

HARMFUL PRACTICE CASE STUDIES: SPOTLIGHTING NUANCES AND PRACTICE POINTS

Co Action Hub



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SARA*

SARA* has been referred to MARAC under the category of professional judgement by a local by and for agency after they assessed her as being at high risk of domestic abuse, and 'honour' based abuse and having been subject to a forced marriage.

Sara was recently assaulted by her husband and would like to leave him. She has disclosed to her case worker that she was pressured by her family to marry her husband 2 years ago, although everything was fine until he brought her here last year. Since then he has physically and sexually assaulted her on numerous occasions. Sara is unsure whether she has been raped because they are married and he has told her that she must have sex with him as she is his wife. He has also told her that he will send her back home if he is not happy with her. She is not allowed any access to money. She is on a spousal visa and is fearful of being sent back to her country where many of the family reside, although some are also in the UK. She has not told her family what is happening as her sister previously tried to leave her husband and their father told her that she needs to make her marriage 'work' and to have children.

Sara does not speak English but the by and for agency are able to engage with her in her own language. The agency has advised her on her options and will be providing ongoing support.

The by and for agency are funded to work across a number of London boroughs, and unfortunately the MARAC takes place on the same day as two other MARAC meetings, as well as a daily MARAC so the worker does not have capacity to attend. The agency is also supporting clients at external appointments and another client has called that day for support following a serious incident. As a result the agency send a written update. No one else at the meeting has any information about Sara or her husband and the discussion is very brief and focuses primarily on the risk from the husband.

* The asterisk indicates anonymization of the name to maintain confidentiality of information and identity of the person

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The chair and co-ordinator are unhappy that the agency have not attended the meeting, and there is a feeling in the room that they are unreliable. No actions are created.

PRACTICE POINTS

- Harmful practices survivors may experience a range of barriers including English language barriers, fear of being deported, and fear of police or other statutory agencies.
- Harmful practices cases may be complex, involving more than one perpetrator. All perpetrators should be discussed in order to effectively manage risk.
- For MARACs to be effective by and for agencies must be adequately funded to be able to attend and engage meaningfully.
- The MARAC model requires all agencies to contribute to risk reduction for all victim/ survivors.
- MARAC chairs and co-ordinators should consider how they work collaboratively with agencies to ensure that risk is reduced for all victim/ survivors.