Planning Guide and Tool: Advocacy with Leaders on Behalf of Survivors

This planning guide is intended to help a GBV team consider the appropriateness, as well as the approach, of engaging leaders to advocate on behalf of individual survivors of GBV. Guidance is organized into three steps: 1 Reviewing safety and ethics, 2. Planning for the meeting, and 3. During the meeting.

The planning tool that follows this guidance may help GBV teams further organize their ideas and plans. While this tool is designed to help teams prepare for challenging discussions related to supporting individual survivors, GBV teams may use the tool to organize themselves ahead of any meeting with leaders that involves advocacy, or an “ask”.

# Advocacy with Leaders on Behalf of Survivors: Planning Guide

## Review safety and ethics before a GBV team member engages in direct advocacy:

* + Advocacy is based on expressed wishes of survivor, including selection of leader
  + GBV team member is clear on the survivor’s wishes, including what information you can share with leader
  + Survivor is receiving ongoing GBV case management/ psychosocial support services
  + GBV team member feels safe and comfortable meetings with the leader for this purpose. This type of engagement shouldn’t be required of staff
  + GBV team member has access to direct supervisor and ability to report any threats, etc.

## Plan for the meeting with a leader:

* + Ensure safety and ethical criteria are met
  + Agree on team member/ representative to engage leader, considering preparedness and appropriate profile
  + Discuss approach with supervisor/ colleagues

 Clarify and prioritize “asks” for leader

 Consider leader’s interests in the case

 Identify common ground

 Identify positive contributions of leader to highlight during the meeting

 Discuss actions taken in similar cases to prepare for likely reactions and possible risks and consequences

 Collect information, including relevant facts about the case and related forms of GBV (see Fact Sheets on different forms of GBV)

 Organize and review key points, emphasizing common ground, appealing to facts, and focusing on “asks”

 Practice greetings, key messages, positive communication

 Request a meeting, as appropriate. If dropping by, be sure to select good time (not during meals, prayers, etc.)

 Plan transportation as needed to arrive on time

 Plan to wear respectful clothing

## During the meeting with a leader:

* + Greet and exchange pleasantries
  + Explain the purpose of your visit and why you have sought their support
  + Listen. The leader may be eager to share feelings and opinions about a case. Exercise patience, listen to concerns, and acknowledge their feelings without argument.
  + Acknowledge leader’s interests and positive contributions
  + Share concerns, drawing on key points. Listen to leader’s response and/or concerns
  + Appeal to leader’s interests and your mutual concern for the survivor
  + Explore the potential of “asks”/ requested actions together.

 Adopt a joint problem-solving approach

 Keep your focus on the survivor and the case at hand; don’t be distracted by broader or other issues that may be raised

 Don’t press for an immediate decision if this is not needed

 If the leader is very angry or resistant, or if any threats are made, thank them for their time and quickly end the meeting

* + Summarize points of agreement and next steps

 Share any final thoughts that you would like the leader to consider

 Express appreciation for leader’s time and consideration

 Share contact information and plan for follow-up, as relevant

# Advocacy with Leaders on Behalf of Survivors: Planning Tool

**Summary of Issues and Request**

Briefly, why are you considering advocating with a leader?

**Ethics & Safety**

Has the survivor requested this intervention? ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you clear about the survivor’s wishes and consent related to:

* What specific information you can share? ☐ Yes ☐ No
* With which specific leaders? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the staff feel safe and comfortable to meet with the leader? ☐ Yes ☐ No Does the staff have:

* Required means of communication and transportation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
* Knowledge of available support, in case of threats or other security risks? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Purpose**

What is your major ask?

What actions do you want the leader to take?

**Engaged community leader/s:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Leader’s Interests**



How open is the community leader to the issue?

Open. Supportive of the GBV program and a proponent of survivor-centered response.

Partially Open. Has demonstrated interest in GBV program activities, but not known as a reliable advocate for survivors.

Closed. Not known to the GBV program and/or thought to be not supportive.

The leader will likely be most concerned about…

**Key Points for Discussion**

What key points- pieces of information or facts- are important to highlight? Which facts will most appeal to the leader’s interests (see **factsheets**)?

**Prepare for Potential Challenges**

Anticipate different perspectives and possible arguments. How will you re-orient discussion to focus on key points?

**Communication Style**

Important things to remember when communicating with leader. Specific greetings?

Has the leader made positive contributions to community safety, or to the GBV program, that you want to acknowledge?