

Interview Procedure for Victim-Survivors

This interview is focused on **smart devices** and how they are being used against victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). Before starting the interview, it's very important to know that there is no right or wrong answer for any of the questions. We are only interested in your experiences and your honest opinion. So feel free to add as many points as you like to the questions, and please ask me whatever questions you have as we go. Please be advised that we may not be able to give advice on your specific situation; we are mainly here to learn from you and your experience.

I understand this may be a very difficult conversation for you to engage in and I really appreciate any information you are able to provide. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable and if at any time you would like to stop participating for any reason you are able to do so. You will still be compensated the full amount. We'll appreciate any input you can give us.

Technical Background & Context

1. How comfortable are you with technology? Do you have a technical background?
2. What smart devices do you currently have at home?
 - a. [If none] Have you had any smart home devices in the past? Or do you often interact with someone else's smart devices, like a partner or friend?

Experience with Smart Device Abuse

3. Have you ever felt that a partner was using smart home devices against you?

Characterizing the abuse

- a. Which devices were involved in the abusive situation?
 - i. Can you remember the specific device name (e.g., Simplisafe alarm system)?
- b. How were the devices used against you?
- c. Is this happening now, or did it happen in the past?

Abuse detection

- d. What initially made you suspicious about these devices?
 - i. Were there any signs related to the device or the account?
 - ii. Were there any signs related to your partner or other household members?

Contextual details

- e. Was the partner living with you in the same household at the time?
 - i. [If no] How did the partner have access to the device?
 - ii. [If not ongoing] Is the partner living with you now?
- f. Why were those devices purchased? Who purchased and installed the devices?
- g. Where in the house were those devices? Who decided to place them there and why?
- h. How did you feel about these devices when they were first bought/installed? Why?
- i. How much control do you feel like you have over the devices and their settings?
- j. How much control do you feel like your partner has over the devices and their settings?
- k. Does the partner have a background in technology? What is it?

Abuse Mitigation

Taking action

- 6. When you first realized your partner might be using [name of the device] against you, were you able to take any action?
 - a. [If **yes**] What actions did you take? What specific challenges did you face while taking those actions? What were the results of the actions you took?
 - b. [If **not**] Why not? What were the barriers? Is there anything you considered trying?
- 7. [If ongoing] Have you considered getting rid of the devices? What were your reasons for keeping them?
- 8. [If **not** ongoing] Do you still have these smart home devices?
 - a. Do you believe that your abuser might still have physical or remote access to the devices you are concerned about? Why?
 - b. [If **not**] Where are the devices now? For how long did you have the devices?

Finding help

- 9. Did you ask anyone for help? [If not] Why not?
 - a. Who did you ask for help? How did you decide who to ask for help?
 - b. What types of help were you looking for?
 - c. Did the information they provided help you in any way? How?
 - d. Were there any other people or groups you wanted to contact, but you were not able to do so? Why not?
- 10. Did you search online for help with the situation? [If not] Why not?
 - a. What types of information were you looking for?
 - b. Did you find anything helpful?
 - c. Did the information you found lead you to take any actions? What were those actions?
- 11. Did you consider seeking legal help with the situation? [If not] Why not?
 - a. Was law enforcement able to help?

Perceptions & Recommendations

Perception of smart devices

12. Before you experienced this abusive behavior, how did you feel about smart devices in general?
13. After experiencing this abusive behavior, has your opinion of smart devices changed at all? How?
14. Have any smart devices helped you in any way while you were going through the abusive experience?
15. Do you think any other smart home devices *could [have]* help[ed] you?

Advice

16. Looking back on this experience, is there any advice you would give people who are in similar situations? What worked or didn't work for you?
17. In your opinion, what should policymakers, governments, law enforcement, and device manufacturers (or other similar groups) do to prevent this abuse, or to help survivors?
18. Do you have any questions for me? Do you have any comments on the interview procedure?

Demographics (on paper)

Survivor Demographics

19. Gender, race, age, employment status, income group, native language
20. Do you have any children? Does your partner share custody of any of your children?
21. What is your living situation? (Lives in shelter, lives with abuser, does not live with abuser)

Abuser Demographics

18. What is your relationship with the [abusive] partner?
19. Partner's gender, race, age, employment status, native language

Interview Procedure for Advocates

This interview is focused on **smart devices** and how they are being used against victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). When we talk about smart devices, that can mean a lot of different things, so we made this printout with some of the more common ones to help jog your memory. Basically, we are interested in hearing about cases you have seen where any electronic device was used against the survivor, **except smartphones, tablets, and laptops**. At any point during the interview, if you are not sure whether something counts as a smart device, just ask.

There is no right or wrong answer for any of the questions we will discuss during the interview, so feel free to add as many points as you like, and if there is any ambiguity at any point of the interview, please ask. Please note that we are still researching how to help survivors of technology abuse, so at this point, we will not be able to give definitive advice. Your input will be very helpful to us in designing tools and guides to help the survivors of IPV.

Advocate's experience

1. What is your current role? What does that entail?
2. How long have you been working with IPV survivors?
3. How many clients do you work with per month, roughly?
4. How comfortable are you with technology? Do you have a technical background?

Clients they have worked with

Frequency of tech-abuse

5. How often do you come across clients who are concerned about technology?
6. How often do you come across clients who are concerned specifically about smart devices, not including phones, tablets, or laptops?

Overview of smart home abuse they have seen

7. What types of smart devices are clients concerned about?
8. In what ways do clients believe that these devices are being used against them?
 - a. Was it tracking, spying, harassment, etc?
 - b. How was the abuser controlling the device (e.g., via a mobile app)?
9. Can you think of any cases where smart home devices helped a client? How so?

Contextual Information

Repeat this section for every case or type of case (e.g., trackers in cars as a repeating theme) the advocate mentioned in the previous section.

10. Is this case ongoing?
11. Is/was the client living with the abuser?
12. Who owns these devices, the client or the abuser? Or are they shared?
13. How much control do clients believe they have over these devices?
14. Did clients know the device was there before they realized it was being used against them? Or were these devices hidden from the client?
15. How did the clients find out or suspect that the devices were being used against them?
 - a. Were your clients ever able to confirm that the smart devices were being used to spy on or harass them?
16. After finding out about the problem, what steps did the client take to mitigate their concern?
 - a. For example, who did they contact? How did they try to protect themselves?
 - b. Were these steps effective in mitigating the abuse?
 - c. What barriers did the client face in dealing with the situation?

Overall recommendations

17. In your opinion, considering the whole timeline of these smart device abuses, what could clients do to protect themselves?
 - a. ...when they are deciding whether to purchase a device, or which one to purchase?
 - b. ...when they are living with a device in their home (pre-abuse)?
 - c. ...when they are experiencing abuse via a smart device?

Preparedness to help victims

18. When you encounter cases like this related to smart home abuse, how prepared do you feel to help the client?
 - a. What about this type of case makes it difficult to help with?
 - b. Do you feel the same with cases involving other technology, like smartphones, laptops, or tablets?
19. When you encounter a case like this, what resources do you turn to for help?
 - a. Are those resources usually helpful? Why or why not?
20. Are there resources that you would like to have access to in order to help clients, which you currently don't?

Opinions on smart devices

21. Do you have any smart devices?
 - a. [yes] What are they? What was your motivation for getting them?
 - b. [no] Would you like to have any smart devices?
 22. How do you feel about smart devices in general?
 23. Has your opinion of smart devices changed after talking to clients who have experienced smart home abuse? How has it changed?
 24. In your opinion, what should policymakers, governments, law enforcement, and device manufacturers (or other similar groups) do to prevent this abuse, or to help victims?
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Final thoughts

25. Do you think there are any other people we should talk to about this study? For example, anyone at the VSP who has also worked with survivors of smart home abuse.
26. We are also interviewing survivors. Do you think any client of yours would like to talk to us about their experience with smart home abuse?
 - a. If yes, would you be comfortable arranging an interview with them? We do not want to learn the client's identity as per our study protocol.
27. Anything else you would like to add?
28. Do you have any feedback about the interview?

Demographics (on laptop)

14. Gender, Race, Age, Education, Native language