

Appendix 4

Victim assessment checklist

Procedure for selecting victim participants

This document should be used to guide the decision to offer a place on a Building Bridges programme to a victim participant and to provide more information about the programme so that the victim can make an informed decision about their participation. The victim participant and a Building Bridges facilitator/coordinator should work through the document together in a private meeting in advance of the programme and before the victim's participation in the programme is confirmed. The selection process can be undertaken by a programme coordinator or a programme facilitator and the terms are used interchangeably throughout this document.

Crime affects people in many different ways and revisiting painful experiences can potentially cause unnecessary harm to individuals. Therefore, coordinators of Building Bridges programmes have a duty to ensure that victim participants are well-prepared for the programme and that their motivation for participation fits well with the restorative goals of Building Bridges.

This document makes use of the 'Impact of Events Scale-Revised' (Weiss and Marmar, 1996) to inform decision-making. The scale is not a diagnostic tool for any clinical or sub-clinical psychiatric disorders, nor should it be used as such. There is no 'cut-off' score for suitable participants. The questions are designed to guide the decision about the suitability of a participant rather than make the decision for the facilitator.

The meeting consists of two stages: an introduction to Building Bridges and the victim screening.

Guidance

The checklist should be completed with every victim before their first participation in a Building Bridges programme.

The checklist should be completed by a Building Bridges facilitator or coordinator in the presence of the victim participant.

The checklist should be completed in a comfortable, private setting.

Only the checklist should be used to record the meeting.

Once the document has been completed it should be stored securely in a lockable cabinet.

The coordinator should be aware that the checklist refers to topics that may be upsetting to the participant. Care should be taken to ensure that any upset that is experienced by the participant is managed sensitively and that all efforts should be taken to minimise any harm from the meeting.



Participant details

Name

Age (years)

Gender

Please note, the Building Bridges programme is designed for adults only. If the participant indicates that they are less than 18 years of age, stop the meeting immediately.

Introduction to Building Bridges

All of the following topics should be discussed and opportunities for the participants to raise questions should be offered.

Once a topic has been discussed, it should be ticked (✓)

Facilitator explained what is the **purpose** of Building Bridges and ensures that the explanation was well understood by the interviewee

Facilitator explained what is the **expected role** of a 'victim' participant?

Facilitator explained what **can and cannot be achieved by the programme**

Facilitator explained how the programme sessions are **structured** and where they will take place

Facilitator explained the **time and resource commitment** required from victim participants

Facilitator explained the **emotional commitment** required from victim participants

Victim screening

This screening consists of two parts: (1) an open discussion with the victim about their experience of victimisation and (2) the Impact of Events Scale.

1. Victim's experience of victimization

The first part should be a free conversation with the participant about the crime they experienced. The aim of this discussion is not to assess any state of emotional distress but to gain an understanding of the motivations of the individual for taking part in Building Bridges. The value of the programme for victims can be enhanced by a facilitator who understands the background to a victim's story.

The facilitator should begin by asking the participant to describe their experience of crime or crimes. There is no fixed direction that the discussion should take, but the following issues should be addressed:

Any physical impact of the crime	
Any emotional impact of the crime	
Any changes in behavior as a result of the crime	
Any changes about their view of the world as a result of the crime	
The participant's motivation to take part in the programme	
What the participant hopes to achieve from the programme	
What does the participant think are the motivations of the offenders who take part in Building Bridges?	
If the participant could meet the person who offended against them, are there questions they would ask them?	
Does the participant have any fears or worries about meeting an offender?	

2. Impact of Events Scale- Revised

The participant should read the following paragraphs and complete the scale in private. The scores should be totalled by the facilitator.

Below is a list of difficulties people sometimes have after stressful life events.

Please read each item, and then indicate how distressing each difficulty has been for you DURING THE PAST SEVEN DAYS with respect to (your problem), how much were you distressed or bothered by these difficulties? This assessment is not intended to be a diagnosis. If you are concerned about your results in any way, please speak with a health professional.

Each item should be scored from 0 to 4 with the scores corresponding to the extent of distress

0 = Not at all 1 = A little bit 2 = Moderately 3 = Quite a bit 4 = Extremely

	Score (0-4)
Any reminder brought back feelings about it	
I had trouble staying asleep	
Other things kept making me think about it	
I felt irritable and angry	
I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it	
I thought about it when I didn't mean to	
I felt as if it hadn't happened or wasn't real	
I stayed away from reminders about it	
Pictures about it popped into my mind	
I was jumpy and easily startled	
I tried not to think about it	

I was aware that I still had a lot of feelings about it, but I didn't deal with them	
My feelings about it were kind of numb	
I found myself acting or feeling like I was back at that time	
I had trouble falling asleep	
I had waves of strong feelings about it	
I tried to remove it from my memory	
I had trouble concentrating	
Reminders of it caused me to have physical reactions, such as sweating, trouble breathing, nausea, or a pounding heart	
I had dreams about it	
I felt watchful and on guard	
I tried not to talk about it	
Total score	

Interpretation of scores

A score of 20 or more may make a participant to harm by taking part in the programme. This is an arbitrary cut-off point informed by the fact that a score of score of 24 or more suggests Post-traumatic stress disorder is a clinical concern. If a participant scores 24 or more, you should advise them of this and suggest that they inform their doctor. This should be done with the utmost care and caution, recognising that this is not a diagnostic tool but a screening instrument. If possible, you should be able to provide access to information regarding post-traumatic stress disorder and the contact details for a local victim support agency.