



Gender-based Violence Pack

Aligned with the
CAPS Life Orientation Curriculum

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Basics of Gender-based Violence

Defining Violence

Before we define gender-based violence, we need to understand the term 'violence'. In short, violence is the act of physically or psychologically harming another person, group or community. Violence is intentional. It involves force or threat and aims to emotionally break down the person who experiences it. Anyone can be a perpetrator of violence. In fact, we can even act violently towards ourselves. Individuals, groups and states of authorities can also perpetuate violence.

Below are some examples of how violence is expressed:

Physical violence: including murder, fighting and assault.

Emotional and psychological abuse: including verbal threats, manipulation, stalking and bullying.

Hate crimes: Involves harming an individual, group or community based on specific characteristics, such as race or culture. Xenophobia, the prejudice against people from another country, often involves hate crimes.

How does violence affect people?

Violence can result in trauma, disabilities and sometimes even death. Violence not only affects people physically but can also affect them emotionally: where they feel scared, fearful and vulnerable. In addition, psychological effects, such as nightmares and flashbacks, can be experienced. Violence is considered a cycle and as a result, can often lead to more violence committed by others: those who experience violence are more likely to commit it.



Violence can even occur in schools and be committed by learners. Bullying and sexual harassment are forms of violence that occur commonly in schools.

What is Gender-based Violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to the psychological, emotional, sexual or economic violence that occurs as a result of unequal power relationships between genders in society. It occurs because of perceived ideas of gender roles, norms and expectations.

There are various forms of GBV:

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

- Violence that is directed specifically onto women and girls.

Violence against LGBTIQ+ people

- Violence directed onto people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex people.

Intimate partner violence (IPV)

- Physical, emotional and sexual violence by a romantic partner.

Domestic violence (DV)

- Physical, emotional and sexual violence by a family member.
- This violence could be sexual assault, battery, coercion and sexual harassment.

Sexual violence (SV)

- Various sexual acts that are unwanted or forced upon someone else.
- This may involve rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or sex trafficking.



In this resource, the focus is on violence against women and girls (VAWG) because this is a common form of violence in South Africa where almost half of all women experience one or more episodes of physical and intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

For more information on violence against other genders, please refer to the resource pack, Sexuality and Gender.

Causes of Gender-Based Violence

Although there is **never** an excuse or justification for GBV, it is important to understand why it occurs. By understanding these factors, it is easier for us to prevent it from recurring.

1. Gender Inequality

Due to the inequality between various genders, gender identities that are considered oppressed are more vulnerable to instances of violence. For example, women are more likely to experience violence committed by a man. This is because women are historically more vulnerable to oppression based on gender stereotypes and perceived power imbalances.

2. Learned Behaviour

GBV is considered 'normal' in some communities where cultural and religious practices on masculinity and femininity play a large role in understanding how we should treat various genders. This suggests that the belief that perpetuating violence is normal, and so it becomes a learned behaviour.

3. The Media

Growing up, children receive indirect messages of what it is expected of their gender. For example, boys are encouraged to engage in rough and tumble play while girls are encouraged to be more submissive. This type of messaging is especially clear in the media (by the TV we watch, or things we read) that reinforces aggressive masculinity and thus, normalises GBV.

4. Other Factors

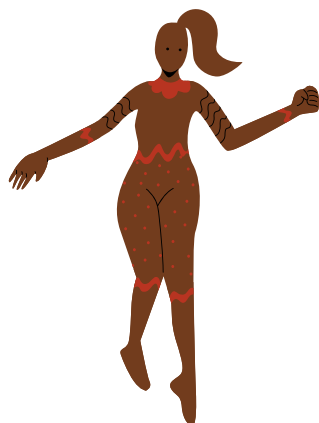
Alcohol and substance abuse indirectly can cause GBV. Someone who is under the influence is less inhibited and may feel absolved of accountability, leading them to commit more offenses. In other instances, transgenerational relationships or '*sugar daddies*' are also likely to result in GBV as these types of relationships often involve significantly unequal power dynamics and very young girls who are vulnerable to rape. because of the power imbalance.

These are not the only factors that play a role in the occurrence of GBV. The lack of resources and places of safety also play a role.

Effects of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is detrimental to a victim's life. Victims will experience not only physical impact, but also behavioural and psychological impact.

The consequences of GBV include:



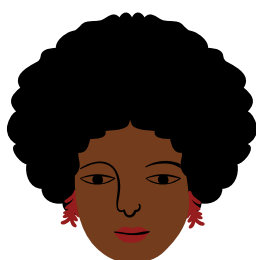
Physical

- Injury and/or death
- Acquiring sexually transmitted diseases or infections, such as HIV
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Miscarriages



Psychological

- Depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Fear
- Shock
- Complex trauma



Behavioural

- Low self-esteem
- Substance abuse
- Shame and guilt
- Living in fear
- Suicidal ideations



Gender-based violence is a big problem in South Africa. In 2012, a study conducted by Gender Links found that 77% of women in Limpopo, 51% in Gauteng, 45% in the Western Cape and 36% in KwaZulu-Natal had experienced some form of GBV.

Sexual Harassment

What is harassment?

This refers to unreasonable and unwanted behaviour from someone else that is found to be offensive and harming.

What is sexual harassment?

This is defined as unwanted sexual behaviour from another person that is psychologically and physically harmful.

Examples of sexual harassment

- Making sexual propositions, such as, “How about it, babe?”
- Spreading rumours like, “She’ll do it with anyone.”
- Sending unsolicited sexual messages or pictures to a cellphone.
- Chasing and/or cornering women and girls to grab and kiss them, flip up their skirts.
- Persistent unwelcome sexual advances.



How do we define sexual harassment?

The most important aspect of defining sexual harassment is how the behaviour makes the victim feel. If the sexual act makes the victim feel uncomfortable and scared, then it can constitute sexual harassment.

The intention of sexual harassment is where one person often harasses to exert their power over another. This is to make the victim feel insulted, intimidated and threatened.



Historically, females have been perceived to be weak or submissive. This has and can lead to violence against women, including discrimination, and women having a lower socioeconomic status in a community. This perception also results in men feeling justified in controlling women, making decisions for the women in their lives and limiting women's autonomy. Women now have fewer options and less resources to avoid or escape abusive situations, to seek justice, and develop their independence.

Women who suffer GBV also suffer other consequences, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and resulting deaths, traumatic fistula, and higher risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.

Men also disrespect women by not calling out abusive men. Peer relations that accept violence against women emphasise and condone aggression.

Rape Culture

What is rape culture?

Rape culture perpetuates the belief that victims have contributed to their own victimization and are responsible for what has happened to them. It includes false beliefs and stereotypes that justify aggressive behaviour and silences the voices of sexual assault victims.

Examples of rape culture

- Slogans or chants that imply sexual assault.
- Pop music that implies that sexual assault is acceptable.
- Using the term "sex" instead of "rape" - these two terms are not the same. Sex involves consent, whereas rape does not.
- Not believe a victim and calling them a liar.

Victim Blaming

What is Victim Blaming?

This is when a community, group of people or individual blames the person for that person's assault. Comments such as "you were sexually assaulted because your skirt is too short" falsely or incorrectly justify why someone was sexually assaulted.



Prevention

How can we work together to prevent rape culture and victim blaming?

1. Challenge those who accept or condone violence

- Challenge social attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, systems and practices that support, justify, excuse, trivialise or downplay violence against women and their children.
- Shift blame from the victim to the perpetrator.

2. Promote independence

- Equalise access to power and resources between genders, including by strengthening women's economic security, independence and social, political and economic participation and decision-making in public life.
- Challenge men's use of controlling behaviours in relationships and the subtle normalisation of male dominance in relationships.
- Promote women's peer support by promoting women's networks and friendships. Support women's collective advocacy and activism.

3. Challenge stereotypes and gender roles

- Encourage children to reject rigid gender roles and develop positive personal identities that are not constrained by gender stereotypes. Do the same for young people and adults
- Challenge aggressive entitled and dominant constructions of masculinity
- Challenge subordinate and sexualised constructions of femininity.
- Promote and support gender-equitable domestic and parenting practices.

4. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships

- Challenge peer relations between men that involve hostility or disrespect towards women.



Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

What is a healthy relationship?

A healthy relationship forms on three basic principles; freedom, love and respect.

Freedom

A healthy relationship allows both people to see their family and friends, go out with other people, make their own decisions, follow their own set of beliefs, religion or practises and be themselves.

Love

A healthy relationship is not abusive. It allows the two people to communicate with respect and honesty and two people feel safe in the relationship. People in healthy relationships have boundaries and can say 'NO' to things they do not want to do, such as sexual intercourse or risky activities.

Respect

A healthy relationship has its grounding in respect where two people can listen to each other's feelings and opinions, are able to celebrate achievements, are not jealous, do not insult or abuse each other and do not control or manipulate each other.

It is important to note that all relationships can go through a hard time and we can disagree and feel unhappy in relationships that are not abusive. This makes it difficult to understand what is normal and not abusive.

Warning signs of an abusive relationship:

- Try to control you
- Pressure you
- Deliberately hurt you
- Express extreme jealousy
- Break you down
- Threaten you



Respectful Relationships

Relationships

It is important that our relationships are formed on the basis of consent, trust, reciprocation and most importantly, respect. It is neither normal nor healthy for people to fear or be controlled by another person.

What are relationships?

A relationship is a bond and interaction between two people. People form four main relationship types:

- **Acquaintances**
 - These are relationships with people who you encounter regularly but are not close enough to be friends or relatives. However, these should also be respectful despite lack of familiarity.
- **Friends**
 - These are relationships with people who you choose to interact with - a friendship should never feel pressured or forced. It is often a natural bonding that occurs because the two people share common interests and ideas.
- **Family**
 - Our family relationships are normally connected through kinships, such as blood or marriage. These relationships should ideally be strong and trustworthy. They should also be life-long and are also intimate as often people live with family.
- **Romantic Relationships**
 - This is when two people feel strongly connected and attracted to each other, both physically and emotionally. It is considered the closest form of relationship.

Basics of Consent

What is consent?

Consent is a mutual agreement based on a shared desire for sexual activities. It is an ongoing verbal interaction that involves honesty, respect and trust. Important to note: consent is not related to power or coercing the other person into saying 'yes' to a sexual activity. There are two actions associated with consent:

Seeking Consent

Seeking consent refers to when a person asks for consent from their sexual partner before engaging in the activity or action. The person seeking is clear about their desires and expectations, and asks permission in a way that does not coerce (pressure and manipulate) the other into saying yes.

Receiving Consent

Receiving consent entails hearing a clear agreement from one's sexual partner and always asking a sexual partner to explain if they are unsure that the answer is a 'yes'. It is when the person asking for consent has clearly received consent.

What consent does look like:

- Communicating at all times and checking that either partner is comfortable.
- Respecting when a partner says "no" or "maybe".
- Not making comments or acting aggressively to coerce someone into saying "yes".

What consent does NOT look like:

- Assuming certain clothes or flirting is giving consent;
- Giving consent under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Giving consent because someone is pressured to.

Seeking Help and How to Help

How can we help those who experience violence?

- **LISTEN**
 - Hear what your friend has to say and try not to interrupt. Let them talk at their own pace. Show them that you are listening by making eye contact and nodding.
- **BELIEVE**
 - Try not to overdo the questions, as this can make it seem like you doubt them. It's important that your friend sees that you're on their side and that you support them.
- **VALIDATE**
 - Tell your friend that what they're feeling is right. Let them know you think their feelings are real and normal, by repeating the feeling word they've used (e.g. 'it's OK that you feel scared'). Acknowledge that you have feelings about it too but try to keep the focus on your friend.
- **NO BLAME**
 - In our society, it's common for victims to be blamed for their experience of violence. Try to avoid questions such as '*Why did you go there?*' and '*Why did you go out with them?*' because they might make your friend think they're responsible for what happened.
- **ASK**
 - If you feel a bit helpless, ask your friend what sort of help they'd like from you. They're not expecting you to solve the problem, and you've already helped just by listening. Asking will also help your friend think about what to do next.



- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- It's important that your friend trusts you and feels like they're in control of the story. If you think someone else needs to know (e.g. a trusted adult like a teacher or your parent), first ask your friend for permission to discuss this with a third person. Preferably encourage your friend to go to the adult but if you two would prefer that you did, you can think together about who can be trusted and don't tell the adult until your friend is okay with it.

- **GET HELP**

- Talk with your friend about what would help stop the violence (if it is still happening), or what they feel they want. Encourage your friend to tell a trusted adult who can do something about it, such as a relative, a teacher or a school counsellor.



Activity 1: Sexual Harassment

Part One

Read this list of behaviours and decide if they are sexual harassment in terms of *Always*, *Sometimes* or *Never*. Place the letters in the appropriate box.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
A. Casual physical contact (e.g. hugging, patting)			
B. Whistling and catcalling			
C. Having someone stare at your body			
D. Invitations for dates			
E. Using terms like 'sweetheart' and 'baby' to someone in passing			
F. Casual conversations			

Part Two

Read this resource pack and identify three examples of sexual harassment. List them below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Activity 2: True or False

Read each statement and identify which is true or false.

Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers.

False allegations of rape are uncommon.

Victims provoke sexual assault by flirting, wearing sexy clothes or getting drunk

Once consent is given to sexual contact it can be withdrawn.

If they didn't struggle or fight back then it wasn't sexual assault.

References

1. Opening Our Eyes Addressing Gender- Based Violence In South African Schools. 2015. 2nd Ed. Pretoria: Doe & Unicef.
2. Samavi, n.d. Menstrual Health - Training Manual.
3. SaferSpaces. 2020. Gender-Based Violence in South Africa.
4. Sexual Harassment & Rape Prevention Program (SHARPP). 2020. Rape Culture.
5. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2016. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) In South Africa: A Brief Review.
6. White Ribbon Australia. Understanding The Issue

Resources

Childline South Africa

Toll-free helpline: 0800 055 555

Website: www.childline.org.za

Sonke Gender Justice (Whistleblower)

Tel: 0800 333 059

SMS: 33490

Email: sonke@whistleblowing.co.za

The Trauma Centre

Tel: 021 465 7373

Email: info@trauma.co.za

Rape Crisis

Tel: 021 684 1180

Email: info@rapecrisis.org.za

1000 Women 1 Voice

Tel: 061 469 0479

Email: info@1000women.co.za

Website: www.1000women.co.za

Periods For Hope

ABOUT

Periods For Hope (PFH) is a registered non-profit organisation that aims to empower high school learners by running sexual health workshops. These workshops include intimate discussions about menstruation, gender, self-esteem and gender-based violence (GBV). PFH aims to educate about sexual and reproductive health as well as empower girls and young women to be agents of their bodies. In addition, it also aims to educate young male learners on gender-based violence practices, the importance of supporting their female counterparts and ending the stigma of menstruation.

FIND PERIODS FOR HOPE ONLINE:



www.periodsforhope.org



info@periodsforhope.org



[@periodsforhope](https://www.facebook.com/periodsforhope)



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Answers to Activity 1

Part One

A. *Casual physical contact (e.g. hugging, patting)*

Sometimes

B. *Whistling and catcalling*

Always

C. *Having someone stare at your body*

Always

D. *Invitations for dates*

Sometimes; if someone is persistent and does not take 'no' for an answer.

E. *Using terms like 'sweetheart', 'baby', etc.*

Sometimes; think about your relationship to the person you are calling these names.

F. *Casual conversations*

Never

Part Two

- Making sexual propositions, like "How about it, babe?"
- Spreading rumours like "She'll do it with anyone."
- Sending unsolicited sexual messages or images to a cellphone
- Chasing and/or cornering women and girls to grab and kiss them, flip-up their skirts, etc.
- Persistent unwelcome sexual advances.

Answers to Activity 2

1. *False allegations of rape are uncommon.*

True. Although there have been cases of false allegations of rape, only 2% are falsely reported.

2. *Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers.*

False. Around 90% of cases are committed by people the victim knows.

3. *Victims provoke sexual assault by flirting, wearing sexy clothes or getting drunk.*

False. This statement implies that perpetrators cannot control themselves. It is also an example of victim blaming.

4. *Once consent is given to sexual contact it can be withdrawn.*

True. Consent is not everlasting. An individual is allowed to withdraw from sexual intercourse if they decide they do not want to engage in it.

5. *If they didn't struggle or fight back then it wasn't sexual assault.*

False. Submission does not equal consent. A lack of "no" does not mean "yes".