

MARISSA – Multi-agency approach to support victims of intimate partner violence with substance abuse issues

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WP4 – Replication Guidelines

University of Tartu



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What is this document, and how to use it?

MARISSA Replication Guidelines have been created within the MARISSA project – Multi-Agency approach to support victims of Intimate partner violence with Substances Abuse Issues (<http://marissaproject.gr/>). The project was funded by the European Union to address the phenomenon of co-occurring Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) victimisation and Problematic Substance Use (PSU). The project was initiated because existing victim support programmes are often ill-equipped to properly support addicted victims of IPV. This is in part because the two elements (IPV and addiction) are often treated separately, instead of being approached under a common protocol. To help overcome this, MARISSA sought to develop practical tools and training materials that could be used by professionals to provide collaborative services for women with co-occurring IPV victimisation and PSU. The MARISSA project has also sought to implement strong awareness raising activities to inform stakeholders, victims and the general public about the topic, the project and our results.

This Guideline introduces the MARISSA intervention tools and training materials. It also gives guidance on how to implement them in different operating environments, both inside our partner countries (Greece, Estonia and Iceland) and in other countries in Europe. It is important to note that during the project, partners also conducted a **needs assessment**, surveying professionals working in the IPV support and PSU treatment fields, to understand what their profile was and where some of the gaps were in terms of expertise. MARISSA partners also carried out continuous **stakeholder engagement** from the start of the project, informing IPV/PSU professionals, policy makers and others about the project activities. Based upon this, MARISSA partners also produced **policy recommendations** on how to improve the operating environment for IPV/PSU professionals. For organizations seeking make use of our outputs in Greece, Iceland or Estonia, these outputs can be found on the MARISSA website (<http://marissaproject.gr/results/>). For organizations in other countries, while these are not required to implement MARRISSA intervention tools and learning materials in other regions, they would be valuable activities to undertake, to improve the effectiveness of such activities.



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Chapter 1: MARISSA Project Partners

MARISSA is an international project funded by the European Union and implemented during 2020 – 2022. Six organisations from 3 European countries developed and implemented practical multi-agency tools and capacity building material on the topic, to build the capacity of professionals so they can offer better services for women with co-occurring IPV victimisation and PSU. The 6 partners include:

Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH, Greece) is focused on the promotion of women's rights and gender equality and is member of the EUROCHILD Network. Since 2015, UWAH has a permanent collaboration with Secondary Schools Educational Authorities in Heraklion and runs structured interventions at high schools to educate teenagers on gender violence and stereotypes. UWAH has participated and led several EU and EEA projects.

Women's Support and Information Centre (WSIC, Estonia) has over 20 years developed extensive expertise in gender-based violence issues, in particular intimate partner violence. WSIC opened the first women's shelter ever in Estonia and organises workshops for children on domestic violence, cyberviolence and related topics in collaboration with local authorities. WSIC has participated in 16 different international collaboration projects since 2006, including 6 funded by the EU DG for Justice.

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies at University of Tartu (UTARTU, Estonia) is the leading political science institute in Estonia. The institute conducts policy analysis, academic and applied research in a range of domains, including those based on gender-based violence. The group also has extensive experience in the evaluation of GBV interventions and has conducted research on gender-based violence in Estonia. Since 2016 Skytte has participated in 10 international projects related to GBV.

University of Crete, Department of Psychology (UoC, Greece) has participated in numerous European Projects on Health Promotion, Prevention of Victimization, Counselling Skills Training, etc. UoC also runs a Counselling Centre to provide psychological sessions and workshops on counselling skills. In collaboration with OKANA, UoC runs the MSc in "Clinical Interventions in Addictions", which provides postgraduate education and training using psychological, biological and ecological approaches in considering drug abuse and, and its effective prevention and treatment.

University of Iceland, Institute for Gender, Equality and Difference (RIKK, Iceland) Founded in 1991, RIKK has been a leading institution in the field of women's, gender and equality research in Iceland. RIKK promotes interdisciplinary gender research and the dissemination of research results and information. RIKK also serves in an advisory capacity to government and civil society bodies.



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Rótin - félag um málefni kvenna með áfengis- og fíknivanda (ROOT, Iceland) offers lectures on women with substance use related problems, has organized conferences on the subject, as well as symposiums and other events. Moreover, it offers treatment courses to women with substance use and trauma histories, and self-help groups and has also developed short courses for women with a history of sexual violence.



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Chapter 2: MARISSA Methodology

Methodology

MARISSA focused on building the capacity of social care professionals from Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Problematic Substance Use treatment (PSU) organisations. This was done using a needs-based approach, starting with an investigation of the needs and challenges faced by professionals as expressed by them. The needs analysis was the basis for the development of project results described in this guideline.

MARISSA followed a multi-agency approach to achieve the expected results. Based on the identified need for coordinated responses in the field of co-treatment of IPV and PSU, MARISSA sought to act as a starting point for multi-agency collaboration between IPV and PSU organisations. Mutual activities were carried out to promote cooperation in the field. Through this cooperation, common interventions tools were developed that could be used by professionals to identify, document and structure services to women with co-occurring IPV and PSU. Partners also developed training materials that would be applicable to professionals working in both fields.

Last but not least, the project methodology was based on a transnational approach. Vulnerability of IPV victims with PSU is a challenge that affects all European societies. The project thus brought together organizations operating throughout Europe, in a transnational effort to address this challenge. The participating countries – Greece, Iceland, and Estonia - were selected as they represent very different European societies, with variant levels of integration of gender equality policies and approaches on IPV and PSU treatment. MARISSA capitalized on the diverse and complementary competencies of the partners to develop training and intervention tools that address the needs of professionals and is applicable in widely different socioeconomic contexts. Evaluation activities were also integrated into the project to assess the appropriateness of tools and materials developed.

Target Groups

The primary target group of MARISSA were professionals in social care, especially in IPV and PSU organizations. The project addressed gaps that exist in their knowledge and awareness of the unique characteristics of co-occurring IPV and PSU. This includes understanding the underlying causes of both and how they can impact upon treatment/support outcomes. MARISSA also sought to guide professionals on what actions to take when confronted with potential co-occurring clients. Training materials were supported by practical tools that could be used by professionals to assess, document and intervene with such clients while providing normal frontline services.



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In addition, relevant stakeholders (from IPV and PSU organizations, Healthcare organizations, Academia and Researchers, Policy makers) as well as actual victims and/or potential victims and the general public, were also included into project activities, to increase their knowledge and raise their awareness on the topic.

Objectives

The overall objective of MARISSA was to build the capacity of professionals and promote multi-agency collaboration between IPV and PSU organizations in order to provide coordinated solutions to address IPV victimization with co-occurring PSU problems. The specific objectives of the project can be described as follows:

- **Improvement of professionals' work-based skills at IPV and PSU settings.** A training manual was developed and tested during the project for the capacity building of professionals. Partners trained 116 professionals in the three participating countries.
- **Improvement of coordinated support services for women suffering from co-occurring IPV and PSU.** Although the link between IPV and PSU is well proven, there is a lack of coordinated practices in the field that the project tried to address. The project did not only develop tools to commonly use, but also brought together professionals from IPV and PSU to mutually engage in activities. In this sense, cooperation, exchanges, and multi-agency collaboration between PSU and IPV organizations was reinforced.
- **Promotion of innovative and coordinated intervention tools for victim support and substance abuse treatment programmes.** Common intervention tools (screening, referral and follow up forms) for professionals in IPV and PSU were developed and tested during the project. In addition to improving services for clients, the tools were intended to promote multi-agency collaboration on the topic. The tools were piloted in 3 IPV and 4 PSU settings (7 in total) in Greece, Estonia, and Iceland.
- **Raise awareness on the topic of challenging the co-occurring IPV victimization and SA problems among stakeholders and the general public in Europe.** The project reached nearly 40 000 people across Europe, using a wide range of in-person and online communication methods such as local workshops and events, website visitors, Facebook followers, e-newsletters and via partner websites.



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Chapter 3: MARISSA Training Manual

The MARISSA Training Manual is available in 4 European languages: English, Greek, Estonian, and Icelandic. It can be found on the MARISSA website: <http://marissaproject.gr/training-manuals-for-professionals-archive/>.

The manual is aimed at professionals, who will act as trainers for a mixed audience of IPV and PSU professionals, with the objective of building their capacity to treat co-occurring IPV and PSU in a cooperative manner. It contains theoretical information on the underlying causes and different dimension of both conditions. It also provides a range of practical exercises that can be used to explore participants understanding of the topic and provide practice in how best to respond to co-occurring IPV/PSU. The manual is comprised of an introduction and six modules that can be used all together in a unified training or can be used independently for covering one specific aspect of the topic. This flexibility has been built into the design so that training can be targeted on the specific gaps that exist within a particular group. This was considered important due to the wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences that professionals in this field have as well as the limited time their work allows for training activities. The six modules in the MARISSA Training manual include:

- 1. Module 1: What is PSU?**
- 2. Module 2: What is IPV?**
- 3. Module 3: Gender, Power, and their Link to IPV and PSU**
- 4. Module 4: Trauma, IPV Victimization and PSU Correlation,**
- 5. Module 5: Multi-Agency Collaboration**
- 6. Module 6: Screening, Risk Assessments, Referrals and Follow-up**

If being administered all together, it is recommended that the training be conducted by a team of trainers who have broad knowledge of or familiarity with the different subtopics. As the training is quite intense, incorporating both lecturing as well as facilitating of group exercises, it is easier to share the workload to ensure that facilitators are ready for each session.

Before conducting a training, all facilitators recommended should thoroughly review the entire manual to ensure that they are familiar with the overall content. Facilitators should study their specific modules as well, so that they can provide these presentations in their own words and not recite straight from the manual.

The facilitating team should know and be familiar with the venue where the training will be held. Some exercises require more space than others and moving within that

space and how to ensure this can take place or thinking of other ways to accomplish the exercise should be thought out before the actual training starts.

If there is more than one facilitator for the training, as we recommend, the team should ideally meet before the training to discuss the workshop/training objectives, content, exercises and handouts, methodologies, and the division of labour. The role of the facilitator is to maintain the structure of the group, contain and move the group process through each session, led by example by having appropriate boundaries and expressing and containing their feelings, and allowing the participants to have their own experiences of the group.

Before conducting lectures, it is a good idea to arrive early to the venue to prepare the space. Each module has associated slides, so there is a need for a projector. Some of the exercises require flipcharts, pens, etc. Some of the exercises also include handouts that need to be downloaded from the MARISSA website and printed out. Facilitators can of course add and subtract from the material provided in the manual, however it is advisable they should only do so after carefully considering the context of the specific training, to ensure that additional material is appropriate.

Chapter 4: MARISSA Intervention Tools

The MARISSA Intervention Tools are available in 4 European languages: English, Greek, Estonian, and Icelandic. They can be found on the MARISSA website: <http://marissaproject.gr/intervention-tools/>.

The Intervention Tools include a screening tool for professionals, to facilitate them identify the co-occurrence of IPV victimization and PSU, a referral form template and a follow-up form template. The Intervention tools are available in English, Greek, Estonian, and Icelandic. Each are briefly described below:

- **IPV/PSU Checklists for Multi-Agency Cooperation:**

These checklists can be used either by an IPV or PSU Agency to assess how well-oriented they are for basic and advanced level multi-agency cooperation. This should be done before pursuing such collaborative relationships. The checklists help to identify gaps that would need to be filled to ensure that the collaborations are as effective as possible. In this sense, they can be useful in helping to identify goals for improving this orientation over time. The checklist can be revisited in the future to determine how much progress has been made.

- **IPV Screening Tool:** To be used by PSU professionals with clients to facilitate the identification of co-occurring Intimate Partner Violence. Although not a full risk assessment, it can help to identify potentially serious harmful situations. Thus, it is worthwhile to use the tool as early as possible in the service process. Ideally, the tool would be used as a natural part of the intake process. This can also be used later, after trust has been established between the provider and client (but still as soon as possible).

- **PSU Screening Tool:** To be used by IPV professionals with clients to facilitate the identification of co-occurring Problematic Substance Use. It can also help to assess the extent and potential harm of substance use if screening has confirmed that the use is possibly problematic. A thorough assessment should ideally be done by a PSU professional after a referral. However, a basic assessment can be done by the IPV worker, to have some basic idea of how problematic the substance use is at the moment in time.

- **IPV/PSU Referral Form Templates:** Working with very different organisations/institutions can be challenging as they may have different philosophies, goals and working culture. This is complicated by the unique factors that are at play when treating an individual suffering from PSU or IPV. For example, the information needed to best serve an individual in either way is similar but not identical. Generally, the more information you give on a



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referral form the more effective response a service can provide, and it will also help to prevent inappropriate referrals. These referral templates help to capture much of the information that is most relevant, so it can be useful in helping professionals make effective referrals for needed IPV or PSU services. However, before referrals, it is best to have some understanding of how the organisation you are referring the client to operates – for example are there restrictions on the types of clients served (such as geographic or when children are present). It is expected that this template would be put into use only after potential IPV/PSU cases are identified using the screening tools described above. It is also helpful for the organization to first use the checklists.

- **Follow-up Guidance:** To be used with former clients who have been suffering from co-occurring IPV/PSU to assess how she is doing and determine if additional interventions or support is needed. It is assumed that follow-up will usually be done via telephone (although sometimes it will be in person also). It is suggested that such conversations will be informal. Because individuals might be in widely different situations, a strict set of questions are not identified. Rather, general guidance is provided.

Chapter 5: Additional MARISSA Outputs

Beyond the manual and intervention tools, several other MARISSA Outputs were produced in the project that may be useful to professionals working in our partner countries as well as the rest of Europe.

Review of existing data and analysis of existing interventions regarding IPV and PSU

In this document you can find the review of existing literature on co-occurrence of IPV and PSU, as well as a review on the existing interventions, tools, methods, material, and practices in Europe and beyond, regarding multi-agency cooperation between IPV and PSU organisations.

The review explored the existing literature and research on co-occurring Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Problematic Substance Use (PSU). It extensively reviewed the existing approaches, interventions, tools, methods, material, and practices in Europe and beyond, regarding the multi-agency cooperation between IPV and PSU services. The Review focuses on the following topics:

- Prevalence of IPV and PSU;
- Theories trying to explain IPV and PSU relationship;
- Current Situation of IPV and PSU;
- Recommendations for Interventions, Services and Policies;
- Multi-agency co-operation between IPV and PSU services and good practices of multi-agency co-operation of IPV and PSU services.

Moreover, the project partners (Estonia, Iceland, and Greece) provided specific information about their countries (policy, legislation, services) regarding the topic of co-occurring IPV and PSU. **The primary outcome of this analysis was that Estonia and Greece are more similar in terms of their existing infrastructure for multi-agency cooperation. At the same time, Iceland already has developed a clearer infrastructure in place that needs further reinforcement and facilitation.**

<http://marissaproject.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/n1.pdf>



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Analysis of the perspectives of IPV/PSU Professionals in Greece, Estonia and Iceland

In this document you can read about the results emerged from Focus Groups activities conducted with professionals in IPV and PSU in Greece, Estonia, and Iceland. The focus groups were aimed at identifying the knowledge, needs and challenges that professionals face in their work when there is co-occurrence of IPV victimization and PSU.

In order to identify IPV and PSU professionals' knowledge, needs and challenges in their work when there is co-occurrence of IPV victimisation and PSU, partners implemented an online survey for PSU services, followed by Focus groups for both IPV and PSU professionals. The Survey collected 23 responses from 18 services in the three partner countries. The purpose of this activity was to establish a baseline knowledge of the status and needs of PSU services/professionals. Following the survey, focus groups with professionals were implemented from October 2020 to January 2021, by UWAH, WSIC, ROOT with professionals, and UoC with students and graduates of its relevant Master Programme "Clinical Interventions to Addictions".

<http://marissaproject.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/n2.pdf>

Needs Assessment Report

The Needs Assessment Report describes the existing context and the key findings on the needs and challenges of professionals in IPV and PSU. This document includes the key findings that were derived from MARISSA project's research, namely the review, the country reports and the focus groups, setting the base for changes at professionals', services and policy level.

The results from all previous activities were comprised into an overall report describing the existing "landscape" and the key findings on the needs of professionals regarding multi-agency in the field of IPV and PSU. The results from the Review of existing data and analysis of existing interventions regarding IPV and PSU and Consultations with target groups corresponding analysis of the focus groups and survey, in order to produce an overall report. The report describes the existing context and the key findings on the needs and challenges of IPV and PSU professionals.

<http://marissaproject.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/n3.pdf>



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Policy Recommendations

These are the Policy Recommendations in the field of co-occurrence of IPV and PSU developed by MARISSA at the national level of the Project Partners and at the European level. The aim of these Policy Recommendations is to ameliorate the support for women survivors of IPV with co-occurring PSU problems and facilitate multi-agency cooperation in the field.

<http://marissaproject.gr/policy-recommendations/>



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