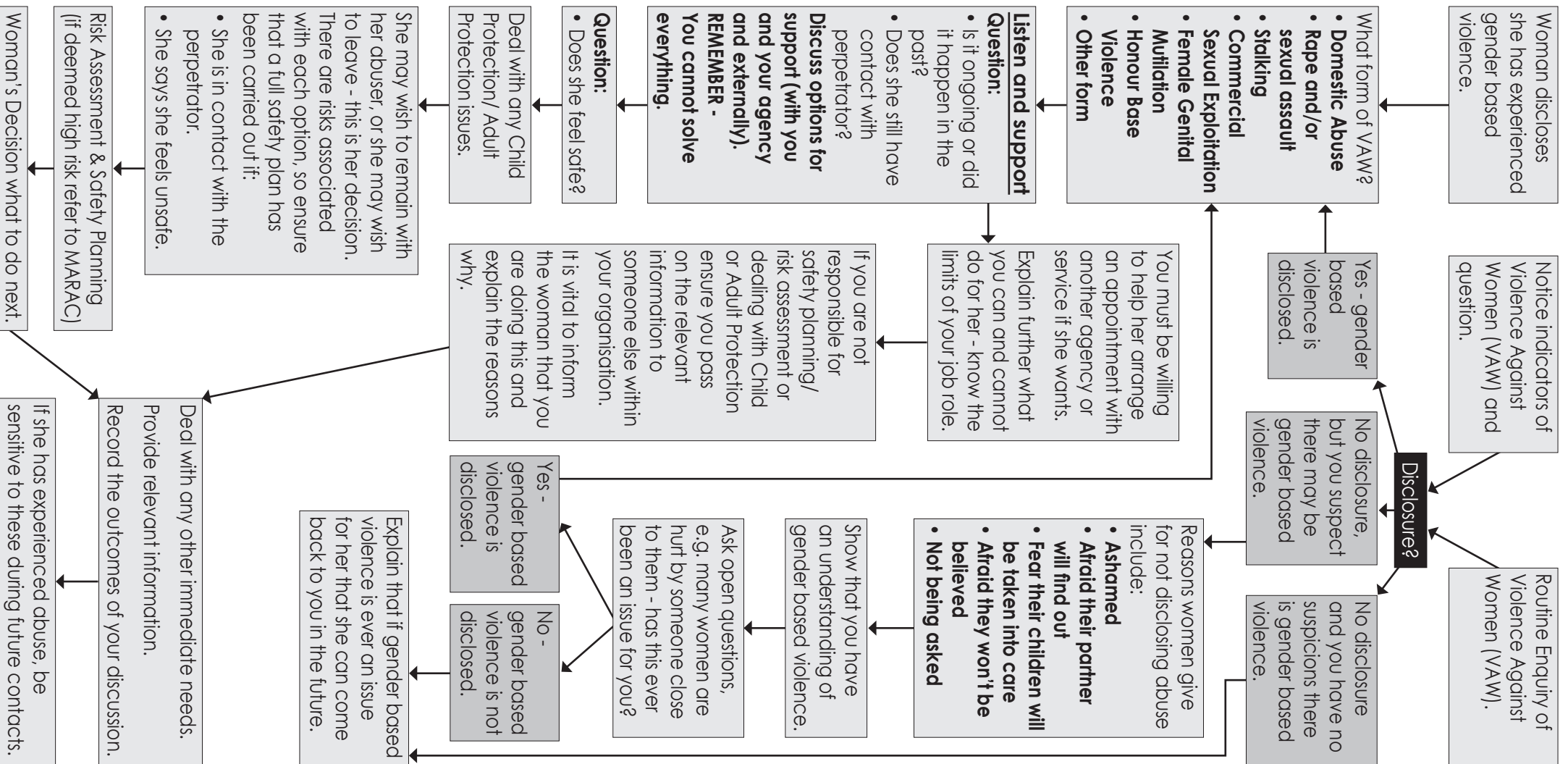


Guide 1 Quick Guide Introduction



Iùil 1 Ro-ràdh dhan Ghrad-iùil

Process for responding to gender based violence



Introduction

These guides are for staff working in Highland and includes information on responding to Violence Against Women. There are 5 guides in total, including this introduction, best practice when responding, impact on children and young people, responding to perpetrators and risk assessment & safety planning.

What is Violence Against Women?

Violence Against Women is an over-arching term, often also called 'gender based violence' that includes various forms of abuse such as sexual violence, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and harmful traditional practices that predominately affect women and are most commonly perpetrated by men.

Who is at risk?

The biggest risk factor to experiencing all forms of Violence Against Women is being female. While no woman is immune from it, not all women are equally at risk. Factors such as age, financial dependence, poverty, disability, homelessness, and insecure immigration status can heighten women's vulnerability to abuse or entrap them further in it. For example, minority ethnic women may face barriers such as racism and language difficulties and may also fear being accused of bringing shame and dishonour upon the family. Women with disabilities may experience communication or physical barriers to getting help or away from an abuser, or be isolated because of their impairment. Young women are at high risk of all forms of abuse, yet often this can be overlooked or minimised, particularly in their teenage years.

What are the impacts?

Experiencing abuse or violence as an adult or when a child can have a wide ranging

effect on an individual's life. The impacts may be physical, psychological, sexual or a combination of these. Other impacts may include financial difficulties, becoming homeless or roofless.

What must staff do?

Staff may have different responsibilities to respond to Violence Against Women, depending on their job role. However, we expect all staff to:

- Be aware of the high incidence of Violence Against Women, particularly domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault and child sexual abuse
- Be ready to respond to a disclosure
- Be prepared to ask individuals about their experiences of abuse, when you suspect someone has experienced abuse and/or when required by your service procedures
- Be knowledgeable about support services in your area and be able to signpost women to services, when applicable
- Participate in training on Violence Against Women, which is offered by the Highland

VAW Partnership throughout the area

- Be aware of the impact of Violence Against Woman on children, and identify and respond to concerns about the safety and well-being of any unborn child, child or young person
- To be aware of their own responses to gender based violence and their own values/beliefs that might get in the way of them being able to listen to a woman's experiences.

Whilst this guidance is primarily focused at supporting female victims of gender based violence, the information can also be used to support men who have experienced abuse.

What services are there in Highland?

A range of support services are available in Highland. Some are provided locally and some are national services. You can get more information on them from the Support Services Booklet for women in Highland.