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# TRAINEE PACK IRELAND

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## **IMPRINT**

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Project workstream 2



SUNIA GEEL – Prevent and combat violence  
against children, young people and women and to  
protect victims and groups at risk

For further informations please visit:  
[www.suniageel.eu](http://www.suniageel.eu)

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# Best Practice in working with Ethnic Minority Groups experiencing Domestic Violence

**Trainee Pack  
(for Participants)**



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# The Sunia Geel Project

**Sunia Geel** derives from the Irish Traveller language, Cant. It translates "take care of yourself", and is viewed as an appropriate name for what the project aims to achieve - families being valued and supported.

The goal of the “**Sunia Geel Domestic Violence Project**” is to prevent and reduce the extent and impact of domestic violence within marginalized communities by generating education, community awareness and providing support to Women, Children and Young People. This will promote positive attitudes, and behavioural changes within disadvantaged Communities. It will also expand knowledge of effective domestic violence interventions with these minority groups amongst service providers. This knowledge will be disseminated to other service providers through training and resource materials provided by **The Sunia Geel Domestic Violence Project**. The partners of Sunia Geel have identified specific target groups. These include; Irish Travellers, Sinti and Roma families, and Muslim migrants in Europe. The objectives of the project are:

1. To increase the knowledge base and skills of service providers in addressing the needs of marginalized, minority groups experiencing domestic violence. This objective acknowledges that Domestic Violence has not been effectively addressed by service providers in the past
2. To generate domestic violence community awareness and address domestic violence from within these communities
3. To support the victims of domestic violence from disadvantaged and marginalized communities through the use of therapeutic interventions. The project aims to empower women, children and young people to make informed decisions
4. To develop knowledge and a set of generalizable insights for use in addressing domestic violence within marginalized communities. The strategic approach developed will be of assistance in other cultural contexts

## **Disclaimer**

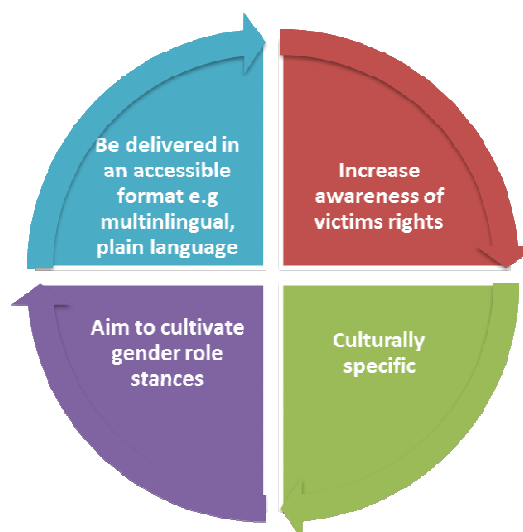
*This training pack is intended as a guide to facilitate training. It gives an overview of ethnic minority groups’ culture and the pertinent issues they are faced with. It is not intended as a comprehensive view of their experiences. It is expected that individual trainers will adapt this manual to meet the needs of their own target group as appropriate.*



# Training Guide

The overall purpose of this training is to encourage services and service providers to develop and deliver **appropriate** and **effective** services in the area of domestic violence / ethnic minority groups.

This will be achieved by increasing understanding of the 4 areas highlighted in this diagram:



## Aims:

- To provide participants with an insight into ethnic minorities
- To provide participants with the skills and knowledge to respond in a culturally appropriate way to members of ethnic minorities who are experiencing domestic violence

## Objectives:

At the end of the training participants will:

- Have an increased understanding of ethnic minority culture
- Have awareness of the social issues that ethnic minority groups experience
- Define prejudice & discrimination
- Reflect on their own attitudes towards ethnic minorities
- Have an increased understanding of the nature of domestic violence
- Identify good practice and multi-agency work in responding to domestic violence
- Know how to deliver services which encompass best practice in a culturally sensitive way when working with ethnic minorities experiencing domestic violence



# Training Guide

## Schedule:

The Training is designed to be delivered over 2 days  
It can be adapted for less (or more) time, as appropriate

<b>Day 1:</b>	<b>Session 1</b>	Introduction to the Training Programme Introduction to Ethnic Minority groups What is Culture? Prejudice & Discrimination
	<b>Session 2</b>	Definition of Domestic Violence
	<b>Session 3</b>	Legislation & Domestic Violence Limitations of legislation
	<b>Session 4</b>	The Impact of Domestic Violence on Women Physical Emotional / Psychological Social & Financial Sexual Power & Control The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Session 5</b>	Challenging Myths and Misconceptions
	<b>Session 6</b>	Socio-Cultural Issues Affecting Ethnic Minorities Double discrimination Institutional discrimination
	<b>Session 7</b>	Barriers to Disclosure Interpersonal Challenges for Ethnic Minority Groups The 'Dos and Donts' when providing Support
	<b>Session 8</b>	Best Practice Appropriate and Effective Services and Responses The Empowerment Wheel



## Day One : Session 1

### Ice breaker exercise

### Introduction

**Best Practice in working with  
Ethnic Minority Groups  
experiencing Domestic Violence**




**Introduction**

**Day 1**  
Session 1: Introduction to ethnic minority groups  
The concepts of culture  
Session 2: Definition of Domestic Violence  
Session 3: Current legislation and how it works  
Session 4: The impact of domestic violence on women and children

**Day 2**  
Session 5: Challenging myths and misconceptions  
Session 6: Socio-cultural issues affecting ethnic minority groups  
Session 7: Barriers to disclosing domestic violence  
Session 8: Practice responses  
Best practice

Recap and Evaluation



Ground Rules for the Training Programme?

Hopes / Expectations / Concerns for the Training Programme?

### Introduction to Ethnic Minority Groups


*Culture is the way we learn to think, behave and do things. It is how we make sense of the world and it has both tangible and intangible elements to it. The tangible are the things we see, the traditions etc.; the intangible are the values and beliefs at the root of behaviour. This is the key to how issues are perceived and addressed.*

*In trying to understand a person's behaviour and practice one has to be aware that what they do is rooted in their cultural identity. One may not understand why people do things in a certain way, but one has to realise that it makes perfect sense to the person themselves.*

**Culture**

“Everybody has a culture. It is a package of customs, traditions, symbols, values, phrases and other forms of communication by which we can belong to a community”

“The belonging is in understanding the meaning of these cultural forms and in sharing values and identity”







## Culture

- Culture is the way we learn to think, behave and do things
- Culture has both tangible and intangible elements



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## Cultural Elements

- **Tangible:** behaviour and tradition, i.e. nomadism, economic activity, family structures and language
- **Intangible:** values and beliefs at the root of different behaviours, the key to how issues are perceived or addressed

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## Prejudice & Discrimination

### Prejudice

- “is a set of negative personal beliefs about a social group that leads individuals to prejudge people from that group in general regardless of personal differences among members of that group.”
- Applies to attitudes, stereotypes and assumptions. Attitudes can be positive or negative

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### Discrimination

- Discrimination is the acting out of prejudice
- Prejudice + power to act = discrimination

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### Discrimination & Ethnic Minority Groups

- Ethnic minority groups continue to experience high levels of social exclusion and disadvantage
- Discrimination is at both the individual or **interpersonal** level and at the **institutional** level

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Negative / Positive attitudes towards ethnic minority groups?



## Social Exclusion

On many indicators used to measure social disadvantage, ethnic minority groups fare poorly on every point:

- Poverty
- Social exclusion
- Health Status
- Infant Mortality
- Life expectancy
- Literacy
- Education
- Training levels
- Access to decision making
- Political Representation
- Gender equality
- Access to credit
- Accommodation
- Living conditions

### Creating positive change through:

- Awareness
- Challenge/Question
- Understand
- Respect
- Support
- Connect
- Political representation/power
- Socialising
- Friendship



### Create interculturalism through:

- Interaction and respect
- Acknowledge diversity
- Consultation in planning
- Sharing of cultural heritage





## Session 2 - Definition of Domestic Violence

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### Definition of Domestic Violence

- Domestic Violence is the use of physical, mental, economic and sexual violence in close adult relationships
- The term 'domestic violence' goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse such as the destruction of property, isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, stalking, and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone

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## Session 3 - Current Legislation and how it works

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## Session 4 - The Impact of Domestic Violence on Women

### The Impact of Domestic Violence on Women

- Physical Effects:
  - Broken bones and teeth
  - Bruising
  - Scarring
  - Gastrointestinal disorders
  - Asthma
  - Injuries causing blood clots / strokes
  - Reduced physical functioning
  - Eating disorders
  - Poor sleep patterns
  - Death by the abuser
  - Death by suicide



### Impact (continued...)

- Emotional / Psychological Effects
  - Depression
  - Psychosomatic problems
  - Self Harm
  - Shame and guilt
  - Feelings of identity loss
  - Low or no self esteem / confidence
  - Difficulty making decisions
  - Hopelessness, apathy, despair
  - Exhaustion
  - Confusion
  - Suicidal ideation / attempts
  - Isolation / loneliness



### Impact (continued...)

- Social Effects
  - withdrawal and forced isolation from family, friends and social interactions,
  - loss of autonomy,
  - hiding,
  - feelings of disconnection with the outside world
  - homelessness
- Financial Effects
  - no choice in financial / household spending,
  - financial dependence on the abuser,
  - the abuser uses money to bribe her into behaving in certain ways,
  - difficulty in sustaining employment,
  - control of social welfare allowance by abuser.



### Impact (continued...)

- Sexual Effects
  - rape
  - unwanted pregnancy
  - gynaecological injuries
  - S.T.D.'S
  - loss of sex drive
  - no choice over sexual activity, or contraception
  - sexual humiliation or degradation
  - forced to watch pornography
  - prostitution



## The Power and Control Wheel

*The Power and Control Wheel was developed in 1984 by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota.*

*Domestic Violence is characterised by eight patterns of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate his intimate partner. That is why the words “power and control” are in the centre of the wheel. A perpetrator systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instil fear in his partner. These behaviours are the spokes of the wheel. Physical and sexual violence holds it all together - this violence is the rim of the wheel.*

1. Using coercion and threats
2. Using intimidation
3. Using emotional abuse
4. Using isolation
5. Minimising, denying, blaming
6. Using children
7. Using male privilege
8. Using economic abuse



## Session 4 - The Impact of Domestic Violence on Women

### The Power and Control Wheel

- Developed in 1984 by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota
- DV is characterized by the pattern of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate his intimate partner; that is why the words “power and control” are in the centre of the wheel
- A perpetrator systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instil fear in his partner
- The behaviours are the spokes of the wheel, while physical and sexual violence holds it all together and are represented by the rim of the wheel.

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## The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

*The connection between the abuse of women and the abuse of children is well recognised. Research suggests that men who assault women are likely to also directly physically abuse children (Hestor and Radford, 1994). Unfortunately, social workers focus on the women’s behaviour rather than the partner’s abuse which discourages disclosure due to fear of the children being removed. However, research is increasingly showing that protecting and supporting the child’s mother is good child protection. Children may*

- *witness or overhear the violence*
- *intervene to protect their mother risking assault themselves*
- *be encouraged to participate in the abuse and degradation of their mother.*

*In 90% of reported domestic violence incidents, children have either been present in the same or a nearby room.*

Domestic violence is a crime and a major social problem affecting many families. Children, who witness, intervene or hear incidents are affected in many ways.



## Day Two

### Session 5 - Challenging Myths & Misconceptions

#### Myths & Misconceptions

##### **Violence against women is more prevalent in minority ethnic groups and is inherent in their cultures**

**Facts:**

- Violence against women is not inherent in minority ethnic cultures
- Women from every cultural, economic and social background can and do experience violence
- Incidents are often not reported as there is fear and social stigma attached to being a victim of domestic abuse



#### Myths & Misconceptions (continued...)

##### **Support services are easily accessible for women from minority groups**

**Facts:**

- The relationship with Support Services for many women from minority groups can be based on fear and mistrust which puts the women under pressure when trying to find support
- Women may fear being alienated by their own communities for bringing Support Services into the family home
- Limited knowledge of and access to the legal system creates additional barriers
- Women might have inaccurate information about their rights and entitlements



#### Myths & Misconceptions (continued...)

##### **Information for women experiencing violence is available to all**

**Facts:**

- Domestic violence affects women from all walks of life
- The needs of women seeking support will vary depending on factors like ethnicity, class, education and religious beliefs
- Written material might make information inaccessible to women with limited literacy levels



#### Myths & Misconceptions (continued...)

##### **DV only happens to working, migrant and Traveller families**

**Facts:**

- Domestic violence is often described as the 'most democratic of all crimes'
- Domestic violence can happen to any woman in an intimate relationship
- There is no 'type' of home in which it happens





## Session 6 - Socio-Cultural Issues Affecting Ethnic Minorities

### Socio-cultural Issues Affecting Ethnic Minority Women

Women experience double discrimination: discrimination as women, and discrimination as a member of a minority group

- Lack of access to basic facilities; compounded by the cumulative effect of poverty, social exclusion and poor living conditions
- Direct discrimination and intimidation when women engage with settled services in a male dominated or patriarchal society
- Negative experiences of state agencies e.g. police
- Fear that disclosure may risk their child(ren) being taken into care

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### Socio-cultural Issues (continued...)

- Cultural emphasis on family, marital stability and the woman's traditional child caring role within the home
- Perceived as disloyal to their cultural group
- Can be perceived as reinforcing negative stereotypes

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### Further Social Issues....

- Lack of sufficient refuge accommodation / appropriate emergency and long term accommodation
- Discrimination by private landlords
- Lack of access to legitimate credit facilities
- Little recognition from service providers of the importance of having people of the same cultural background working in services for victims of domestic violence

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*These socio-cultural issues may be summarised under the following headings:*

- ***Those which affect women's access to services***
- ***Those which reduce the options available for support and resources***
- ***Those which affect the choices which the woman can realistically make.***





## Session 7 - Barriers to Disclosure (Interpersonal)

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The most powerful barriers to disclosing domestic violence are beliefs and feelings that victims hold about themselves and their abuse. Many victims do not identify themselves as victims. They feel responsible for the violence, or they minimize the pattern of control. They believe that they can manage it by themselves and fear the consequences of disclosure. They will disclose when the timing is right for them, and when they feel heard and supported. Coming to the realization that they are victims is an unfolding process that can be facilitated with good information and sensitive understanding by professionals.

### Barriers to Disclosure (Interpersonal)

- Fear of isolation from her family/community
- Fear of intimidation from his/her family
- Fear of violence from his/her family
- Fear for personal safety
- Lack of privacy
- Separation from some (boys) of the children
- Partner/children/family members always with her
- Fear that the children will be removed into care

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### Barriers to Disclosure (Interpersonal)...continued

- Blaming herself for abuse
- Shame/embarrassment
- Feeling she will not be taken seriously
- Fear that things will be taken out of her control
- Fear that partner may be arrested
- Previous negative experiences of disclosure
- Low self efficacy
- Addiction

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## Session 7 'Do's and Don't's when supporting someone disclose Domestic Violence

### DO 😊

*Service providers can do a number of things to reduce the barriers to disclosure and provide support to a woman experiencing domestic violence.  
If you suspect someone is a victim and they deny it, engage her as if it were a possibility:*

- **DO** Provide an environment conducive to disclosure and confidentiality. Use active listening and empathy
- **DO** Talk about the common feelings of embarrassment, guilt, shame and fear
- **DO** Offer a definition of abuse that includes emotional abuse
- **DO** Reassure the individual that it is not her fault, and you are not there to judge or blame anyone. You may not agree with her decisions, but let her know that you are there for her and that she is not alone



### DO 😊

- **DO** Explain your policies on confidentiality and mandatory reporting / child protection, risk to self or others
- **DO** Let her know that domestic violence is a complex problem which can be difficult to handle alone
- **DO** Indicate that there are specialized resources, support services and information
- **DO** Recognize the limits of the victim's resources
- **DO** Reassure the individual that she will decide what to do next
- **DO** Inform her of your ongoing support and the availability of resources if she requires them



### DO 😊

- **DO** ensure that domestic violence resource information is displayed in areas where victims can access them confidentially
- **DO** research and familiarise yourself with domestic violence services generally and within local communities
- **DO** Ensure safety for the victim and dependent children is always the first priority
- **DO** Discuss a safety plan including the storage of important documents
- **DO** Provide her with possible resources in a safe format (to avoid risk if discovered). Leave the door open for her to make the best decision possible for her at that time
- **DO** Remember self care



### DON'T 😞

- **DON'T** Make assumptions but allow disclosure in the victim's own time
- **DON'T** Tell her what to do. Instead, discuss with her what all of their options are, both in staying and leaving
- **DON'T** Make ultimatums about choosing to leave their abusive partner
- **DON'T** ask about the abuse in front of her partner, family or friends



### DON'T 😞

- **DON'T** Recommend couples counselling or marriage counselling as a solution
- **DON'T** Tell them everything will be ok
- **DON'T** Try to offer a service that is not within your expertise; instead link the woman with the relevant resources
- **DON'T** respond with your own frustrations in wanting to 'fix' things





## Session 8 - Best Practice

### The Empowerment Wheel



### Best Practice Guidelines



#### **Maintain Confidentiality**

*It is crucial that organisations maintain strict confidentiality when dealing with cases of domestic violence. The importance of the extended family network within the Ethnic Minority Community should never be used as a reason to divulge information to a victim's family. To give information about a case or to disclose information in relation to the whereabouts of a person in a refuge to anyone within their family (mother, sister, etc) is to put their safety/life in danger.*

#### **Respect diversity through cultural appropriateness**

*Services need to recognise and plan for the different needs of women around culture. Promoting positive images of women from minority ethnic groups is essential. Developing culturally appropriate services involves consideration and collaboration with Ethnic Minorities and being aware that women from many different backgrounds may need to use your service. Depending on the specific group, needs may be different and so will the individual needs of each woman. Issues such as disability, sexuality, addiction and religion need to be factored into any response.*



### **Engage in community development practices**

*Ethnic Minority group women's voices should be central in the challenging of violence against women and in the development and design of support services. This should be acknowledged and supported. It implies that a community development approach to the work needs to be adopted. Support services need to work in solidarity and partnership with Ethnic Minority women to encourage their participation in developing services to better meet their needs*

### **Promote equality and intercultural approach**

*An intercultural approach focuses on 'inclusion by design' which means that diversity or cultural difference is integrated within the whole organisation as opposed to being seen as an add on or an extra to existing supports. An organisational commitment to equality will ensure an environment where racist and prejudicial attitudes can be challenged and addressed as they arise. Standards to deal with these issues involve practice, policies and procedures to ensure equality of access and outcome for all.*

### **Safety**

*The primary objective must be securing the safety of those experiencing Domestic Violence and ensuring that service providers are not at risk.*

### **Empowerment**

*Services should support the victims of Domestic Violence to determine their own needs by involving them centrally in decision-making and the choices which affect them. Support them as they progress from crisis to safety and independence.*

### **Respect**

*A respectful and understanding ethos should underpin all service responses thereby building a culture of empathy and trust amongst domestic violence victims and those providing services.*

### **Encourage Minority Group Representation**

*Minority Groups are under represented in staffing within service providers. It is important for service providers to have Ethnic Minority staff or volunteers within their services. Services should also form links with Ethnic Minority organisations to try to tackle this issue in a holistic manner.*

### **Monitor Intercultural Competence**

*Service providers should monitor their intercultural performance; it should form part of all service providers policy in order to guide their practice.*

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**Thank You**







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