

Cooperation in multi-professional teams

Factsheet

Risk assessment

- It is essential to assist victims in evaluating both their present and future safety, along with that of their children.
- A comprehensive risk assessment, following best practices, involves gathering pertinent information about the domestic environment, inquiring about the victim's perception of risk, and making a professional judgment regarding current risk factors.¹ This is usually done by specialised victim support services or the police.
- A risk assessment and a clear protocol for referring victims with injuries resulting from domestic violence to further interventions after an emergency room visit are required. The disclosure of domestic violence is also associated with certain reporting and notification obligations, which vary depending on the professional group.
- This may concern the reporting and notification obligations of pedagogical and psychosocial occupational groups in cases of suspected immediate danger to self or others and danger to the well-being of children.
- Medical professions are also subject to special reporting obligations, which are regulated in the respective professional laws.

Challenges in working together in multi-professional teams

- Different organisational tasks, visions, values, goals, and intentions.
- Different rules, regulations and working mechanisms.
- Different tools and instruments for assessing and reporting the risk of domestic violence.
- The data collected by different professions are not comparable due to differences in the way the data is collected, the way it is stored and the lack of data.
- Differences in the understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and the impact on different professions.
- Lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various professions.
- High staff turnover in organisations impairs communication, as it takes time for trust to develop.



Click [here](#) for risk assessment instruments.



See a [video](#) to the role of multi-agency cooperation.



Find more information on domestic violence in [Module 1](#).

- The definitions and terms used differently by individuals and organisations.

Domestic violence in times of disasters

Quarantine, restrictions, closed schools, home office, short-time work, financial worries, and fear of the future – all these factors have the potential to cause increased stress in relationships and family life. It is therefore suspected that there has been and will continue to be a significant increase in violence at home.

Some risk factors included:

- Health and mental health problems increased during a lockdown situation, as health-related services are only accessible to a limited extent. This had a negative impact on the health status of individuals, increase their stress levels and often resulted in an increase in violent assaults.
- Economic insecurity or unemployment is accompanied by financial worries can reinforce destructive coping mechanisms.
- Violence always has to do with power. In times of crisis and isolation and the associated feelings of helplessness, loss of control and powerlessness, violence is supposedly a means of regaining control and power.
- Language barriers, closures of contact points or the fact that social workers are only present on site to a limited extent due to the protective measures can make access to support services considerably more difficult.
- Victims were also reluctant to take advantage of support services for fear of contracting COVID-19.

Helpful sources

They can be found [here](#).

(1) Kersten, J., Burman, M., Houtsonen, J., Herbinger, P., & Leonhardmair, N. (Eds.). (2023). *Domestic Violence and COVID-19: The 2020 Lockdown in the European Union*. Springer.