Midwives Against Violence

Discussion questions to accompany video[[1]](#footnote-1)

Objectives:

* This video is meant to introduce the topic of domestic violence in a safe way
* The aim is to encourage discussion, awareness and co-learning amongst health providers
* The questions are designed to set up a safe and respectful environment where health providers can share their experiences and how they might address this issue in their professional practice.

*Before showing the video have a look at some of the statistics on domestic violence from the Nabilan survey or DHS) and invite people to talk about their experiences in dealing with these issues. The aim is to promote a safe space where health providers can have personal and respectful conversations about these complex problems and learn from each other.*

1. **Have a look at the statistics on domestic violence (from the 2016 Nabilan Survey conducted by The Asia Foundation, in the slides attached). Were you aware of these statistics, what do you think of them?**

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1. **How do you feel about this in terms of the work you do with women, what does it mean for your practice?**
2. **Some people in this group may have experience with domestic violence, either in their own family or in helping their patients. We need to be respectful of everyone’s experiences in dealing with this difficult and complex problem. Is there anyone who would like to talk about their experience or about a situation they have been involved with?**

*Watch the first part of the video and have a discussion about the Law Against Domestic Violence. Or watch the whole video and choose some of the questions below to discuss.*

1. **What does the Law Against Domestic Violence mean in Timor-Leste? How do you feel about this Law? What does it mean for health providers?**

*Domestic violence is a crime in Timor-Leste. The Law Against Domestic Violence came into effect in July 2010. The law is to protect all family members from domestic violence, including spouses, ex-spouses, children and grandparents as well as domestic workers.*

*The Penal Code in Timor-Leste includes laws against physical assault, sexual assault and the protection of children from abuse. The law says that sex with children under 14 is not allowed and that children under 14 are not able to consent to sex. For people aged 14 and over, the law says both people must consent to having sex, but any sexual activity by a person in position of authority over a young person under 18 years is a crime. For example, it is a crime for a teacher to have a sex with a 15 year old student, even if both of them consent.*

*The Law Against Domestic Violence requires police and health workers to give immediate assistance to victims of domestic violence. The police are required to investigate and prosecute a case and they do not need a complaint from the victim. Being able to correctly identifying when domestic violence is happening and reporting it in the right way is an important part of this law.*

*Article 22 of the Law Against Domestic Violence talks about specialised hospital services and their obligation to report to the police. The implications of mandatory reporting for health workers are severe, as is reporting without consent of the woman affected. What do you see is the role of primary health care providers under the law below, and in what circumstances would reporting be appropriate/inappropriate?*

**Article 22. º**

**Assistance in hospital services**

Whenever a patient reveals to have been a victim or the clinical diagnosis concludes the patient was a victim of a domestic violence related crime, the specialized hospital services are asked to intervene to:

1. Provide assistance and medical follow up for victims of domestic violence taking into account the needs of victims, particularly children;
2. Proceed with the preservation of evidence relating to possible crimes, including the completion of examinations or forensic tests or taking other precautionary measures appropriate to the case;
3. Inform the victim of his / her rights and remedies which may be adopted, and the obligation of the hospital authorities to state those facts to the police;
4. Immediately report the facts to the police or the prosecutor;
5. Prepare a report on the situation and steps to be taken and send it to the competent authorities;
6. Refer the victim to a safe house if the situation warrants, and the victim so requests.
7. **When discussing her pregnancy care, what prompted the midwife in the video to ask the woman whether she had any other problems? What are some of the other signs a midwife might notice from a woman who is experiencing domestic violence?**

*Depression and sadness*

*Lots of stress, anxiety and trauma*

*Not eating or sleeping well*

*Suspicious injuries (bruises, burns, bites, fractures)*

*Unexplained injuries or ‘accidents’*

*Sexually transmitted infections*

*Stories that don’t add up, delay before seeking treatment, many presentations to the clinic*

*Abortion, not wanting the baby*

*Thinking about or attempted suicide*

1. **The midwives in the video said how difficult it was for women to open up about their experiences of violence. What things do you think you can do to help women feel safe to talk?**

*Privacy – try and speak with the patient alone, the suspected offender should not be present, ask family to wait outside, other patients should not be able to overhear.*

*Listen and make time – talking about an assault can be very difficult, the victim may shake or cry for long periods, these are symptoms of acute trauma.*

*Believe, respect and reassure – ‘that must have been very frightening’, ‘the violence is not your fault’, ‘violence is a wrong and nobody deserves to be treated that way’, ‘you were right to tell, we will help you to be safe’, ‘violence is a crime and the law can help protect you’.*

*Confidentiality – The information must not be shared with anyone except the other workers caring for her. Talk about confidentiality, why its important to keep a record and with who her information will be shared. Document everything.*

1. **What do you think about how the midwife asked the woman about her other problems? What are some other ways you could ask?**

*General questions - ‘How are things at home?’, ‘How are things with your husband?’, ‘Is there anything happening that might be affecting your health?’*

*Direct questions - ‘Are you afraid of anyone at home?’, ‘Are you worried about the safety of your children?’, ‘Has your husband ever threatened to hurt you?’*

*Prompting - ‘Sometimes pain can come from stress or worry or when bad things happen to us, have any bad things been happening to you?’, ‘Sometimes pain can come from being touched or physically treated in a bad way, or when you didn’t want it. Has anything like that happened to you?’*

*Avoid pressing women for an answer, avoid yes/no questions, avoid suggesting other causes such as ‘did you run into a door?’ Allow the woman to answer in ways that she feels most comfortable*

1. **How can you as a midwife best help women who are experiencing violence?**

*Safety - discuss how she can keep herself safe and find out whether there are people she can turn to. Always ask about the safety of her children.*

*Information - know about and provide her with information on her rights and the services available by phone and in the community*

*Referral – ask what she wants to do. Do an assisted referral based on the woman’s wishes*

1. **What organisations and supports are available in your area that can help women who are experiencing violence?**

*The facilitator should bring brochures and contact details for support services in the area, for health providers to keep. If possible, arrange a visit to these services to know more about what they provide and build relationships between providers.*

*Fatin Hakmatek – provides safety, counselling, medical treatment and forensic examination and emergency accommodation for 1-3 nights, at referral hospitals in Dili, Suai, Baucau, Maliana, Oecussi*

*Uma Mahon – provides a safe place for victims to stay, counselling and help to re-integrate into the community. Fokupers, Ismaik, Uma Pas, religious congregations in the area.*

*Police Vulnerable Person’s Unit – provides security and criminal investigation. Domestic violence is a public crime and the law states police must help victims and investigate the crime.*

*MSS - coordinates referral networks and provides social assistance for victims of violence*

*MSS Child Protection - assist with safe placement of children.*

*PRADET - provides psychosocial service for people who are experiencing trauma.*

*Rede Feto - national network of women’s organisations.*

*Marie Stopes – provides counselling and treatment about STIs and for family spacing.*

*ALFeLa – provides free legal advice and representation for victims in the Tribunal.*

*Casa Vida – provides accommodation, counselling and school or training for girls less than 18 years. Pregnant girls are helped with antenatal care and their new baby.*

*Other helpful people in the area - chefe suco, chefe aldeia, church services?*

**Examples of organisations and contact numbers for domestic violence support services in selected districts, as at July 2016.**

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| **Organisation** | **Dili** | **Baucau** | **Liquica** |
| ALFeLa (Free legal advice and representation for women and children) | 331 0282 | 7799 7589 | 331 0282 |
| Casa Vida (Accommodation, counselling and training for girls under 18 years of age) | 7735 2345 | 7735 2345 | 7735 2345 |
| PRADET (Provide psychosocial services for people experiencing trauma) | 332 1562 | 332 1562 | 332 1562 |
| Fatin Hakmatek (Provide safety, assessment, counselling, medical treatment and forensic examination) | 7725 4597 | 7735 70997736 48097757 5033 | 7725 4597 |
| Fokupers (Safe house) | 332 1534 | 332 1534 | 332 1534 |
| Rede Feto (National network of women’s organisations) | 331 2841 | 331 2841 | 331 2841 |
| Ismaik (Safe house) | 7819 5209 | 7819 5209 | 7805 54077703 1840 |
| Marie Stopes Timor-Leste (sexual and reproductive health services including counselling and treatment for sexually transmitted infections; family planning counselling and services)  | Office: 332 2923Clinic: 3322841National Youth Hotline: 800 1001 (freecall for TT customers)76767676 (freecall for Telemor customers) | 7808 3801 | 7807 1234 |
| MSS (Coordinates referral networks and provides some humanitarian assistance for victims of violence) | 333 1119332 2938 | 333 1119332 2938 | 333 1119332 2938 |
| MSS Child Protection (Assists with safe placement of children) | 331 1266 | 331 1266 | 331 1266 |
| Police Vulnerable Persons Unit (Provides security and criminal investigation for cases of domestic violence and sexual assault) | 7564 1059 | 7693 0908 | 7831 1296 |
| Ambulance | 331 1044 | 7831 7661 | 7768 03267797 1200 |

1. The information in the answers align with PRADET’s Guide for Health Workers on Recognising and Responding to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Child Abuse, and draws on the findings from the La Trobe, UNTL study on the ‘Knowledge and needs of midwives in responding to violence against women in three districts of Timor-Leste’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)