



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



HIGHER HEALTH

Higher Education and Training
Health, Wellness and Development Centre

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

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Socio-historical context of gender violence & its consequences.

The problem of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa is a complex one that is both **an individual and a social problem.**

Rooted within and emerges from the country's **historical and current unequal social, economic and cultural relations**

Underlying beliefs in the **supremacy of certain genders**, connected to **history and culture continues to reinforce gender stereotyping and inequality?**

Current cultural and societal factors contributing to gender inequality in South Africa are compounded by the country's history of apartheid (**Normalizing violence**).

If there is an imbalance of power between people, gender-based violence will continue.

What is GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ?

- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** is a serious **violation** of **human rights** and a life-threatening health and protection issue. It is any form of harm or abuse directed at a person because of their gender, and it is driven by unequal power and social norms.

Forms of GBV

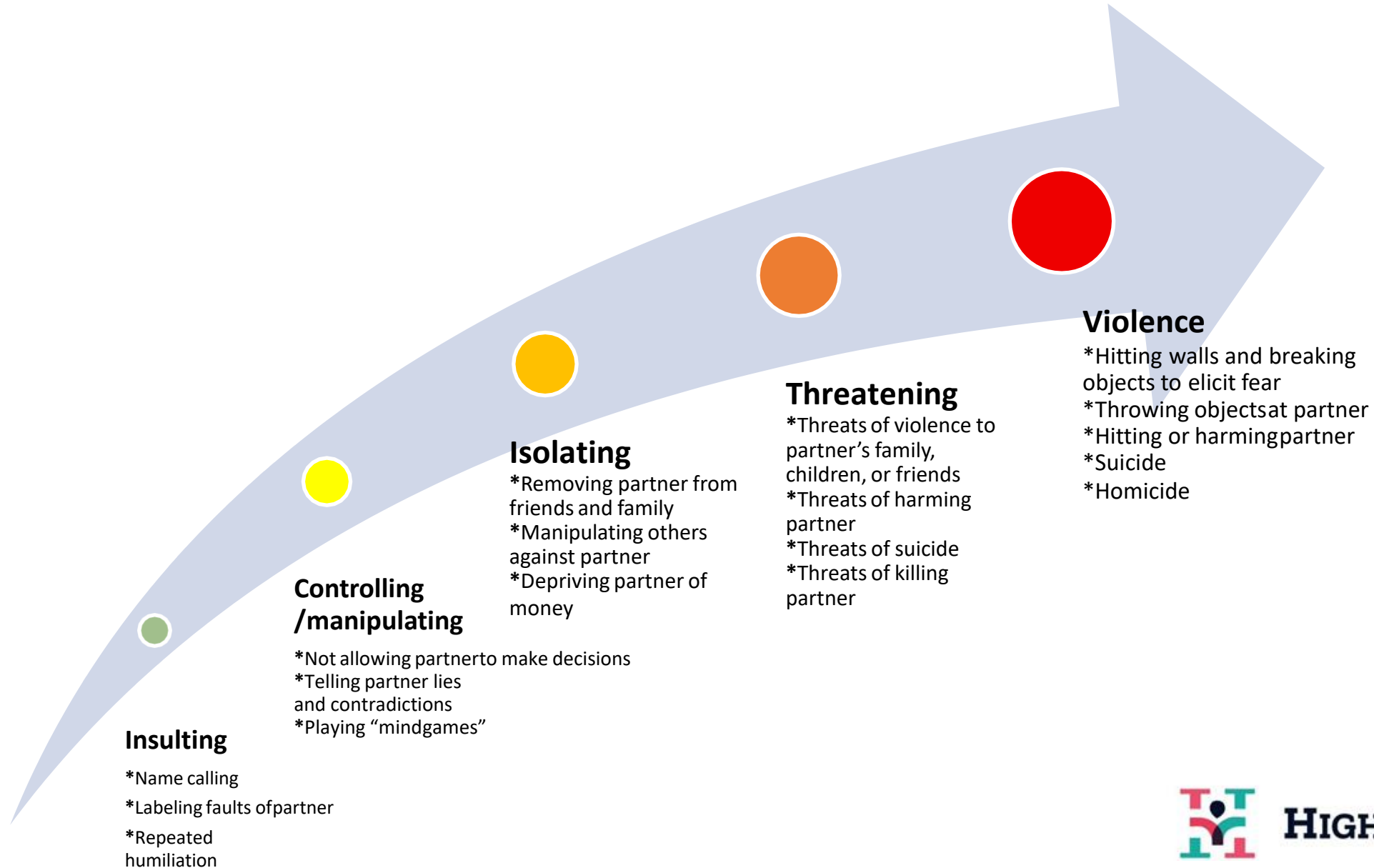


The different forms

Verbal	Unwelcome pressure for sexual activity, innuendos, suggestions, comments with sexual overtones	Offensive flirting, sex related jokes or insults, inappropriate enquires about a person's sex life.	Requests for sex, proposals of a sexual nature, messages, sexual intimidation	Comments on appearance, graphic comments about a person's body
Non-verbal	Displaying gender degrading material(images, stereotypes, sexist language), and unwelcome gestures	Stalking, flashing, following, watching	Sexually suggestive and Offensive material email/social media/phone	Sending/sharing Pornography without consent
Using power to get sexual favours	A lecturer rewarding student For responding to sexual advances	Sex for marks	Favouritism by lecturer student that respond sexual advances	Denial of promotion, merit ratings, marks, bursaries, etc if fail to submit to sexual advances

Economic abuse/sexual exploitation	Exchanging money, gifts, food, accommodation for sex	'Sugar daddies'		
Psychological abuse	Threats of violence through words or actions	Humiliating comments Or insulting	Isolation (Locking up partner)	Use of children to control or hurt
Domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV)	One partner maintains power and control over the other in intimate relationship	IPV includes use of threats, physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological or financial abuse	Domestic violence is when a member of family uses physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological or financial abuse against another family member	IPV can include rape or sexual assault by intimate partner
Physical abuse	Unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching, kissing, to sexual/physical assault	Pinching, patting	Attempted rape, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts including rape, femicide	Date rape, acquaintance rape

Intimate partner violence



The consequences of GBV

- “In South Africa, GBV is not just widespread, it is severe.
- When we look at the numbers, over a third of women have experienced physical or sexual violence.
- But what often gets left out of the conversation is what happens *after* the violence.
- Gender-based violence is not only about immediate harm, it often has lifelong consequences.
- In many cases, survivors don’t just ‘recover’ and ‘walk away” they live with life long or even permanent disabilities.



- For example, severe physical assault can result in spinal injuries leading to paralysis, or head trauma that affects memory, speech, or cognition.
- In some cases, survivors lose limbs due to extreme violence or delayed medical care.
- We also need to recognise that psychological trauma can be just as disabling. Conditions like PTSD can affect a person's ability to work, study, or maintain relationships.
- So GBV is not just a social issue it's also a public health and disability issue.



PHYSICAL	PSYCHOSOCIAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL	SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial or permanent disability • Poor nutrition • Making chronic illness worse • Chronic pain • Gastrointestinal problems • Organ damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger, anxiety, fear • Shame, self-hate, self-blame • Post-traumatic stress disorder • Depression • Sleep disorders • Suicidal thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual disorders and risky behaviours • Early sexual experiences (for those who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse) • Unprotected sex • Abortions • Bad pregnancy outcomes
PHYSICAL	PSYCHOSOCIAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL	SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse • Social stigma Social rejection and isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal death • Suicide • HIV & AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) • Infertility • Chronic pain

SA Cases

She experienced **memory loss**

She struggled with **speech and concentration**

She had difficulty with **basic daily functioning**

She could no longer work or independently care for her children

She became dependent on family members for care.

A **37-year-old mother of four** in the Eastern Cape was brutally attacked. Sustained **severe head injuries** during the assault.
Left **permanently disabled** following the incident Required long-term care and could not return to normal functioning.

Her children, instead of being supported by her, now had to grow up with a parent who was physically present—but cognitively changed.



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Contributing Factors & Consequence of Gender Based Violence

These factors are not causing violence or are not justifications for violence.

Understanding these factors helps to spot and deal effectively with violence in our communities.

Knowing how these factors are related to one another and to violence is one of the important steps in addressing GBV!

SOCIETY	COMMUNITY	RELATIONSHIP	INDIVIDUAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty Economic, social and gender inequality Poor social security Masculinity linked to aggression and dominance Weak legal and Criminal justice system Perpetrators not prosecuted Social and cultural norms support violence Availability of small firearms Conflict or post conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High unemployment High population density Social isolation of females and family Lack of information Inadequate survivor care Schools and workplace not addressing gender-based violence Weak community sanctions against GBV Poor safety in public spaces Challenging traditional gender roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family dysfunction Intergenerational violence Poor parenting practices Parental conflict involving violence Association with friends who engage in violent or delinquent behaviour Low socioeconomic status and socio-economic stress Friction over women's empowerment Family honour more important than female health and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender, age and education A family history of violence Witnessing gender-based violence Survivor of child abuse or neglect Lack of sufficient livelihood and personal income Unemployment Mental health and behavioural problems Alcohol and substance abuse Commercial Sex Work Attitudes supporting

Low reporting of gender-based violence incidents

Among respondents who had experienced GBV, only 13% reported it.

- Almost half of the victims (47%) explained that they felt uncertain whether the behaviour was serious enough to be disclosed.
- Another frequent reason indicated by 31% of the victims is that at the time of the incident they did not identify the behaviour as an act of violence.

VICTIMS



*South African rapper Flabba murdered
by girlfriend*

9 December 2015


BBC News, News24


Domestic violence against men: unmuting the reality of the forgotten gender



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REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING

- Fear of secondary victimisation
- Embarrassment and/or shame
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of hurting the alleged perpetrator's wife, girlfriend and/or family
- If the alleged perpetrator is an intimate partners no physical evidence or witnesses
- There is nowhere to report
- Not trusting place where reporting takes place
- Not wanting to expose one's identity
- Fear that it won't be kept confidential
- Fear that by reporting there may be reprisals by accused and they may harm victim further



Cycle of violence

- The cycle of violence looks at the repetitive nature of perpetrator's actions that hinder a survivor's ability to leave an abusive relationship.



GBV Response Plans and Strategies starts with us in our institutions.

Safe and Inclusive Spaces: Creating an environment where students feel physically and emotionally safe, fostering inclusivity, and celebrating diversity.



Resource Accessibility: Ensuring easy access to educational resources, libraries, technology, and extracurricular activities to support academic and personal development.



Wellness Programs: Introducing wellness programs, fitness activities, and recreational opportunities to promote a healthy work-life balance.



Faculty and Staff Support: Providing training for faculty and staff to recognize and respond to the diverse needs of students, including mental health, GBV and personal development. Staff debriefing sessions.



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- Level based – inclusive GBV interventions that target students at their various developmental stages and maturity levels of understanding.
- First year students: Onboarding and introductory awareness sessions focusing on psychoeducation, services access, emergency lines, physical responders' access, protective factors, building networks of safety, safety plans, mental well-being.
- Second year students: Refresher onboarding, awareness campaigns, skills training, building coping and resilience, mental wellbeing, mentoring, peer support.
- Third year students: Refresher training, skills training, peer mentoring, building independent support teams, mental wellbeing, peer support, social outreach: each one teach one, reach ten.
- Fourth year / Honours: Independent support, peer mentoring, mental wellbeing, social outreach, collaborative work with partners, council involvements etc.

Laws and policies providing avenues of redress to and protecting the rights of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

- **The Domestic Violence Act** provides the opportunity to lay a charge against the abuser and apply for a Protection Order at the Magistrate’s Court. It clearly outlines the duty of members of the police to assist and inform complainants of their rights (Section 2), which includes assisting a person to find suitable shelter and obtaining medical treatment (Section 2.a.) if required.
- **The Protection from Harassment Act** provides for anyone to lay a charge against the harasser and apply for a Protection Order at the Magistrate’s Court.
- **The Sexual Offences Act** criminalizes all forms of sexual abuse and provides for access to PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) within 72 hours after the sexual assault (Section 28).
- **The National Health Act** provides anyone the right to lodge a complaint about being ill-treated at a healthcare facility (Section 18.1)
- **The Equality Act** gives survivors of sexual and gender-based violence the opportunity to open a case of unfair discrimination on the ground of gender. Gender-based violence is one of the grounds mentioned in the Act (Section 8.a).



Securing the Future of Tomorrow's Leaders



Comprehensive Education and On-boarding: Implementing programs that provide students with a well-rounded education, encompassing academic, social, and emotional learning.



Leadership Training: Integrating leadership development courses and workshops to empower students with the skills needed to become effective leaders -



Guidance and Mentorship: Offering mentorship programs and personal/social guidance to help students make informed decisions about their role in preventing and fighting GBV.



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Dear First-Year
Students,

MENTAL HEALTH:

At HIGHER HEALTH, we recognize the importance of mental well-being in the holistic development of students. For those facing mental health challenges, we provide a comprehensive support system.

Higher Health offers a credit bearing Mental Health skills programme which is part of the comprehensive Civic Education curriculum and we offer a 24 Hour Crisis Helpline for students that connects them to our professional psychologists and counsellors at no cost.

Contact Us

24 Hour Toll Free
 0800 36 36 36



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Higher Education & Training: Health, Wellness and Development Centre

- THANK YOU -

