



SAFEGUARDING & HOLISTIC PROTECTION

We Lead Safety, Security and Wellbeing Training Manual



Table Of Contents

Foreword	1
Acknowledgements	2
Glossary	3
Introduction Safeguarding & Holistic Protection Training Manual	4
Project Background	4
Why This Training Guideline	5
Who Should Use This Guideline	5
Guideline Layout	5
Understanding Safety, Security, And Wellbeing	5
Module One Physical Safety & Security	7
Physical Security	7
Understanding Your Work Environment	7
Threat Analysis	8
Risk Analysis	8
Guides For Filling Safety And Security Risk Assessment Matrix	8
Risk Matrix Table	9
Security Strategies	9
Integrated Security Planning	10
Module Two Digital/Cyber Security	11
Why Digital Security Matters	11
Common Digital Security Risks	11
Minimum Digital Security Practices (Essentials Checklist)	11
Responding To A Digital Security Breach	11
Module Three Wellbeing & Wellness	12
Objectives of the section	12
Facilitator's Instructions	12
Understanding Wellbeing & Wellness	12
Assessing Current Wellbeing	13
Developing A Wellness Plan	13
Module Four Response, Processing, Documentation And Reporting SRHR Violations	14
Understanding SRHR Violations	14
Response To SRHR Violations	14
Principles Of Response (The "4 R's")	14
Immediate Actions	14
Basic Needs Assessment	14
Processing SRHR Violation	14
Intake And Screening	14
Case Management	14
Referral Pathways	14
Documentation Of SRHR Violations	14
Why Documentation Matters	14
Documentation Principles	14
What To Document	14
Tools And Forms	15
Reporting SRHR Violations	17
Internal Reporting	17
Legal Reporting	17
External / Advocacy Reporting	17
Reporting Tools	17
Ethics And Confidentiality	17
Coordination And Stakeholder Roles	17
Key Actors	17
Referral Mapping	17
Module Five Safety and Security Policies Development and Implementation	18
Module Six Final Practicum / Capstone Project	18
Conclusion	21
Annexes	23

Foreword

Safety and security of human rights activists and people who work in civil society organizations has always been a key consideration in programming. Yet, it is one of the most misunderstood and neglected when it comes to budgeting and availing resources for activists to support themselves.

Having worked with activists and frontrunners of social change across the world for decades, Hivos has had an understanding and appreciation of the role of safety and security in this work. Hivos started investing in safety and security years back, albeit modestly. At the time, it seemed adequate to anticipate risks and develop mitigation plans in case they were needed. However, with the roll out of bigger and bolder programs that placed activists and excluded communities at the core, the topic of safety and security became more important and urgent. It needed to be planned carefully and included in program budgets. When the Power of Voices programs were designed in 2020, safety and security had already become a central issue in programming. Therefore, promoting safety and security became a core approach in We Lead.

However, even with this appreciation and effort, we have learned that safety and security is a dynamic issue that requires us to constantly learn and be adaptable. The world has changed in unimaginable ways in the last five years, and this has challenged human rights work in profound ways. Issues, such as conflict, attacks on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and the ever-evolving anti-rights movement have made it not only difficult to respond to issues of safety and security but has created other deeper challenges.

The emotional toll of hostility and backlash towards our work has threatened not just the safety and security but also the wellness and wellbeing of activists and development practitioners. It has demanded constant review of the operating context and adaptation of our approaches. This is what led to our partnership with the Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) Hub. The partnership was born out of a desire to have more focused and dedicated support for our rightsholders

and their organizations. It was also meant to ensure that we were responding quicker and more effectively to emerging threats. Importantly, the partnership was meant to help us center wellness and wellbeing in our safety and security approach.

We have witnessed many activists suffer physical, emotional, and psychological torture as a function of their work without supportive structures to deal with these challenges. We have also witnessed activists suffering burnout and mental illness due to work-related pressure and lack of support. In response to these challenges, We Lead sought to address wellness and wellbeing as an integral part of programming and put measures in place to facilitate this. These measures were intended to help us provide the required support to our staff, partners and rightsholders so they could deal with the daily pressures that negatively impact their work and personal lives and prevent them from being effective.

Despite having this noble and bold vision for our safety and security work, we only managed to scratch the surface with We Lead. We encountered numerous almost insurmountable challenges, but we also made good efforts to develop and systemize our work. This is what makes this manual important. It provides practical tools and tips for activists to learn how to improve their safety, security, and wellbeing. It also supports our efforts to equip the larger human rights movement with practical tools and strategies to enhance their safety, their wellbeing, and foster a sense of collective resilience. We hope that activists and other actors in the human rights sector will find this guide useful.

Nyambura Gathumbi
Global Program Manager, We Lead

Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to the tireless rightsholders and CoAs involved in the We Lead project, particularly from Uganda, Niger, and Kenya, whose lived experiences, insights, and unwavering resilience shaped this manual into a meaningful and responsive resource.

We are profoundly grateful to the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub, Kenya (The Hub) for leading the development of this guideline and for its continued work in equipping young women defenders to not only survive but thrive through training, documentation, advocacy, and care. Special recognition goes to The Hub team members, Salome Nduta and Diana Letion, whose leadership and dedication were central to driving this work forward.

Special thanks to the Hivos We Lead team, whose strong commitment to safety, self-care, and mental wellbeing remains central to our shared vision of creating secure and supportive environments for all SRHR defenders.

We are especially thankful to our We Lead, Global Program Manager, Nyambura Gathumbi, for her strategic leadership and unwavering support, and to our Global Project Safety and Security Officer, Stephen Amimo Mugacho, whose expertise and coordination were critical in guiding this process.

Deep appreciation also goes to the dedicated country focal points Chaibou Bagnou-Niger, Hannington Omollo-Kenya, Rukia Nzibo-Kenya, and Winnie Akidi Adile – Kenya, Patricia Witney Namyalo- Uganda whose on-the-ground efforts ensured relevance and accuracy throughout this documentation.

We also thank our Regional Program Officers, Saida Alou and Dorcas Mwachi, for their steadfast dedication, leadership, and tireless efforts in strengthening safety and security frameworks across the regions, fostering an environment of care and protection for all We Lead partners and rightsholders.

Special recognition is due to Edwin Oloo, our Administrative Assistant, whose behind-the-scenes coordination was instrumental in ensuring the smooth execution of all engagements, to Hilda Omega, We Lead Kenya and Uganda Grant and Finance Officer; whose meticulous financial management support played a vital role in bringing to life the safety and security activities that shaped this training manual, and to Catherine Ferrer and Cynthia Omondi, Communications Officers; for their sharp editorial eye and thoughtful contributions in finalizing this document.

Finally, to all We Lead stakeholders, thank you for your passion, solidarity, and invaluable contributions. This manual stands as a testament to our collective commitment to safeguarding the dignity, rights, and security of all those who defend SRHR across the world.

Glossary

AIDs	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CoA	Community of Action
EA	East Africa
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LBTI	Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex
LATAM	Latin America
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
WHRD	Woman Human Rights Defender



Introduction Safeguarding & Holistic Protection Training Manual

Since its launch in 2021, the We Lead program has empowered communities of action and rightsholder groups to advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) across diverse regions. Central to this work has been the leadership and participation of young women especially those from marginalized and underrepresented groups. These include young women activists, young women with disabilities, young women living with HIV, displaced young women, and young women who identify as sexual minorities.

As the program evolved, it became increasingly clear that many of these rightsholders, communities of action and We Lead staff faced significant safety and security challenges in the course of their advocacy. Through a combination of needs assessments, field visits, safety and security training, capacity building sessions, and direct feedback from implementing partners, several critical security gaps were identified, including:

- Limited knowledge and skills in digital and physical security
- Inadequate access to trauma-informed response tools and support systems
- A lack of youth-friendly, context-specific safety protocols
- Insufficient preparedness for handling emergency situations such as arrests, threats, or harassment

To address these urgent needs, the We Lead program, in partnership with the **Women Human Rights Defenders Hub (Kenya)**, designed and delivered a series of **Safety and Security Training** courses in the focus countries between 2022 and 2025. These courses were grounded in the lived experiences of rightsholders and enriched by the expertise of experienced facilitators and partners.

The outcome of this collaborative and participatory process is the **We Lead Safety and Security Training Manual**. This manual is a practical, rights-based, and contextually relevant resource aimed at equipping young women and their allies with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to protect themselves and continue their critical work safely.

Project Background

In today's rapidly shifting global landscape, the commitment to safeguarding human rights requires courage, resilience, and an unyielding spirit. Nowhere is

this truer than among women human rights defenders and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advocates, whose dedication to justice and equity is often met with challenges and risks that affect their safety, security, and wellbeing.

We Lead is a bold, transformative, innovative, and far-reaching program designed to amplify the voices and strengthen the influence and position of young women whose sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are most often overlooked. This ground-breaking five-year program (2021–2025) focuses on empowering adolescent girls and young women who live with HIV, face discrimination and marginalization, live with disabilities, or are displaced from their homes.

Operating across Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Niger, Mozambique, Lebanon, Jordan, Guatemala, and Honduras, We Lead champions the SRHR of young women by placing them at the forefront of change. At its core, the program is fueled by vibrant Communities of Action (CoAs) and is powered by a unique consortium of six dynamic organizations: Restless Development, Positive Vibes, Marsa, FCAM, FEMNET, and led by Hivos. Funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and rooted in local leadership, We Lead is not just a program; it's a movement to ensure that no voice is left behind.

In the nine countries where We Lead operates, the environment is highly restrictive, making advocacy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) not only difficult but dangerous for consortium partners, CoAs, and rightsholders. In these contexts, SRHR are frequently criminalized either fully, or marginalized as lesser rights, and relentlessly attacked by influential conservative forces.

This hostile climate fuels a range of safety and security threats: from disinformation campaigns that push anti-SRHR and anti-gender narratives, to direct attacks on human rights defenders advocating for SRHR rights. Regressive legislation is weaponized, policy processes are manipulated, and public opinion is mobilized against both the rights themselves and those who defend them. Even the criminal justice system is used as a tool of intimidation harassing healthcare providers and rightsholders alike. For those working on the frontlines, the risks are real, and the consequences are profound.

This hostile environment in all countries where We Lead is present has continued to affect the safety and security of partners and activists and remains a key challenge due to the restricted civic space, and the cultural and religious beliefs that justify violence and harassment of human rights defenders - especially regarding SRHR. Hence there is a need for a comprehensive and structured safety and security strategy. This guideline therefore aims to equip defenders and activists with practical tools and strategies to enhance their safety, safeguard their wellbeing, and foster a sense of collective resilience.

Why this Training Guideline

Safeguarding is the responsibility of individuals and institutions to protect people, especially those most at risk from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect in any context. When working with women and girls, safeguarding applies to all staff, volunteers, and affiliated personnel involved in providing services, advocacy, or protection. It is essential that everyone understands what safeguarding is, who it applies to, and what is at stake when breaches occur, including loss of trust, reputational damage, legal consequences, and most critically harm to the very individuals we aim to support.

This training guideline provides a structured and standardized framework for delivering knowledge, skills, and competencies in safety, security, and wellbeing. It serves the following key functions:

- Provide a structured learning path – a roadmap for both trainers and trainees to facilitate a logical flow of information to help build skills and capacities progressively
- Ensure consistency and quality across different locations, thematic groups and even trainers
- Facilitate effective delivery through methods, tools, and additional resources needed in safety, security, and wellbeing
- Ensure alignment with organizational values and project goals with its content
- Provide a basis for assessment and evaluation. Safety, security, and wellbeing are not static and require regular updates to respond to the prevailing needs and operational context

Overall, the purpose of a training guideline is to provide a comprehensive and practical foundation for designing, delivering, and evaluating training programs that drive skill development, enhance performance, and support organizational growth.

Who should use this guideline

This guideline was developed following a series of capacity building sessions in safety, security and wellbeing under the We Lead Project, a project focusing on sexual reproductive health rights for key right holder groups including women living with HIV, gender and sexual minorities, displaced persons, and persons abled differently.

While the foundational information came from the sessions, the guideline can be used by all persons who seek to enhance their capacities and skills in safety, security and wellbeing including but not limiting to;

- Women Human Rights Defenders
- Facilitators of safety and wellbeing training
- Human rights institutions and government agencies
- Development partners

Guideline layout

This guideline has two main sections focusing on safety and security and wellbeing.

Understanding safety, security, and wellbeing

A comprehensive understanding of safety, security, and wellbeing is crucial in ensuring that both staff and organizations thrive and continue to deliver their respective mandates.

Common terminologies used within the set-up of safety and security are shown in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1 Common terminologies used within the set-up of safety and security

Safety focuses on creating environments free from physical harm, ensuring that individuals are not exposed to dangers such as accidents, injuries, or hazardous conditions. It involves establishing protocols, providing appropriate equipment, and fostering an awareness of potential risks.

Security, on the other hand, emphasizes protecting individuals and resources from intentional threats such as violence, theft, or cyber-attacks. This includes implementing measures like access control, emergency response plans, and data protection practices.

Finally, wellbeing encompasses a broader perspective that includes both physical and mental health. It involves creating a supportive environment where individuals feel valued, respected, and motivated, and where stress and burnout are minimized.

Promoting wellbeing also includes considering factors like work-life balance, mental health support, and a positive organizational culture.

By unpacking these three interconnected elements of safety, security, and wellbeing, and developing mechanisms to respond to each, we ensure a holistic approach to fostering a productive and protective environment that supports learning, growth, and individual and organizational success.



Module One

Physical Safety & Security

Objectives of the Section

1. Understand the theoretical concept of safety and security
2. Understand the working environment of activists, including threats faced
3. Understand how to analyze threats and risks
4. Develop security strategies and plans

Facilitator's instructions

- Refer to the introduction to this chapter for the background to the discussion on why safety and security is important.
- Introduce the chapter by outlining its objectives, activities, and the techniques to be applied.
- Guide participants in unpacking their working environment, threats and risks faced and how to analyze them
- Guide participants in identifying security strategies that work for them as well as developing security plans

Physical Security

Understanding your work environment

Understanding one's operating environment through a comprehensive context analysis is a critical step in the development of establishing strategies for safety and security. This process involves examining the various political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors through a PESTLE tool shown Figure 2.

This tool enables one to identify the different elements in their work environment, how they affect their work, and how to set up mechanisms to address them

Conducting a context analysis is crucial in understanding one's operating environment, for several reasons:

1. **Identifying Key Factors and Influences:** A context analysis helps in identifying various factors that can influence your work as a defender, anticipate potential challenges, leverage opportunities, and mitigate risks.
2. **Anticipating and Managing Risks:** Understanding the operating environment allows for the identification of potential risks and uncertainties.
3. **Improving Decision-Making and Strategic Planning:** Context analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the environment and helps defenders to make informed decisions and develop strategic plans.

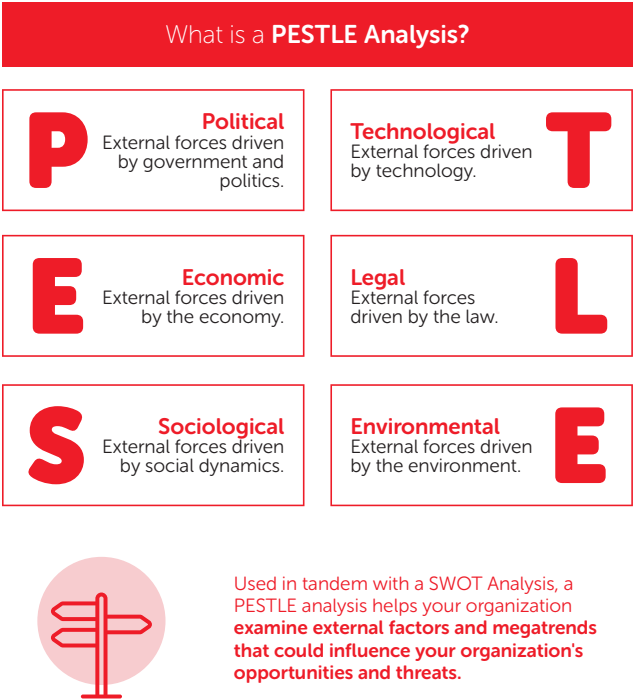


Figure 2 PESTLE tool and illustration

4. **Adapting to Changes and Ensuring Sustainability:** The environment defenders operate in is not static; it changes due to various internal and external factors. By regularly conducting context analysis, defenders can adapt their strategies and content to ensure they remain safe and secure in their work

GROUP EXERCISE
Use Pestle tool to identify factors surrounding your work environment as follows
Political - National and Global politics that may affect your work
Economic -
Social - Cultural factors affecting your work
Technological -
Legal - Both national and international laws/policies
Environmental -

Figure 3 Group exercise on PESTLE

Threat Analysis

Threat analysis is a critical process for identifying, assessing, and prioritizing potential risks and threats that could impact an organization's operations, assets, personnel, and overall objectives.

A threat is a danger to you, your organization, or your property. They could also be indications that someone will harm somebody else's physical or moral integrity or property through purposeful and often violent action.

Threats are categorized as follows:

Political - National and Global politics that may affect your work
Economic -
Social - Cultural factors affecting your work
Technological -
Legal - Both national and international laws/policies
Environmental -

Figure 4 Threat analysis tool

Note: Anyone can make a threat but not everyone can pose a threat. Some people who make threats ultimately pose a threat, but many who make threats do not pose a threat.

GROUP EXERCISE
Use Pestle tool to identify threats faced

Figure 3 Group exercise on PESTLE

Some people who never make threats do pose a threat.

You therefore need to:

1. Assess the capacity of the person making the threat
2. Think about why someone has made a threat

Steps to assess a threat



Figure 6 Threat analysis tool

Risk Analysis

A risk is the possibility of something happening that will have negative effects.

Risks are often determined by the following factors:

- Who you are
- The work that you do
- Your visibility

Risks are measured by looking at the likelihood of them occurring and the impact they will have on an individual and their work. Using the below risk matrix table, WHRDs, advocates of SRHR and their organizations are able to come up with standard operating procedures (to address the likelihood of a risk occurring) as well as contingency plans (to address the impact the risk may have if it does occur)

Guides for Filling Safety and Security Risk Assessment Matrix

5*5 Quantitative Risk analysis table					
Probability/Likelihood	Risk Magnitude				
Almost Certain - 5	5	10	15	20	25
Likely - 4	4	8	12	16	20
Possible - 3	3	6	9	12	15
Unlikely - 2	2	4	6	8	10
Rare - 1	1	2	3	4	5
Severity (Impact)	Negligible - 1	Minor - 2	Moderate - 3	Major - 4	Catastrophic - 5

Table 1 5*5 Security risk assessment guide: Quantitative Risk analysis table

5*5 Quantitative Risk analysis table					
Probability/Likelihood	Risk Magnitude				
Almost Certain - 5	Very Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
Likely - 4	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Possible - 3	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
Unlikely - 2	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium
Rare - 1	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
Severity (Impact)	Negligible - 1	Minor - 2	Moderate - 3	Major - 4	Catastrophic - 5

Table 2 5*5 Quantitative Risk analysis table

Magnitude of Risk	Risk Index	Magnitude & Acceptability of Risk of Risk Scenario
Severity (Impact) X Probability Score	>20 Very High	Very high = Unacceptable: Maximum disruption of project plan, maximum threat to project success, implement new process or change baseline plan.
	15-20 High	High = unacceptable; Maximum disruption of project plan, large threat to project success, implement new process or change baseline plan.
	10-14 Medium	Medium = acceptable: Some disruption of the project, little threat to project success, some management actions necessary.
	6-9 Low	Low = Acceptable: Little disruption of the project plan, some threat to project success, some management actions necessary.
	<5 and 5 Very Low	Very Low = Acceptable: no disruption of the project, no threat to project, current approach is sufficient

Table 3 5*5 Quantitative Risk analysis table

Risk Matrix Table

Threat	Probability Likelihood Rare, Unlikely, Possible, Likely, almost certain	Impact Consequence Negligible, Minor, Moderate, Major, Catastrophic	Insurance available (Yes/No)	Mitigation measures	Primary Risk rating: Very Low, low - Green, moderate Yellow, high - Read, and very high. Done using Colors.	Residual risk rating Very Low, low - Green, moderate Yellow, high - Read, and very high. Done using Colors.	Acceptability of risk (Yes/No)

Table 4 Safety and security matrix

NB: Each color shows the intensity a risk may have on individuals, their work, and their organizations if it occurs. Green shades are safe to operate under. Yellow indicates a need to put in place some contingency plans. range is unsafe and requires both contingency plans and standard operating procedures. ed and black are the highest levels of risks which are not worth taking. They exact a very heavy toll on individuals, their organizations, and their work and should be avoided at all costs

GROUP EXERCISE
Use Risk Matrix to analyse level of risk faced

Figure 7 Group exercise for risk matrix

Security Strategies

Security strategies are developed to respond to the risky situations that organizations and advocates find themselves operating under. The following are to be considered while developing security strategies:

- **Acceptance:** Develop strategies that help you gain the acceptance and goodwill of local populations by promoting a positive image as part of a security strategy.

- **Protection:** Consider the use of protective procedures and devices to put a barrier between you and the threat and/or the risk.
- **Deterrence:** Develop strategies that aims to stop a perpetrators from committing attacks by making them experience the negative consequences of their past actions.

Integrated Security Planning

By conducting a thorough risk and threat analysis, defenders can evaluate the likelihood and potential

impact of these risks, allowing them to develop targeted strategies to mitigate or manage them effectively.

The process not only helps in understanding vulnerabilities but also in allocating resources more efficiently to areas of greatest concern, thus enhancing overall preparedness. Furthermore, risk and threat analysis informs the development of contingency plans, emergency response protocols, and training programs to ensure resilience in the face of potential disruptions.

Our security escalation process is easy

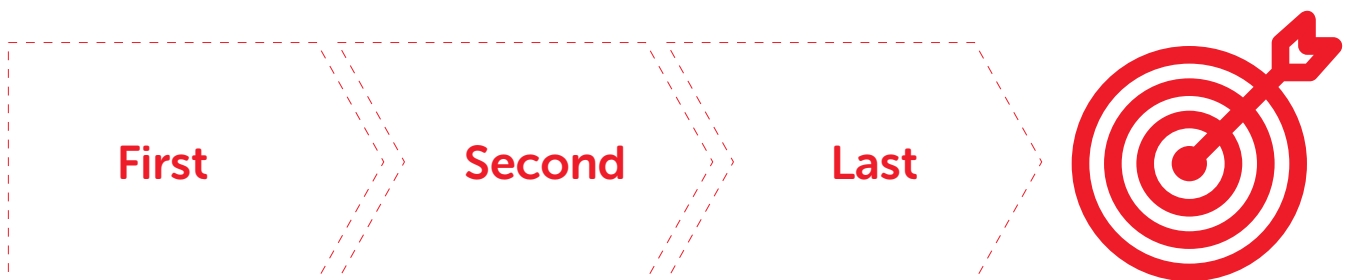


Figure 8 Security escalation process

Note: Whatever your strategy you apply, always have a security escalation plan and resources.

's Safety Plan Today's Date: _____

Step 1: Warning Signs of a Crisis 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	Step 2: Activities I Can Do By Myself to Try to Take my Mind off of Things 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Step 4: People I Can Call for Help 1. Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____ 2. Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____ 3. Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____	Step 5: Ways That Supportive People Can Help Me Stay Safe 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Step 6: I Can Call These Very Important Phone Numbers 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	Step 3: Taking My Mind off of Things PEOPLE I CAN GO TO: 1. Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____ 2. Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____ 3. Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____
I Have Great Strengths To Help Me Get By 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	PLACES I CAN GO TO: 1. _____ 2. _____

Safety Plan | Adapted from an original work by Barbara Stanley and Gregory K. Brown
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.

SOCIAL WORK TECH

Figure 9 Group exercise security plan

Group Exercise: Develop security plans for the risks identified, including contingency plans, standard operating procedures and resources required.

Module Two

Digital/Cyber Security

Why Digital Security Matters

In today's increasingly digital world, protecting your online presence is just as important as ensuring your physical safety. For people working on SRHR and human rights, digital insecurity can have serious consequences both for defenders and the communities they serve. Sensitive information such as survivor stories, medical data, advocacy strategies, or case files must be handled with great care to prevent unauthorized access, surveillance, harassment, or reputational harm.

By adopting simple but effective digital security practices, we can reduce our vulnerability to online threats and ensure that our work remains safe, ethical, and grounded in the principles of dignity, privacy, and consent.

Common Digital Security Risks

Digital threats often go unnoticed until damage has been done. Some of the most frequent risks include:

- **Phishing attacks** – deceptive emails or messages designed to steal your login credentials.
- **Weak passwords** – reusing simple or similar passwords across platforms makes it easier for attackers to gain access.
- **Unencrypted communication** – using platforms that do not protect your messages or calls can expose sensitive information.
- **Device loss or theft** – losing an unsecured phone or laptop can lead to data leaks or identity exposure.
- **Online harassment** – targeted trolling, doxxing (publishing private info), or digital surveillance of activists is common, especially in SRHR spaces.
- **Unsafe public Wi-Fi** – using unsecured networks can expose your browsing and login details.

Minimum Digital Security Practices (Essentials Checklist)

Here are key practices every SRHR defender and practitioner should follow:

Secure Your Devices



- Use strong passwords with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid using birthdates or predictable patterns.

- Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) on all major accounts.
- Keep your devices updated with the latest security patches and software updates.
- Use a screen lock (PIN, fingerprint, or face ID) on your phone, laptop, or tablet.

Protect Your Communication



- Use encrypted messaging apps such as Signal or WhatsApp for private communication.
- Avoid sharing confidential information through SMS, Facebook Messenger, or unsecured email.
- Turn off geotagging on your camera and disable location sharing when it's not necessary.

Safeguard Your Data



- Back up important files to an encrypted cloud service or external hard drive.
- Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN), especially when working remotely or using public Wi-Fi.
- Store sensitive documents in secure, password-protected folders.
- Avoid posting identifiable information about yourself or your clients on social media.

Responding to a Digital Security Breach

If you believe your digital safety has been compromised:

- **Stop and assess the breach** – What data may have been exposed? Was your device lost, or your account hacked?
- **Change all passwords immediately**, starting with your email and social media accounts.
- **Take screenshots** and document the breach (including time, date, and platform used).
- **Report the incident** to your organization or digital security focal point.
- **Reach out for expert support** through trusted digital rights organizations (see below).
- **Seek psychosocial support** if the incident caused distress or triggered anxiety.

Module Three

Wellbeing & Wellness

Objectives of the section

1. Understand the theoretical concept of wellbeing and wellness
2. Understand the working contexts of activists and wellbeing concerns emerging from the contexts
3. Identify the day-to-day wellbeing and wellness challenges faced by activists
4. Explore coping mechanisms employed by the activists
5. Outline other possible mechanisms that can work for activists

Facilitator's Instructions

- Refer to the introduction to this chapter for the background to the discussion on why wellness and wellbeing.
- Introduce the chapter by outlining its objectives, activities, and the techniques to be applied.
- Explain the mind mapping technique to be used in this wellness/wellbeing training (refer to the techniques box, see annex 1).
- Ask the participants to reflect on and identify the common wellness and wellbeing needs they face in their work and communities, including those of vulnerable groups they work with [List them on meta cards and post them on a section of the wall]
- With the participants, group the needs according to their similarities as you discuss each need.
- Guide participants in developing wellbeing and wellness strategies.

Understanding Wellbeing & Wellness

This section seeks to explore the concept of wellness and wellbeing of defenders and unpack the challenges they face and explore ways of managing their needs within project implementation and the environment they operate under.

According to a study on resilience of civic actors by Inuka Kenya ni Sisi Kenya Trust, they ask a fundamental question:

Why does wellness matter?

Wellness is an essential conversation because most organizations and individuals work under challenging circumstances, and the only time people get to rest is when they are arrested. The situation is dire for women civil actors who have additional family responsibilities and rarely get time to take a break for self-care, collective care, wellness, and healing. Social movements must find ways of safeguarding and centering mental and emotional wellbeing. Wellness matters because of the following:

Systemic neglect of the wellness and wellbeing of civil actors has severe impacts on the quality of life, health, productivity, and effectiveness of civil actors. Civic actor wellness is linked to building a thriving, sustainable, and impactful civil society that contributes to the development of the country. Wellness enables civil actors to develop resilience, tools, and capacity to overcome personal, and environmental challenges in their important work including self-accountability care, workplace wellness, and vital functional outcomes (participation in family, work, community, and society).

Source: Inuka Kenya Ni Sisi Trust: Weaving Wellness Resilience: The Case of East Africa, March 2024

Therefore, this guide aims to provide individuals with the knowledge and tools to improve their overall wellness and wellbeing. It offers practical advice, exercises, and resources to help participants lead healthier, more balanced lives and effectively deliver on their mandate.

Assessing Current Wellbeing

The following three methods are used:

a) Collective assessment of needs based on the work defenders do

Through this method, the participants answered the following questions under each of the PESTLE parameter:

- What experiences can you share that have affected you emotionally and psychologically?
- What strategies and tactics have you used to cope with these effects?
- What gaps exist in your organization to address these needs?
- What resources are required to fully address the needs identified?

b) One-on-one sessions with a professional

The group analysis is followed by a session with a counselor where individuals are assisted to address individualized wellbeing and wellness needs through a number of exercises and followed by one-on-one sessions for those most in need. Some individualized exercises can be done using the following tools:

- Self-Assessment Tools
- Wellness Wheel
- Stress Assessment Questionnaires
- Lifestyle Inventories
- Color personality tests
- Personal circle of control

c) Team building

Team building exercises are a way of enhancing bonding among the participants as well as doing

debriefing after the exercises analyzing wellbeing and wellness needs at both the group and individual levels.

This exercise is led by a team building expert and involves a number of group activities aimed at achieving different objectives depending on the participants involved. Broadly, team building exercises include intellectual stimulation exercises, songs, dances, hiking, swimming, sports and board games. Any team building activity chosen is aimed at addressing needs identified during the collective or individual wellness and wellbeing levels.

Developing a Wellness Plan

After the assessment of wellbeing and wellness needs, the facilitator leads participants in the process of analyzing the results, setting priority areas of intervention and developing a wellness plan.

The analysis is done through matrix ranking, followed by individualized priority needs that fall outside the matrix ranking. Priorities are set based on individual needs and goals.

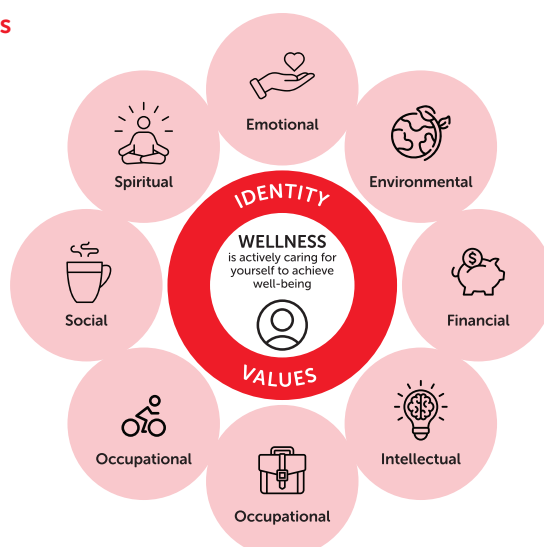
This is the last part of addressing wellness and wellbeing needs. Participants are encouraged to develop/set **SMART** goals for each dimension of wellness, set detailed steps to achieving each goal, identifying resources and support needed, and set timelines and milestones for achieving wellness and wellbeing.

Wellbeing Strategies

Capacities

Who do we know

What can we do



Wellbeing Planning

What will we do

This structured approach ensures that the guide is comprehensive, practical, and usable. Each section can be expanded to suit the needs of different participants, with detailed content, examples, and activities to provide them with a rich and engaging learning experience.

Module Four

Response, Processing, Documentation and Reporting SRHR Violations

Understanding SRHR Violations

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) refer to the human rights relating to sexuality, reproduction, and health. This includes:

- Right to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services
- Right to bodily autonomy and integrity
- Right to be free from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- Right to make informed decisions about reproductive health

Response to SRHR Violations

Principles of Response (The “4 R’s”)

- Respect: Ensure dignity and autonomy
- Responsiveness: Provide timely, non-judgmental help
- Referral: Link to appropriate services
- Rights-Based Approach: Prioritize the victim/survivor’s human rights

Immediate Actions:

- Ensure safety and privacy of the survivor
- Obtain informed consent before any action or referral
- Listen actively and non-judgmentally
- Do no harm: Avoid re-traumatization or exposure
- Assess for urgent needs (medical, legal, psychosocial)

Basic Needs Assessment:

- Medical care (e.g., emergency contraception, PEP)
- Psychosocial support
- Protection and safety planning
- Legal aid or police reporting (if desired)
- Shelter (in case of violence)

Processing SRHR Violations

Processing involves handling the case systematically from intake to resolution.

Intake and Screening:

- Use survivor-centered intake forms
- Identify type of violation and urgency
- Classify cases (e.g., physical violence, reproductive coercion)

Case Management:

- Assign trained caseworker
- Develop individualized response plan
- Coordinate with multisectoral teams (health, legal, social services)

Referral Pathways:

- Ensure referrals are survivor-led
- Use pre-established referral networks (e.g., clinics, shelters, legal aid)
- Keep records of referrals and follow up on them

Documentation of SRHR Violations

Why Documentation Matters:

- Legal evidence for prosecution or redress
- Monitoring trends and prevalence
- Supporting advocacy and policy reform
- Ensuring continuity of care

Documentation Principles:

- Confidentiality: Secure storage, limited access
- Accuracy: Use exact words, avoid interpretations
- Informed Consent: Survivor must agree to documentation
- Standardization: Use uniform forms and codes

What to Document:

- Survivor’s basic information (with consent)
- Description of the incident (date, place, type)
- Perpetrator information (if known)
- Services provided and referrals made
- Consent forms and any legal reports filed

Tools and Forms:

We Lead critical Incident reporting Forms

Reporting Details		
Name of Reporter (The Person writing this report):		
Reporting (Intake) Date: DDMMYYYY:		
Category of Reporter	Rightsholder	
	Host Organization (Staff)	
	Community of Action (CoA)	
	Consortium Partner Organization (Staff)	
	Other (Specify)	

Bio Of The Victim/Survivor		
Name (Optional) (Abbreviation)		
Category of Victim/Survivor	Rightsholder	
	Host Organization (HO's Staff)	
	Community of Action (CoA's Staff)	
	Consortium Partner Organization (CPO's Staff)	
	Other (Specify)	
Contact (Phone and Email)		
From which Target Group	Living with HIV	
	That have a disability	
	Who identify as lesbian, bisexual, trans or intersex and	
	Affected by displacement	
	Prefer not to say	
Age bracket	0-12	
	15-17	
	18-35	
	36 and above	

Emergency Contact/Next of Kin	
Name (Optional) (Abbreviation)	
Contact (Phone and Email)	

DETAILS OF VIOLATION	
Incident Date: DDMMYYYY	
Location of Incident	

Country of Incident		
Type of the Violation	Physical Assault	
	Sexual Assault	
	Murder	
	Kidnapping (Ransom)	
	Cyber Attack (Kindly explain more)	
	Arbitrary Arrest	
	Other (Specify)	
KINDLY DESCRIBE INCIDENT: Please describe in detail what happened, the factors leading to the incident, and the events as they occurred. (Ensure clarity while being concise.)		
Current Status of Victim/Survivor/ Case: (e.g., still remanded in police custody, case closed, ongoing investigation, etc.)		

ACTION(S) TAKEN: Please outline the immediate actions taken in response to the incident to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim/survivor.

ASSISTANT/SUPPORT(S) NEEDED		
Medical		
Psychological		
Legal		
Socio-economic		
Other (Specify)		
No assistant/Support needed		
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS		
Are there any other relevant information or observations you would like to share regarding this incident?		

N/B: Please ensure all relevant documents, photos, maps, or supporting materials are attached to this report or emailed separately for proper documentation.

- **Medical Evidence Collection Forms**
- **Case Notes**

Reporting SRHR Violations

Internal Reporting:

- Case summaries (anonymized) to supervisors
- Tracking statistics for internal improvement
- Flagging high-risk or repeat cases

Legal Reporting:

- Only with survivor consent (unless mandatory by law)
- Accompany survivors through the reporting process
- Work with legal aid organizations for support
- Secure chain of custody for physical evidence

External / Advocacy Reporting:

- Aggregate data for national/international reports
- Submit to human rights bodies (e.g., UN Special Rapporteurs)
- Use for advocacy, funding, and accountability efforts

Reporting Tools:

- NGO Monitoring Reports
- UN Shadow Reports (e.g., for CEDAW, CRC)

Ethics and Confidentiality

- **Do no harm:** Always consider potential risks to survivors
- **Survivor control:** They decide what happens next

- **Data security:** Encrypt digital records, lock physical files
- **Avoid bias:** Treat all survivors equally, regardless of background
- **Trauma-informed approach:** Recognize signs of trauma and adapt

Coordination and Stakeholder Roles

Key Actors:

- Health professionals (treatment & evidence)
- Legal actors (protection, prosecution)
- Social workers (case management, support)
- Human rights monitors (documentation & advocacy)
- Police (investigation, only when survivor agrees)
- Civil society/NGOs (awareness, support)

Referral Mapping:

- Maintain a **current** directory of trusted service providers
- Update contact information regularly
- Build **memorandums of understanding (MoUs)** between sectors

Module Five

Safety and Security Policies Development and Implementation

1. Introduction

Definition

- **Safety policies:** Frameworks that define procedures and responsibilities for ensuring the physical and psychological well-being of individuals in an organization or community.
- **Security policies:** Rules and measures designed to protect people, property, data, and information systems from threats, harm, or unauthorized access.

Purpose

- To safeguard human life and organizational assets.
- To ensure compliance with laws, regulations, and industry standards.
- To provide guidelines for preventing, responding to, and recovering from incidents.
- To promote a culture of awareness, responsibility, and preparedness.

2. Key Principles of Safety and Security Policy Development

Risk-Based Approach

- Identify and assess potential risks and vulnerabilities before developing policies.
- Prioritize measures based on risk severity and likelihood.

Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- Align policies with national laws, labor codes, and international standards (e.g., ISO 45001 for safety, ISO 27001 for information security).

Inclusivity and Participation

- Involve employees, management, security experts, and other stakeholders in policy formulation.

Clarity and Accessibility

- Policies should be clearly written, easily understood, and accessible to all members of the organization.

Proportionality

- Security measures should be proportionate to the level of risk neither excessive nor insufficient.

Continuous Improvement

- Policies should be reviewed and updated regularly in response to changes in threats, technology, or operations.

3. The Policy Development Process

Step 1: Needs Assessment

- **Purpose:** Determine why a policy is needed.
- **Activities:**
 - Conduct a risk assessment.
 - Identify existing safety/security gaps.
 - Review regulatory requirements and industry best practices.
 - Consult CoAs Staff, rightsholders, stakeholders and management.

Step 2: Policy Planning

- Define the **scope** (e.g., facility-wide, IT systems, transportation).
- Set **objectives** (e.g., reduce accidents by 20%, ensure 24/7 access control).
- Assign **responsibilities** for policy creation and enforcement.

Step 3: Drafting the Policy

A comprehensive safety or security policy typically includes:

- **Policy statement** – overall intent and purpose.
- **Scope and applicability** – who and what the policy covers.
- **Definitions** – key terms for clarity.
- **Roles and responsibilities** – duties of management, employees, security officers, etc.
- **Procedures** – step-by-step processes for prevention, incident response, reporting, and recovery.
- **Compliance and enforcement** – consequences for violations.
- **Review and revision mechanisms.**

Step 4: Consultation and Review

- Circulate the draft policy to stakeholders for input.
- Integrate legal, technical, and practical feedback.
- Conduct pilot testing if applicable.

Step 5: Approval and Adoption

- Obtain formal approval from top management or governing authorities.
- Communicate the policy organization-wide.

Step 6: Implementation

- Training and awareness: Educate staff on their roles and procedures.
- Resource allocation: Provide necessary tools, equipment, and budget.

- Integration: Embed safety/security protocols into daily operations.

Step 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

- Conduct regular audits, inspections, and drills.
- Use incident reports and feedback to assess effectiveness.
- Update policy as risks and technologies evolve.

4. Implementation Strategies

- **Leadership Commitment:** Management must demonstrate visible commitment through funding, communication, and modelling safe behaviour.
- **Communication and Training:** Regular workshops, e-learning, posters, and safety drills and Clear communication channels for reporting hazards or breaches.
- **Incident Management System:** Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and recording incidents and Analyze root causes and implement corrective measures.
- **Monitoring and Compliance:** Use key performance indicators (KPIs) such as: Number of incidents per quarter, Percentage of CoAs Staff, trained and audit compliance scores.
- **Documentation and Record-Keeping:** Maintain logs of inspections, accidents, and corrective actions.
- **Technology Integration:** CCTV surveillance, access control systems, alarm systems, cybersecurity tools, etc.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Fire evacuation plans, first-aid teams, disaster recovery plans, and communication protocols.

5. Key Components of a Safety and Security Policy

Component	Description	Examples
Risk Assessment	Systematic identification of potential hazards and threats.	Safety audits, vulnerability scans
Preventive Measures	Proactive steps to avoid incidents.	PPE, access controls, training
Incident Response	Immediate actions following an incident.	Fire evacuation, breach containment
Recovery Plans	Steps to resume normal operations.	Business continuity plan
Roles and Responsibilities	Defined duties of all staff.	Safety officer, IT security manager
Training & Awareness	Education and drills.	Fire drills, cybersecurity workshops
Compliance & Enforcement	Rules and sanctions.	Disciplinary procedures
Monitoring & Review	Evaluation and improvement.	Regular policy review cycles

6. Challenges in Policy Development and Implementation

- Lack of management support
- Inadequate funding and resources
- Low employee awareness or resistance to change
- Rapid technological changes
- Poor communication
- Failure to update policies regularly
- Non-compliance due to complexity or irrelevance

7. Best Practices

- Align with international standards (e.g., ISO 45001, ISO 27001, OSHA).
- Use a holistic approach integrating physical, digital, and human security.
- Conduct regular drills and simulations.
- Establish confidential reporting channels (whistle-blower systems).
- Include mental health and well-being under safety considerations.
- Collaborate with external agencies (e.g., fire services, cybersecurity firms).
- Use data-driven decision-making analyze trends and incidents statistically.

8. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- Perform periodic audits (internal and external).
- Gather feedback from CoAs' staff, rightsholder and stakeholders.
- Review policy effectiveness after incidents or regulatory changes.
- Update policy documents to reflect new risks and lessons learned.
- Encourage a safety and security culture where everyone takes responsibility.

9. Case Study Example (Illustrative)

- Organization: CoA XYZ.
Issue: Frequent physical attacks on the rightsholders.
Actions:
 - Conducted risk assessment:
 - Developed new safety and security policy with clear protocols to help rightsholders keep safe.
 - Implemented quarterly training sessions and monthly audits. Outcome: 60% reduction in accidents within one-year.

Module Six

Final Practicum / Capstone Project

- Groups design a realistic SRHR advocacy project or campaign (proposal, budget, risk assessment).
- Present mock submissions (e.g., UPR, national parliament, media press conference).
- Receive peer & facilitator feedback.
- Action plans for applying in participants' local contexts.



Conclusion

The path of human rights advocacy is one of resilience, resolve, and collective power. As women defenders and SRHR activists face an increasingly complex array of challenges, their safety, security, and wellbeing must remain at the forefront of our collective efforts. This guideline has been crafted to empower, equip, and support them as they continue to champion human rights, often at great personal risk. By adopting these strategies, we hope that defenders will feel more secure and prepared, allowing them to focus on their impactful work.

In closing, safeguarding human rights is a shared responsibility, and each one of us has a role to play. As we strive toward a future where every advocate can operate without fear, may this guideline serve as a steadfast resource. Together, we can build a safer, more supportive environment for all defenders, allowing them not only to survive but to thrive in their essential mission.



Annexes

Annex 1: Safety & Security Tips

Physical Security

Here are reliable resources to strengthen your physical security:

Organization	Resource Title	Resource Link
Front Line Defenders	Physical Security Manual for Human Rights Defenders	https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/security-manual
Protection International	Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders	https://www.protectioninternational.org/publication/protection-manual-human-rights-defenders
Peace Brigades International	Security Training Handbook	https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/security-training-handbook
HURIDOCs	Risk Assessment and Security Planning Tool	https://huridocs.org (Search for "risk and security planning")
Defend Defenders	Resource Hub for East and Horn of Africa	https://defenddefenders.org/resources
Urgent Action Fund	Safety and Security for Women Human Rights Defenders	https://urgentactionfund.org (Check "Resources" section)
Amnesty International	Guidelines on Protection of Human Rights Defenders	https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/human-rights-defenders/

Digital Security

Here are reliable resources to strengthen your digital security:

- **Access Now Digital Security Helpline:** www.accessnow.org/help (Free, 24/7 digital security support for activists and civil society)
- **Front Line Defenders Digital Security Guides:** www.frontlinedefenders.org
- **Digital SafeTea Toolkit** (for women and LGBTQ+ human rights defenders): <https://digitalsafetea.net>
- **Tactical Tech Collective** – Security in a Box: <https://securityinabox.org> (Step-by-step digital safety guides in multiple languages)

Annex 2: Wellness and Wellbeing Tips

Physical Wellbeing

a) Nutrition

- Understanding basic nutrition principles
- Meal planning and preparation tips
- Importance of hydration
- b) Exercise and Physical Activity
- Types of exercise (cardio, strength, flexibility)
- Creating a balanced workout routine
- Staying motivated and overcoming barriers

c) Sleep

- Importance of sleep for overall health
- Tips for improving sleep quality
- Creating a bedtime routine

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

a) Stress Management Techniques

- Identifying sources of stress
- Relaxation techniques (deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation)
- Time management strategies

b) Mindfulness and Meditation

- Benefits of mindfulness and meditation
- Simple mindfulness exercises
- Guided meditation practices

c) Building Resilience

- Developing a positive mindset
- Coping strategies for adversity
- Seeking professional help when needed

Social Wellbeing

a) Building and Maintaining Healthy Relationships

- Effective communication skills
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Importance of empathy and active listening

b) Effective Communication Skills

- Verbal and non-verbal communication
- Assertiveness training
- Giving and receiving feedback

c) Community Involvement

- Benefits of social engagement
- Finding volunteer opportunities
- Creating a support network

Occupational Wellbeing

a) Work-Life Balance

- Setting boundaries between work and personal life
- Time management techniques
- Prioritizing self-care

b) Career Development

- Setting career goals
- Continuous learning and skill development
- Seeking mentorship and guidance

c) Managing Workplace Stress

- Identifying stressors in the workplace
- Strategies for coping with job-related stress
- Creating a supportive work environment

Spiritual Wellbeing

a) Exploring Personal Values

- Identifying core values
- Aligning actions with values
- Reflecting on personal beliefs and practices

b) Practicing Gratitude

- Benefits of gratitude for wellbeing
- Daily gratitude practices
- Gratitude journaling

c) Finding Purpose and Meaning

- Exploring passions and interests
- Setting meaningful goals
- Engaging in activities that bring joy and fulfillment

Environmental Wellbeing

a) Creating a Healthy Living Environment

- Importance of a clean and organized space
- Reducing environmental stressors
- Creating a relaxing home atmosphere

b) Sustainable Living Practices

- Reducing waste and conserving resources
- Eco-friendly habits
- Supporting sustainable initiatives

Annex 3: Practical Activities and Exercises

1. Guided Meditations and exercises by an expert

- Short and long meditation scripts
- Techniques for relaxation and focus

2. Journaling

- Reflective questions for self-discovery
- Goal-setting exercises
- Gratitude and positivity prompts

3. Group Activities

- Team-building exercises
- Discussion topics for group sessions
- Community service projects

4. Develop a reading culture

- Books (fiction, non-fictional) that help you relax
- Articles on wellness and wellbeing
- Websites that are interesting to you and provide/open up opportunities for you

5. Use Apps and online Tools

- Wellness and fitness apps
- Meditation and mindfulness tools
- Habit tracking and goal-setting apps

6. Join support Groups and Organizations

- Local and online support groups
- Professional organizations related to wellness
- Contact information for counseling and mental health services
- Jointly, track goals and achievements and monitor changes in wellbeing
- Add templates for security planning, threat analysis, incident mapping etc.



