
Practice Sessions: Responding to Survivors

GBV teams can organize one-on-one, or small group sessions for community leaders interested in practicing their response to women and girls who seek their help, and survivors who disclose incidents of GBV. Practice sessions, including feedback and discussions, should usually be completed within one hour.

Organizing Exercises

Practice sessions can include different types of exercises, depending on the size of a session and leaders' preferences. Some options include:

- Role play between a GBV team member (acting as survivor) and leader
- Role play between two leaders, acting out different parts
- Role play presentations (with two actors in front of a small group)
- Small group discussion, where responses are suggested without pressure to “act.”

For each session, the following steps are recommended:

1. Present a situation or scenario (either to the group or only to the person acting in the role of a survivor).
2. Allow time for leaders to practice response through an exercise.
3. Reflect on the exercise. Ask leaders how they felt. Invite feedback from any leaders who observed the exercise. Recognize positive things that leaders did. Provide feedback through questions and suggestions for changes, or additional actions.

Scenarios

Each exercise will involve a brief, hypothetical situation or scenario with a woman or girl seeking help, or a GBV survivor. Scenarios should be relevant to the context, but not based on real cases. Names used for scenarios should be easily recognized but not the same as any known survivors, or family members of leaders. Teams and leaders can consider the following options:

- Agree on a problem the woman or girl might be facing, such as a type of GBV, but no other details
- Discuss problems within the community, or a particular trend of GBV, and then agree to practice response to a survivor reporting a related incident.
- Select and adapt a scenario from **Discussion Guide: Hypothetical Scenarios**

Key Elements for Community Leaders to Practice Through Sessions

Through scenarios, leaders can practice important elements of survivor-centered response, within their respective roles as community leaders. Leaders can practice what to say and do to reflect empathy and concern, and how to share options for support and assistance. Through practice, leaders can increase their comfort and skill in the following key elements of response:

- Creating a safe space and putting survivor at ease
- Listening
- Non-verbal communication
- Making helpful statements
- Asking questions to understand needs and preferences (while avoiding unnecessary questions)
- Sharing options for referrals and other forms of support (without advising or directing)

What GBV Teams Can Offer and Learn

Through practice sessions, GBV teams can provide feedback and support to community leaders who are committed to strengthening survivor-centered response. Practice sessions also offer GBV teams an opportunity to learn with leaders. GBV teams can:

- Become more familiar with community response to survivors, which can inform programming.
- Learn about leaders' practices in response, which can help GBV teams better prepare survivors engaged with GBV case management who are weighing the option of reporting to leaders
- Gauge leaders' familiarity with GBV consequences, referral systems, etc. and identify areas for follow-up
- Strengthen relationships with leaders for future collaboration