



## Helping survivors of abuse

Preventing violence at community level is your main task as a community worker. Unfortunately violence does and will occur in the communities you support.

This flash card will help you:

- Take positive supportive action to help a survivor of abuse (especially physical/sexual)
- Have information at hand to refer survivors and their families for follow-up support

### Things to keep in mind if you or someone you know has been physically and or sexually assaulted:

- Go to a safe place. Call for someone you trust for support and to accompany you.
- Visit a clinic or hospital as soon as possible after the incident. In a sexual assault ask for treatment to prevent HIV infection and for sexually transmitted diseases (STI'S). Women and girls should request an anti-pregnancy pill. All this medication needs to be taken within three days (72 hours).

- Avoid bathing or showering before going to the clinic or hospital. Keep all evidence safe, including the clothes worn at the time.
- Report the incident to the nearest police station. Make sure the incident is recorded and you receive some evidence that it is, perhaps a form or a reference number. You may need forms to be signed by a health worker that you have seen.
- Even if you feel okay, talking to someone is really important. There may be groups or a counsellor in the community that can help you. Sometime the shock and worry of what has happened may appear a few days later. Don't be alone in such moments. Seek support.

### Remember!

**You are a community worker not a health worker or counsellor. Survivors of abuse need medical care and support from trained individuals. Your role is to help the survivor get such support, and be there for them until the help is accessed.**





# Helping survivors of abuse

Where to turn to for help - your own community list (you may have to copy and make several if you volunteer in different places):

**Fill this table in with important details about your community/area**

Name of CBV	
Name of Community	
The closest Police Station is..	
Address:	
Telephone number:	
The closest Clinic is...	
Address:	
Telephone number:	
The closest Hospital is....	
Address:	
Telephone number:	
Crisis lines	
Child line:	
Rape support:	
Counselling:	
Other important information	



## Supporting Women and Girls

There is a saying 'who lives it, knows it'. This can also be the case with gender based violence. Women and girls who have experienced gender based violence and survived are in a better position to understand why it happens and help others overcome and avoid it.

This flash card will help you

- Talk to women about their experiences
- Encourage women to help others and form a network of support where there are none already

### Some tips for working with women:

- Start where women gather and remember there is often a hierarchy in a women's group, so find out who the group is led by or turns to first;
- Ask women to share, what are their fears, beliefs and value systems around gender and violence? From there you can talk together about what are myths/untruths and what is real for them and others. Information is power for women and girls.
- In every community there is usually one woman who is a teacher, a police woman, or even a doctor. Using a successful local woman can be a good way to encourage women and girls to think about important gender and violence related issues. How did this woman become a teacher/doctor? What can you say about her family? How does this woman support her family?

### A story to share

Read the story at the back of the card to the group. Read slowly and carefully. At the end ask the group what their feelings are about the story. Ask questions to make the group think:

- Was the girl to blame for what happened?
- How could the situation have been avoided?
- Why did the situation happen again with her own daughter?
- Why did her mother suggest she keep quiet?
- How could/should the community help?

### A women's support network

When women and girls suffer violence, it is often other women they turn to for help or who offer assistance. Not everyone will seek support and their pain will continue. As women, what opportunities can you take to prevent this happening again? How can you keep safe from this sort of abuse? What advice can you give others if something goes wrong, what can be done to help the survivor and make sure it does not happen again.





## Supporting Women and Girls

### **A story: The destructive power of silence**

I was sexually abused by my brothers when I was seven. I don't remember how it started but several instances are very clear. No one else was home except me and my younger sister (aged four at the time). I was wearing a long white t-shirt and no underwear. The brother told my sister to get out (I think she suspected something because she peeped at us through the wall) and he did 'it' to me. He was 17. I was ashamed to tell anyone even though it hurt. He kept doing it. He always bought me sweets. I would see him and pretend nothing was going on. Then my two brothers found out. We all lived together in a big family homestead.

Once, the 20 year old brother asked me what I was doing with his younger brother and I told him. He asked me not to tell any one, and threatened me. Then my mum found out. I am not sure how she suspected, but she interrogated me. Of course I lied because I was afraid. I was caught. She didn't say anything, only that she'd tell dad. Of course living in a compound with so many people, there are no secrets, so within days every body knew what had happened. I remember the accusing eyes and hushed whispers when I appeared. I was so ashamed. Only dad asked me what happened. He told me to tell him if it ever happened again. Everybody assumed

it was the first time, I didn't correct them. I also didn't tell them about the other brothers.

I forgot about it until high school when someone asked me if I was a virgin. Of course I lied yes, but the memories came flooding back. So did the anger, guilt and shame. I blamed myself, I felt I had encouraged them in some way. I thought it was all my fault. As far as I can remember, nothing was done to the culprit – everybody treated him as before. I am the one who got accusing eyes and pointing fingers and terrible jokes from my other cousins. I was so small.

I am a mother now. My cousin took my two year old daughter the other day, stripped her and indecently touched her. I was so angry. In fact mum was still proposing keeping quiet about it but I would not allow that. I confronted him and threatened to kill him. I also told several other people so that he knows others know and should something like that happen again, he would be the first suspect.

I have also learnt that my sexuality is my responsibility, regardless of what has happened in the past, now it's my choice and I am in control. I am struggling to forgive the one who assaulted my daughter. I think the wound and pain is too fresh, let me give it time.

*Story adapted from 'Defying the Odds' published by FEMNET*



## Reaching young people and breaking the cycle of violence

Culture is always changing and the ways of young people today are not always the ways of their parents or their grandparents. Young people always strive to find their own way.

This flash card will help you:

- Talk to young people about violence and its consequences
- Show young people how they can make a difference and change things for the better
- Encourage youth to establish peer support groups, which support survivors of GBV, and link these to HIV support groups, as well as raise GBV prevention awareness

### Some tips for working with youths:

- **Schools as entry points:** Many young people attend school, so reaching them at school is a great idea. Talk to school heads and teachers and ask if you can have some space during the school day to talk to children about their rights, violence and abuse.
- **Remember out of school youth:** Many young people are also out of school. They are an important group that needs to be reached.

Find out where young people out of school gather, it may be at church or youth centres. Talk to parents, they will also know where the young people gather.

- **Edutaining activities:** Young people like excitement and often engage in dangerous practices because they are bored or are feeling rebellious. Just talking to them will not be enough. 'Edutainment' is ideal for young people. This means getting important messages across using entertainment such as song, dance, games and theatre. DO NOT just sit them down and talk!
- **Encourage experience sharing:** Young people and children are not as experienced at sharing stories as adults might be. You might ask them to use other means to share their experiences. If you have access to colour and paper - use art. Ask them to draw a picture or make a cartoon. Ask them to create a song or a dance about the consequences of violence. This way they can relate to the message and remember it.



## Reaching young people and breaking the cycle of violence

Young people also need to know the facts - share the following information with them and discuss. Consider using the game cards in this toolkit here too.

- **Remain non-judgmental:** When talking with young people, give them lots of space to share their ideas. Don't judge them. Let them speak. Ask questions that highlight the risk in what they say as well as the good practices. Ask young people how they would change things! Ask them how it could be done.

Explore what young people have experienced or understand about GBV.

Young people really like to talk. Give them an opportunity to talk and share.

Make sure the atmosphere is relaxed. Never judge what young people say - even though it may be shocking to hear - let them express themselves freely. You can always ask the others in the group to respond to an outrageous statement that might be said just to get a reaction.





# 16 days of activism against gender based violence

**November 25 to December 10 every year every where**

## What is the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign?

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign. It began in 1991. It happens in November and December every year! This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including November 29, International Women Human Rights Day, 1 December, and World AIDS Day. The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organising strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by:

- raising awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue
- strengthening local work around violence against women
- establishing a clear link between local and international efforts
- providing a forum in which organisers can develop and share new and effective strategies
- demonstrating the solidarity of women around the world
- creating tools to pressure governments to implement promises made

**Every year there is a Campaign theme. Over the years, Campaign themes have included:**

"Democracy without Women's Human Rights . . . is not Democracy" (1993)	"Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights" (1991/1992)
"Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing: Bringing Women's Human Rights Home" (1995)	"Awareness, Accountability, Action: Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights" (1994)
"Building a Culture of Respect for Human Rights" (1998)	"Demand Women's Human Rights in the Home and in the World" (1997)
"Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the Campaign" (2000)	"Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom from Violence" (1999)
"Creating a Culture That Says 'No' to Violence Against Women" (2002)	"Racism and Sexism: No More Violence" (2001)
"For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: No More Violence," (2004-2005)	"Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights: Maintaining the Momentum Ten Years After Vienna" (1993-2003)
"Demanding Implementation, Challenging Obstacles: End Violence Against Women!" (2007)	"Celebrate 16 Years of 16 Days: Advance Human Rights ←→ End Violence Against Women" (2006)
<b>Commit-Act-Demand: We CAN End Violence Against Women! (2009)</b>	"Human Rights for Women ←→ Human Rights for All: UDHR60" (2008)



## 16 days of activism against gender based violence

### Join the 16 Days movement!

Become part of an already existing student, community, national or international activity for the 16 Days or take actions on your own. Submit your planned activity to us for posting to the International Calendar of Campaign Activities and become part of the growing global movement organising during this time. Your submissions will also enable the Center to refer other individuals and organisations that are interested in your activities to you. Please send a description of planned activities for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence to the address below.

**Get Involved-Online!:** The Center will post all information about the Campaign online at [www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html).

**Take Action Kit:** Contact the Center for Women's Global Leadership to receive a free copy of the Take Action Kit for the 16 Days Campaign.

The action kit includes:

- a campaign profile and a description of dates
- a list of participating organisations and countries
- a bibliography and resource list
- a list of suggested activities
- a current campaign announcement
- supplemental information relevant to this year's theme

### For more information about the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, please contact:

Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA, Tel: (1-732) 932-8782, Fax: (1-732) 932-1180, e-mail: [cwgl@igc.org](mailto:cwgl@igc.org), website: [www.cwgl.rutgers.edu](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu)

### The 2009 Take Action Kit: More details about the Campaign

The 2009 Take Action Kit, which will have more information about each of the theme points and suggestions to help with your planning, should be available online and in print in August each year. To request a kit, please contact CWGL:

Keely Swan, 16 Days Campaign Coordinator, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 160 Ryders Lane, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA; Phone (1-732) 932-8782; Fax: (1-732) 932-1180; E-mail: [16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu](mailto:16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu); Or to access the kit online, go to: [www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html)

Whatever you do, make a special effort over these 16 Days.  
Pick a topic a day to discuss.

Ask community leaders and teachers to include important information in the meetings and classes over this period.

## Working With the Police and Legal Services

Fighting gender based violence needs the involvement, support and action of the law and the legal services. These are both areas still dominated by men who themselves may need to understand the issues around GBV.

This flash card will help you:

- Talk to law officials (men and women) such as the police and share information about GBV and HIV;
- Understand the importance of establishing local legal support.

### Getting the understanding and support of the law

All communities have some access to a police or satellite police station or mobile police unit. Many will be staffed by local community members. Find out what they know or understand about gender based violence. Include them in your group work. In doing so you may be able to create awareness, and help individuals within the law enforcement system to decide to become 'women's rights defenders!' Here is how to make a start.

#### 1. Making contact

- Approach the chief/senior officer/officer in charge and ask for a few minutes of their time.
- Introduce your work and what you are trying to achieve - emphasise that the changes you hope to make are to benefit everyone, including the valuable work they do.

- Answer any questions they may have.
- Request some time to talk to all the officers about gender based violence. You could invite them to attend another planned meeting or talk to them separately. This session will be about awareness-raising as well as discussing how the law can better help the community on this specific issue.
- If you have some IEC materials to leave behind do so, ask if they can be prominently displayed.

#### 2. Learn and share

Consider using the following sessions from the 'Walking the Talk' booklet:

- About gender and gender based violence (all steps)
- The rights of women and girls (step one, two and five)

Share the story at the back of the card and discuss. Let them know it is based on a true story and only the names have been changed.

Ask the group to think about the different ways they are helping, and how they could offer more help.





## Working With the Police and Legal Services

"I decided to become a women's rights defender"

### A positive story about getting involved in fighting GBV

When my 11 year old daughter came home early from school one day, she found three men had broken into our home. Twenty minutes later, they had stolen our electronics, my money and my daughter's innocence. That evening, my wife told me how two of the men had harassed our 11 year old daughter until the third man saved her from being raped. Two hours later, my wife and some of the neighbours, all women, took her to a clinic, counselled her, and did 'everything that needed to be done'. In other words, there was nothing I, as a man, a father, could do for my own daughter. As a man I felt so powerless and alone. I moved my family to another area and my daughter to another school.

*Ask the group how they feel about the story so far?*

*Carry on with the story.*

It took me a week to report the incident to the police. The police officer listed the things stolen and then asked me "So brother, what was the value of the stolen items? Was anyone at home at the time? Was anything else taken away?"

When I answered "Yes, my daughters innocence!" the officer looked at me for the first time. Other officers joined in the conversation. "So, brother, how can we assist you if you don't have a suspect? Why has it taken you so long to come and report?" I replied I was reporting as a matter of record. "Ok, brother, come back when you have a suspect."

Interrupt the story again to ask: Why did it take the man so long to report the case? How could the officer have dealt with it differently?

*Conclude as follows:*

The three suspects were never caught. My family barely survived the period after the incident - blaming each other and feeling guilty and powerless. My wife and I broke up - being the parent of an abused child was hard. One day I was invited to join a group of men fighting for human rights and for survivors of GBV and sexual abuse. I went along and decided to join because no child, no woman, no man, should go through the difficult process of seeking justice alone like I did. Now I work with survivors and make sure their cases are heard by the police - we accompany them to the station.

*What are your feeling now about the whole story? What can be done to help survivors and their families in similar situations? How can your ideas turn into action?*

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