Appropriate Attitudes

Survivors are never responsible for the violence they experience. The use of violence is always a choice made by perpetrators. This is an important tenet of case management practice; however, for participants who are new to GBV work in general and case management in particular, this may take some time to fully understand and assimilate, as many individuals will come to the work with preconceptions of blame attached to survivors of violence.

Attitudes relating to violence and survivors are deep and pervasive in most societies. As we are members of our societies we need to look deeply at our beliefs and challenge ourselves.

Power is a central element of gender-based violence, and is also present in all relationships – including a caseworker’s relationship with a survivor.

We all bring our own attitudes and beliefs to this work, and some of these attitudes may be harmful to survivors without our knowing it. It is important to recognize and begin to challenge our own attitudes.

Survivor-blaming is common in many communities, and is something that we must actively strive to avoid and counter in our work with survivors.

There are power relationships inherent in our work with survivors, and we must strive to develop relationships of power with rather than power over.

Survivor-centered attitudes involve putting the best interests of the survivor first, ensuring that all work is based on what the survivors want and needs rather than our own opinion of what s/he wants and needs.