



# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Gender-Based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. Gender-based violence includes sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. It also includes threats of violence, coercion and manipulation.

It is sometimes used interchangeably with Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), is any harmful act of sexual,

physical, psychological, mental, and emotional abuse that is perpetrated against a person's will, and it is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females.

It is a public health issue, as well as a barrier to public, societal, governmental, and economic participation. Although research has shown that women are more affected than men, both men and women can be victims of GBV. There are various forms of gender-based violence. It could be;

			
Sexual Violence	Harmful Traditional Practices	Physical Violence	Emotional/Psychological Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Rape and marital rape</li> <li>ii. Child sexual abuse, defilement, and incest</li> <li>iii. Sexual abuse</li> <li>iv. Forced sodomy/anal rape</li> <li>v. Forced prostitution</li> <li>vi. Sexual harassment</li> <li>vii. Sexual exploitation</li> <li>viii. Sexual violence as a weapon of war and torture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Female genital mutilation (FGM)</li> <li>ii. Early marriage</li> <li>iii. Forced marriage</li> <li>iv. Honour killing and maiming</li> <li>v. Infanticide and/or neglect</li> <li>vi. Denial of education for girls or women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Physical Assault including wife battery</li> <li>ii. Slavery</li> <li>iii. Destruction of properties</li> <li>iv. Corporal Punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Abuse/Humiliation</li> <li>ii. Confinement</li> <li>iii. Bullying, Belittling, humiliating, or undermining an individual's sense of self-worth/self-esteem (e.g., constant criticism, verbal insults, and name-calling, etc.).</li> </ul>

## Socio-Economic Violence

i. Discrimination and/or denial of opportunities, services

ii. Financial Abuse



iii. Trafficking in persons

iv. Obstructive legislative practice

## Offering Psychosocial First-Aid

Psychosocial First-Aid (PFA) is a humane, supportive response to a fellow human being who is suffering and in need of support. It is provided in response to emergency situations arising as a result of emotional or psychological injuries before expert medical care is sought.

You play a very important role in your community as a

religious leader in addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). As a person of influence, people within your congregation will naturally gravitate to you for support, guidance and help, thus you can offer psychosocial first-aid to those in need.

In trying to meet the needs of members who have experienced any form of gender-based violence, here are some points to note.

## Helping a survivor of GBV (What Not To Do)

- ✗ Do not judge the survivor. Don't judge what they have or haven't done.
- ✗ Do not pressure survivors to tell their story.
- ✗ Do not interrupt or rush someone's story (Be patient, don't speak too rapidly).
- ✗ Do not touch the person if you're not sure it is appropriate to do so.
- ✗ Do not tell them someone else's story.
- ✗ Do not talk about your own troubles.
- ✗ Do not give false promises or false reassurances.
- ✗ Do not think and act as if you must solve all the person's problems for them.

## Helping a survivor of GBV (Things to say and Do)

- ✗ Try to find a quiet place to talk and minimize distractions.
- ✗ Be calm and show understanding.
- ✗ Acknowledge how they are feeling.
- ✗ Respect the person's privacy and confidentiality.
- ✗ Let them know you're listening; nod your head in understanding.
- ✗ Give information in a way the person can understand- Use simple language.
- ✗ Know when to refer – You cannot solve everyone's problem. When a survivor needs professional help, notify the appropriate professionals or organisations as quickly as possible.

## What To Do As A Religious Leader

Religious leaders play a vital role in the campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls.

As a religious leader, you can;

- ✗ Get enlightened about the forms and causes of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)/Gender-Based Violence (GBV)/Harmful Practices (HP) such that you can use the skills you have acquired to train other leaders too.
- ✗ Create safe homes or relief centres in your place of worship where women and girls can receive financial, legal, health and psychosocial assistance.
- ✗ Acquire knowledge on GBV issues and how to respond to diverse situations.
- ✗ Organize male-only activities teaching the participants on the negative impacts of GBV and the elimination of GBV.
- ✗ Address issues of violence against women and girls in your sermons by highlighting that this is

injustice and oppression which God speaks against. Identify the ills of these practices and promote behavioural and attitudinal change. You can also organise seminars to raise awareness on issues of GBV.

- ✗ Produce communication materials on gender-based violence and share within your congregation. You can also share phone numbers and resources of relevant NGOs.
- ✗ Invite Civil Society Organisations to organise GBV Sensitivity trainings for officers within the counselling unit of your church or mosque.
- ✗ Encourage other religious leaders like you to spread the word.
- ✗ Continuously engage your congregation on the dangers of perpetrating acts of GBV as they are punishable offences under the law. Crimes such as rape, child abuse, wife battery are all punishable offences. Do not help to sweep them under the carpet!



Take our Community Psychosocial First-Aid Course via our mobile app.  
Download GBV Tête-À-Tête app on the Google PlayStore or iOS App Store to take the course.



Centre for Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN):  
34, McNeil Road, Sabo-Yaba, Lagos.  
Website: [www.cewhin.com](http://www.cewhin.com) . Email: [info@cewhin.com](mailto:info@cewhin.com)  
Tel: 0913 600 0347 or 0913 600 0349.  
Facebook: @cewhin Twitter: @cewhin Instagram: @cewhin\_ng

Take our Community Psychosocial First-Aid Course via our mobile app.  
Download GBV Tête-À-Tête app on the Google PlayStore or iOS App Store to take the course.

Follow the GBV Tête-À-Tête App for updates.  
Facebook: @GBVTeteATeteApp | Instagram: @gbvteteatete\_app