

What to do and say

when you are pressed for confidential information

1

Take a deep breath and THINK

2

Slow down the process “I need to get back to you on that.”

Validate their feelings “I know this is frustrating for you.”

Validate their role “I know you have an important job to do.”

Stick with your position “I don’t have any information I can share with you right now.”

Attend to your relationship “I will get back to you as soon as I can on this.”

3

Cite the laws that require you to keep information confidential “My agency is bound by law not to disclose this information.”

4

Get help “I understand your request. I will have to speak to my supervisor and get back to you.”

5

Contact the survivor and find out what information, if any, she would like you to reveal. Help her weigh her options: allow you to release information, talk directly with the other person, or keep her information confidential. Support her decisions.

It's not ours to tell:

Keeping our clients' information confidential



Domestic violence programs can not disclose any information about a program participant without their written permission. - RCW 70.123.076

Domestic violence advocates' communications with recipients of services are privileged (confidential and protected from disclosure). - RCW 5.60.060

Domestic violence program records about participants are confidential (with some narrow exceptions for judicial review). - RCW 70.123.075

State Laws

All recipients of VAWA grants (including STOP, GTEA and LAV), Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program are prohibited from disclosing "personally identifying information" about program participants. - *Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) 2005 [42 U.S.C. §13925; Public Law 109-162, Section 3(a)(18)]*

Recipients of VOCA money are prohibited from revealing any information about a program participant. Also, this information is immune from legal process in all proceedings. - *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) [42 U.S.C. 10601-10604(d)]*

and (e)]

Federal Laws