

Wissenschaftliche Begleitung Interventionsprojekte gegen häusliche Gewalt (WiBIG):

From local innovations to standards of good practice: Intervention projects and their work

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Chapter 8: Elements of good practice and indicators of social progress

The findings from a wealth of data collected during six years of evaluation research shed light on the problem of domestic violence from different angles and permit conclusions to be drawn. These in turn have pointed the way to recommendations for a basic framework for good practice in addressing domestic violence through intervention as well support for the victims and their children. The present chapter describes and explains central elements of good practice. We have based our work on a catalogue of criteria published by a team of British authors (Humphreys et al. 2000). Our research findings endorse this catalogue while at the same time developing it further and teasing out additional levels of differentiation.

Elements of good practice should be understood as **developments** and **achievements** that have been put to the test in practice and that have proved their practical value. We have evaluated some of them ourselves, and we have also had them assessed from the perspective of experts in a number of different fields of practice and where possible from the perspective of the victims and others involved. The elements represent criteria for evaluating practice in tackling domestic violence and form the basis for evaluating what the community is doing in this area.

These developments and achievements represent **advances in quality**:

- They should be pursued as a strategy and aimed for as a result;
- They can be implemented even under less than optimal conditions;
- The majority of them can be implemented independently of the others;
- Both practice and politics must be able to be measured against their existence;
- They can be seen as parameters for further evaluation of practice.

We realise that the following compilation of elements, taken as a whole, describe an optimal state that can only be achieved in the long term. Current trends in social policy, in fact, often work against achieving this goal, for example in closing women's refuges and failing to make

funds available for new kinds of support services. However, we believe that the existence of even a selection of components points to a trend towards better protection for victims and better intervention. Yet this selection cannot be totally arbitrary. Some elements, such as the existence of legal standards, an agreement on appropriate and binding definitions and an articulated policy to back intervention against violence in the private sphere constitute the foundation of qualified intervention and support; they are basic to all further efforts. Without an appropriate legal framework for protection and support services, such as powers to intervene etc., domestic violence will be regarded as a purely private matter and treated as such. Without a firm budgetary framework, state funding of protection and support services, for example, is not possible, and without a statement of political will these services will not be set up or, if they are, may easily be closed down again. Without an appropriate definition of domestic violence, effective intervention and protection are not possible. However, conversely it is conceivable that legal provisions and definitions might remain on paper and policy be confined to publishing plans of action never actually be translated into practice. The existence and quality of protection and support agencies, as well as the effectiveness and quality of state intervention are reflected in the extent to which the basic elements result in a practice which is of benefit to the people who need it and is able to actually change violent relationships. Without further training there is no possibility of changing people's attitudes or enabling them to develop the competence and motivation to put new measures in place. What really matters is how the elements interact and how they are linked up to create a coherent system for protection, support and change. In order to reflect and develop these processes monitoring and evaluation procedures are essential.

We see the model of elements of good practice presented here as a tool and a guide to practice. This instrument is made up of different components that are in a relationship of reciprocity; they are not necessarily in any chronological order. For example, whether inter-agency cooperation succeeds has an influence on the content and extent of further training and on the quality and binding nature of guidelines and recommendations produced for practice. Some components are, however, prerequisites for others: in the work of supporting victims, information about violence and risk is acquired without which it is not possible to develop practice guided by safety issues. We have put these components into a clear structure, listed elements of good practice and sub-divided them into individual aspects (sub-components). They can be used to draw conclusions about quality standards and recommendations for developing good practice and identifying what resources are necessary.

Basic elements: legal standards (1), definitions (2) and political will (3)

Components of implementation and operationalisation:

- Guidelines (4)
- Attention to safety issues (5)
- Special units (6)

Components of service provision for particular target groups:

- Victims of violence (7)
- Children affected by violence (8)
- Perpetrators of violence (9)
- Information for victims and the general public (10)

Components of cooperation: (11)

- Cooperation on a case-by-case basis
- Interagency, structural cooperation

Components of training and evaluation:

- In-service training (12)
- Documentation and monitoring (13)
- Evaluation (14)

The presentation of these elements will be illustrated by a series of examples of best practice. The examples were chosen to show that many models and exemplars already exist; however, this selection makes no claim to being exhaustive.

Basic elements

1st basic element of good practice: clear statutory basis for better intervention and better protection against violence

The statutory foundation of provisions in civil, criminal and police law defines the framework of societal standards within which the problem of domestic violence will be discussed in the political and professional arena. It makes clear the political will to cease treating violence in the private sphere as a private matter and instead to take it seriously as a violation of human rights, and to acknowledge the rights of victims to protection and help. It has an influence on public opinion on domestic violence and therefore on the opportunities victims have of finding protection and support in their social environment, and it gives a clear signal to violent individuals that their behaviour will not be tolerated. In that sense it has a preventive effect. It regulates the scope for intervention open to the authorities, marks out a framework for the response of agencies to domestic violence and creates legal certainty in intervention practice.

Sub-components:

Establish possibilities for securing protection and imposing sanctions in cases of domestic violence in all areas of the law

- Codified in police law: the possibility of issuing go-orders banning the violent person from the home for longer periods and of imposing short term bans prohibiting the violent perpetrator from approaching or having any contact with the victim.
- Codified in civil law: the possibility of longer-term allocation of housing to people who are victims of domestic violence or who are at risk, the possibility of long-term bans prohibiting the violent perpetrator from approaching or having any contact with the victim and the possibility of child protection measures in cases of domestic violence.
- Codified in family law: the possibility of protection from domestic violence in the context of custody and access arrangements both for children and adolescents and for parents who are victims of violence.
- Codified in criminal law: the possibility for public prosecutors to initiate and pursue prosecution for domestic violence in the public interest.

Practice based on an appropriate definition:

- All options for legal protection are not confined to marriage and intimate relationships but include other violent relationships in the immediate social environment.

Interaction between the judiciary, support services for victims and behaviour modification programmes for perpetrators

- Linking police and judicial protection measures with services ensuring that victims are offered counselling.
- Legal possibility of imposing orders to attend social training courses and recommendation to the criminal prosecution services to use this power, as well as procedures for monitoring compliance with the court orders.
- Professional criteria for the use of legal discretionary powers, including inter-agency agreement on criteria.

Examples from practice:

In Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, the intervention agencies offering counselling as a follow-up to police intervention were appointed by order of the Commissioner for Women's Issues at *land* level. This means that data protection issues can be dealt with and counselling can be an integral part of the intervention.

In Schleswig-Holstein, the chief public prosecutor issued a circular order instructing all public prosecution services to make use of the possibility of imposing orders to attend perpetrator programmes.

2nd basic element of good practice: definition of domestic violence as the basis for institutional action

It is vital that anyone involved in intervention in cases of domestic violence or providing support services has a good understanding of the problem and can define clearly what is

included and what is not. Clarifying exactly what is meant by domestic violence is just as important as the question of what term should be used in the work of one's own agency – for example, “domestic violence“ or “violence in close social relationships.“ Without a clear and uniform definition it is not possible to keep case statistics and collect data that are comparable across agencies. Without this it is not possible to check whether changes in intervention and support practice have actually begun to take effect and whether new legal standards are being applied. For that reason, it makes sense to coordinate definitions between agencies rather than have each agency developing its own, possibly different, definition. If definitions are to guide effective and helpful practice they must fulfil certain requirements, which are formulated in the sub-components.

Sub-components:

- Develop and agree on a definition in inter-agency cooperation forums.
- Choose pragmatic wording that nevertheless does not oversimplify the complexity of the problem.
- Use gender-neutral wording.
- Reach a consensus about where to draw the line between domestic violence and child abuse or other forms of violence.
- The definition should not be confined to physical violence, but include sexualised violence, stalking and the significance of threats, power and control.
- The definition should not be confined to violence in marriage.
- Ensure the definition is put in writing and disseminated throughout public authorities and agencies.
- Run in-service training courses to introduce the definition.

Example from practice: The Berlin police force revised the definition of domestic violence in their guidelines on police attendance at incidents of domestic violence, after finding that the original wording was too complicated and not very workable in practice.

3rd basic element of good practice: clear political will and action plans

There is evidence that an unequivocal political will to take domestic violence seriously and refuse to tolerate it is a central driving force for societal change. This political will is reflected, on the one hand, in legislative reform (cf. 1st basic element) and, on the other hand, is expressed very clearly in public funding of protection and support services (cf. elements 6 to 10). Failure to maintain these services, as well as failure of the state to intervene, sends out the signal that domestic violence is not a crime worthy of being taken seriously but is a purely private matter and consequently a problem that must be solved privately.

Of particular importance are political concepts indicating how a *land* or local authority intends to tackle domestic violence. Authorities and agencies can base their practice on these action plans. Provision for funding cooperation forums and their coordination should be anchored in these action plans to ensure they are safeguarded in the long term.

Furthermore, welfare state provisions for people in crisis situations indicate whether there is only lip service, or a real willingness to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. Initiatives to combat poverty or social exclusion increase opportunities for victims to leave violent relationships and reduce factors that intensify violence.

Sub-components:

- Action plans to combat domestic violence at central government, state and local authority level.
- Parliamentary monitoring of implementation of action plans.
- Protection for victims of violence free of charge.
- Social security in critical phases of life.
- No deportation for victims of violence.
- Adequate funding for protection and support services.
- Funding for cooperation forums and coordination of cooperation activities.
- Funding for research and evaluation.

Examples from practice:

Action plans at *land* level now exist in many German states, e.g. Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Bremen, Berlin, Hesse (currently being prepared), Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia.

The government of the state of Schleswig-Holstein has declared the intervention project KIK to be an integral part of its “Sustainable Schleswig-Holstein“ policy.

Components of implementation and operationalisation

4th element of good practice: establishing and applying guidelines, codes of good practice, training packs and leaflets for practical use

Guidelines, training packs and leaflets translate legislation and definitions into concrete steps for implementation in each field of practice. Our study identifies them as an indispensable operational tool, without which a great deal would remain on paper and never actually be implemented. Guidelines are valuable in ensuring that the interpretation of domestic violence that an agency has developed becomes known at all levels and also becomes a guiding principle in practice. They detail procedures to be followed in cases of domestic violence, standardise practice and help ensure that real progress is made within the agency. Through such guidelines correct professional procedures should be made binding on all members of an agency, and they facilitate criticism in cases where the code of practice is contravened. Their scope and the degree to which they are binding should be clearly stipulated.

Sub-components:

- The guidelines and recommendations are addressed specifically to each relevant field of practice.
- The guidelines set out how the agency sees its responsibilities in cases of domestic violence and when it cooperates with other agencies.
- The binding character of the document – regardless of whether it is a set of guidelines, a code of practice, or practical instructions for action – is based on the agency's organisational structure and the scope of its authority.
- Guidelines can be invested with a great deal of power and high level of acceptance in the agency through internal training courses and discussion.
- Guidelines should be complemented by checklists to facilitate rapid verification and as a memory aid in crisis situations.
- Cooperation agreements should be established with other agencies, guidelines should be circulated to other agencies and agreements on sharing information and passing on data to other agencies should be drawn up.
- Establish procedures for testing the codes of practice in the field and for monitoring compliance, and define the responsibility for this task clearly.

Examples from practice:

Within an evaluation of the SIGNAL model project in one of Berlin's university clinics, a manual for practice was compiled. Other examples within the health service include the work of the federal coordination centre for women's health (German acronym: BKF) and material compiled by RIGG Rhineland-Palatinate for the health service.

Police guidelines to be followed in all incidents of domestic violence in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania regulate cooperation following attendance at cases of this kind.

In the state of Berlin the introduction of new guidelines was backed up by intensive in-service training programme.

RIGG drew up a guidance document for preliminary investigative procedures and checklists for public prosecution services.

Within the Berlin police force a structure of special units responsible for domestic violence was created at the command unit level as well as for the individual police stations.

5th element of good practice: safety-oriented practice

The issue of safety has particular importance when dealing with violence. Safety is the goal of the intervention and the aim of the counselling and support processes. Safety from violence is the central criterion against which practice can measure its success. All measures taken in the context of domestic violence must be scrutinized to establish whether they increase or jeopardise the safety of the victims and their children.

In clarifying safety issues and arranging safe situations, criteria for the interaction between victims and professionals are needed. It must be taken into account that, while victims can often best assess for themselves the risks they face, they are often trapped in the violent

relationship and not in a position to do anything to protect themselves. For that reason, a dual-track approach is needed: On the one hand, it has been shown that a breathing space created through outside intervention is useful in helping someone to break away from a violent situation and plan their future freely. For that reason, state intervention is indispensable - even against the will of victims. On the other hand, it must be recognised that intervention can also increase the potential risk. It is therefore vital to listen to victims and take their fears seriously. They need to be given options enabling them to choose the path that gives them the greatest personal sense of safety. They should not, however, be pressured to make use of specific measures, such as applications under the Protection from Violence Act.

It is crucial that any programmes concerned with changing the behaviour of perpetrators never lose sight of the safety of victims and include provision for action to be taken if their safety is jeopardised.

Sub-components:

- Provision of a needs-based range of gender-specific residential shelters that are anonymous and free of charge.
- Ability of victims to choose for themselves the protection and support services they need, while taking into account child protection issues.
- Criteria for safety planning with victims of domestic violence.
- Criteria for safety planning with children and adolescents in families where domestic violence occurs.
- Listening to the victims' own assessment of issues connected with their safety.
- Model safety plans for victims and for children and adolescents.
- Provisions for confidentiality and anonymity when counselling victims.
- Information about housing and accommodation possibilities for perpetrators who have been banned from their home.
- Contractual provisions to limit confidentiality in counselling and educational work with perpetrators of violence.
- Drawing up risk assessments in perpetrator programmes.
- Data protection provisions to permit the police to pass on personal information needed for contacting the victim to authorised intervention agencies. Automatic communication of data, rather than requiring victims in an acute crisis situation to sign consent forms, should be the preferred approach.
- Provisions to allow a rapid exchange of information between the police and civil courts, to speed up procedures as provided for under the Protection from Violence Act, and to identify quickly any breaches of orders imposed by the police or courts.

Examples from practice:

Women's shelters have proven to be an indispensable part of protection and support for abused women. They often cooperate with counselling centres for wider coverage, and more recently with intervention agencies.

In women's shelters safety plans have been developed both for women and for children.

Telephone hotlines constitute an important low-threshold service. Examples include the BIG hotline for victims of domestic violence in the state of Berlin or Schleswig-Holstein's helpline, which covers the whole state.

Mecklenburg-West Pomerania has developed an exemplary procedure by which the police pass on information to the intervention agencies.

6th element of good practice: Special units in institutions to deal with cases of domestic violence

Setting up special units has advantages for competent processing of cases of domestic violence. They consolidate skills and experience and are able to develop a routine in dealing with their special field more quickly than other departments within an institution. They give a clear signal that this is an area of work that requires specialised professional knowledge. In rural or sparsely populated regions, in which relatively small numbers of cases of domestic violence have to be dealt with, problems of lack of routine and insufficient familiarity with new legislation and codes of practice are particularly evident. Special units can ensure that the cases of domestic violence that arise within a local authority or rural administrative district or within an institution are concentrated.

Special units are also useful in driving forward the establishment of the issue of domestic violence as one of the responsibilities of an institution. If it has been clarified, on all levels of the hierarchy of an organisation and on all working levels, who is responsible for this topic, there is a lower risk of newly developed practice petering out again. However, care must be taken to ensure that the establishment of special units is accompanied by broad based in-service training and that it does not become a case of passing the buck on domestic violence. Special units are also a suitable vehicle for providing staff with up-to-date information through peer training and regular information sharing in team meetings and work discussions within an organisation. They also act as contact points within local or regional cooperation structures.

Sub-components:

- Special units in public prosecution services.
- Specialised police officers who promote competence in dealing with cases of domestic violence within the police force.
- Specialised staff in the Aliens' Office and social services department.
- Special units in the general social welfare services or child protection and youth services, particularly in cases where there is an agreement on routine police notification of youth services, or where the function of initial counselling following police attendance was assigned to the social welfare service.

Examples from practice:

Special units in public prosecution services for dealing with cases of domestic violence are now more common. In Schleswig-Holstein, the chief public prosecutor instructed units of this kind to be set up throughout the state.

In several states in Germany, special coordinators are designated within the police force to deal with cases of domestic violence.

A number of women's shelters were able to bring about an agreement through bilateral discussions to set up special units within the youth services.

Components of service provision for particular target groups

7th element of good practice: specific protection and support services tailored to the needs of victims of domestic violence

The protection and counselling services on offer must be conceptually designed to meet certain requirements. It must meet the needs of the victims and not be difficult for them to access. Apart from high-threshold facilities such as women's shelters, low-threshold services such as telephone hotlines are also necessary. It is essential that some source of help and crisis intervention service can be accessed at any time of day or night.

The counselling is open-ended and not oriented to any specific outcome. It is based on the counselling needs and the resources of the victim and it respects her decisions. The counsellor must not press the client either to leave or to stay in the relationship. Her subjective feeling of safety or being threatened must be carefully explored and discussed. The aim is to end violence and create safety. Counselling will try to move towards this goal in a way that the victim perceives as possible for her.

According to published research, domestic violence – in the sense of systematic abuse and control – is in the majority of cases violence perpetrated by men within their intimate relationships with women. That is why services are needed that are explicitly for women and take a women's advocacy approach. However, within local or regional cooperation networks, it is essential that a service for male victims of domestic violence also be provided and publicized.

It is vital that the links between domestic violence and other possible problems, such as illness, alcohol, poverty, social isolation etc. be recognised. Counsellors must therefore not only show understanding and empathy but must also work from a holistic perspective. Furthermore, for people from an immigrant background, services with adequate special skills must be available. Cooperation based on mutually agreed and binding procedures must be set up with special counselling centres and other agencies dealing with specific problems.

Since the victims of violence differ in terms of needs, personal circumstances and life planning, additional problems, family situation, social and financial resources, the nature, duration and intensity of the violence they have suffered and their individual capacity to deal with the experience of violence, a multi-faceted and flexible spectrum of support services is needed. All agencies offering protection and support in cases of domestic violence need

sufficiently skilled staff, clear professional quality standards for good social work and adequate resources.

The following sub-components describe a support system that works in close cooperation with state institutions and takes into account both the complexity of the problem and the broad range of differences among the people affected. While some services are indispensable and can only exist in the form of autonomous facilities – such as women’s shelters, for example – other services such as legal advice or counselling for men suffering domestic violence can be linked to existing agencies. “Support services tailored to needs“ as an element for good practice encapsulates the endeavours of a local authority or regionally based support network to cover as far as possible all the needs mentioned – at least in a cooperation network, even if a separate agency cannot or need not be set up for each aspect.

Sub-components:

- Victims have the option to choose a protection and support service that suits their needs.
- Adequate range of anonymous refuges for women. The number must be tailored to demand and will depend on catchment area, population density, and population structure. Admission is by self-referral. Children and adolescents are admitted with their mothers. The length of stay depends on the individual crisis. Counselling and support are offered throughout the stay.
- Adequate, accessible and appropriate spaces for women with disabilities.
- Contact point for men who are victims of domestic violence.
- Crisis intervention and counselling.
- Counselling services available within easy reach of where the victim lives.
- Free legal advice.
- Proactive crisis intervention, information and counselling following police contact.
- Telephone and, if requested, 24-hour mobile outreach crisis counselling.
- Outreach counselling available for those whose mobility is restricted for various reasons.
- Provision of practical support and accompanying people to court or public authorities.
- Proactive contact subsequent to crisis intervention and initial counselling session (follow up).
- Cooperation agreements between women’s support agencies and the youth services or youth service and child protection agencies.
- Cooperation agreements with the police and justice system.
- Cooperation with agencies offering perpetrator programmes.
- Cooperation with skilled relationship or family counsellors.
- Cooperation with other specialist counselling services such as addiction counselling, debt counselling, parenting counselling etc.
- Commitment to quality standards.

Examples from practice:

Within a nationwide workshop discussion, the women's shelter coordination office has drawn up "Professional principles for counselling women in the area of domestic violence", which could be used as a basis for developing quality standards.

Outreach counselling is offered, for example, by the mobile intervention team in Berlin, the intervention agencies in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and the central child and youth service (ASD) in Stuttgart.

Cooperation on a case-by-case basis takes place between the intervention agency in Neubrandenburg and the local men's counselling centre.

8th element of good practice: independent support services for children and adolescents living in the context of domestic violence

The effects of domestic violence against the mother or of violence between parents and the links between domestic violence and violence against children and adolescents must be recognised and taken into account when designing local or regional cooperation networks. Children and adolescents who live in families where there is domestic violence have a need for protection, information and counselling in their own right. It is important to speak directly with children and adolescents to clarify whether they are at risk or under strain and not rely solely on the assessment of parents or third parties. Even if the violence experienced is directed at someone else it nevertheless jeopardizes a child's welfare. In many cases it must actually be regarded as a form of violence against the child. This is a call to youth services to take action, but care must be taken that it does not turn into an accusation against the parent who has suffered violence. On the other hand, it must not be assumed that the author of direct violence against children and adolescents is necessarily the perpetrator of the domestic violence; it is necessary to check whether the child might be at risk from the parent suffering violence. Good practice pays attention to the needs of the girls and boys and recognises the importance of their family bonds, without either creating an air of mystique around these bonds or passing responsibility for child welfare decisions onto the children and adolescents. The goal to aim for is a balanced combination of support for the children and adolescents, support for the parent suffering violence, and provision for violent parents, guided by the overall principle of promoting protection against violence.

Sub-components:

- Provision of free unbureaucratic support from educational social workers and therapists.
- Cooperation agreements between protection and counselling agencies involved in domestic violence and youth services.
- Mandatory in-service training for staff working in youth services. Training is funded by youth services at the relevant government level.
- Participation of local authority youth services in local or regional cooperation networks, and of the youth services department at higher governmental levels in a statewide cooperation network.

- Cooperation agreements on the part of protection and counselling agencies with skilled parenting counselling.
- The needs of children and adolescents must be taken into account when drafting the guidelines for intervention practice, especially the guidelines for police attendance and for youth services procedure.
- Crisis intervention and counselling services tailored to the needs of children and appropriate for their age following police attendance.
- Women's shelters are organised in such a way that women can go to them both with small children and with older adolescents of both sexes. They have sufficient qualified personnel to be able to work effectively with children and adolescents. The space itself is appropriate for children and adolescents.
- Child protection services provide counselling and support not only for children who have suffered violence, but also those who have witnessed domestic violence.
- In cases of domestic violence emergency child and youth protection services quickly and unbureaucratically take in girls and boys in crisis situations who want, or are obliged, to leave their families. There are gender-specific emergency services.
- There are groups available for girls and boys facing this kind of situation appropriate for their age and gender.
- Age-graded informational material for children and adolescents on the topic of domestic violence;
- Free emergency phone line for children and adolescents, staffed by people trained in domestic violence.
- Teaching material for all types of schools and age group on the theme of domestic violence. Teachers receive training on the subject.
- Initial and in-service training on the issue of domestic violence is provided for childcare workers.

Examples from practice:

The Kindernotdienst, a children's crisis centre in Berlin, working in cooperation with BIG, was able to obtain permission to extend its work to include counselling and providing accommodation for children witnessing domestic violence.

In Karlsruhe, a cooperation scheme between a women's shelter and the city's children's bureau developed and organised groups for girls and boys who live in a context of domestic violence.

BIG has developed lesson plans for schools on the topic of domestic violence.

The intervention agencies in Rostock and Schwerin have developed a concept for counselling children and adolescents following police intervention.

The Verden women's shelter provides online counselling for children and adolescents during school hours. It is backed by in-service training for teachers.

Working within a nationwide expert forum, the Diakonisches Werk (social welfare unit of the Lutheran Church) has compiled material on working with children and adolescents who have experienced domestic violence.

9th element of good practice: provision of behaviour modification programmes for perpetrators of violence

As part of a policy of preventing violence and improving protection for victims, good practice in intervention and support must include a service for perpetrators. In the past the victims were largely left to their own devices when it came to trying to make changes and create non-violent relationships. Part of the state's taking responsibility for violence in the private sphere includes funding in this area. Due to the gender-based nature of domestic violence these programmes must be designed and run in a gender-specific way. The counselling and social training courses provided for men should be complemented by a contact point for violent women following agreements within the local-authority-based or regional support network.

Since social training courses for violent men must be regarded as contributing to greater safety and protection for victims, close cooperation with protection and counselling agencies for women is vital. For this field of work qualified personnel and the application of international quality standards are necessary.

Sub-components:

- Programmes for men who have self-referred or been referred through the justice system.
- Group programmes for violent men.
- Contact point for violent women.
- If necessary, services provided in other languages.
- Contracted and assured cooperation with the criminal prosecution authorities.
- Contracted and assured cooperation with protection and support agencies for women.
- Contracted and assured cooperation with youth services and child protection agencies with due attention to issues of paternal responsibility.
- Cooperation with addiction counselling.
- Cooperation with relationship counselling.
- Commitment to quality standards and criteria for success.
- Participation in local and regional cooperative alliances.

Examples from practice:

The Baden-Württemberg Landesstiftung, or foundation, made 750,000 euros available for perpetrator programmes. The Schleswig-Holstein justice ministry finances regional perpetrator programmes.

The men's bureau in Hannover plays an active role in the intervention project HAIP and runs groups for violent men. They cooperate with the public prosecution service and have an agreement specifying the extent and type of feedback.

The agencies in Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin and Freiburg that offer perpetrator programmes also cooperate with the public prosecution service.

The men's bureau in Hannover provides social training courses in Turkish as well as German.

The children's bureau of the city of Karlsruhe has published on its website "What women and children believe is required of the work with perpetrators of violence in the context of marriage and long-term relationships".

The staff of Brücke e.V Elmshorn, the men's bureau in Hannover and the Berlin centre for the prevention of violence (BZfG) are contemplating programmes for violent women.

10th element of good practice: publicly available information about rights, intervention, protection and support possibilities in cases of domestic violence.

Legislation and intervention possibilities that aim to provide protection, and support services that aim to organise safe situations and help clarify perspectives for the future, can only truly become effective if people know about them and are able to use them. If the target groups they are intended to reach do not know about them, they remain on paper without making any contribution to changing violent relationships. Information material and possibilities for individuals to access information are therefore of great importance. Even if the usefulness of printed brochures is bound to be limited, information in writing is nevertheless indispensable, and could for example take the form of "emergency cards." Victims would then at least have a telephone number they can ring when they have decided to seek help. Telephone information services are an essential counterpart to this.

Information for the general public is of particular importance to victims since it is primarily to their family or social environment they turn when seeking help. Public information campaigns can help counter widespread prejudices, so that victims meet with greater understanding and are given more reliable information.

Sub-components:

- Emergency cards for seeking help that can be handed out, for example, by the police.
- Telephone information and counselling services available outside normal office hours.
- Brochures about rights and available options with regard to domestic violence disseminated in public places.
- Posters, stickers and the like, giving information about protection services and telephone hotlines, displayed in public places, including on public transport and daily newspapers.
- Multilingual information tailored to the population structure.

- Information and emergency cards for children and adolescents appropriate for their age at public places they have access to and in schools.
- Information aimed at neighbours and the social environment of victims with advice on how to support them and organise safe situations.
- Information aimed at perpetrators of violence including the availability of behaviour modification programmes.
- Initiatives by the press and broadcasting councils to counter the use of language that trivialises or sensationalises domestic violence, to promote protection for victims and disseminate accurate information.
- General media and PR campaigns (via the print media, film, exhibitions, CD-ROM etc.), giving information about the dynamics of domestic violence and possibilities for intervention.

Examples from practice:

The BIG domestic violence hotline offers telephone crisis intervention and counselling in the state of Berlin from 9.00 a.m. to midnight.

As part of a campaign entitled "Taking action against male violence," the city of Munich's Commissioner for Women's Issues has published a brochure "What neighbours can do in cases of domestic violence."

Successful examples of local campaigns can be found in Munich and Ludwigsburg.

The BIG hotline advertises its services on the Underground television channel.

KIK in Schleswig-Holstein ran a multilingual poster campaign throughout the state. Trier also staged a poster exhibition on violence against women, which went on nationwide tour and was also reproduced as a series of postcards.

KIK and CORA in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania printed and distributed carrier bags with slogans against domestic violence.

CD-ROMs AVA1 and AVA2, published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, provide information for victims and professionals in a modern form.

Components of cooperation

11th element of good practice: institutionalisation of cooperation between institutions and agencies

Inter-agency cooperation has proved to be an indispensable part of any effective change in intervention practice and any support network concerned with safety issues. It takes place bilaterally and across professions, and is concerned both with concrete procedure in

individual cases and with general coordination of responsibilities. However, unless it is set up in a binding form, cooperation often remains a mere declaration of intent and expression of good will. Often it is individuals taking part in cooperation forums who work for their institutionalisation and who develop interdisciplinary work on a structural basis or based on individual cases, sometimes without any reduction in work load or sometimes even in their free time. It is vital that cooperation is actively desired and not merely tolerated. If an organisation wishes to cooperate with others, it needs procedures and regulations in which the interaction between reciprocal provision of information, acceptance and passing on of responsibilities and distribution of roles are agreed. Cooperation agreements remove participation in cooperation forums and collaboration on a case-by-case basis from the sphere of individual commitment and integrate it into the catalogue of responsibilities and self-understanding of an organisation.

Sub-components:

- Binding delegation of representatives from all responsible institutions to regional or local cooperation forums.
- Coordination and conclusion of bilateral cooperation agreements between all responsible institutions.
- Coordination and approval of reciprocal information arrangements.
- Coordination and approval of an overall policy for intervention and support in cases of domestic violence for the local authority, region or *land*.
- Compliance with rules for successful cooperation.
- Making the necessary resources available to coordinate cooperation forums.

Examples from practice:

The intervention projects against domestic violence have created cooperative alliances between agencies at *land* or local authority level.

The evaluation research assessing intervention projects against domestic violence has published a catalogue of guidelines for successful cooperation, identifying factors that promote or hinder cooperation.

In the Stuttgart intervention project STOP cooperation agreements were concluded between the central child and youth service (ASD) and the women's intervention agency (FIS) and between the women's intervention agency (FIS) and the men's intervention agency (MIS).

Examples of agencies where coordination is the main remit include BIG, CORA, FRIG and STOP; examples of agencies with coordination as part of their remit are KIK and GIP; an example of voluntary coordination work is HAIP.

Components of training and evaluation

12th element of good practice: developing and expanding skills – initial and in-service training and specialised units

The ability to intervene competently and provide support in cases of domestic violence requires basic knowledge about the topic, combined with specialised knowledge specific to each profession. These two elements should be delivered as part of initial training and backed by in-service training. In-service training should be offered both on a compulsory and voluntary basis. It should be designed to question the myths and prejudices on domestic violence that are widespread in society, to provide accurate and up-to-date information, promote willingness for inter-agency cooperation and expand practical skills and confidence as well as legal certainty. Making domestic violence a firmly established component of initial and further training for a particular profession or organisation gives the signal that they have taken on board responsibility for tackling the problem of violence.

Sub-components:

- Compulsory in-service training on domestic violence in all public authorities with responsibilities in the field of intervention in cases of domestic violence: police, family courts, local and county courts, bailiffs, public prosecution services, criminal courts, youth services, social security office, Aliens' Office.
- Provision of internal further training within public authorities along with inter-agency/inter-disciplinary further training.
- Further training courses for all agencies and occupations that are in a position to identify domestic violence and facilitate access to support: nurseries, schools, social workers, residential and open youth work, the legal profession, health care workers.
- Involve protection and counselling agencies in further training for public authorities.
- Provide further training for protection and counselling agencies on changes in the law and new research findings.
- Promote arrangements for peer training.
- Include the topic of domestic violence in the initial training for the above-mentioned occupations.

Examples from practice:

Working in cooperation with BIG, the youth services of six boroughs in Berlin have provided in-service training for their staff on domestic violence.

In Berlin, staff from women's shelters are involved in initial and in-service training courses for the police.

In Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, in-service training for the police is delivered by staff from intervention agencies.

The women's shelter coordination office, in cooperation with BIG, ran train-the-trainers seminars for staff of women's shelters and counselling agencies in order to qualify them to deliver in-service training for the police, justice system and youth services.

BIG developed a curriculum for further training courses for youth services professionals.

13th element of good practice: documenting and monitoring processes of change and the implementation of new practice

Careful documentation of the work provides an indication of changes in how innovative practice is being used, responses to it, and the need for support. It thus facilitates planning based on the needs of the different target groups. Changing routine practice in public authorities and agencies and implementing innovations is usually a long-term process. This should be backed by ongoing monitoring, because both individuals and organisations have the tendency to revert to habitual behaviour patterns. Documentation and monitoring are valuable in identifying weaknesses and structural problems as well as any resistance within the organisation and opening them up for discussion. In this way awareness of domestic violence and good practices can be successfully established in all relevant institutions. It is advisable to organize the process of monitoring as well as dealing with the conflicts that arise out of the introduction of new practice not only internally within each agency, but to refer them to an independent agency or mediator authorised by the cooperative alliance.

Sub-components:

- Develop and coordinate instruments for documentation in the cooperation forum.
- Document take-up of new practice in institutions with responsibilities in the field of domestic violence.
- Discuss outcomes in an inter-agency information sharing forum and harmonise procedures to make it possible to compare data and track referral and communication channels between agencies.
- Organise monitoring and provide conflict mediation by an authorised agency.

Examples from practice:

The parties involved in the Stuttgart intervention project STOP are working on harmonising their documentation method so that it produces comparable data.

The women's shelter coordination office is working on producing standard statistics for women's shelters throughout the country.

The network of intervention projects in Baden-Württemberg (NIP) is working on standardizing statistics in support agencies.

The women's counselling agencies in the *land* of Berlin are working on standardising their statistics.

Domestic violence was introduced as a criterion into the statistics kept by the youth services in the *land* of Berlin.

The ASD, or general social welfare services, in the town of Halle keeps internal statistics on cases of domestic violence allowing a comparison with child abuse and sexual abuse.

BIG's coordination office offers conflict mediation (clearing) in intervention and cooperation on domestic violence issues.

14th element of good practice: evaluation of practice

An institution's willingness to not merely make declarations of intent to improve their practice but to also have it evaluated is a testimony to its interest in long-term change and quality assurance. External evaluation that gathers information from the perspective of those directly involved in or affected by interventions as well as from the users of support services can provide feedback to practice about whether improvements have begun to take effect, whether codes of practice are being implemented and whether they meet needs. If evaluation instruments have been developed it is an indication that the organisation is interested in checking whether it has achieved its goals and in pursuing a quality assurance policy.

Sub-components:

- Regular self-evaluation and external evaluation at intervals to check whether targets have been achieved.
- Regular reporting to the cooperation forum.
- Involvement in research projects.
- Theory-practice transfer.

Examples from practice:

Participants in expert forums at BIG have committed to reporting regularly - in writing and in a standardised form - on developments in their fields and in their government departments and to present these reports to the coordination office for dissemination to other participants.

The evaluation research assessing intervention projects against domestic violence (WiBIG) has developed and put in place a procedure for conducting evaluation and theory-practice transfer with the greatest possible transparency and involving the specialised participation of practitioners.

Future perspectives

The 14 elements of good practice described here provide a frame of reference for planning intervention and support addressing domestic violence and for refining practice.

Implementing the elements in a local authority, a rural district or *land* contributes to tackling the problem of violence in the long-term on a high professional level. The large number of examples from practice is an indication of the outcome of years of work in this field and gives cause for optimism. However, the large gaps that still exist are thought-provoking and should be seen as a motivation for further activity. A cause for concern is that in many places services are being scaled back or axed, whereas what is actually needed is a more extensive and differentiated range.

The elements point to a need for future research and a need to translate research findings into practice.

Elements of good practice and recommendations on how to go forward

On the basis of the extensive research and data collection over six years, the evaluation research project is able to issue the following central **recommendations** centring on *selected elements of good practice*.

Clear statutory basis for improved intervention and protection from violence

- Special standards should be included in the Police Acts of all the states throughout Germany regulating the use of go-orders banning perpetrators from the residence following incidents of domestic violence. Special standards promote legal certainty for officers attending incidents of domestic violence. They illustrate in a special way the political will to intervene in domestic violence.

Practice that is tailored to issues of safety

- Any action taken in the context of domestic violence must be examined in the light of whether it increases or jeopardises the safety of victims and their children.
- The aim of work with perpetrators in the context of intervention projects is to protect victims. Agencies working with perpetrators should establish contact with (ex)-partners as a fixed part of their practice.

Special units in institutions to deal with cases of domestic violence

- In order to permanently anchor the theme of domestic violence in the police force it is necessary to set up structures independent of particular personnel. Coordinator/multipliers models have proved successful (for example in Berlin and Rhineland-Palatinate), and also other fixed units (e.g. in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Hannover).
- Public prosecution services that have not yet done so should set up special units to deal with cases of domestic violence. They should join a regional cooperation network on domestic violence or initiate collaboration if it does not yet exist.

Specific protection and support provision tailored to the needs of victims of domestic violence

- It is essential that proactive counselling be offered after every incident of police intervention in the context of domestic violence.
- The approach of counselling agencies that rely on clients' initiative should be complemented by an outreach counselling and mobile advocacy service.
- Outreach counselling and crisis intervention in cases of domestic violence must be incorporated into a dense support network, which continues to include residential protection facilities such as women's shelters.

Separate support provision for children and young people living with domestic violence

- It is vital that the particular needs of children and adolescents for protection, information and counselling in the context of domestic violence be recognised. The question of whether children and adolescents are suffering or are at risk must be clarified by talking to them directly and must not be established merely by taking into account the assessment of parents or third parties.
- The youth welfare service must be involved in cooperative alliances.

Provision of programmes for behavioural change for perpetrators of violence

- Agencies working with perpetrators should regularly cooperate with the criminal prosecution services and women's support agencies. This will ensure the goals of reliability and providing protection for victims are met.

Institutionalisation of cooperation between institutions and agencies involved in intervention and support

- Inter-institutional cooperation needs its own venue, specific forums and independent resources.
- Coordination must continue to be an integral part of the work of cooperative alliances and must be guaranteed. It must confront the new challenges presented by ongoing refinement of practice.

Developing and expanding skills

- Initial and in-service training on the topic of domestic violence should be firmly established in all institutions involved. Its continued existence should be guaranteed. The contents of the training should be modified to take account of constantly evolving understanding of the complexity of domestic violence.
- The public prosecution services should optimise access to victims of domestic violence in order to secure their willingness to be involved in the prosecution as early as the preliminary proceedings.

Documentation and monitoring of processes of change and implementation of new practice

- Standardised documentation of police attendances at incidents of domestic violence must be developed in consultation with the public prosecution services and civil and administrative courts.

Evaluation of practice

- Sustainability and quality assurance require internal documentation and external evaluation.

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