

CHAPTER 8

SCHOOLS

- 8.1 School personnel's assistance in protecting the student's safety is important. However, a student may not take the initiative to disclose intimate partner violence problem in his / her family. School personnel are advised to be sensitive to the traits manifested by the student or his / her parents and identify the problem as early as possible by making reference to paragraphs 1.7 to 1.10 in this Guide. They should, as far as possible, provide emotional support and assistance to students who are affected by such violence in family.

REFERRAL FOR SERVICES

- 8.2 When school personnel e.g. the principal, teacher, student guidance personnel, etc. identifies any intimate partner violence case, referral should be made to the school social worker, where applicable, or consult / refer the victim, with his / her consent, to the Family and Child Protective Services Units of Social Welfare Department (SWD), or Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) / Integrated Services Centres (ISCs) of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) listed in **Appendix XIX** (a sample of referral letter is at **Appendix XI**) with the victim's consent at the earliest possible time. To ensure that prompt action will be taken by the receiving end, there should be prior discussion between the referrer and the concerned social worker.
- 8.3 Some victims may decline the social service introduced simply out of worry and misunderstanding about related procedures, e.g. fear of personal information being disclosed, reluctance to relay the incident to different persons, etc., the school personnel should give assurance to the victim to address the victim's concerns as far as possible. If the victim still insists not to receive any social service, the school personnel should (i) remind him / her that he / she should have taken care of the safety of himself / herself and other family members e.g. the children; (ii) provide information to contact SWD or other agencies in the future if he / she needs to. Continuous attention should also be paid to the concerned student so that deterioration of his / her family problems can be detected and the victim can be advised again to receive service when necessary.
- 8.4 As the problem of intimate partner violence may have impact on the children of the family, school personnel should safeguard the well-being of the students if the intimate partner violence problem is also known to the school. It is important that school can identify signs and symptoms of risks of affected students and provide them with emotional support and assistance. School personnel should keep the information of such incidents private and

confidential and avoid disturbance caused to the students affected by asking details about such incidents, in particular, in public area. For the ultimate well-being of the students, school personnel should work closely with the responsible social worker and maintain communication with the victim parent or workers of shelter (if any) to ensure a co-ordinated safety and welfare plan for individual students concerned.

- 8.5 In case child abuse is suspected, the “Procedural Guide for Handling Child Abuse Cases (Revise 2007)” should be complied with. For cases involving intimate partner suffering from sexual violence, or with elder victims, reference should also be made to the “Procedural Guidelines for Handling Adult Sexual Violence Cases (Revised 2007)” and “Procedural Guidelines for Handling Elder Abuse Cases (Revised August 2006)” respectively.