
Discussion Guide: Hypothetical Scenarios

Group discussions with community leaders involving hypothetical scenarios can help to create space for sensitive and important discussions related to GBV response. This discussion guide includes suggestions for arranging and leading any group discussion, followed by steps for facilitating scenario-based discussions, sample scenarios, sample questions, and important ideas for discussing GBV response through hypothetical scenarios.

Arranging Discussion Groups (ahead of discussion)

- Identify a comfortable and quiet locations for discussions.
- Limit groups to 15 participants
- Complete discussions within 1.5 hours.
- Ensure lead facilitator has experience and/or training in facilitation. The facilitator must be able to ask probing and clarifying questions, demonstrate comfort and patience when talking about sensitive issues, positively manage negative or harmful comments, and respond appropriately to disclosures of GBV.
- Have a referral list of available services in case of GBV disclosure.
- Where possible, arrange same-sex facilitators for all male or all female discussion groups.

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Greet everyone, share introductions, pleasantries, and gratitude for any recent positive actions.
- Share general information about your organization and program (with any new participants).
- Present the purpose of the discussion.
- Agree to not share stories that identify individuals.

Discussion (30-45 minutes)

- Introduce topic of discussion and begin with a question or other prompts.
- Be sure to review questions/prompts and adapt them for context.
- Avoid “teaching”, talking too much, or arguing. Use prompts to keep conversation going and remember the discussion is also a learning opportunity for you.
- Do not feel pressure to use all questions/prompts.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Summarize key takeaways or ideas from discussion.
- Agree on any points for further discussion and make plans as appropriate.
- Thank all participants.

Steps for Facilitating Scenario-Based Discussions

1. Select or create a scenario, adapted for contextual relevance. Use names that are easily recognized but not the same as any known survivors, or family members of leaders.
2. Share or read a scenario. Clarify that the scenario is hypothetical and not based on any individual in the community. Ask participants not to reference specific cases during discussion.
3. Prompt discussion with limited questions.
4. Highlight important ideas and wrap-up discussion with plans for follow-up.

Sample Scenario 1

Sarah is a 16-year-old student who loves to study and has big dreams for her life. She lives with her family and helps to care for her younger sisters. One day, she learns that her father is in debt to an older, wealthier man in their community named Adam. Four years ago, her father needed money to pay medical bills after an injury and asked to borrow money from Adam. Adam did not believe Sarah's father would be able to repay a loan, so he instead offered to give the money in exchange for Sarah's hand in marriage, once she was a bit older.

Adam has now come calling for Sarah. She is devastated and does not want to marry Adam, who is much older and already has two wives. She feels betrayed by her father, but she does not wish to anger or humiliate him, and he gave his commitment to this Adam.

Sample Scenario 2

Hada is a 20-year-old woman with one small child. Her husband, Kader, was away from town for work for most of a year. During this time, Hada was very friendly with her neighbors and liked to help in the community. She volunteered with a women's group and also took classes at the Women and Girls' Safe Space.

Since Kader returned home, Hada is rarely seen in the community. She no longer visits neighbors of the Women and Girls' Safe Space. It appears that Hada is pregnant again, but she has not announced her pregnancy and is not seeking prenatal services.

Sample Scenario 3

Miriam lives with her husband, Ali, and their three children. When they got married, Ali paid a bride wealth to her family. He often tells her that he had paid a good price for her so she should work hard and be a good wife, or else he will send her back and demand the money back from her family.

Miriam works from early in the morning until late in the evening selling vegetables in the market. When she gets home, she is tired, but she still needs to cook dinner, fetch water, wash clothes, and look after her young children.

Ali often takes the money that Miriam earns at the market and goes out in the evening. He comes home late, and often, he starts shouting at Miriam. He beats her in front of the children. Sometimes he makes her sleep outside to punish her if the food is cold or not cooked to his liking, and to show the neighbors that he is the boss in his family. Many of their neighbors ignore Miriam. Although they often see her with bruises on her face, they just keep quiet.

Sample Scenario 4

Agnus is a 13-year-old girl who has been very sad and ill lately. Her mother was worried about her and took her to the doctor, who informed her that Agnus is pregnant. Agnus confessed to her mother that John, their 19-year-old neighbor, raped her some weeks ago. This is why she has been sad and not acting like herself.

Prompts/Questions

- How might the woman or girl at the heart of the scenario might be feeling?
- What risks does she face? What might happen if...
- How would different members of her family respond in this situation? Other members of community?
- Would you (or another leader) be involved, somehow, in this situation? Would the woman or girl facing problems likely seek support from a leader? Why or why not? Who else might contact you to become involved? Why?
- Whose interests should guide a leader's actions in such a case?

Important Ideas for Discussion

- Keep the survivor at the center of discussion. Discussion will likely shift into other areas of concern, and the facilitator can help to bring focus back to the woman or girl at the heart of the scenario. This provides good practice for survivor-centered response.
- Focus on the role of community leaders. Discussion may shift to what others could or should do. What can leaders to support a woman or girl in this situation?
- Be prepared to remind participants not to reference individuals or real cases.
- Be prepared to share information with leaders to help survivors access support.
- Note areas for learning and further discussion—for both leaders and the GBV team.