

## VIPROM – NEWSLETTER

### Victim Protection in Medicine

Dear readers,

welcome to our **second** newsletter of the EU Project VIPROM: “*Victim Protection in Medicine - Exploiting practical knowledge of medical staff to enhance the professional contact with victims of domestic violence*”! Time flies and we have been very active in the last 6 months and we are progressing well to achieve our project goals. VIPROM was on the move and was introduced nationally and internationally by VIPROM partners to many various stakeholder groups. Last but not least, [5 Project blogs](#) have been published so far and more to come.

In this newsletter you will find short updates on what has been achieved the past months, an introduction to one of our sister projects IMPROVE, information on latest EU politics regarding domestic violence (DV), knowledge for your daily practice on how to communicate well in DV and a summary of an interview with an expert, who is training psychologists in Sweden.

Enjoy reading this issue!



Bettina Pflleiderer

Coordinator of VIPROM

## UPDATE ON VIPROM'S ACTIVITIES IN A NUTSHELL

### 2<sup>ND</sup> consortium meeting in Parma



Group picture of the consortium in Parma in front of the meeting venue (Photo: private)

After the first meeting in March last year to kick-off the EU project, the VIPROM consortium has met again, this time in Parma, Italy. The meeting, that took place 26-27 September 2023, was very well organised and hosted by our Italian partners.

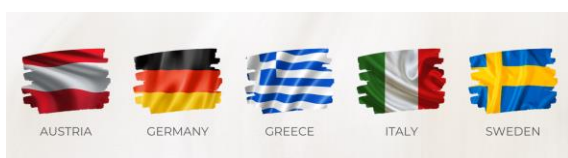
The VIPROM consortium gave updates on ongoing tasks, shared and discussed what has been achieved, and planned the next steps. By forming multiple breakout groups for brainstorming sessions an extensive and fruitful collaborative exchange was made possible.

If you want to stay up-to-date more frequently, we invite you to follow us on [social media](#), to check our [web-site](#) or subscribe to our [newsletter](#)!

**The next project meeting will be in Vienna (Austria) from 20-21 February 2024.**

### UPDATE ON WP2: Needs Assessment for Sustainable Organisational Change

Over the last months, VIPROM partners from Sweden, Italy, Germany, Greece and Austria conducted a needs assessment analysis to understand the country-specific training needs of various medical professionals better. Another goal was to identify required key elements in order to ensure professional victim protection in the medical sector. After evaluating the data of all partners, it became clear that there are overarching issues that need to be considered when developing and delivering DV trainings. This includes **procedures and practices** of identifying, engaging, supporting and referring victims of DV as well as **trauma-informed communication** with victims of DV. For more information on our results, we invite you to visit our [blog](#).



Also, a repository of existing training materials in our VIPROM partner countries have been collected and can be found now on our [website](#).

### UPDATE ON WP3: Development of DV curricula and training materials

The project is currently updating the [European training platform on DV](#) after review existing training contents, materials, and methods for our DV curricula. Also, a [new module on stereotypes and biases](#) was designed and included online. The training platform will be adapted to the **national context** and translated into **different languages** (Swedish, Italian, Greek, German) until June 2024. German translation is already available for many modules. In the next step, all partners will work on the conceptualisation of our train-the-trainer seminars. We will keep you updated about our progress in the next newsletter or in our upcoming blogs!

## INTRODUCING: our sister projects IMRPOVE & ISEDA

We have more exciting news to share: last autumn, we have initiated a collaboration with our two sister projects: **IMPROVE** and **ISEDA**. Since both projects also work on the issue of DV, we want to create synergy effects and a holistic approach towards combating DV. In our bi-monthly meetings, we share ideas and set up a common dissemination strategy. In spring, a joint publication workshop will be organised – we will be happy to share insights in the next issue!

In this newsletter issue, we would like to introduce one of our sister projects: “IMPROVE”.



**IMPROVE** stands for “*Improving Access to Services for Victims of Domestic Violence by Accelerating Change in Frontline Responder Organisations*”.

The IMPROVE project sets out to reinforce the fight against domestic violence by developing several tools to increase reporting and detection of domestic violence by empowering the victims to understand their rights to services and justice. Besides, it will support the police authorities, civil society organisations and other frontline responder organisations in enhancing their competencies to utilise innovative solutions which will enable and accelerate policy implementation.

Innovations produced by IMPROVE are based on applied research that constructs a pioneering conceptual approach which efficiently addresses diverse identities of the survivors, the underserved, vulnerable and marginalised individuals as well as multiple forms and situations of domestic violence.

Here is the link to the website: [www.improve-horizon.eu](http://www.improve-horizon.eu)

Here is the link to the Training Platform: [www.training.vimprodo.eu](http://www.training.vimprodo.eu)

## IMPROVE Webinar

IMPROVE is organising an online webinar on **Breaking barriers: How can AI support victims of domestic violence?**

The webinar will provide insights into domestic violence, demystify Artificial Intelligence (AI), and help you understand how it works. The participants will discover the innovative AinoAid, a victim-oriented chatbot developed within the EU project IMPROVE, showcasing how technology aids those affected. Additionally, our speakers will delve into the ethical and legal aspects of AI in domestic violence contexts, addressing concerns, biases, and fostering understanding. VIPROM’s coordinator Bettina Pfleiderer, who also is a partner in IMPROVE, is one of the speakers. You are invited to attend the webinar!

The webinar spans 90 minutes, encompassing 60-minute of presentations followed by an interactive 30-minute Q&A session.

More information on the webinar and a way to register can be found [here](#).



**improve**

**Join our webinar**

**1 March 2024**  
12:00 - 13:30 CET

**Breaking barriers**

How can AI support victims of domestic violence?

Anna Juusela (We Encourage)  
Bettina Pfleiderer (WWU)  
Ellimari Kortman (We Encourage)

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - WHAT'S NEW IN EUROPEAN POLITICS?

After the ratification of the **European Council Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence** by the European Union on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, the “Istanbul Convention” finally entered into force on 1 October of the same year. This milestone development allows the EU to now draft, within its competence, binding legal frameworks and define the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. Moreover, the agreement enables the Commission to sanction Member States for violations against the Istanbul Convention.

In line with the goals of the VIPROM-Project, Article 20(2) of the Convention also enshrines victim's rights to access to health care and social services and “that services are adequately resourced and professionals are trained to assist victims and refer them to the appropriate services.”

On 29 November 2023, the Commission established an **EU network on the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence**. The network will meet twice a year and will be composed of Member State officials and stakeholders (<https://preventionbv.eu>).



In December 2023, the **WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe)** has published its biannual country report on the status and value of women's specialist services in preventing and tackling gender-based violence against women. Among other things, the report highlights that in 2022 there were at least 2,558 victims of femicide across the 37 European countries that contributed data.

Despite these shocking numbers, several European countries are still lacking at least one national women's helpline and 30% of existing helplines do not meet the standards of the Istanbul Convention. Furthermore, 20 of the EU Member States still do not fulfil the convention's minimum standards for the provision of sufficient beds in women shelters. The full report is available [here](#).



## GOOD TO KNOW – TOOLS & KNOWLEDGE FOR YOUR DAILY PRACTICE

### Conversation techniques in case of suspected violence

Medical professionals are in regular contact with victims of DV. The stressful daily work routine makes it difficult for them to identify or screen for the presence of DV. Yet, as frontline responders they represent an important pillar in the help system to initiate change. The German VIPROM partner [GESINE Intervention](#) has over 30 years of experience with victims of DV and understands that approaching victims can be associated with many uncertainties due to a lack of knowledge how to communicate well. Following up on this, they want to share **practical conversation techniques** that can be applied easily in the daily practice.

A little teaser of the tool ...

### *practical examples*

"I have the impression that you do not feel comfortable in your partnership, that you feel threatened. Such experiences can trigger great discomfort, restlessness, nervousness... If you wish, you can also talk to me about this..."

"Problems in the partnership come in different shapes and can lead to violence. By this I mean not only beatings, but also humiliation or massive controlling behavior..."

... click [here](#) to download the whole practical working tool!

FEEL FREE TO APPLY, PRINT AND SHARE THIS  
TOOL WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES



## TOPIC OF INTEREST IN MEDICAL EDUCATION IN DV

### Training psychologists in DV in Sweden - An interview with Viktoria Andren

Victoria Andren is a licensed psychologist who currently works as director of studies at an education centre associated with the hospital in the Swedish Region of Västmanland. She has been interested in the field of domestic violence (DV) for a long time, her starting point was when she got as a student the chance to work with boys convicted of sexual offenses. This experience steered her to attend the trainings of our Swedish VIPROM partner NCK on *men's violence against women*, which gave her further theoretical knowledge, along with pedagogy to train co-workers.

Victoria was interviewed for this newsletter. She was asked at first about the general importance of DV trainings for psychologists. For Victoria, **the knowledge area of DV is very important and valuable, not least for psychologists**. As director of studies, she does her best to incorporate this knowledge in training for soon-to-be and already licensed psychologists. Victoria explains that by weaving this knowledge in the training at different times, the trainees are reminded that knowledge of DV is often if not always relevant.

As next questions she was asked to share what should be included in trainings. She responded that much can be included in training about DV. **However, one thing that Victoria highlights as particularly important for psychologists is the language being used.**

Psychologists must carefully reflect on the words they choose when talking to a victim/survivor of DV. Victoria highlights that there is a big difference between telling a client that she/he has been subjected to involuntary sex or using the expression sexual assault. While the former expression sends a signal of involuntary sex being not really DV, the latter expression clarifies that what has taken place is an actual assault, i.e. violence.



Victoria was also asked about clinical relevance of trainings. **Clinical relevance** is also something Victoria stresses repeatedly as being of importance, stating that **theories of violence must do justice to the professional reality of the psychologist**. For that, training on violence needs to offer space for self-reflection. Not only for the trainees, but also for the trainers, Victoria declares. Trainers must also take time to reflect e.g. on their role as teachers, on what explanatory models are included/excluded, and what consequences this may have for the overall understanding of and work with DV.

Lastly, we wanted to know from Victoria why projects like VIPROM are needed in the medical field. Victoria believes that **funding of a project like VIPROM by the EU to be a strong indicator that knowledge of DV is highly needed among health professionals**. She is positive towards the idea that psychologists are to train psychologists. When asked about advice for future trainers, she quickly replies: **"Great understanding of DV and pedagogical skills"** and to **"keep the training closely linked to practical work"**.

## VIPROM CONSORTIUM



## CONTACT US



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