

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, *and* SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS



Importance for Adult and Child Survivors of Domestic Violence

Healthy social, cultural, and spiritual connections can help reduce the isolation and negative effects of domestic violence because they provide survivors with emotional support, help, guidance, and concrete resources. Strong, positive connections help adult and child survivors to have feelings of trust, hope, faith, and a belief that they matter.

Overall Role of Practitioners

Practitioners can foster survivors' connections with caring and dependable family members, friends, neighbors, organizations, or faith communities so they can strengthen or build a healthy support network.

Examples of How Practitioners Can Help

1. Be authentic, compassionate and respectful to build your own relationship with adult and child survivors.
 2. Explore with survivors how they can connect with others to access services, resources, and opportunities (e.g., relatives or friends who can provide child care; social or cultural groups they can turn to for help).
 - Identify a strategy or a trusted person to help a survivor to overcome any internal (e.g., shame, lack of energy) or external (e.g., transportation, financial resources) challenges that prevent them from connecting with others to get what they need.
3. Facilitate survivors' access to DV and parenting support groups, playgroups, recovery groups, and other support services for parents and children, either in the community or online.
 - Provide information about culturally and linguistically responsive groups.
 - Address needs such as internet access to make group participation or individual services possible.
 - Go the extra mile by sitting with a survivor to make a phone call, accompanying them to a first appointment or meeting, or identifying a specific individual at a program with whom they can connect.

4. Foster stable and positive friendships and relationships for children (e.g., placing siblings with a family member if they are removed from the care of their parent; paying for after-school programming; suggesting on-line activities and games for a child with their peers or supportive adults, etc.).
5. Provide survivors' friends and family with information on how to support a loved one experiencing domestic violence and give them information about how they can also care for themselves.
6. Engage community allies—such as faith leaders and school personnel—to provide meaningful support and resources to adult and child survivors.

“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

Alexander Den Heijer



Advancing an Adult & Child Survivor-Centered Approach

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Examples of Questions to Ask Survivors

1. Who do you turn to when you need help? How do they help you?
2. What organizations or groups do you feel connected or close to?
 - What is it about that organization or group that makes you feel connected or close to them?
 - How do they help you?
3. How can your social network help you to address the challenges you’re faced with?
 - What can I do to help you engage your network?
4. What role does spirituality or religion play in your life?
 - How does your spirituality or religion help you?
5. In what ways have you separated yourself from people or conditions that have had a negative impact on you or your child?
 - What helped you to do that?

This is part of a series of Practice Tips on Protective Factors for Adult and Child Survivors of Domestic Violence. Find the others here: <https://dvchildwelfare.org/resources/protective-factors-practice-tips/>