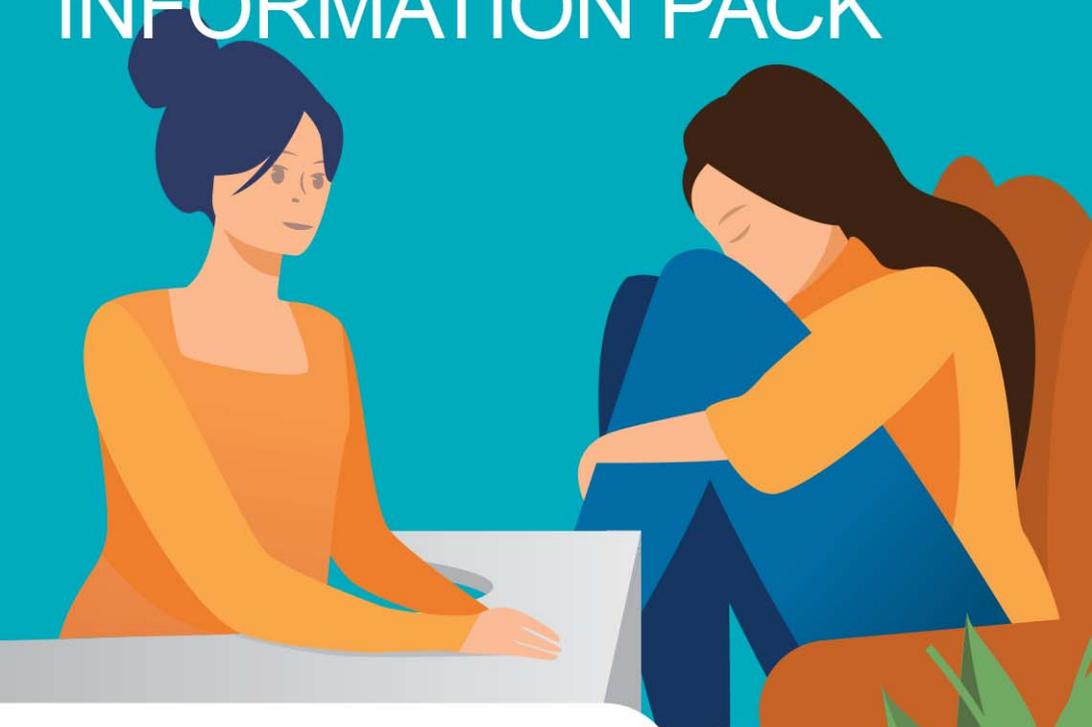


GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE INFORMATION PACK



STRENGTHENING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN'S HEALTH STATUS

IN SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

unicef 
for every child



Co-funded by
the Health Programme
of the European Union



WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

The term gender-based violence (GBV) is used to describe any harmful act perpetrated against a person based on socially ascribed/gender differences between males and females. It includes acts of causing physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, or threats of such acts, and other deprivations of liberty.

GBV stems from unequal power relations between men and women and the resulting discrimination against women. While GBV can affect both females and males, women and girls are disproportionately more affected. The risk of GBV against women and girls further increases in times of crisis. Some women and girls are at higher risk, such as those with disabilities and those from the LGBTI+ community.

▶ HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE GBV?

GBV can happen in different places – for example, in the home, school, camp, park, street, car, train, bus – and the perpetrator can be either a known or an unknown person.

GBV takes multiple forms. Some of the most common forms of GBV are:

- ▶ **Physical violence** includes hitting, slapping, beating, shaking, pushing, biting, pulling hair, burning, torture, choking, cutting, shooting, and others. In other words, it is intentional use of violent physical force so as to cause a person actual or likely physical injury or suffering that is not sexual in nature.
- ▶ **Emotional violence** includes humiliating or degrading treatment, name-calling, persistent shaming, humiliation, constant criticism, stalking, harassment, unwanted advances, solitary confinement or isolation, intimidation, or threats of physical violence. It involves persistent attacks on a person's sense of self and inflicting mental or emotional injury.
- ▶ **Sexual violence** includes rape, unwanted kissing and touching, unwanted advances, female genital mutilation, among others. In other words, sexual violence means forcing a person to take part in non-consensual sexual activities, whether or not they are aware, including penetrative, non-penetrative and sometimes even non-contact acts.
- ▶ **Forced marriages** are marriages in which one or both parties have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union. Early marriage is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age. A child marriage is considered to be a form of forced marriage, given that one or both parties have not expressed full, free and informed consent.

No matter the circumstances, violence against women and girls is never acceptable!

GBV

is not a personal problem or the problem of an individual family. The whole of society has a responsibility to make sure that women and girls are safe!

GBV can also take other forms, like denial of opportunities and access to education, the health system and economic resources, or intimate partner violence if it is happening in context of intimate relationship, etc.

Some forms of GBV are more noticeable, such as physical violence, while there are other forms that might be harder to recognize due to presence of harmful social norms. These include not allowing girls/women to visit the doctor, attend school, work or handle money, as well as early marriage, marital rape, female genital mutilation, sexual comments, etc.

Understanding the consequences of GBV can also help us recognize that it is happening. It is not only women and girls who suffer the consequences of GBV – their families and children do too:

- ▶ **Physical consequences** range from relatively minor injuries to severe injuries leading to death or permanent disabilities; unintended pregnancies or adverse pregnancy outcomes; sexually transmitted infections, urinary tract infections, etc.
- ▶ **Psychological consequences** include anxiety, nervousness, difficulties in sleeping and concentration, lack of appetite, anger and irritability, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.
- ▶ **Social consequences** include distancing of a person from their friends and family, losing their job or income, dropping out of school, social isolation and marginalization, etc.

People who provide services and assistance must respect your privacy and keep your story confidential. If you disclose your experience and ask for help, those assisting you should ask for your consent when planning support and referring you to other services. Exceptions to this approach include cases where there is a risk of self-harm or harm to others, cases where a child has suffered GBV, or cases where the perpetrator is a humanitarian worker.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW EXPERIENCES GBV?



YOU ARE NOT ALONE, HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you have suffered GBV, do not feel that you have to hide it or that it is your fault. Confide in someone you trust: it can be a friend, a person working in the camp or organization, or a teacher. Ask for support or assistance. If you are afraid to tell what happened, you can first just get the information on services that are available and what are the procedures. You can disclose your experience when you decide and feel ready.

If you have suffered GBV, you are not alone. Support is available! You are not to blame for violence that happened!

If someone you know tells you they have experienced GBV, listen without judgement, believe this person and give them information and support to access available services.

SAFETY FIRST

GBV incidents can happen more than once and can become more severe. When you make decisions about your future, always keep in mind that your own safety, and the safety of your children, is most important. There are services and legal procedures to ensure that you are safe from the perpetrator. You can get assistance from police and the management of the centres immediately.

MEDICAL SERVICES

If you have suffered any injuries, you can get medical assistance from a doctor in the centre.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

There are different services available to aid recovery: from women-only workshops in safe spaces, to language lessons, to counselling with a psychologist. Although physical consequences are more visible, it is equally important to take care of your mind and feelings.

CONTACT INFO:

Service providers can use the space bellow to add contacts relevant for each specific location



The content of this leaflet represents the views of the author(s) only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

**GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE
INFORMATION PACK**