

**“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*

## DVSP Role Play Activities #3 & 4

### About the Scenario for Service

Use your own names and agency names, if you prefer.

On the following pages are two role play scenarios. Have your staff role-play the scenarios. Be prepared to have discussions about how responses could be improved, whether the advocate followed the guidelines, where in the stages of change the victim is, and how your agency would handle the particular circumstances of that victim.

**Role play activity 3:** In this scenario, the victim is open to shelter, but has specific circumstances that may make sheltering a difficult service to provide. She has a pet (a dog) who is not a service animal and she does not want to leave him behind. She also has two children: an infant daughter and a 15-year old son. This scenario is designed to teach your staff to consider those circumstances when offering shelter, and if the victim cannot be accommodated, to safety plan around them in a 10 minute call.

**Role play activity 4:** In this scenario, the victim is resistant to accepting any assistance. He does not think any of the safety plan tips will work for him and/or doesn't think he needs to take any steps to safety plan. He does not give permission for your agency to follow up. This scenario is designed to teach your staff how to explain all the services offered and how to suggest options without pressuring the victim.



*This project was supported by Grant No. 2011-TA-AX-K111 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.*

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## SCENARIO 3 ADVOCATE

It is 11 pm. You just answered a hotline call from City Police. Officer Smith was at the scene and she said the victim (Jessica Jones) said yes to questions 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, and 11. Officer Smith said the offender (Jason Jones) is not going to be arrested tonight, but has agreed to spend the night at his brother's, and has left the scene.

Jessica agreed to speak with you before Officer Smith called, and Officer Smith just handed the phone to her.

### Remember the Guidelines!

#### **Build Rapport**

*Thank you for speaking with me. I understand this is a stressful night.*

#### **Explain your services**

Remember to mention the confidentiality policy in easy to understand language.

#### **Reiterate Danger**

*I'm really concerned for your safety after hearing what Officer Smith told me. Officer Smith may have already told you, but I want to make sure you know that families in your situation have been killed. I want to make sure you are going to be okay.*

#### **Provide Education and Safety Plan**

Explain that the abuse is not the victim's fault, is an issue of control, and is recurring and will become worse and more frequent. Focus your statements on the abuser's accountability.

*He made the choice to react that way. There isn't anything you could have done that would justify him reacting that way.*

#### **Encourage Jessica to Come in for Services**

Is there shelter space? Is Jessica eligible? Keep in mind that Jason is not being arrested, according to Officer Smith.

#### **Conclude the Call**

Validate the victim's feelings. Confirm a plan. Ask for permission to convey the plan to the officer. If given permission, tell the officer the plan, confirm the victim has your number, thank the officer.

### Key Feature of Conversation | BREVITY

The conversation is very brief, mostly providing the hotline with basic information about the case. The conversation between the victim and the hotline is also a brief one of no more than 10-minutes length.

## SCENARIO 3

### VICTIM: Jessica Jones

It is 11 pm. Your 15 year old son (Alex) called the police when his stepfather (Jason, your husband) pushed Alex after Alex intervened in an argument between you and Jason. Jason had been drinking and was in your face, but did not get physical with you tonight. When the police came, he agreed to go to his brother's for the night, but you think he might come back after the police leave.

He has gotten physical with you in the past. The first time was about a year ago when you were pregnant with your infant daughter (who is also his daughter). He has choked you, shoved you and Alex, and has withheld medical assistance from you. He has several guns and has made threats to kill Alex in the past. He gets very jealous and is constantly checking your cell phone to see if you who you are texting and calling.

You cannot drive and do not have access to a vehicle, anyway. You have a small dog that Jason has also threatened to kill. Jason has kicked the dog in the past. You do not work and do not have much of a support network locally, especially since you had your daughter 6 months ago.

**If the advocate asks you, you want to go into short-term shelter.** You are not ready to leave Jason, but you do think you need a few days apart because you don't know how he will react to the police intervention. You want to bring the dog with you because you think Jason may harm the dog in your absence.

**Do not offer information about your son or your mobility impairments unless it comes up naturally in conversation.**

You do not think the abuse is your fault, but you also do not think it is very serious. You explain it away by saying of course Jason gets frustrated — he is putting up with a teenage stepson, a crying infant, and a dependent wife. It's natural for him to get frustrated sometimes. You have not thought seriously about leaving the relationship. In general, you are very polite, agreeable, and deferential.

## SCENARIO 4 ADVOCATE

It is 3 am and you received a hotline call from City Police. Officer Smith said the victim (Dennis Davis) answered yes to 1 and 2, and declined to answer any of the other questions. His boyfriend (Albert) hit his hands with a hammer. He is being arrested tonight. Dennis declined any medical treatment.

Dennis agreed to answer the phone before Officer Smith called, and Officer Smith just handed him the phone

### Remember the Guidelines!

#### **Build Rapport**

*Thank you for speaking with me. I understand this is a stressful night.*

#### **Explain your services**

Remember to mention the confidentiality policy in easy to understand language.

#### **Reiterate Danger**

*I'm really concerned for your safety after hearing what Officer Smith told me. Officer Smith may have already told you, but I want to make sure you know that people in your situation have been killed. I want to make sure you are going to be okay.*

#### **Provide Education and Safety Plan**

Explain that the abuse is not the victim's fault, is an issue of control, and is recurring and will become worse and more frequent. Focus your statements on the abuser's accountability.

*He made the choice to react that way. There isn't anything you could have done that would justify him reacting that way.*

#### **Encourage Dennis to Come in for Services**

Is there shelter space? Is Dennis eligible? Keep in mind that Albert may be released in just a few hours.

#### **Conclude the Call:**

Validate the victim's feelings. Confirm a plan. Ask for permission to convey the plan to the officer. If given permission, tell the officer the plan, confirm the victim has your number, thank the officer.

### Key Feature of Conversation | BREVITY

The conversation is very brief, mostly providing the hotline with basic information about the case. The conversation between the victim and the hotline is also a brief one of no more than 10-minutes length.

## SCENARIO 4

### VICTIM: Dennis Davis

It is 3 am. You called the police after you got into an argument with your live-in boyfriend, Albert, and he swung at you with a hammer. He hit your hands with the hammer (when you put your hands up to block your face), but you don't think anything is broken and do not want to go to the hospital.

Albert is being arrested tonight. You are ready to break up with him and consider the relationship over. He has been violent in the past, but you do not take it seriously because you never need medical attention. Nevertheless, every time you get in an argument, he will hit, push, or slap you. He has thrown objects at you in the past, but this is the first time he has hit you with an object.

You are not concerned about your safety because he has been arrested. You are the lease-holder and you've decided you are kicking him out of your apartment (that is what you were fighting over). While this has been happening, you've been thinking about how you could drop his belongings off at his mother's house while he is in jail.

You do not want any services from the advocate. You are polite, and open to hearing what the advocate has to say, but you do not think that you are in danger, especially since Albert has been arrested. You think there is no point to a safety plan since he is in jail.

That said, you are not sure whether you want to press charges. You think that he understands the relationship is over now and you are not afraid of retaliation. You do not want to make a big deal of this or have other people think you are abused. You are embarrassed to be speaking to a domestic violence hotline and do not consider yourself a victim.

If the advocate brings it up, you may be interested in legal assistance. It might be worth it to talk to someone about how long Albert might be in jail before making bail, what your rights are in the prosecution, and whether you are legally allowed to kick him out of the house. **Do not mention any of this unless the advocate brings it up! You are not interested in a legal advocate/legal assistance if the advocate only mentions it as assistance with a restraining order. You do not want to file a restraining order.**

**You do not give permission for the advocate to follow up with you and you will not make any appointments, unless the appointment is about your legal rights.**

