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Technical Brief:


Safe Technology for the Provision of Services to Women Migrant Workers at Risk or Subject to Violence

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Spotlight Initiative





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About this Technical Note

This note provides guidance on the safe use of remote technologies to provide support to women migrant workers who are at risk of, or have experienced violence, harassment, abuse or exploitation. The provision of services through remote technologies is not new. However, various remote methods are increasingly being used as technological innovations evolve and they become more accessible. The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures to contain it have also prompted many service providers to either shift to, or augment, remote service delivery. Technologies are diverse in how they are designed, developed and function and may include: land and mobile phone lines, SMS/text-based systems, online chat functions, chatbots, and video-related interfaces among other systems and apps. This note is adapted from various sources that have explored the use of these technologies for the specific purposes of communicating with survivors of violence. It is intended to provide guidance to service providers on how to safely employ technologies based on current knowledge with examples from different countries and contexts. This brief should be read in tandem with the brief on [Remote Service Provision for Women Migrant Workers at Risk or Subject to Violence](#).

General Considerations

Technology has evolved rapidly over the last decade with wide accessibility and use, including by women migrant workers.¹ Advances in technology through the internet, software applications for networking and communication and mobile phones, have enabled greater access to information and services, as well as connection with family, friends and other important personal and professional contacts irrespective of borders or distance. With the COVID-19 crisis and associated limitations to movement and human interaction, these technologies have been harnessed to continue providing much needed support to women whose risks and experiences of abuse have increased during this period.² Technology has proven to be an important modality to support women, including women migrant workers, although it comes with specific risks that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the survivor-centred principles of safety, confidentiality and privacy are upheld.

Employ multiple options for survivors to access support. In order to maximize reach, including to harder to reach populations, it is important to consider various methods that can be employed concurrently, such as a land or mobile line, short messaging services (SMS), website with online chat functions, video sessions, etc. Women migrant workers may not speak the local language when in a country of destination, may not have control over or even access to their phone or have access to a computer, may not have privacy or may simply feel more comfortable/uncomfortable interfacing with one format over another. It is critical to choose tools that are free or affordable, easy to access and that do not require multiple steps or layers of complication, such as app downloads that have system requirements; the need to create an account; the need to sign/log-in or authentications. **Keep in mind that protected internet is best and that free public Wi-Fi may not be accessible during quarantine and lockdowns in any case.**

- [For more information on choosing a platform, see: Technology Safety \(National Network to End Domestic Violence\)](#)

Illustrative Platforms and Software

The National Network to End Domestic Violence in the United States is leading the field in digital safety for violence against women service provision. In a review of tools, the organization has identified the following illustrative examples of those well set-up to protect privacy:

- [ResourceConnect](#): for web chats, SMS and video chats
- [Gruveo](#): for video calls
- [Cyph](#): for video calls and messaging (individuals and groups)

¹ ILO and UN Women. 2019. [Mobile Women and Mobile Phones: Women Migrant Workers' Use of Information and Communication Technologies in ASEAN.](#)

² ILO and UN Women. 2020. [Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN](#)

Ensure the organization or service provider has control over the technology. Because of the privacy and safety considerations that are required in communicating with women at risk of or experiencing abuse, it is not advisable to use ‘off-the-shelf’ software and apps that are not customized (for language, privacy and security) for this purpose. This does not mean that new apps should necessarily be developed by organizations from scratch, which can be expensive and too restrictive for wide access and use. Apps that are already available (e.g. Messenger, WhatsApp, Signal, Line, WeChat, Zalo) and widely used should be customized for privacy and safety in the local context combining the expertise of the service providers and software developers. Minimally, off-the-shelf apps and software should be tailored to the options most suitable for the context (e.g. language, security and privacy settings). Once designed (and tested), the organization or service provider should maintain control of the software without any content being visible to, accessible or stored by the software developer. For web-based chats, it is important that the technology company is not able to see or access (e.g. no knowledge, zero knowledge or no view services) content or user information.

Tailored WhatsApp Examples

In Colombia, a WhatsApp based platform using [turn.io](#) called [Cosas de Mujeres](#) was developed to connect Colombian and Venezuelan women with gender-based violence services. The platform securely collects and analyzes data to determine the greatest support needs in order to inform future service provision that meets the specific needs of that border population.

In Malaysia, [Women’s Aid Organization](#), launched a WhatsApp hotline called ‘Think I Need Aid’ or TINA to complement its traditional landline service. Women can receive support through texting with a counsellor, in addition to making appointments for face-to-face consultations and receiving referrals to shelters and other services.

Examine the various ways that technology creates safety risks for survivors to mitigate them in design and implementation. Safety risks exist in the act of calling, chatting, typing, video interactions, looking up information and after the communications have taken place. Knowledge of the interaction or interception of the content is possible by perpetrators (intimate partners or employers), family members, authorities who may be tracking undocumented migrants, or even strangers (e.g. hackers). Compromised data and information can put women at further risk or harm, for example, should abusers (intimate partners or employers) retaliate or should authorities attempt to use the information to detain or deport her. This is possible through the device (phone, computer, tablet), the telecommunications account or through records that are kept within apps and through online services tracking a user’s history. Translation services are critical, especially for reaching women migrant workers, however, it is important to ensure that only basic information is translated by the software or computer with actual support delivered with live translators who have been trained on survivor-centred principles (See the [Brief on Remote Service Provision](#)). Women may need to leave their residence or workplace to access support and may rely on free public Wi-Fi, which is not secure and may in any case not be accessible during quarantine and lockdowns. These risks need to be addressed in the planning, design and implementation of remote service delivery using technology.

Provide hardware and technology training to service providers. Staff should not be using personal equipment to provide services, even if they are working from home as personal phones and computers are used for numerous purposes and often have many programmes and downloads. This poses multiple opportunities for data interception and privacy breaches. In addition to mobile phones, earphones/headsets and laptops or tablets, consider supplying a work only SIM card and/or off-setting the cost of phone credits and internet fees. Service providers should be given training on all aspects of interfacing with survivors through technology with quick reference materials that can be readily used during interactions and to inform women of what they should do to maintain privacy and safety. In addition, organizations should provide a secure or virtual private network (VPN) for communications and to share files and not public Wi-Fi.

Example: In Cambodia, Ministry of Women staff at the national and sub-national level have been trained on how to assist survivors (including women migrant workers) and have additionally been supplied tablets and smartphones to respond to survivors in a timely manner and to connect them to needed support and protection services.

Inform women of the safety features and how to use them. It is important for women who call for support to know how to protect themselves. Information can be relayed (including in the languages spoken by women migrant workers) at first point of entry, such as the landing page of a website or at the beginning of a call/ chat/video. At the end of the communication women should be given information on how to erase the history and any traces of the contact. Women should be advised that disclosing abuse publicly via social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) is risky and may put them at further risk. Instead, women should be directed to established helplines (including those run through Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or another medium that has been established specifically for survivors) and referred to vetted support services within the network to meet their additional needs (see the brief on [Remote Service Provision for Migrant Women at Risk of or Subject to Violence](#)). For ongoing service provision to survivors, consider giving women mobile phones (even if they are basic, older and used) with prepaid credits and periodic data top ups. Ensure that the phone is set-up separately for the woman and that it is not part of a family service, where account information may be viewed by the perpetrator.

Example: In Cambodia, [Child Helpline Cambodia](#), an implementing partner of Safe and Fair, has established helpline support that is connected to social media outlets, such as Facebook Messenger, to raise awareness of the service and increase access through channels that are commonly used by survivors.

Include technology in the monitoring and assessment of the service. Quality of service provision also depends on the functionality of systems and their accessibility. When determining which methods to use, consider usability. The design should include visuals, simple clean script and intuitive navigation features that are easy to understand even for low literacy populations. For women migrant workers, it also involves ensuring multi-lingual access (although content should be translated and vetted by fluent speakers and not through

auto-translation). Programmes and software (especially those that are customized) should be able to function equally well on different devices (iPad, Chromebooks, smartphones, tablets, PCs, etc.) and through different browsing systems (Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, etc.). The functionality should be tested and monitored over time. Women, including women migrant workers (though they do not need to be survivors), should be engaged in testing and providing feedback on the usability and functionality of the methods being employed. Over time, ensure proper maintenance and upgrades, that software is regularly updated and work to improve features based on evolving standards and feedback received.

Example: In Viet Nam, [CSAGA](#), a non-profit organization promoting the rights of women and girls and providing support to survivors, provides the GBV hotline number at the top and a Messenger icon button (for live chat) on the left margin on every page of the site. These features to access support are fixed, so that users do not have to navigate through different pages to access the information, nor do they need to go back to the page where they initially saw the hotline number and Messenger icon.

Secure internal work, communications, file sharing and data storage. Technology will most likely be used in the internal day-to-day operations of the helpline/call centre. Security must also be considered in staff communications and the storing and sharing of information or documents. There is abundant software to meet the needs of different organizations, teams and structures. There are many software programmes to help with internal organization of files, coordination, networking, etc. that staff can access remotely. These resources are useful, but need to be assessed for privacy and security capabilities to ensure they meet the recommendations provided in this brief.

Software Examples for Internal Organizational Use

[Primero/GBVIMS+](#) is a tool developed by UNICEF, IRC, Save the Children, UNFPA, DPKO and OSRSGG-CAAC. It is an internationally available web application for safely collecting, storing, managing and sharing data for gender-based violence case management and incident monitoring. Several countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Libya and Nigeria) are using it with additional country roll-outs in progress across the globe. The application allows frontline staff to securely track incidents of gender-based violence and individual survivors' progress as they receive case management services. [Spider Oak Cross Clave](#) is a programme for organizations that need an easy way to collaborate and communicate with maximum security settings. It is intended for remote work and can be used nationally or across nations.

Specific Considerations for Different Methods of Communication³

³ The content below, unless otherwise referenced, originates from the National Network to End Domestic Violence – the leading global authority documenting and providing guidance on [Safe Technology](#).

Phones

Helplines have been operating via phone for quite some time. During the pandemic, however, it may be that call centres are closed and helpline staff are working from home. If contact to the helpline is being made through mobile devices, phones should be procured and distributed to staff by the helpline organization or entity, in order to ensure that personal devices are not used for work purposes. This would ensure that the highest privacy settings can be set and that information related to cases and calls are kept confidential within a professional and protected domain. It is important to ensure that phones are equipped with a conference call function to accommodate translators or cultural mediators who may be joining the call and/or for connecting with referral partners when needed.⁴ Work phones should be kept for work purposes only and not used for personal matters and should be limited to the functions of the workplace, including which apps can and cannot be downloaded. Security settings should be set to the highest data protection options. Passcodes should be activated, so that any information on the phone can only be accessed by the helpline staff member. Service providers should also make phones available to women who receive ongoing support (e.g. through case management) and/or to women who are in particularly challenging situations where they may not have access to personal phones or outside communication (e.g. domestic workers or women in employer-provided accommodation). Often, companies or organizations are willing to donate phones (even if older models) for this purpose.

Illustrative Phone Practices

In several countries in Europe (UK, Ireland, Czech Republic, Italy, Romania and Portugal) and in South Africa, Vodafone and Hestia, have partnered to develop the [Bright Sky app](#), which provides survivors with a tool to document their abuse (in text, audio, video or photo) in a secure platform that does not save this information on the person's device. It also provides information on support services in their local area. The app is available in English, Urdu, Punjabi and Polish, in addition to Welsh if downloaded to an iPhone/iPad.

In India, several apps have been developed that do not require dialing or even opening phones in some cases. For example, the [Safetipin](#) and [Raksha](#) apps send SOS alerts and GPS locations to trusted/pre-determined contacts with pushes of the power button and the [Chilla](#) app is designed to recognize screams which activate alerts to trusted/pre-determined contacts.^{5, 6} There are many silent apps that have been developed to alert trusted contacts that help is needed. In cases where apps or panic buttons (paired with GPS) alert police or other authorities, it is critical that those services are capable and qualified to respond in a survivor-centred way, otherwise, women can be put at further risk of harm or danger.

⁴ [GBV Mobile and Remote Service Delivery Guidelines. IRC](#)

⁵ [Not Just Hotlines and Mobile Phones: GBV Service Provision during COVID-19. UNICEF](#)

⁶ [Best 10 Personal Safety Apps For Women. Hongkiat](#)

In Japan, a COVID-19 emergency consultation hotline (also available through the [web](#)) has been established for domestic violence in 10 languages. There is also an accompanying Facebook Messenger platform that accommodates five languages.

In Malaysia, [Women's Aid Organization](#) (WAO) has moved from a traditional hotline service to one that is more dynamic and can field many calls at once. Through the Nubitel call centre service, they are also able to do three-way calls securely to allow for translators or other service providers to join the conversation with the survivor.

In the United Kingdom individuals facing an emergency can call the [999 line](#). Operators from telecommunications centres then direct callers to the support they need. If women are not in a position to speak for fear of being overheard, operators are trained to ask questions and request callers to cough or tap 55 on their phone if they need to be connected to the police.⁷

SMS and App-based Texting

Messaging apps, such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Signal, Zalo, WeChat, Line and others are very commonly used by women, including where possible, to connect to helpline services. Women migrant workers in destination countries often prefer these methods. Though these third-party apps require download by both users in order to have two-way communication, they may be preferable because of the encryption and privacy settings available. Women migrant workers should be informed on how to increase privacy through these apps in their primary language (e.g. Bahasa, Burmese, Chin, Khmer, Lao, Tagalog, Vietnamese), including deleting message history; not saving the contact details of the programme or attendant's name (or saving it under a code name); erasing any information that might be backed up in a cloud account or shared between devices; and offering alternative options for communications. Survivors should be discouraged from sharing pictures of abuse through technology (especially online where pictures can be manipulated or used to cause further harm) and attendants should not store or keep evidence on behalf of survivors on any of their devices. Survivors should be informed on how to securely keep evidence on their own. For example, using [DocuSAFE](#) or the [Bright Sky](#) App or by sharing with a trusted family member or friend who can keep the evidence in a secure and confidential location as back up.

Privacy and Security Settings Information

The following apps are widely used and can be downloaded and customized by service providers:

- [WhatsApp](#)
- [WeChat](#)
- [LINE](#)
- [Zalo](#)
- [Messenger](#)

⁷ [National Police Chiefs Council and Women's Aid](#)

Mobile-based SMS voice and texting that is provided through the mobile phone carrier may be another common method of contact to the helpline. In such cases, where the survivor prefers to use SMS texting for ongoing communication instead of a dedicated messaging app, it is best for the organization to use a dedicated texting service platform. These texting platforms receive the messages on a computer, rather than on the mobile phone which can facilitate case management by the helpline centre/organization. Survivors should not be required to use a specific communication tool to contact the helpline, as different groups will have different access, preferences and needs. Once contact is made and the survivor's unique safety risks and concerns are determined, options for which device and app to use can be discussed and decided upon. It is important to verify the identity of the person when interacting to ensure that the communication has not been intercepted by the perpetrator or someone else. This can be done by establishing code words to be exchanged at the beginning and during texts.

SMS and App Text Practices

In Argentina and Chile, a Silent Chats programme run through WhatsApp, provides a text-based hotline women and girls can use to communicate concerns through secure text chat. The gender-based violence referral pathway is activated (at the request of the survivor) from within the WhatsApp programme itself.

In India, the [National Commission for Women](#) launched a WhatsApp number (7217735372) alongside their online domestic violence reporting capability to improve accessibility and referrals during COVID, until in-person services resume full operation. The Commission has constituted a special team to handle these complaints on a fast-track basis. The team provides immediate security to the survivors without any formal registration of the case.

In Viet Nam, The [Centre for Women and Development](#) (of the [Viet Nam Women's Union](#)) and the Peace House support women who have suffered domestic violence or trafficking. They have received training to respond to survivor needs through Messenger, Zalo and WhatsApp, which is available to them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Technologies that provide multilingual access must have the translated content vetted by a native speaker to avoid doing any harm. Technologies that provide automated translation would not be appropriate, since verbatim translation may not be coherent or may inadvertently communicate the wrong thing. Chatbots can be similarly problematic. Violence against women is extremely sensitive and complex – there is no standard response to fit the unique context and experience of every survivor. This is especially true for women migrant workers, who may be facing particular challenges due to their status (see the brief on [Remote Service Provision for Migrant Women at Risk of or Subject to Violence](#)).

Video Calls

Video calls may be used with survivors to foster a deeper connection, especially for ongoing communications and case management (provided the survivor is comfortable and prefers

this option). Video calls can also facilitate accessibility, for example for women with limited language skills, those who are hearing-impaired or who have physical disabilities. Video calls, however, provide less anonymity and can also pose safety risks to survivors (should she be confined to the space where the abuser is present). Even in situations where it is safe, some survivors do not want helpline attendants looking into their homes or seeing what is in the background. The wishes of survivors need to be respected. Using video should be as if you are receiving the survivor in person. It is important to be on time, look and behave professionally and ensure that the woman can see and hear you well. It is advisable to send something in advance or explain to the caller what to expect on the video session (e.g. confidentiality, safety and privacy measures in place, signals to stop the communication, etc.).

Video calls using popular platforms (Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, Microsoft Teams, etc.) for individual communication or for support groups may collect information about users; record calls; and collect other data. It is critical that these companies do not collect or maintain information on survivors. Options for privacy should be enabled (even if there is a cost involved).

Video Privacy and Security Settings

The following platforms are widely used and can be downloaded and customized by service providers:

- [Zoom](#)
- [Skype](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [GoToMeeting](#)
- [BlueJeans](#)

The video platform with some of the strongest built-in privacy settings being used by a number of violence against women service providers is [Gruveo](#).

Examples:

In Canada, the [Canadian Women's Foundation](#) has launched the “Signal for Help” campaign, which involves a simple single-handed gesture that can be used by victims during video calls to silently (and thus safely) ask for help.⁸

In Victoria, Australia, a number of survivor support organizations are using a tool called [Gruveo](#) which is an encrypted web-based video chat service that provides maximum privacy settings and does not require an application to be downloaded.⁹

⁸ [COVID-19, Lockdown, and Intimate Partner Violence: Some Data from an Italian Service and Suggestions for Future Approaches | Journal of Women's Health \(liebertpub.com\)](#)

⁹ Monash University. 2020. Responding to the ‘shadow pandemic’: practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Websites and Social Networking Platforms

Websites and social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook) are good for disseminating critical information and alerting survivors to support that is available and the channels for accessing it. Websites and social networking platforms, however, come with a number of risks to privacy and confidentiality, especially as related to tracking a user's search history and engagement. Survivors can be educated by service providers on how to use incognito mode which disables tracking. Should a survivor access a support website, the landing page should include pop-ups that explain the tracking risks and how to erase them. The landing and internal pages of the site should also include quick escape buttons that the user can click on to be immediately transferred to another site (e.g. Google search page; cooking site or something that would not raise concerns if the perpetrator were to see the screen).

Examples:

In Australia, [WESNET Safety Net](#), provides internet browser privacy tips for Chrome, Internet Explorer, Safari and Mozilla Firefox that apply to anyone using these browsers in any part of the world.

In Singapore, the organization [AWARE](#), provides information on its landing page to explain the importance of confidentiality and privacy.

In the United States, [The Hotline](#) (a national helpline website), provides a security alert upon entering the site and a pop-up with a red "exit" to safely leave the site. In addition, a short message explains to survivors that they can exit by clicking the "escape" key twice and also reminds them to clear their browsing history.

Where survivors may not be aware of support services or contact numbers, service providers should consider a shielded website, which provides a pop-up on commonly visited sites (e.g. Google search) allowing survivors to interface with a violence support service in a masked pop-up. The browser will only record the common site visited and not any engagement with the pop-up. For migrant women workers, this can be done on frequently visited websites and/or possibly in collaboration with labour unions, migrant resource centres and/or embassies and consular services. Shielded websites can be customized, including for language to ensure that the targeted population understands the pop-up.

Example: In New Zealand, [Women's Refuge developed 'shielded'](#), a portal that can sit on any website and refer survivors to their specialized domestic violence services. The communication is shielded and does not show up in the browser history.

Where internet connections are weak or non-existent, consider using Bluetooth enabled technologies to provide information on how to access support services.

Bluetooth Technology

In places lacking Internet access, Bluetooth technology is an innovative tool being used by grassroots organizations to share public service announcements, podcasts, and other short messages across communities. Audio files can be stored on mobile phones and then freely and easily shared with other mobile phones that are close by. Most mobile phones today have Bluetooth and the file-sharing quality is usually very clear. Bluetooth sharing is also a good substitute or compliment to written materials for low literacy populations, ensuring a wider reach. Bluetooth-distributed public service announcements should be short and well-crafted to relay the most pertinent information quickly (e.g. the helpline number/handle, that it is confidential and the languages it is offered in).¹⁰

Website Pop-up Chats

Websites of survivor service organizations may have the option to engage in a chat through a pop-up box on the site. These chat boxes allow communications to take place without the survivor needing to take additional steps to access a helpline support person (e.g. such as downloading an app or making a phone call). Website chats are also often programmed to delete automatically at the end of the communications or can be directed to do so within the settings. On the other hand, the website where the chat box appears likely collects data that can create concerns around privacy. It is important to work with website developers to install privacy options that limit or block IP addresses, location information and any personal data, including the number of times, the dates and times the person has contacted the service or if this data is collected that it is not accessible to anyone outside the organization. Chat data should not be integrated with any client database system, even if this option exists. It is also important to consider that women migrant workers may not be able to write or type in the language of the service provider in countries of destination. Referring to a helpline where interpreters can be made available is essential to be able to support them.

Cautionary Note on Chatbots

Chatbots are software-based programmes that provide text or speech interactions with users, in place of a live human. They have become an increasingly popular way to communicate with people generally to meet a variety of user needs and queries. Chatbots are also being used in the provision of information and support for survivors of violence. Although they may be cost-effective in meeting the demand, especially where human resources are limited, they may not be appropriate. Chatbots usually operate through artificial intelligence, which replicates information/responses learned from large data sets and patterns that mimic society and are gender-biased.¹¹ This process has the potential to replicate very inappropriate and even dangerous responses that can cause more harm to a survivor. In addition, survivor situations are unique and migrant women, in particular, may have special needs and considerations, which chatbots would not be able to

¹⁰ Madre. 2020. [From Global Coordination to Local Strategies: A Practical Approach to Prevent, Address, and Document Domestic Violence under COVID-19 Toolkit](#)

¹¹ Wajcman et al. 2020. [The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing](#). UN Women.

differentiate and tailor responses to. Chatbots may be helpful in providing basic information and referrals, but they should never replace support that should be provided by a person (e.g. psychosocial counselling; legal advice; etc.) and should always be developed with violence against women specialists.

Chatbot Examples

In South Africa, [Rainbow](#) was launched for individuals to ask questions related to relationship abuse confidentially and without the fear of shame or stigma. The chat bot was developed with the expertise of Soul City, an organization specializing in social justice and gender-based violence issues.

In Sweden, the chatbot tool [Sophia](#) is being built by the Kona Club (a group of international women banded together to further equality through technology) to provide information to survivors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on how to gather evidence (stored on a secure server); assess their rights and learn more about their options.

In Thailand, a Lieutenant Colonel that had handled numerous cases of gender-based violence developed a [My Sis Bot](#), which provides information services to survivors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through a computer or mobile phone. The information provided includes how to report to police, how to preserve evidence and what they are legally entitled to (e.g. services and compensation).¹²

Additional Resources

- [Digital Services Toolkit \(National Network to End Domestic Violence\)](#)
- [Technology Webinar \(National Network to End Domestic Violence\)](#)
- [Technology Safety Australia \(WESNET\)](#)
- [The Role of Service Providers, Technology and Mass Media When Home Isn't Safe for Intimate Partner Violence Victims: Best Practices and Recommendations in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond \(Slakoff et al.\)](#)
- [Not Just Hotlines and Mobile Phones: GBV Service Provision during COVID-19 \(UNICEF\)](#)

¹² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/5/feature-using-ai-in-accessing-justice-for-survivors-of-violence>

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



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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

3. Do I have what I need?

A **reference guide** on migrant women workers to help understand her situation

Health fact sheets tailored to migrant women (language considerations and no mandatory reporting) that can refer her for medical needs

Knowledge and connections to **social-emotional support groups for migrant women survivors**, such as peer-networks

A list of **partners to deal with common labour violations**, such as labour attachés, trade unions, embassies, or migrant resource centres

A **safety planning** template for migrant women workers: where she can go w/o reporting to authorities; if she is isolated/trapped in a home; etc.

A sheet with details on **laws and regulations** related to migrant women workers who arrived through both formal and irregular channels

Referral pathways and protocols that are updated with information friendly to women migrant workers

A roster of **interpreters** and cultural mediators and their contact information



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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

DO's

- ✓ Explain to her how you will maintain privacy and confidentiality
- ✓ Explain to her how to reconnect if the call drops
- ✓ Ensure privacy when interacting with survivors
- ✓ Keep records in a locked cabinet or in an anonymized database with password protection
- ✓ Respect women's individual circumstances and their right to make their own informed decisions
- ✓ Reflect on your own biases and learn from the survivor's cultural and social experiences
- ✓ Take steps to maintain self-care. This is critical for you and in service to other women

DON'Ts

- ✗ Share any information without the survivor's consent
- ✗ Call her back if the call drops
- ✗ Work in a space where others can see or hear your communication
- ✗ Leave paper records in places that are visible or accessible
- ✗ Tell survivors what to do or coax them into any decisions
- ✗ Assume you know her background and circumstances
- ✗ Neglect your own well-being



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.

How were you able to get to a safe place?

Tell me more about how that happened.

Would you like to see a doctor?

~~Why did you do that?~~



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.



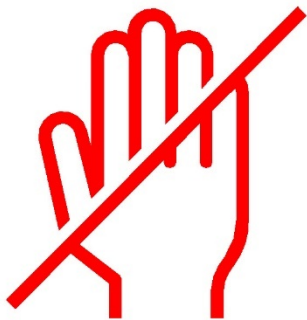
It's okay to cry;
crying is an expression
of emotion.

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.



Spotlight
Initiative



Photo: UN Women/Ploy Phutpheng



Safe Technology for the Provision of Services to Women Migrant Workers at Risk of or Subject to Violence

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 a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. It 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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