Has close relationships with community members who can help support them to stop violence and use new behaviors; the person doing harm is able to talk about hard things at least with certain people	• No connections or community • One or two people who are connected to at least the survivor or victim and/or the person doing harm willing to get involved • No close community but community setting (neighborhood, city, ethnic community) that has at least some people or an organization that would be willing to get involved • At least one or two strong leaders and a group of connected people who would be willing to get involved	• No shared values and/or opposite values • Some overlap of values • Significant overlap of values • Shared membership in a values-based community (for example, faith institution, community group, political group, etc.)