



## **Safety and Justice Reform**

*A process for improving national and local responses to violence against women and girls by working with police and justice agencies to analyze current practices and create new tools to increase the safety of victims and accountability of perpetrators.*

Global Rights for Women is a leading voice in the global movement to end violence against women and girls. GRW builds international partnerships that advance laws, principles and practices to create communities where all women and girls live free from violence.

GRW's Safety and Justice Reform process integrates knowledge gleaned from more than thirty years of research, demonstration projects, and other criminal justice work around the world. The process is based on a methodology created in Duluth, Minnesota, US as a core component of a Coordinated Community Response (CCR), also known as "the Duluth Model." This model was originally created in the context of domestic violence, the most common form of violence against women globally.

GRW carries out the Safety and Justice Reform process by partnering with women's rights NGOs, the police, and other criminal justice agencies to create interventions to address violence against women. The Safety and Justice Reform process can also be conducted within other institutional processes such as the child welfare system. These interventions are grounded in the input and voices of victims of violence, consultation with community members, practitioners, advocates, defense attorneys, researchers, agency leaders, and experts in confronting this human rights abuse on the national and local levels.

After conducting thorough consultation and assessment of current practices, GRW works with law enforcement, judicial, and advocacy leaders to create more effective criminal justice interventions that are tailored to the local context. Examples of criminal justice interventions created and developed as part of a Safety and Justice Reform process include risk assessment tools, police policies, prosecution plans, perpetrator programs, and enhancement of local Coordinated Community Responses (CCR).

The goal of Safety and Justice Reform is the promotion of women's human rights to equality and freedom from violence and protecting victims of violence from future harm and possible death at the hands of perpetrators. Each agency in the criminal justice system plays a part in achieving this goal. Coordination and communication among and within each agency is essential to effectively protecting victims and promoting their human rights. The action of one practitioner is strengthened by the cumulative effect of coordinated actions across the criminal justice system. Interagency coordination is strengthened when agencies operate and share information based on common policies and protocols. All agencies should be guided by common risk indicators that they routinely collect, analyze and share.

Ensuring the visibility of previous and ongoing violence is critical -- particularly with domestic violence victims. Tools that facilitate this visibility for every agency include, for example, a relevant and valid risk assessment tool, and a thorough police policy that directs a skilled response to violence. An effective police response can lead to a successful prosecution, resulting in appropriate accountability for the offender, thus making victims safer and reducing domestic violence.

## **Key Principles of Safety and Justice Reform**

### **An Interagency approach**

The development of effective interventions in cases of violence against women and girls requires the engagement and coordination of law enforcement, prosecution, probation, victim advocates, social workers, health care providers and possibly others. It is critical that all practitioners share a basic understanding of risk management, deterrence and safety that is grounded in research and tested practices. In fact, the absence of a coordinated approach to violence against women and girls can thwart the possibility of safety and justice for victims.

### **Written policies**

An interagency approach to violence against women and girls requires that written policies be assessed, adapted and, where necessary, created for each criminal justice agency. Creating written policies that result from communication and coordination serves two goals: 1) a consistent, effective, and fair response based on research-based practices that practitioners, as well as the public, can count on; and 2) bringing agencies with distinct missions together under a set of common goals that centralize victim safety and perpetrator accountability.

### **Administrative protocols and procedures**

Each criminal justice agency policy must develop and implement administrative protocols or procedures that are explicit in their directives and coordinate workers' actions. Every form, guideline, report format, and assessment tool must be reviewed for consistency with the shared goals of victim safety and perpetrator accountability.

### **Information Sharing**

To achieve effective interventions, agencies must share information to facilitate coordinated, goal-driven responses. For example, the information that a law enforcement officer records about a domestic violence incident impacts how prosecutors can proceed, case resolution and sentencing, conditions of probation, and rehabilitation programming. Systems must be designed and implemented

so that practitioners share vital information and receive feedback on the impact of their actions and decisions.

### **Addressing the context and severity of violence**

Law enforcement, prosecution and the judiciary are accustomed to respond to individual incidents. However most cases of violence against women, including domestic violence and sexual assault, involve ongoing subjugation, intimidation, and emotional harm. A victim of coercive, controlling domestic violence may also use violence to defend herself. When practitioners can understand who is the predominant aggressor, and who needs what level of protection from whom, they can tailor interventions to interrupt on-going domestic violence and sexual assault.

An effective police policy and risk assessment tool directs practitioners to gather information that illuminates both the pattern of abuse and the specific harmful acts. Policies and protocols prescribe interventions based on the circumstances, frequency, and severity of abuse. The response reflects an understanding of who is most dangerous in a relationship and who is most vulnerable.

### **Recognition of violence against women and girls as a patterned crime**

Interventions to process one assault are different than interventions designed to stop ongoing abuse. An effective police policy and risk assessment methodology should do both. This dual approach has important implications for an interagency approach. First, seemingly isolated incidents must be linked into a more coherent picture of behavior by the perpetrator, and a complex interplay of risk and safety for the victim. Second, practitioners must see their shared task and function as reaching beyond the processing of the single event to stopping future abuse. Without addressing the pattern of conduct, coercion and violence are likely to continue and may escalate in severity and frequency.

The patterned nature of domestic violence means that the justice system will likely continue to have ongoing contact with a victim. This extended contact provides the opportunity to build relationships that reinforce safety and accountability in more lasting ways. How a victim is treated by the criminal justice system may well determine whether she is willing to participate in a prosecution or other court intervention. It will shape the potential for a mutually beneficial partnership.

### **Experiences and voices of victims**

A core component of addressing violence against women is understanding and redressing the power imbalance between men and women. Therefore, it is imperative that the process of developing criminal justice interventions prioritizes gathering information directly from victims about their experiences, and that it incorporates that information into the system response. In addition, engaging with women victims lets them know that their voices are important.

Criminal justice agencies are often unsure how to incorporate the voices and experiences of victims into their work to change policies and practices. In the first step of the Safety and Justice Reform process,

GRW meets with victims in focus groups to identify specific ways that interventions can better promote victim safety. GRW can provide technical assistance and training in how to incorporate the voices of survivors into the work of the criminal justice system.

## Safety and Justice Reform Process

The full Safety and Justice Reform Process is carried out in four phases. To conduct all four phases takes a minimum of 36 months to complete. It is possible to conduct the Safety and Justice Reform process by only doing the phases 1-3, which takes a minimum of 9 months to complete but is preferably done in 24 months.

<b>Phase 1: Develop an in-depth understanding of the processing of criminal justice cases of violence against women and girls and the experience of victims.</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Identify representatives and agencies for development of inter-agency approach by creating a Safety and Justice Reform (SJR) working group.	GRW staff and local partners
Schedule initial site visit, interviews, assessment, and SJR meeting in the country that GRW is working with	GRW staff and local partners
Develop the content, outlines and materials to be used at the SJR site visit and meeting	GRW staff
Travel for site visit, observations of criminal court process' of domestic violence, interviews of core agency representatives, and SJR meeting	GRW staff
Conduct one-on-one meetings with local criminal justice agency representatives, and observe criminal court process' of violence against women cases	GRW staff
Contact victims of sexual assault and domestic violence whose abuser currently does not have a criminal case pending to provide feedback and input on a draft version of criminal justice intervention	Local NGO partner in consultation with GRW staff
Facilitate up to three focus groups of victims to provide input on draft version of criminal justice intervention to be discussed by SJR working group	GRW staff in consultation and with coordination of local NGO and victims
Facilitate up to three focus groups of advocates for victims of violence to provide input on draft version of criminal justice intervention to be discussed by SJR working group	GRW staff in consultation and coordination of local NGO and advocates for victims of violence
Write redacted report (no personal identifying information) victim focus group input on criminal justice intervention	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO

Write redacted report of advocate focus group input on criminal justice intervention	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO
Collect current written policies of each criminal justice agency regarding domestic violence and risk assessment (if they exist)	GRW staff and SJR partners
Collect copies of relevant criminal justice agency forms, guidelines, report writing formats, and any current assessment tool that is in place that addresses violence against women and girls.	GRW staff and SJR partners
Conduct text analysis of 20-50 cases of violence that the police responded to in the past two years. Depending on confidentiality laws, this could mean that the state/national police would sign an MOU with GRW and the local NGO for data confidentiality, or they would send us redacted case files.	GRW staff, local NGO, in coordination with state police
Observe police as part of a ride-a-long to observe current response to violence. This can only happen if the local police department allows police ride-a-longs and it is safe to do so.	GRW staff and SJR
Facilitate SJR meeting towards development of criminal justice intervention	GRW staff and SJR working group
Produce meeting and interview notes for distribution and further development of criminal justice intervention	GRW staff and SJR working group

<b>Phase 2: Develop a draft criminal justice intervention taking into consideration the local context, input from survivors of violence, including the national legal framework and the experiences and needs of police and justice agencies.</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Produce a summary report with findings, trends and themes of the cases reviewed as part of the text analysis.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO and police/justice agencies
Develop a draft of the domestic violence criminal justice intervention for review by all partners of the SJR for review	GRW staff and SJR working group
Distribute draft of the tailored and adapted domestic violence criminal justice intervention to all partners of the SJR	GRW staff and SJR working group
GRW staff travel to facilitate a workshop of all participants to finalize draft of the tailored and adapted criminal justice intervention to all partners of the SJR	GRW staff and SJR working group
Finalize criminal justice intervention tailored and adapted to the local context	GRW staff facilitates finalization of criminal justice intervention with SJR working group

<b>Phase 3: Conduct training of trainers for the selected representatives of the criminal justice system on utilizing selected criminal justice policy/tools.</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Develop draft of “Train the Trainers” curriculum, content, outlines, and materials to be used	GRW staff for review and SJR working group
Finalize the “Train the Trainers” curriculum, content, outlines, and materials to be used	GRW staff for review by SJR working group
Conduct “Train the Trainers” event for the selected representatives of criminal justice agency that criminal justice intervention was designed to address and change	20 Participants for “Training the Trainer” / Train the Trainers training conducted by GRW staff and international consultants
Make adaptations and revisions to “Train the Trainers” curriculum, content, outlines and materials to be used	GRW staff for review by SJR working group
Finalize and distribute “Train the Trainers” curriculum, content, outlines and materials to be utilized by law enforcement and training team	GRW staff for distribution by SJR working group

<b>Phase 4: Assess implementation of criminal justice intervention and make necessary changes and adaptations.</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Travel to site to assess effectiveness of implementation of criminal justice intervention.	GRW staff to travel to country 6 months or 1 year after implementation of criminal justice intervention.
Conduct interviews of police officers and other officials about the effectiveness of the implementation of the criminal justice intervention.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO and SJR working group
Conduct a focus group or individual interviews of criminal justice practitioners and advocates about the effectiveness of the criminal justice intervention implemented.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO and SJR working group
Conduct interviews or focus groups of victims that the police met with during the one year time period about their experience of the implemented criminal justice intervention.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO
Conduct text analysis of the implementation of the criminal justice intervention in cases of violence against women. If the agency that changed the policy/practice was the police, the state/national police would submit between 20-50 case files to assess	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO and SJR working group

how cases were processed. Depending on confidentiality laws, this could mean that the state/national police would sign an MOU with GRW and the local NGO for data confidentiality, or send us redacted case files.	
If the agency that changed the policy/practice was the police, GRW and members of the DVIA would observe police as part of a ride-a-long to observe the implementation of the criminal justice intervention. This can happen if the local police department allows ride-a-longs and it is safe to do so.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO and SJR working group
Produce a report and assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the criminal justice intervention.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO
Write recommendations for changes to the implementation of the criminal justice intervention for cases of violence against women and girls.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO
Provide consultation to local NGOs and policy agencies on implementing changes to the criminal justice intervention that was developed and implemented.	GRW staff in coordination with local NGO

## Examples of Past Safety and Justice Reform Initiatives

**Republic of Georgia:** GRW completed the Safety and Justice Reform process in the Republic of Georgia, resulting in nationwide adoption of a risk assessment tool for use by police in domestic violence cases. This risk assessment tool that was developed is based on the Georgian experience, based in research, and with the input of victims of domestic violence.

**Republic of Moldova:** GRW completed the Safety and Justice Reform process to develop a police policy to address domestic violence. The process also recommended a revised risk assessment tool, change in case processing through mapping, and the role of police vs. advocates.

**Ethiopia and Central America:** GRW also provides introductory workshops that can serve as a “launchpad” for Safety and Justice Reform. For example, in Ethiopia, GRW provided a workshop for members of the National Coordinating Board on basic elements of a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to violence against women. In Guatemala, GRW facilitated a workshop on CCR for advocates, attorneys, police and government officials from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.