



STREE MANORAKSHA TRAINING

Joint Meeting to Negotiate for Non-Violence





Learning objectives

- To understand the objective of a joint meeting.
- Guiding principles for conducting joint meetings.
- Process of negotiation for non-violence.
- To understand the impact of violence on children and safeguarding them.



What to do in Joint Meeting?

Remember that...

- We must remember the meetings **are not reconciliations.**
- The meeting should equip the woman to go back on her terms. A detailed homework is necessary before we go in for such joint meetings.
- Women may express urgency to get their husbands being called and given advise to change violent behaviour.
- While calling for such meetings, it is pertinent that certain guidelines be followed.
- The purpose of these meetings is negotiation for non-violence.

Remember that...

- Joint Meeting provides a common platform for the woman facing violence and the perpetrator to openly talk about the issues, with the purpose of sorting out the problem situation.
- The joint meeting is the most appropriate time for the counsellor to question the abuser and reflect on his actions in a non-threatening manner.

Remember that...

- The counsellor at the outset must believe in the woman and not judge whether she is right or wrong. Even if it appears “to be a woman’s fault” violence is non-negotiable.
- If either of the partner is not consenting, defensive or lacks insight and motivation to change, joint meeting will not be initiated.
- We need to focus on **RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE , MUTUAL RESPECT , DEMOCRATIC MANNER** as the only way to deal with issues. **NOT VIOLENCE**

Steps for Preparing Woman for the Joint Meeting

- Telling the woman that the counsellor is on her side and trusts her completely, can help her to stay calm and confident.
- The counsellor will not get in to who was right or wrong, as the focus of the meeting is to state that beating her or abusing her is unacceptable.
- The counsellor should seek a detailed account of the woman's narration pertaining to violence.

Steps for Preparing Woman for the Joint Meeting

- Questions such as whom does she want the joint meeting with, has such an effort been made in the past, what was the outcome of those meeting need discussion.
- The counsellor needs to be aware of the aspects that need to be covered in the joint meeting.
- Counsellor should enlist all the points of conflicts by talking to woman.

Steps for Preparing Woman for the Joint Meeting

- Counsellors should carefully note all the main non-negotiables as expressed by the woman.
- Counsellors should be able to ensure that the woman's safety and concerns are not jeopardized.
- Preparing the woman to put her points across in a non-threatening manner is most useful. This process itself builds her confidence.

How to Conduct a Joint Meeting?

Joint Meeting needs to be a **common platform** for the woman and the perpetrator (husband/partner) to openly talk about the issues which each one has with the other in the presence of the counsellor, with the focus being **negotiating for non violence** and **not reconciliation**.

- Meeting should start with an introduction of the counsellors, the staff of OSC.
- The rules and objective of the meeting should be explained.
- It is good practice to allow the perpetrator talk first (in the joint meeting).

How to Conduct a Joint Meeting?

- It should be communicated to the perpetrators that the purpose of the joint meeting is to end violence.
- Counsellor should appreciate the perpetrator for coming for the joint meeting as that indicates that he is interested in continuing the relationship.
- The counsellor should not threaten/intimidate the abuser/perpetrator with force/authority.
- However, it is important to educate the perpetrator about the implications of violence.

How to Conduct a Joint Meeting?

- If the abuser and the woman is able to arrive at a consensus, joint statement with detailed conditions must be documented.
- It is useful to get the concerned persons' signature.
- If the meetings fail, it is still important to record the points and get the signatures of the concerned persons.

Scenario 1:

Najma is married to Alam for 5 years. In the past few years, they have been experiencing financial difficulty due to the lockdown. Alam has also started drinking a lot more since then. "Once he starts drinking, he doesn't stop", she says.

There have been multiple instances when Alam got angry and hit Najma, she has got many bruises and constantly remains scared whenever he comes home intoxicated.

Najma is extremely distressed and wants her husband to behave respectfully. She comes to the OSC centre hoping that her husband can be spoken to.



Preparing the Woman for Joint Meeting

- Enable Najma to express her feelings, anger, and disappointment towards Alam.
- Validating her feelings, her fear.
- Explaining to her that his behaviour is unacceptable and how the substance is used as an unhealthy way of coping.
- Helping her cope with her own anxiety and fear about her husband as well as finances.
- Assure her that the meeting can be organised but he may not agree to come.
- Helping Najma to have realistic expectations from her relationship with her husband.

Joint Meeting Objectives

- Providing a space for Najma to express herself, especially the impact of drinking.
- Providing a space for Alam to express his worries about finances and his understanding of drinking behaviour.
- Discussing how Alam feels when he is violent towards Najma.
- Discussing the impact of violence on Najma.
- Recommending Alam get treatment for alcohol dependency
- If Cooperative: Helping the couple develop a contract with certain ground rules. E.g. Alam shouldn't drink at home, Najma should not react/taunt him when Alam comes home drunk, and should leave him be.
- Highlighting how violence in any form and context is not acceptable and needs to stop immediately

In case of violence or escalation, Najma needs to leave home and go to a safe space. Alam needs to work on ways to deal with his anger. Etc



Scenario 2:

Mamta, a 25yr old, was married off at an early age. She didn't feel ready but was married due to economic issues in her family. Her husband is aged 40, he belongs to an upper-middle-class family. Her husband is quite involved in himself and provides Mamta with all the materialistic comfort.

Recently Mamta found out about his extra-marital relationship. She was extremely hurt and devastated. Her husband is expecting her to accept the extra-marital relationship and states that he wishes to live with his girlfriend. He has threatened her that if she is not agreeing to the living arrangement, he will no longer provide her or her children financially.

Mamta is worried about her and her children's future. She wants the counsellor to conduct a joint meeting.

However, she mentions that her husband is very hesitant to talk to anyone. He has dismissed conversations with family, community etc. He won't change his mind.



Intervention

- Enable her to express her feelings - anger, despair, feeling betrayal and validate her feelings.
- Emphasising that it's not her fault. Explaining to her that these situations are really out of one's control.
- Understanding what she wishes to do, and what are her expectations.
- Mentioning that Forcefully living in the same house – CAN escalate violence –PUT her and her children at RISK – Physical and psychological.
- Assure her that Meeting can be organised – but HE may not agree to live with her.
- Think through demands to make her and her children's life comfortable.
- Negotiate and facilitate economic support to children, school fees and title of the 2nd house in her name.
- Focusing on her growth, development, and future. Helping her feel satisfied with her life.



Dos	Don'ts
Believe in the woman & Take a stand against violence	Adjusting/ compromising does not STOP violence. If this is done- purpose of stopping violence is defeated
Introduce OSC team and explain purpose of the meeting. Explain rules of the meeting. Each person will be given a chance to speak	Do not let entire extended family be a part of the joint meeting. Keep to minimum number on both sides to avoid disruption
Prepare her to speak in the meeting without getting angry/upset	
Communicate clearly to the woman that you are on her side	Do not threaten the abuser with use of force
Documentation of the meeting should state that verbal, physical , sexual and economic abuse against woman must stop immediately .	Do not say that - “ she should obey husband, she should not visit her parents or call them, she should not speak with her friends”
Provide a copy of the documentation to both parties	© Project Stree Manoraksha, NIMHANS



SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Joint meetings **DON'T** always work. They work **ONLY** if abuser/ **FAMILY** is **WILLING** to change **BEHAVIOUR**.
- Women should be **INFORMED** of limitations of joint meeting . **ALTERNATIVES** must be thought of **BEFORE HAND**
- When **ABUSER** turns up at **OSC** without **PRIOR** notice – **RESPECTFULLY COMMUNICATE THAT JOINT MEETING CANNOT HAPPEN RIGHT AWAY.**
- Woman is yet to develop a concrete plan with **OSC** of her expectations – in such times **JOINT MEETING** is not useful.



Working with the perpetrator

- Individual sessions are advised.
- Check for the reason of violence towards his partner.
- Refer for mental health support, if violence is a result of mental health issues.
- Educate about legal complications, if violence is a result of social causes.

How to provide family support to women facing violence?

- Involve the family in healing process if the client consents.
- Discuss with the family about the importance of support from the near and dear ones.
- Believe the woman when she shares the problem.

How to provide family support to women facing violence?

- Educate about being emotionally supportive and not to blame the woman.
- Assuring the woman and promising support from the family.
- Provide instrumental and monetary support for the woman.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



Impact of violence on children

- Exposure to violence can have large impact on children.
- Children model their parents and witnessing violence may result in normalizing violence.
- Exposure to violence is distressing to children and can manifest in different ways.

Impact of violence on children

Internalising Symptoms	Externalising Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fearfulness• Social Withdrawal• Anxiety• Depression• Somatic Complaints• Bedwetting• Poor academic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substance Use• Anger outbursts• Anti-social behaviours• Poor Self-esteem• Difficulty in peer relationships• Temper tantrums

Safeguarding children

- Children from violent households are at risk of developing mental health problems.
- Discuss safety planning.



Safeguarding children

- Separation of child/children from the violent environment to be considered :
 - When all other means of safety. have been considered and offered.
 - Child is at imminent risk.
 - When victim is unable to protect the child.

Safeguarding children

- Contact Child line/ Child Welfare Committee if you are concerned about the child's safety.
- Teach the child about what to do during crisis.
- Help the child identify his/her safety places.

Thank you

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Presentation prepared by:

Minnu Elsa Abraham, Devanshi Goradia (Project Trainer)

Sampurna Chakraborty (Project Manager)

Madhuri H.N (Assistant Professor, Project)

Veena Satyanaryana (Additional Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, Co-Principal Investigator, Project)

Prabha S Chandra (Professor of Psychiatry, Principal Investigator, Project)

Project Stree Manoraksha

