



Student Affairs

What is Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?

There are many different definitions of GBV, however the mostly globally accepted definition is "violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex OR gender identity" (Ott, 2017). GBV encompasses any form of behavior and abuse that causes:

- fear
- bodily harm
- emotional harm
- a person to do things against their will
- death

Gender-based violence (GBV) also involves acts of violence committed against women, men, boys or girls, as a result of social norms about roles and behaviour expected of each gender. It often occurs within relationships. Although men and boys are also subjected to abuse and violence, women and girls are more often affected owing to power imbalances and the low social status that accorded to them by society. These factors often result in discrimination and in their being denied opportunities in various spheres of life.

- Groups that are particularly vulnerable include:
- women and girls,
- children,
- older people,
- people living with disabilities, and
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual (LGBTQA+) people. (Nkonyane, 2019)

Gender-Based Violence

Warning signs of GBV

These are the common signs and symptoms of GBV mostly in a relationship, however the list is endless, as some forms of GBV are subtle and some may not necessarily have visible signs.

- Extreme jealousy
- Possessiveness
- Unpredictability
- A bad temper
- Cruelty to animals
- Verbal abuse
- Extremely controlling behavior
- Antiquated beliefs about roles of women and men in relationships
- Forced sex or disregard of their partner's unwillingness to have sex
- Sabotage of birth control methods or refusal to honor agreed upon methods
- Blaming the victim for anything bad that happens
- Sabotage or obstruction of the victim's ability to work or attend school
- Controls all the finances
- Abuse of other family members, children or pets
- Accusations of the victim flirting with others or having an affair
- Control of what the victim wears and how they act
- Demeaning the victim either privately or publicly
- Embarrassment or humiliation of the victim in front of others
- Harassment of the victim at work (NCADV, 2018)

Forms of GBV

GBV can occur in many different forms. These are the most common forms:

Physical

Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking
Burning
Strangulation
Damaging personal property
Refusing medical care and/or controlling medication
Coercing partner into substance abuse
Use of weapons

Emotional

Name calling, insulting
Blaming the partner for everything
Extreme jealousy
Intimidation
Shaming,
Humiliating
Isolation
Controlling what the partner does and where the partner goes
Stalking

Gender-Based Violence

Forms of GBV

GBV can occur in many different forms. These are the most common forms:

Sexual

- Forcing a partner to have sex with other people (human trafficking)
- Pursuing sexual activity when the victim is not fully conscious or is afraid to say no
- Hurting partner physically during sex
- Coercing partner to have sex without protection / sabotaging birth control

Technological

- Hacking into a partner's email and personal accounts
- Using tracking devices in a partner's cell phone to monitor their location, phone calls and messages
- Monitoring interactions via social media
- Demanding to know partner's passwords

Financial

- Inflicting physical harm or injury that would prevent the person from attending work
- Harassing partner at their workplace
- Controlling financial assets and effectively putting partner on an allowance
- Damaging a partner's credit score

Treatment after sexual Assault

After someone has been sexually assaulted, it is important to get medical treatment. POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP) is treatment that is given to survivors of sexual assault to reduce their risk of contracting HIV. If someone has been sexually assaulted and the HIV status of the attacker is unknown, the survivor is treated as though the attacker/s were HIV+. This way we will be ensuring that all possible precautions are taken to reduce the chances of HIV passed on to the survivor of sexual assault. Anyone who has been sexually assaulted should get PEP. This includes women, men and children, both boys and girls who report within 72 hours and are HIV negative.

Getting PEP has the following advantages:

- Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) including HIV
- Prevention from unwanted pregnancy resulting from rape
- Prevention from acquiring Hepatitis B.
- Referral for psychosocial care.

What treatment is given?

The treatment is in the form of tablets for adults and syrup for children. This medication must be taken by mouth as prescribed, two or three times a day.

When should the medication be taken?

It should be taken as soon as possible, BUT must be taken within a period of 72 hours (3days) of assault. The medication must be taken for a period of 28 days.

Does the medication have any side effects?

There may be side effects, such as headaches, tiredness, skin rashes, a running stomach and nausea which are treatable. It is VERY important not to miss a single dose of the medication even if the side effects do occur.

Where can I obtain PEP?

You will have an HIV test, and receive information and counselling about what the test means. You will also be counselled after you receive the results of the HIV tests. Your results may be available within 30 minutes after taking the tests OR you may be asked to return for your results where you will be given a 3-day started pack of the medicine, so you can begin taking it. If you test positive, the medicine will be stopped. You will be informed about organisations and people that can help you live positively and about having your condition monitored. If you test negative, you will get the rest of the course of treatment. If you think that it will be impossible to come back after the first visit, tell the doctor to give you the full course of medication.

Why is it necessary to take medication for 28 days?

To decrease the risk of becoming HIV positive, it is advisable to take the medication for 28 days, than to become HIV positive for life. You will have another HIV tests after 6 weeks, 3 months and again after 6 months after the rape/sexual assault. It is very important for you to find out the results of your HIV test so that you can know your HIV status.



The Impact of GBV

The potential harmful impacts of these forms of GBV include:

- ill health;
- psychological, physical and emotional trauma;
- unwanted pregnancies;
- sexually transmitted infections, including HIV infection;
- suicide;
- depression;
- low self-esteem;
- Death
- Educational Delays with your studies
- Drop out

Where to go for help

Survivors/victims generally do not speak of the incident for many reasons, including self-blame, fear of reprisals, mistrust of authorities, and risk/fear of re-victimization. Acts of GBV evoke shaming and blaming, social stigma, and often rejection by the survivor/victim's family and community. Stigma and rejection can be especially severe when the survivor/victim speaks about or reports the incident

Should you be a victim of GBV, we want to encourage you to seek assistance and it is important that you receive help. You can approach the following services for help.

- Stop Gender Violence helpline: 0800 150 150 or sms: 32074 or Watssapp: 0849228808
- National crisis number: 0861322322
- Report neglect or GBV of a child: 0861 4 CHILD (24453)
- SAPS: 08600 10111
- Childline: 08000 55 555
- Report any GBV of children and women to the Department of Social Development on 0800 220 250.
- LifeLine 24-hour crisis helpline: 021 461 1111

Policies and Laws in South Africa to protect Human Right dignities

The Parliament of South Africa has passed laws to protect the rights of individuals against GBV. Read more about these laws to know your rights. These laws are:

- The Domestic Violence Act of 1998
 - The Children's Act of 2005
 - The Maintenance Act of 1998
 - The Promotion of Equity and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000
 - The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act) Amendment Act of 2007
- (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2018)

Unisa Policies

Unisa is in the process of revising their new Sexual Harassment policy. This policy will include Staff, Students and Visitors. Other relevant policies are:

- The Sexual harassment policy
- The Student Disciplinary code
- The Diversity policy

Unisa Student Affairs

We provide the following support services to Students and all our services is strictly confidential

- Individual Counselling and Referral Services
- Group Counselling Services
- Family and Partners Counselling Services
- Community Engagement Support Services
- Awareness and Empowerment Interventions
- Student Health and Wellness Services , Peer Education Support and Social network platform
- Please follow our Facebook on: Unisa Student
- Research in the field of GBV

References

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). (2018). Signs of Abuse. Retrieved from: <https://ncadv.org/signs-of-abuse>

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Ott, M. (2017). Series: What Does That Mean? Gender-based Violence. Women for Women. Retrieved from: <https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/series-what-does-mean-gender-based-violence>.

Women Against Abuse. (2019). Types of abuse. Retrieved from: <https://www.womenagainstabuse.org/education-resources/learn-about-abuse/types-of-domestic-violence>