

Policy development tips for digitalized services in sexual assault centres

Avoid confusion

- Define tech terms so everyone's on the same page

Work with what you know

- Adapt existing policies:
 - Telephone crisis line
 - Record keeping
 - Managing abusive people

Understand how the digitalized service is different from other services

Consider:

- Data management
- Safety of support seekers and staff
- Requirements for staff

Manage data

- What data does the technology collect?
- How is the data managed?
 - By vendor: Read their privacy policy
 - Internally: Review settings, establish procedures

Identify critical connection points:

- Establishing support seeker consent
- Establishing support seeker identity
- When a support seeker is in immediate danger
- When a support seeker stops responding
- Maintaining boundaries
- When someone is abusive

Engage staff

- Ensure everyone understands legal obligations
- Learn about challenges and concerns
- Identify privacy and safety issues
- Establish how to use the tech efficiently and safely
- Train everyone on policies and procedures

Avoid the use of personal devices

- Using workplace devices only:
 - Improves management of support seekers' information

- Enhances staff and support seeker safety
- Supports work/personal boundaries
- Is more equitable for all staff

Revisit policies when the tech changes (and it will!)

This resource was created in 2023 by Paula Wansbrough for PRIMAL GLOW Communications on behalf of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC). It is another component of the OCRCC's Preventing Gender-Based Violence Program - Using Technology to Better Support Survivors in Frontline Settings, funded by Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Office of Women's Issues, Ontario.