Safety Planning for Deaf Survivors

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WHAT IS THE GOAL OF SAFETY-PLANNING?
SAFETY
is as simple as ABC

ALWAYS
BE
CAREFUL
Safety-planning is more than...

• Staying out of “dangerous” rooms
• Gathering necessary documents
• Packing a suitcase
• Having 911 on speed-dial
• Having a checklist
WHAT CREATES SAFETY?
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- **Physiological Needs**
  - Air, food, water, shelter, clothing, sleep

- **Safety and Security Needs**
  - Health, employment, property, family, stability

- **Love and Belongingness Needs**
  - Friendship, family, intimacy, connections

- **Self-Esteem Needs**
  - Confidence, achievements, respect of others, connections, need for individuality

- **Self-Actualisation**
  - Morality, creativity, spontaneity, acceptance, experience purpose, meaning and inner potential
Accessibility Considerations

• Is your office accessible? Are you accessible?
• Discuss and create solutions for communication access
• Create plans for different possibilities
• Don’t assume others will provide accommodations
• Seek out Deaf advocates
Ask yourself...

• Do you have a budget for communication access? Can you use interpreters effectively?
• Are you aware of Deaf/Relay Interpreters? Video and Text Relay Services?
• Are you knowledgeable about other tools for communication access? CART, captioned phones, etc.
• What your assumptions and biases are about Deaf people
SAFETY IS...
COMMUNICATION ACCESS
What ISN’T Deaf Culture

• Aggressive, “in your face” signing
• Pushing/shoving to get attention
• Excessive “blunt” insults/put-downs
• Ramming the back of a car to get attention
• Waking partner up by shaking her violently
• Lack of confidential services
What IS Deaf Culture?

- Reality of a small community
- Information sharing
- Importance of detailed background information when answering questions
- Facial expressions a big part of ASL grammar
- Fear/mistrust of “hearing” systems
Lost in Translation

• Reporting Domestic or Sexual Violence
• Filling out legal paperwork
• Abuser manipulating the system
• Small community = possibility of no escape
• DV shelter rules often not culturally sensitive
• What is safe to you may not be safe to me
Understanding Barriers

• Institutionalized audism and ableism
• Learned the “need to please”
• Abuse in educational settings
• Lack of accessible/culturally competent services
• Fears that exposure will lead to the closing of Deaf schools – loss of Deaf culture
• Tradition of secrecy - protection of perpetrators who are members of the community
SAFETY IS...
CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
Don’t treat me the way you want to be treated.

Treat me the way I want to be treated.

-Stephanie Johnson
Safety Plans must be...

- Individualized
- About the fears/concerns she has
- Realistic for her situation
- Always open to revisions
- Revisited frequently
Consider and Include

• Batterers
• Family and Friends
• Workplace
• Community Organizations and Events
• DV/SA agencies
• Other Service Providers
• Legal System
SAFETY IS...
HAVING CHOICES
Thank You!

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