

Speak Out

**A Sexual Gender-based Violence
PREVENTION RESOURCE**

BY LYDIA HOUSE INTERNATIONAL





Speak Out: An SGBV Prevention Program

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CONTENT + DEVELOPMENT

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Speak Out

AN SGBV PREVENTION PROGRAM

PUBLISHED BY



00. Why do we need SGBV Prevention?

1 in 3

**women and girls
worldwide**

Statistics and facts

WORLDWIDE

- More than 1 in 3 women (globally) have been victims of sexual or physical violence (that's over 730 million women)
- 60-75% of women worldwide report being sexually harassed or feeling unsafe in public spaces
- Over 40 countries currently have *no laws* against domestic violence (meaning it is not considered a crime)
- 1 in 4 victims of human trafficking are children
- 98% of sex trafficking victims are women and girls

❖ ***Why do SGBV perpetrators walk free?***

❖ Why don't more victims report?

Children and women are often told:

- to be quiet about SGBV (it's private)
- not to spoil the reputation of a man who abused them
- threats from the man's family if they tell
- people will tarnish the girl's reputation if she tells

***When a sexual assault has occurred,
the person who deserves protection is the victim,
NOT the perpetrator.***

***When we tell a victim of SGBV to be
quiet about their abuse, we are
protecting the abuser!***



Our worldview must shift from one of perpetrator privilege to victim advocacy.

People who are sexually assaulted often do not report the crime or seek services due to the stigma and shame attached to the issue, or because they have been pressured to keep silent about the sexual assault in order to protect the reputation of the perpetrator.

If we want to work to end sexual and gender-based violence, we must begin by refusing to protect the aggressors.

01. What is Sexual Gender-Based Violence?

SGBV refers to harm or threat of harm perpetrated against a person based on her/his gender. It is rooted in unequal power relationships between men and women; thus, women are more commonly affected. It is often used interchangeably with 'violence against women' and can include sexual, physical, economic and psychological abuse. SGBV manifests in various forms including physical, emotional and sexual violence, sexual exploitation, discrimination and harassment.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: What is the World Bank doing and what have we learned?. A. Willman, C. Corman. World Bank, 2013.

Physical

- Rape
- Intimate Partner Rape
- Sexual Extortion (such as sex-for-grades)
- Sexual Exploitation
- Sex Trafficking
- Physical Harassment
- FGM

Non-Physical

- Verbal harassment
- Voyeurism/Exhibition
- Forced use of pornography
- Virtual harassment

Sexual Abuse

occurs anytime someone who is weaker or vulnerable is taken advantage of or manipulated and used for the sexual stimulation of an older, stronger, or more influential person.

Consent

Consent is **specific**, meaning that consent to one act does not imply consent to others, and **reversible**, meaning that it can be revoked at any time.

- UN Women

Consent cannot be given by a person who is **under the age of 18, extremely intoxicated, unconscious, asleep, or has a developmental disability that significantly impairs decision-making.**

By law, all persons under age 18 are considered children, and therefore cannot consent regardless of their experiences or what they communicate. **Any sexual act by an adult with an underage person is considered sexual abuse.**

Sexual activity "agreed to" under duress because of coercion, intimidation, threats, or harassment is **not consensual** and is considered sexual violence.

- USAid YouthPower Learning



02. Myths vs Facts

MYTHS

It is a man's right to have sex with his wife or partner whenever he wants.

When a child is sexually abused by a family member or community leader, they should keep quiet and not spoil his reputation.

If a man provides a girl with school fees, funds for food, child support, etc, then she owes him sexual favors.

Only females can be sexually assaulted.

Girls who dress like adults, act in a provocative way, or are known to be sexually active are inviting sexual attention or assault.

Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers.

NO can sometimes mean YES: women sometimes play 'hard to get.'

FACTS

Forcing any woman to perform sexual acts when she does not explicitly consent is a sexual assault.

A victim of sexual assault should never be silenced, and the perpetrator should always be brought to justice.

Providing help or gifts for someone does NOT entitle someone to sex. This is exploitation. Sex without real consent is a sexual assault.

Both males and females can be sexually assaulted; and both deserve to be believed and protected.

A child's appearance /behavior does not excuse sexual abuse. A child is unable to consent to sexual activity no matter how they dress or act.

8 out of 10 victims of sexual assault are assaulted by someone they know.

No means NO!

03. After-Effects of SGBV for Survivors

Physical

- Injury
- STIs
- Pregnancy
- Fistula
- Chronic pain
- Sleeping/eating disorders
- Death

Just 5 minutes of sexual abuse can cause *LIFELONG* damage to a victim of SGBV.

Psychosocial

- Depression
- Suicidal feelings
- Shame, self-blame
- Anxiety and PTSD
- Rage
- Mental disability, memory loss

Social

- Victim-blaming, shame
- Silencing and rejection
- Forced marriage
- Substance abuse
- Vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation

04. Recognizing Perpetrators of SGBV

*The most common locations where SGBV occurs are **home and school**.*

Perpetrators may be people with good reputations, status, and position. They use their social privilege as an opportunity to exploit and victimize women and children. Their social position is used as a shield when they are accused.

99%

of SGBV perpetrators are male, regardless of victim.

8 out of 10 abusers know their victims

- *Relatives*
- *Friends*
- *Teachers*
- *Pastors or Imams*
- *Peer, sibling, cousin*

RED FLAGS:

- Special attention
- Gifts, secrets
- Free childcare/ assistance
- Prior accusation/ suspicion
- Preferential to one child

A photograph of a woman with dark skin and short hair, smiling and holding a young child. The woman is wearing a patterned blue and white dress. The child is wearing a striped shirt. They are standing in front of a wooden structure with a thatched roof.

05. Recognizing the Victims and Vulnerable

Physical

- Bruises, cuts, swelling (especially untreated)
- Disordered appearance, unusually bad hygiene
- STIs, thrush, urinary infections
- Pain with urination
- Pregnancy

Social + Behavioral

- Fearfulness, flinching
- Socially withdrawn
- Regressive behaviors (thumb-sucking, bed wetting, soiling self)
- Rage, sadness
- Acting out, speaking about sexual things at a young age
- Fear or resistance to specific persons or places
- Sudden terror of school or other routine places

Vulnerability

- Signs of neglect, often seen alone
- Extreme poverty, food/shelter instability
- Dropping from school
- Sent to work at a young age
- Living with relatives as a servant/worker

We have a responsibility to

SPEAK OUT

*when we see these warning signs or learn
of SGBV that is occurring in our community.*



06. How to Respond to SGBV Reporting

When a person, *especially a child*, chooses to tell you that they have been (or are being) sexually abused, the **FIRST** and **MOST IMPORTANT** things you must say are:

***I believe you
It's not your fault***

How you react to a victim may be crucial to their ability to heal.
Help them realize they are not to blame by how you respond:

What you are responsible for:

Listening | Comforting | Supporting

DO:

- ✓ Stay Calm (calm face, controlled)
- ✓ Full attention
- ✓ Be patient
- ✓ Let the person use their own words
- ✓ Tell them what you will do next



What you are *NOT* responsible for:

Investigating | Interrogating | Judging

DO NOT:

- X Ask leading questions
- X Interrogate the victim or attempt to “investigate” the event
- X Try to “get to the bottom” of what happened
- X Make the person feel they could have prevented it
- X Make promises you can’t keep
- X Confront the perpetrator

REMEMBER:

***I believe you
It’s not your fault***

- It is natural to feel rage, disgust, or horror when hearing a firsthand report of SGBV. But remember that your body language and reactions are facing the *victim*.
- The last thing you want is to make the *victim* feel you are disgusted or horrified by *them*.
- Self-control is **essential** to protecting the future healing of a victim who reports SGBV to you.

07. What Can We Do to prevent SGBV?

The ***prevalence of GBV results*** directly from inequalities in our patriarchal society, which are upheld as "***traditions.***"

When a man sexually assaults a woman or child, he may be able to use his privilege to avoid being brought to justice, while the victim is told to keep silent since she would be upsetting the social "status quo" by accusing the man and bringing him down.

Our "traditions" lead to an inversion of justice: women and children are victimized, and then told to keep silent and "protect" the reputation of a violent perpetrator, who is upheld as a figure to be respected.

There is no greater injustice than protecting a perpetrator and punishing a victim.

Reconsider Your Views

❖ ***Gender roles + Acceptable Behavior***

- Do you have different expectations from girls than from boys?
- Do you consider some tasks to be “man’s work” or “women’s work”?
- Do you expect girls to guard their sexuality, but not boys?
- Do you tolerate sexual harassment from boys as “natural” behavior?
- Do you excuse aggressive behavior in boys?



Educate Yourself + Others

- Hold a ***SPEAK OUT*** session
- Attend SGBV training events
- Educate your children/teenagers about their rights, the rights of others, and ***CONSENT***
- Set goals for your home, community, or organization to be an environment that makes at-risk people and children feel safe to report SGBV or suspicious behavior
- Create a zero-tolerance policy for SGBV in your home, community, or organization

08. Create an SGBV Reporting Protocol

➤ **Preventative Rules (examples)**

- 2 Adults rule
- No corporal punishment, public humiliation
- No child alone
- No verbal harassment, vulgar joking, unwanted touching
- Open-door meetings rule
- Mandatory GBV education for all staff/ volunteers

What if we could create a professional / social culture that is part of the solution instead of part of the problem?

➤ **Enforcement**

- Zero-tolerance policy
- 2 Marshals (at least one female) to manage complaints
- Indirect reporting option (email, phone number)
- Peer network with youth leaders
- Make a plan: disciplinary actions, hearings, policies
- **Protect the victim/ complainant!**
- Emergency protocols (know the procedures)
- Create a Policy Agreement (see Appendix A)

Demonstrate that you work to protect the victims and to expose and remove the perpetrator.

10. Appendix A

SAMPLE SGBV PREVENTION POLICY

RULES TO HELP PREVENT/REDUCE SGBV

These rules are meant to protect the vulnerable in our organization and those it serves. Note that these rules also protect staff members in two ways: 1) they protect potentially vulnerable staff members from harassment and assault, and 2) they protect all staff members from being misunderstood or wrongly suspected/accused of impropriety. If we all abide by these rules, there is less room for interpretation of events since more people will be present.

- “Two adults” rule: When separated from their group, a child or children may not ever be alone with less than 2 adults at a time. If possible, at least one of these two adults should be female.
- When meetings take place between 2 adults alone (especially between a man and woman), the doors to the room must remain open. If confidentiality is a concern and the door must be closed, there should be a designated third party present – preferably a woman if one of the two parties is female.
- Verbal harassment, and sexually inappropriate language, joking, storytelling will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Not only should no staff member engage in this type of speech, but all staff have a responsibility to stop it if they hear others engaging in it.
- Corporal punishment [hitting, pushing, shoving, grabbing, dragging] or verbal abuse [screaming, using belittling language] will NEVER be tolerated from staff or administration toward children under any circumstances.
- Children (persons under 18 years old) should under no circumstances be left alone, sent out on an errand alone, or sent home alone separate from their group. If they are accompanied by an adult staff member, remember there must be more than one adult with them.

PROTOCOLS FOR REPORTING OF COMPLAINTS AND VIOLATIONS

- Any and all complaints about SGBV or any kind of sexual/verbal harassment will be taken very seriously and investigated.
 - We have 2 designated “Marshals,” to whom SGBV and harassment complaints should be directed. These two persons are: [insert names of the marshals, note that at least one must be a female and not related to the other in any way].
 - If you wish to report an incident, or suspicion of an incident, or if you feel you may be in danger, select one of these Marshals whom you trust, and report it to her, either in person or in writing, or both.
 - Note that, if you report, you may choose how much information you wish to reveal.
 - Indirect reporting option: if you do not feel able to speak to someone face-to-face, but you wish to report an incident, you may report anonymously through [insert pathway here: email, messaging, anonymous written, etc]
- ### RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

- If a staff member is accused of a violation involving SGBV/harassment, the case will be referred to the Marshals and [insert director’s name(s) or Human Resources staff member]. The complaint will be considered and taken very seriously. Those reviewing the complaint will determine if it is credible.
- We reserve the right to terminate employment/ organizational involvement of any person, even if the complaint against them cannot be “proven,” or no legal action is taken.
- If a complaint is deemed credible, the accused party will be terminated. This does not automatically mean they will be reported to the local authorities. This will be further determined by all involved parties.
- If the person accused of violation is a director or a Marshal, another party will be appointed to oversee the case, and instructed not to consider the status of the person in question. All of the same protocols will apply to them.
- Records will be kept of all complaints, regardless of whether any action was taken.
- If a complaint is made concerning someone against whom there is already another complaint, that person will be terminated. This is a safety measure for the sake of the organization as much as for the alleged victims.
- If a complaint is made against a minor (person under age 18): the Marshals and [director, principal, etc] will confront the accused minor, with his legal guardian(s), about the incident. NOTE: the person who filed the complaint will not be present and must not experience harassment as a result of lodging the complaint.
- If the reporter or her family experience harassment, threats, or any other harm as a result of coming forward with the complaint, a separate case may be opened to deal with this.
- If the complaint is found to be credible, the accused minor will be dismissed from our program, regardless of whether legal action is taken.
- I have read and understood all the rules and protocols outlined in this document. I understand that if I am found in violation of any of these protocols, my employment/volunteer position could be terminated. I agree to abide by, and do my best to help enforce these regulations, for the good of all who are involved with my organization. I understand that if I do not comply, my position may be terminated.

•Signature of staff member/ volunteer: _____ Date: _____

•Witness: _____

This page is left blank for you to make note of local resources for SGBV survivors and reporting in your area.

**Did you learn something new today?
Did your views on SGBV change?**

**PLEASE SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
so we can help others:**



Scan the QR code to complete a quick survey

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SPEAK OUT for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.
SPEAK OUT, judge righteously, defend the
rights of the poor and needy.
- Proverbs 31:8-9



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