

“Not only is this program lifesaving, it has prepared and equipped us with the tools needed to help the victims that need us the most.”

*Advocate,  
Maryland  
National LAP participant*

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE PROGRAM (DVSP) IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

## Steps to Implement

**Develop Administrative  
Procedures**

**Train Your Hotline  
Advocates**

**Collect and Report Data**

## Roles for Implementation

The **Team Coordinator** is responsible for communicating with MNADV, capturing and submitting data, monitoring progress of the LAP, and overall training procedures.

The DVSP **agency representative** serves as the agency contact point for the Team Coordinator and MNADV. The agency representative should have some authority to make decisions and give input regarding training his or her agency and other LAP policy-related decisions. The agency representative should be prepared to attend all LAP meetings.

## Call on MNADV for Assistance

MNADV will provide technical assistance, as capable, upon request. Additional, more detailed, and user-friendly documents are available upon request. You are welcome to contact us if you have difficulty with any of these steps.



LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

# Develop Administrative Procedures

The DVSP should develop procedures in the following areas:

**Law enforcement-initiated calls:** When responding to law enforcement-initiated High Danger calls, the hotline advocate should use the **Communication Guidelines**.

**Victim-initiated calls:** Hotline advocates should also administer Lethality Screens when victims directly call the hotline. The agency should establish standards for administration based on the victim's manifestation of danger.

**Teen dating violence:** DVSPs should collaborate with the partner law enforcement agency to determine whether officers will administer the Lethality Screen to minors. Take into consideration local mandatory reporting laws and your agency's policy on serving minors.

**Language access policies:** All hotline staff should be prepared to speak with a High-Danger victim with limited English proficiency skills. Make sure staff know the policies (calling Language Line, for example).

**Documentation:** For law enforcement-initiated LAP calls, hotline advocates should record on a Lethality Screen the victim's responses to the screen questions and information about the parties and the law enforcement agency involved (for note-taking purposes). Advocates should have the Lethality Screen easily accessible at all times in order to immediately respond to LAP calls.

**Danger Assessment:** If trained and certified, as appropriate, advocates should complete a Danger Assessment upon working with High-Danger victims in person when the victim accesses services. The Team Coordinator has information on how DVSPs can be trained and certified in the Danger Assessment. We strongly recommend that all advocates complete Danger Assessment training. See: [www.dangerassessment.org](http://www.dangerassessment.org)

**Collecting completed Lethality Screens and Danger Assessments:** All completed Lethality Screens faxed or scanned from the partner law enforcement agency should be kept for tracking follow up plans and data collection.



See **DVSP**  
**Sample**  
**Policies** for  
more best  
practices

## CONSIDERATIONS

Certain considerations should be addressed prior to implementation while you are formulating policies, practices, and procedures. Examples include:

- What will a hotline advocate do if a victim screens in at High-Danger and wants shelter, but is on the “administrative approval” list because of prior negative experiences with her?
- How will the program organize a system for following up with High-Danger victims?
- How will the program serve the victim that walks through its doors and is not ready to engage in services?

# Develop Administrative Procedures

Collaboration is Key

## Know your partner law enforcement agency representative.

A staple of the LAP is the level of cooperation, coordination, and communication—the 3 Cs—that is necessary to achieve the goal of getting victims into services. Agency representatives from law enforcement and the DVSP should introduce themselves to one another and keep open lines of communication.

## Meet before you implement.

Although you'll have had teleconferences, trainings, and meetings with the law enforcement agency or agencies prior to implementation, it is important for law enforcement and the DVSP to meet to establish procedures and to ensure open lines of communication. Schedule at least one meeting prior to the implementation date, and consider instituting regular LAP meetings for all partners.

## Resolve problems.

Any problems with communication or cooperation between law enforcement and DVSPs should be addressed immediately and systematically, and resolved to benefit the victim.

- For example, if a problem occurs during a phone conversation, the officer or advocate who experienced the problem should immediately contact his/her supervisor who, in turn, should immediately contact a supervisor from the partner agency to resolve the issue or at least to begin the process of addressing it.
- Additionally, the two supervisors should subsequently communicate with their respective LAP agency representatives so that the matter may be addressed at that level.
- Finally, the two agency representatives should communicate with one another for a final resolution.



# Train Your Hotline Workers

## FORMAT

Hotline advocates should be trained in-person using your agency's established training procedures.

## LENGTH OF TRAINING

The **training time** is **about 2 hours**. Refer to the **Domestic Violence Service Program Training Materials**.

## TRAINING MATERIALS

Trainers are provided with a **DVSP PowerPoint, training handouts**, and the **DVSP Communication Guidelines**.

## PARTICIPANTS

To demonstrate the partnership and collaboration between your program and law enforcement, representatives from your partner law enforcement agency(ies) should be in attendance, if available.

## PROVIDE HOTLINE STAFF WITH MATERIALS

Share the training, implementation, and informational materials with staff. Post the **DVSP Communication Guidelines** near the phone(s) used by hotline advocates. Include training materials in new staff orientation.

## ONGOING TRAINING

We suggest you re-train staff every year and provide them with updated information and tools, as available.



**Best  
Practices**

## DATA COLLECTION

### Law Enforcement- Initiated Calls

Four points of information should be captured and reported from the Lethality Screens that are submitted by law enforcement. Data should be maintained by each agency.

- Number of High-Danger Lethality Screens.
- Screens received from law enforcement.
- Number of High-Danger calls to the hotline.
- Number of High-Danger victims who spoke with a hotline advocate.
- Number of victims who spoke with the hotline advocate and went in for services.

### Victim-Initiated Calls

Five points of information should be captured and reported from the screens that are self-initiated.

- Total number of Lethality Screens administered.
- Number of High-Danger Lethality Screens.
- Number of non-High Danger Lethality Screens.
- Number of Lethality Screens where the victim answered none of the questions.
- Number of victims who spoke to the hotline and went in for services.



Refer to  
Sample  
Data  
Sheets

**Note:** Law enforcement and DVSPs will provide some duplicate data to ensure that victims don't "fall through the cracks." Agency representatives from both the law enforcement agency and the DVSP should communicate with one another to ensure law enforcement and program data matches before reporting.