

Risk assessment and risk management by police

Principle 2. Introducing an individualised approach to risk management

Expected result: Police officers take into consideration individual characteristics such as race, disability, age, religion, immigration status, ethnicity and sexual orientation, and implement interventions aimed at preventing victims' secondary victimisation.

Recommendations for improving individualised approaches to risk management

Adopt internal policies and learning strategies that challenge institutional sexism, racism and other stereotyping.

Monitor the effectiveness and impact of risk management strategies for diverse groups.

Reflect victims' individual characteristics in risk management strategies.

Reflect perpetrators' individual characteristics in risk management strategies.

Reflect children's specific experiences and needs in risk management strategies.

An individualised assessment and risk management process helps to prevent services from exposing women and children to service-generated risks (109). Managing risk should include taking action in response to the perpetrator's specific tactics and behaviours, as well as addressing the victim's particular safety needs, for maximum improvements in both safety and accountability. An individualised approach also enables more efficient and appropriate use of system resources.

Applying an individualised approach promotes policing responses that are more appropriate and effective for all female victims of intimate partner violence. Improvement of risk management requires police to routinely and comprehensively identify the needs of victims and to understand how these may vary according to their individual characteristics, such as race, disability, age, religion, immigration status, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Victim participation in identifying and prioritising needs is essential in individualised assessment and risk management processes. Police should monitor the relevance of risk management strategies for diverse victims to determine if and how local and national risk management procedures and practices need to be changed. Adopting internal policies and learning strategies that challenge institutional sexism (110), racism and other stereotyping can facilitate this process.

To this end, police should work in partnership with community-based specialised women's services (e.g. advocacy services for migrant women) to access appropriate expertise, as well as to gather feedback about their performance directly from victims.

Police should also consider the individual characteristics of the perpetrator in order to implement the most appropriate perpetrator-focused risk management interventions (111).

Finally, police should consider using a specific risk management approach for children that reflects their particular needs and experiences. Police could work with local victim services, children's rights organisations and/or statutory child protection departments to agree protocols for risk management for children. A number of models for responding to child victims are available: for example, police might use the domestic violence risk assessment for children (112) or the safe and together approaches (113).