



Database Considerations for Canadian Anti-Violence Organizations: Handout

Before purchasing a database for the storage of women, children and youth's personal information, it is recommended that anti-violence organizations clearly assess the five key themes below.

NECESSITY

What problem is your anti-violence organization trying to solve with a database? Is a database really the answer? For example, is your organization trying to assess gaps of service? Is there another way to get the information you need?

FUNCTIONALITY

Is the database you choose user friendly? Has your anti-violence organization allocated sufficient money, resources and staffing to keep the database up to date and useful? Has the organization allocated funding and staff time to conduct annual privacy assessments? Has the organization allocated sufficient resources for training existing and new staff, and for providing ongoing technical support?

PRIVACY AND SAFETY

What privacy laws apply? Who will have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that confidential personally identifiable information is protected? Is there a designated privacy officer within the organization? Do users sign documents acknowledging their responsibilities for protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable information, such as a confidentiality agreement or an employment agreement with confidentiality provisions? Are these incorporated into the anti-violence organization's policies?

SERVICE RECIPIENT INFORMATION

What factors will be used in establishing collection, modification, use and disclosure procedures for identifiable data? Are women, children and youth informed about the security and data sharing policy? What is the process for residents and/or organization participants to opt-out, inspect, withdraw or correct their data/records? How will anti-violence organizations inform women, children and youth about this process? How will they ensure that the data is completely gone if a service recipient opts-out of having her personal information collected in a database?

COST

Has the anti-violence organization priced multiple options and received at least two bids for the project? Has the organization done a cost-benefit analysis to assess the balance between ongoing costs and



ultimate benefits? Has the anti-violence organization designated appropriate funds for the project? While modest expenses for outcomes measurements are part of any grant, a direct services grant should primarily fund services and not outcomes measurement.

The BC Society of Transition Houses has prepared a Database Vendor Questionnaire for Canadian Anti-Violence Organizations. This questionnaire will assist organizations to assess the privacy benefits and risks of potential databases. Find a copy of this questionnaire here <https://bcsth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Database-Vendor-Questionnaire-for-Canadian-Anti-Violence-Organizations.pdf>

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Adapted from and in cooperation with the Safety Net Technology Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence, United States

This project has been funded by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC); the views expressed herein are those of the BC Society of Transition Houses and do not necessarily reflect those of the OPC.