

Information about

Gender-based Violence and Where to get help



2nd Edition



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HURINET**
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 **DIGNITY**
DANISH INSTITUTE AGAINST TORTURE

Sometimes when violence erupts in the home, the woman is kicked out together with the children and the man does not follow up on the wellbeing of the children. This forces some women to persevere.

Chief

I stayed due to culture and threats. He then abandoned me and the children after I delivered. Now I found help through a community health volunteer and am living free of his violence with my children.

Survivor of gender-based violence

What is gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of societal or cultural roles attributed to being Female or Male. It is a grave violation of a person's human right, no matter when, where, or how it takes place. It can affect men, women and children. Gender-based violence can take many forms:



Physical Violence

Any act which causes bodily harm as a result of physical force e.g. pushing, hitting, slapping, serious and minor assault.

Psychological / Emotional Violence

Any act which causes mental distress or harm to an individual e.g. humiliation, insults, threats, limiting contact with others, financial control, limiting access to medical or other services.



Reporting intimate partner violence¹ especially among men is usually met with ridicule from people in the society. (See **pg 13** for safe reporting platforms).

Sexual Violence

Any sexual act or attempt committed against someone without their consent using coercion or force, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim e.g., sexual assault, rape, indecent acts like touch etc.



¹Intimate partner violence is domestic violence by a partner/spouse



Anyone can be a target of gender-based violence, however, around the world, women and girls are often more likely to be affected. Statistics from the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) indicate that **approximately 40% of Kenyan women have experienced at least one episode of intimate partner violence.**

Intimate partner violence (e.g. husband, boyfriend), is one of the most common forms of violence affecting women and their children.

Other examples of violence include:

- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** - the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

- **Economic Violence** - is control over financial resources by a partner e.g. denying your partner from working when they want to. A recent study (MIDRIFT & DIGNITY, 2022) also shows that economic violence is when one refuses to provide basic necessities to the family when they are able to.
- **Child marriage/early marriage** - is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age. It is a form of forced marriage, given that one and/or both parties have not expressed full, free and informed consent.

What can cause gender-based violence?

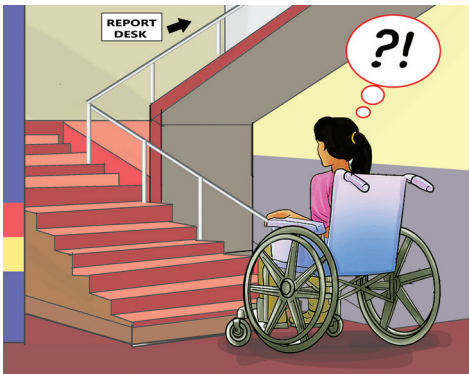
According to the Root Causes of GBV Study by MIDRIFT & DIGNITY in 2022 found that : Gender based violence is caused by: cultural beliefs and acceptance of violence, barriers in reporting GBV and limited access to justice, normalization of intimate partner violence, beliefs on masculinity, gender norms and power imbalance.

The risk of violence can be exacerbated if someone:

- Has witnessed and/or been exposed to violence as a child.
- Has unhealed trauma.
- Are living in conditions of difficulty with high levels of stress and poverty.
- When the root causes of violence are not addressed.
- Use and abuse of alcohol and/or drugs.

Barriers to reporting GBV cases

- Structural barriers (e.g. stairs may affect wheelchair users, lack of safe spaces for reporting /lack of confidentiality & distance to accessing services)
- Communication barriers (e.g. language, lack of information on procedures of reporting)
- Attitudinal barriers like stigma, ridicule & discrimination from people.
- Systemic barriers (financial, poor evidence preservation, threats and intimidation to survivors and/or witnesses etc.)



Persons with Disabilities (Physical, Hearing, Speech, Visual and Intellectual impairments) have a right to access services without any barrier.



Did you know that you can apply for waiver services in the hospital if you are unable to pay for P3² ?

² A P3 form is a legal document produced for court. P3 forms are available for free online. At the police station a fee is charged for printing/photocopying. A medical examination fee is charged at the hospital.

Resolving cases at the household level



- Kangaroo courts³ are common in the community especially in resolving domestic violence cases.
- Let's encourage use of formal Judicial processes to resolve GBV cases (e.g police stations, law courts and children's office).

Experiences of Children

- Children are at risk of sexual abuse, child labor and parental neglect.
- Let's educate our children on age - appropriate sex education and meaning of consent.
- Create a safe space for children to talk about boundaries around sex as well as safe reporting of abuses.
- Ensure perpetrators are held accountable.



³ Unofficial court held by a group of people in the community. The process does not include evidence & may ignore due process and come to a predetermined conclusion

How can gender-based violence affect someone's mental health?

Gender-based violence can cause serious physical injuries and sometimes even result in death. It can have long-term sexual and reproductive health consequences including sexually transmitted infections, fistula, unwanted pregnancies (risk with unsafe abortion) as well as complications with pregnancies.

Despite the physical health consequences, violence can also severely affect the mental well-being of survivors and their family members. It can cause:

Stress and Anxiety - with symptoms such as:

- Experience of stress, "having too many thoughts" or worries
- Feeling fear, worry and uneasiness
- Feeling anxious, restless or alert
- Feeling tension or pain in the body
- Difficulty sleeping
- Experiencing increase in heartbeat or breathing very quickly



Feeling hopelessness/despair or unhappiness-with symptoms such as:

- Sad/low mood, feeling down, or feeling numb
- Loss of appetite or eating too much
- Loss of interest or withdrawing from chores or activities you used to do or find pleasure in
- Isolation or withdrawing socially, feeling lonely or detached from others, not engaging as usual in family and community
- Suicidal thoughts

Experiencing gender-based violence can also cause stigma and shame from one's family and the community including

- Victim blaming for causing the violence e.g. not being a good partner and deserving of the violence, violence as a form of discipline, rape culture e.g. blaming women for being raped.
- Blaming oneself for the violence e.g. the survivor feels that it is their own fault that they are experiencing violence.
- Loss of social support network
- Stigmatization and ostracization by family and the community

Sometimes, stigma and blame also happen if a survivor chooses to stay in a violent relationship. **Whatever, the choice - the violence is never the survivor's fault**



Where can you seek help in your community?

If you have experienced gender-based violence, it is possible to get help. You can go to:

County Health Facilities

Contact Persons:

- Clinical Officer
- Community Health Extension Worker (CHEW)
- Community Health Volunteers (CHVs)

Nairobi Women's Hospitals across the Country

Contact:

- Counselling Psychologist

Level 5 Hospitals:

- Gender-Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC)
- The Youth-Friendly Centre

Level 4 Hospitals:

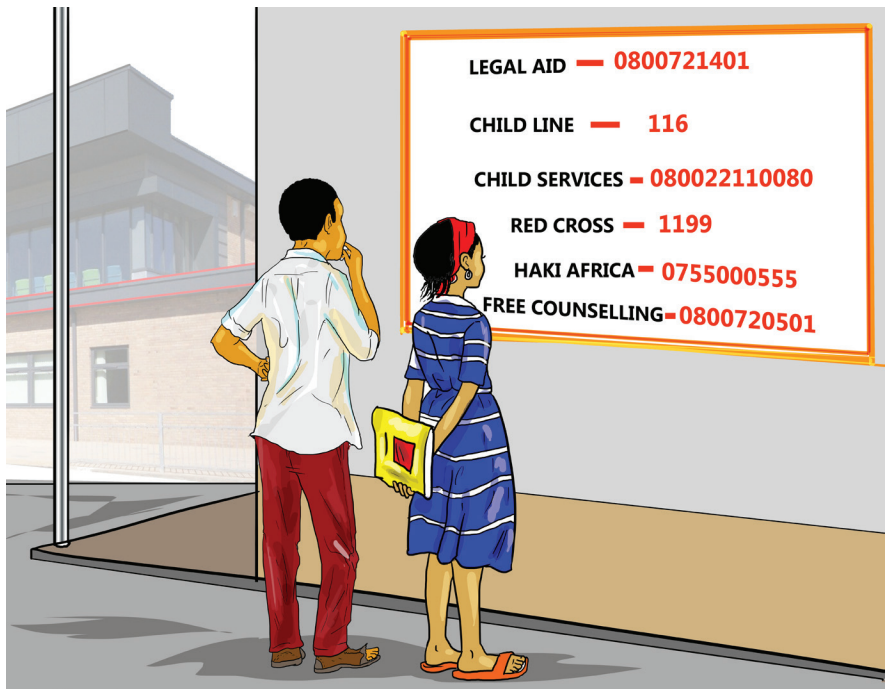
- Youth-Friendly Centre

Additional places

- **Police stations** near you where there are gender desks specifically to handle gender-based violence.
- Safe spaces or **Rescue centers**

Where can you get help/advice ?

When a community member experiences GBV, you can get services such as: Free counselling, Legal aid, Rescue Services and Child protection services etc. All listed hotlines are toll free and confidential.



You can also contact the following service providers.

**Healthcare Assistance Kenya(HAK)
Gender-Based Violence Hotline**
Tel : 1195 (Toll Free)

The hotline is linked to local facilities that provide medical treatment and prevention of infections, legal aid and rescue centers. It also offers immediate 24-hour confidential tele-counselling and coordination of rescue missions through SMS system for survivors .

Police Gender Based Violence Hotline
Tel : 0800730999 (Toll Free)

Liverpool VCT one2one youth Hotline
Tel : 1190 (Toll Free)
www.lvcthealth.org

Youth hotline provides free information on sexual reproductive health and rights

Aunty Jane Hotline
Tel: 0800-721 530 (Toll Free)
www.auntjane.org

Information on sexual & reproductive health.

MIDRIFT HURINET
Referral to relevant service providers
(Not toll Free)
Tel: 0702-520 894



Where can you get help/advice ?



One on one with a trained counselor/ Community Health Volunteer or talk to someone you trust like family member or friend.

Survivors can join a support group to share experiences with other survivors. Group therapy helps healing and coping for most people.

The mental health and wellbeing of a survivor of violence is important.





“

The counselling services helped me to reflect on my life and make important decisions which freed me from my painful past relationship. Now I am firmly in control of my life.

Survivor of gender-based violence

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Five tips to support someone experiencing gender-based violence

1. Never blame the survivor for what happened- it is never the survivors fault.
2. Be supportive i.e., by actively listening to the person.
3. Keep regular contact with the person to check if they are safe. If you communicate with the person, make sure it is in a safe way where the abuser cannot follow the communication.
4. Avoid spreading rumors or telling others about the violence without consent from the person.
5. If the survivor has expressed the need for help, assist the survivor locate and access resources/support in the community.



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