



Module 1

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Essential Services Package for
Women and Girls Subject to Violence
Core Elements and Quality Guidelines





MODULE 1

Introduction

The Essential Services Package comprises five Modules:

Module 1. Overview and introduction	Module 2. Health	Module 3. Justice and policing	Module 4. Social services	Module 5. Coordination and governance of coordination
Chapter 1: Introduction to essential services package 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Context 1.3 Purpose and scope 1.4 Language and terms	Chapter 1: Introduction to essential health services 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms	Chapter 1: Introduction to essential justice and policing services 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms	Chapter 1: Introduction to essential social services 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms	Chapter 1: Introduction to essential coordination and governance actions 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms
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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES PACKAGE

1.1 Introduction

The **United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence** (the “Programme”), a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC, aims to provide greater access to a coordinated set of essential and quality multi-sectoral services for all women and girls who have experienced gender based violence.

The Programme identifies the **essential services** to be provided by the health, social services, police and justice sectors (the “Essential Services”) as well as guidelines for the coordination of Essential Services and the governance of coordination processes and mechanisms (the “Coordination Guidelines”). Service delivery guidelines for the core elements of each essential service have been identified to ensure the delivery of high quality services, particularly for low and middle income countries for women and girls experiencing violence. Taken together, these elements comprise the “**Essential Services Package**”.

The Essential Services Package comprises five overlapping modules:

- Module 1: Overview and Introduction
- Module 2: Health Essential Services
- Module 3: Justice and Policing Essential Services
- Module 4: Essential Social Services
- Module 5: Essential Actions for Coordination and Governance of Coordination

The Essential Services Package reflects the vital components of coordinated multi-sectoral responses for women and girls subject to violence. The provision, coordination and governance of essential health, police, justice and social services can significantly mitigate the consequences that violence has on the well-being, health and safety of women and girls’ lives, assist in the recovery and empowerment of women, and stop violence from reoccurring. Essential services can diminish the losses experienced by women, families and communities in terms of productivity, school achievement, public policies and budgets, and help break the recurrent cycle of violence. The Essential Service Package also plays a key role in poverty reduction and development and efforts to achieve the newly agreed 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Essential Services Package aims to fill the gap between the agreements and obligations made at the international level for the provision of services for VAW, including the agreed conclusions of the 2013 Commission on the Status of Women, and country level activity by providing technical guidance on how to develop quality essential services.” services-responses. These obligations are detailed in human rights instruments, international agreements and accompanying declarations and policies that provide global norms and standards upon which to build the Essential Services Package. While extensive commitment to respond to, and prevent violence against women and girls has occurred at a global level over

the last decades, many women and girls have inadequate or no access to the range of supports and services that can protect them, assist in keeping them

1.2 Context

Violence against women and girls is widespread, systemic and culturally entrenched. The United Nations Secretary-General has described it as reaching pandemic proportions.¹ Violence against women consists of “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”² Gender-based violence, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or which affects women disproportionately,³ takes many forms. In addition to physical and sexual violence, violence against women and girls includes psychological and emotional harm and abuse, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, abuse resulting from allegations of sorcery and witchcraft, so-called honour killings of women and girls, trafficking of women and girls, female infanticide and other harmful practices. Intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence are among the most pervasive and insidious forms of violence against women and girls. The term ‘violence against women’ includes violence against girls, particularly girls that could use the essential services provided for women.

According to a 2013 global review by the World Health Organization (WHO), 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual

safe, and support them to address the short and long term consequences of experiencing various forms of violence.

intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.⁴ More than seven percent of women globally reported ever having experienced non-partner sexual violence.⁵ Some country studies show that up to 70 percent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetimes, the majority by a husband or other intimate partner.⁶ It is estimated that one in five girls has been abused in childhood with estimates from some countries as high as one in three.⁷ Gender based power relations within society put many girls at a much higher risk than boys for some forms of violence, and sexual violence in particular. A study of men’s use of violence in selected sites in seven countries in Asia and the Pacific revealed that 26-80 percent of men reported having perpetrated physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, and 10-40 percent of men reported committing non-partner rape, citing sexual entitlement as the most common motivation.⁸

1 United Nations (2006) Secretary-General’s In-depth Study on Violence Against Women A/61/122/Add.1.

2 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 1, retrieved from [http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.48.104.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.48.104.En?Opendocument).

3 See for example, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 19, retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm>.

4 WHO, Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women, p. 2 (“Only women aged 15 years and older were included, to differentiate violence against women from child sexual abuse.” p. 12), retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf.

5 *Ibid*, p. 18.

6 UN Women “Violence against Women: Facts and Figures” SAY NO UNITE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, retrieved from www.saynotoviolence.org/issues/facts-and-figures. Population surveys have found that between 10-70% of women report being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives, see Heise, L, Ellsberg, M. and Gottemoeller, M. (1999) Ending Violence against Women (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University School of Public Health). The UN Secretary-General’s Study, *supra* note 1 states that violence against women affects one third of all women in their lifetime.

7 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/status_report/2014/en/ p. 14

8 UN Women (2013) Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific (UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Volunteers).

Several studies suggest that, globally, half of all female homicide victims are killed by their current or former husbands or intimate partners.⁹

Violence against women and girls has detrimental and long lasting consequences to the well-being, health and safety of women and girls, along with economic consequences, effects on educational outcomes, and impact on the productivity and development of societies and countries. While extensive commitment to respond to, and prevent violence against women and girls has occurred at a global level over the last

9 See for example, UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2013, p. 14, available at http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/GSH2013/2014_GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_BOOK_web.pdf.

1.3 Purpose and scope

The purpose of the Essential Services Package is to support countries as they work to design, implement and review services for all women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence, in a broad range of settings and situations. The Package is a practical tool for countries setting out a clear roadmap on how to ensure the provision and coordination of quality services of all sectors. It is designed to ensure that the services of all sectors are coordinated and governed to respond in a comprehensive way, are women-centred and where necessary, child-centred, and are accountable to victims and survivors and to each other. The guidelines for each core element of the essential services are designed to ensure a quality response to violence against women and girls.

The way in which essential services are implemented will vary from one country to another. Some countries may already have the described services in place; others may need to adapt existing services or progressively implement new services, or take additional measures to meet these standards. It is critical that each country has a plan in place to achieve identified standards, and to ensure that measurement and accountability processes and mechanisms are in

place to ensure that services are being delivered and are of the required quality.

decades, many women and girls have little or no access to the support and services that can protect them, assist in keeping them safe, and address the short and long-term consequences of experiencing violence. Thus, government commitment to addressing violence against women and girls is critical to achieving the goals of these Guidelines.

The international obligation to exercise due diligence requires States to establish effective measures to prevent, investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women. This includes effective means to respond to each case of violence, as well as address the structural causes and consequences of the violence, by ensuring comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, gender sensitive justice systems and police, available health and social services, awareness raising activities and ensuring the quality of all measures.

place to ensure that services are being delivered and are of the required quality.

While the Guidelines may be applied to other forms of violence against women and girls, they are primarily intended for situations of intimate partner violence, and non-partner sexual violence. The focus is primarily on responding to violence by taking action at the earliest stages of violence, and intervening to prevent the reoccurrence of violence. These guidelines focus on services and responses designed for women but take into consideration the needs of those girls who are of an age where they may use such services. Where relevant, these guidelines also highlight what needs to be considered for women and girls who are accompanied by their children when using essential services. Not only are women and girls overwhelmingly the victims of male violence and abuse, the United Nations acknowledges that violence against women “is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men”.¹⁰ As a result, the dynamics of violence

¹⁰ United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

against women, the forms of violence that women experience, the severity, frequency and consequences are very different from violence experienced by men.

The scope of the Essential Services Package is complemented by the focus of UNICEF, which, among other things, works to ensure all children live free from violence. UNICEF will continue to develop significant guidance and responses for children as

1.4 Language and terms

Coordination is a central element of the response to violence against women and girls. It is required by international standards that aim at ensuring that the response to violence against women and girls is comprehensive, multidisciplinary, coordinated, systematic and sustained. It is a process that is governed by laws and policies. It involves a collaborative effort by multi-disciplinary teams and personnel and institutions from all relevant sectors to implement laws, policies, protocols and agreements and communication and collaboration to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Coordination occurs at the national level among ministries that play a role in addressing this violence, at the local level between local-level service providers, stakeholders and, in some countries, at intermediate levels of government between the national and local levels. Coordination also occurs between the different levels of government.

Core elements are features or components of the essential services that apply in any context, and ensure the effective functioning of the service.

Essential Services encompass a core set of services provided by the health care, social service, police and justice sectors. The services must, at a minimum, secure the rights, safety and well-being of any woman or girl who experiences gender-based violence.

Formal justice systems are justice systems that are the responsibility of the State and its agents. They include government supported laws, and institutions such as police, prosecution services, courts, and prisons that have the responsibility to enforce and apply the laws

victims of violence. The Guidelines, while universally applicable, have been developed specifically with consideration for low to medium income countries. It is also important to note that these guidelines do not focus on interventions in crisis or humanitarian settings. However the responses described within these guidelines are complementary, to the extent possible within current guidelines, to those that focus on crisis/humanitarian settings.

of the State and to administer the sanctions imposed for violations of laws.

Gender based violence is “any act of violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately”.¹¹

Governance of coordination has two major components. The first component is the creation of laws and policies required to implement and support the coordination of Essential Services to eliminate or respond to violence against women and girls. The second component is the process of holding stakeholders accountable for carrying out their obligations in their coordinated response to violence against women and girls and ongoing oversight, monitoring and evaluation of their coordinated response. Governance is carried out at both the national and local levels.

Health system refers to (i) all activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore and/or maintain health; (ii) the people, institutions and resources, arranged together in accordance with established policies, to improve the health of the population they serve.¹²

Health care provider is an individual or an organization that provides health-care services in a systematic way. An individual health-care provider may be a health-care professional, a community health worker; or any other person who is trained and knowledgeable in health. Organizations include hospitals, clinics,

¹¹ CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 19, para 6.

¹² WHO, Health System Strengthening: Glossary, found at www.who.int/healthsystems/Glossary_January2011.pdf.

primary care centres and other service delivery points. Primary health care providers are nurses, midwives, doctors or others.¹³

Intimate partner violence is “the most common form of violence experienced by women globally . . . and includes a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by a current or former intimate partner, without her consent. Physical violence involves intentionally using physical force, strength or a weapon to harm or injure the woman. Sexual violence includes abusive sexual contact, making a woman engage in a sexual act without her consent, and attempted or completed sex acts with a woman who is ill, disabled, under pressure or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Psychological violence includes controlling or isolating the woman, and humiliating or embarrassing her. Economic violence includes denying a woman access to and control over basic resources.”¹⁴

Justice service provider includes State/government officials, judges, prosecutors, police, legal aid, court administrators, lawyers, paralegals, and victim support/social services staff.

The **Justice continuum** extends from a victim/survivor’s entry into the system until the matter is concluded. A woman’s journey will vary, depending on her needs. She may pursue a variety of justice options, ranging from reporting or making a complaint which initiates a criminal investigation and prosecution or seeking protection, and/or pursuing civil claims including divorce and child custody actions and/or compensation for personal or other damages, including from State administrative schemes, concurrently or over time.

Multi-disciplinary response teams are groups of stakeholders who have entered into agreements to work in a coordinated manner to respond to violence against women and girls within a community. These teams are focused on ensuring an effective response to individual cases and may contribute to policy making.

13 WHO (2013) Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines at page vii.

14 UN Secretary-General’s Study, supra note 1, para 111- 112.

Non-partner sexual violence “refers to violence by a relative, friend, acquaintance, neighbor, work colleague or stranger”.¹⁵ It includes being forced to perform any unwanted sexual act, sexual harassment and violence perpetrated against women and girls frequently by an offender known to them, including in public spaces, at school, in the workplace and in the community.

Quality guidelines support the delivery and implementation of the core elements of essential services to ensure that they are effective, and of sufficient quality to address the needs of women and girls. Quality guidelines provide ‘the how to’ for services to be delivered within a human rights-based, culturally-sensitive and women’s-empowerment approach. They are based on and complement international standards and reflect recognized best practices in responding to gender-based violence.

The **social services sector** provides a range of support services to improve the general well-being and empowerment to a specific population in society. They may be general in nature or provide more targeted responses to a specific issue; for example responding to women and girls experiencing violence. Social services for women and girls who have experienced violence includes services provided by, or funded by government (and therefore known as public services) or provided by other civil society and community actors, including non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations.

Social services responding to violence against women and girls are specifically focused on victims/survivors of violence. They are imperative for assisting women’s recovery from violence, their empowerment and preventing the reoccurrence of violence and, in some instances, work with particular parts of society or the community to change the attitudes and perceptions of violence. They include, but are not limited to, providing psycho-social counselling, financial support, crisis information, safe accommodation, legal and advocacy services, housing and employment support and others, to women and girls who experience violence.

15 *Ibid.* at para 128.

Stakeholders are all government and civil society organizations and agencies that have a role in responding to violence against women and girls at all levels of government and civil society. Key stakeholders include victims and survivors and their representatives, social services, health care sector, legal aid providers, police, prosecutors, judges, child protection agencies, and the education sector, among others.

Victim / survivor refers to women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing gender based

violence to reflect both the terminology used in the legal process and the agency of these women and girls in seeking essential services.¹⁶

Violence against women (VAW) means “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”¹⁷

¹⁶ UN Secretary-General’s Study, *supra* note 1, notes the ongoing debate the terms victim and survivor. Some suggest that “the term “victim” should be avoided because it implies passivity, weakness and inherent vulnerability and fails to recognize the reality of women’s resilience and agency. For others the term “survivor” is problematic because it denies the sense of victimization experienced by women who have been the target of violent crime”. Therefore, these guidelines use the term “victim/survivor”.

¹⁷ Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Article 1.

CHAPTER 2:

COMMON PRINCIPLES, CHARACTERISTICS AND FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Research and practice suggests that the manner in which services are provided has a significant impact on their effectiveness. Key to responding to violence against women and girls and maintaining women and girls' safety and well-being is an understanding of the gendered nature of the violence, its causes and consequences and providing services within a culture of women's empowerment which assist women and girls to consider the range of choices available to them and support their decisions. In delivering quality essential services, countries must consider the overriding principles that underpin the delivery of all essential services and the foundational elements which must be in place to support the delivery of each essential service. These principles and foundational elements are reflected in common characteristics and activities that cut across the health, social services, police and justice sectors and the coordination and governance mechanisms.

The principles, common characteristic and foundational elements for Essential Services for women and girls subject to violence can also be found within international legal instruments. States around the world have negotiated and agreed to support a set of global norms and standards for addressing violence against women and girls including:

- The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women¹⁸ and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁹ provide the human rights based framework.
- The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women²⁰, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action²¹, as well as numerous General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, along with General Recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, clearly outline what States should be doing to address this issue.

- More recently, the Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice²² provide broad recommendations that cover substantive, procedural, and operational criminal justice issues while recognizing

18 General Assembly resolution 34/180.

19 General Assembly resolution 44/25.

20 General Assembly resolution 48/104.

21 Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I and annex II.

22 General Assembly resolution 65/457, annex.

the importance of a holistic, coordinated multi-disciplinary response.

- The Agreed Conclusions²³ adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its 57th session provides further guidance for establishing comprehensive, coordinated, inter-disciplinary, accessible and sustained multi-sectoral services for all victims and survivors of all forms of violence against women and girls.

2.1 Principles

The following overlapping principles underpin the delivery of all essential services and coordination of those services:

- A rights-based approach
- Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment
- Culturally and age appropriate and sensitive
- Victim/survivor centred approach
- Safety is paramount
- Perpetrator accountability.

A rights-based approach

Rights-based approaches to the delivery of quality essential services recognize that States have a primary responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of women and girls. Violence against women and girls is a fundamental breach of women and girls' human rights, particularly her right to a life free from fear and violence. A human rights approach calls for services that prioritize the safety and well-being of women and girls and treat women and girls with dignity, respect and sensitivity. It also calls for the highest attainable standards of health, social, justice and policing services – services of good quality, available, accessible and acceptable to women and girls.²³

A key principle arising from this global normative framework is the obligations for States to exercise due diligence in the areas of prevention, protection, prosecution, punishment, and provision of redress and reparations.

Strong leadership at all levels and an ongoing commitment to the guiding principles, common characteristics and the development and implementation of strong foundational elements are essential for successful design, implementation and review of a sustainable, effective, quality response to violence against women.

Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment

The centrality of gender inequality and discrimination, as both a root cause and a consequence of violence against women and girls, requires that services ensure gender sensitive and responsive policies and practices are in place. Services must ensure that violence against women and girls will not be condoned, tolerated or perpetuated. Services must promote women's agency where women and girls are entitled to make their own decisions, including decisions that refuse essential services.

Culturally and age appropriate and sensitive

Culturally and age appropriate and sensitive essential services must respond to the individual circumstances and life experiences of women and girls taking into account their age, identity, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and language preferences. Essential services must also respond appropriately to women and girls who face multiple forms of discrimination - not only because she is a woman, but also because of her race, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, religion, disability, marital status, occupation or other characteristics – or because she has been subjected to violence.

Victim/survivor-centered

Victim/survivor-centred approaches place the rights, needs and desires of women and girls as the centre of focus of service delivery. This requires consideration of the multiple needs of victims and survivor, the various

23 E/2013/27.

risks and vulnerabilities, the impact of decisions and actions taken, and ensures services are tailored to the unique requirements of each individual women and girl. Services should respond to her wishes.

Safety is paramount

The safety of women and girls is paramount when delivering quality services. Essential services must prioritize the safety and security of service users and avoid causing her further harm.

2.2

Common characteristics of quality essential services

Essential services share a range of common characteristics and common activities. These are applicable regardless of the specific 'sector' that may be responding to women and girls experiencing violence. Service delivery across all essential services and actions should have the following key characteristics:

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Adaptability
- Appropriateness
- Prioritize safety
- Informed consent and confidentiality
- Effective communication and participation by stakeholders in design, implementation and assessment of services.
- Data collection and information management
- Linking with other sectors and agencies through coordination

Availability

Essential health care, social services, justice and policing services must be available in sufficient quantity and quality to all victims and survivors of violence regardless of her place of residence, nationality, ethnicity, caste, class, migrant or refugee status, indigenous status, age, religion, language and level of literacy, sexual orientation, marital status, disabilities or any other characteristic not considered.

Perpetrator accountability

Perpetrator accountability requires essential services, where appropriate, to effectively hold the perpetrators accountable while ensuring fairness in justice responses. Essential services need to support and facilitate the victim/survivor's participation with the justice process, promote her capacity of acting or exerting her agency, while ensuring that the burden or onus of seeking justice is not placed on her but on the state.

Guidelines

- Service delivery must be created, maintained and developed in a way that guarantee women and girl's access to comprehensive services without discrimination in the whole territory of the State, including remote, rural and isolated areas.
- Services are delivered to reach all populations, including the most excluded, remote, vulnerable and marginalized without any form of discrimination regardless of their individual circumstances and life experiences of women and girls including their age, identity, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and language preferences
- Service delivery is organized to provide women and girls with continuity of care across the network of services and over their life cycle.
- Consider innovative service delivery to broaden coverage of service delivery such as mobile health clinics and courts as well as the creative use of modern IT solutions when feasible.

Accessibility

Accessibility requires services to be accessible to all women and girls without discrimination. They must be physically accessible (services are within safe physical reach for all women and girls), economically accessible (affordability) and linguistically accessible (information is provided in various formats).

Guidelines

- Women and girls are able to access services without undue financial or administrative burden. This means services should be affordable, administratively easy to access, and in certain cases, such as police, emergency health and social services, free of charge.
- Services must be delivered as far as possible, in a way that considers the language needs of the user.
- Service delivery procedures and other information about essential services are available in multiple formats (for example, oral, written, electronically) and user-friendly and in plain language to maximize access and meet the needs of different target groups.

Adaptability

Essential services must recognize the differential impacts of violence on different groups of women and communities. They must respond to the needs of victims and survivors in ways that integrate human rights and culturally sensitive principles.

Guidelines

- Services understand and respond to the individual circumstances and needs of each victim / survivor.
- A comprehensive range of services are provided to allow women and girls to have options to services that best meet their individual circumstances.

Appropriateness

Appropriate essential services for women and girls are those which are delivered in a way that is agreeable to her: respects her dignity; guarantees her confidentiality; is sensitive to her needs and perspectives; and minimizes secondary victimization.²⁴

²⁴ Secondary victimization has been defined in the UN Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures to be victimization that occurs not as a direct result of the act but by through the inadequate response of institutions and individuals to the victim.

Guidelines

- Efforts are made to reduce secondary victimization, for example, minimize the number of times she has to relay her story; the number of people she must deal with; and ensuring trained personnel are available.
- Women and girls are supported to fully understand their options.
- Women and girls are empowered to feel able to help herself and to ask for help.
- Women and girls' decisions are respected after ensuring she fully understands the options available to her.
- Services should be delivered in a way that responds to her needs and concerns without intruding on her autonomy.

Prioritize safety – risk assessment and safety planning

Women and girls face many risks to their immediate and ongoing safety. These risks will be specific to the individual circumstances of each women and girls. Risk assessment and management can reduce the level of risk. Best practice risk assessment and management includes consistent and coordinated approaches within and between social, health and police and justice sectors.

Guidelines

- Services use risk assessment and management tools specifically developed for responding to intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.
- Services regularly and consistently assess the individual risks for each women and girl.
- Services use a range of risk management options, solutions and safety measures to support the safety of women and girls.
- Service providers should ensure that women and girls receive a strengths-based, individualized plan that includes strategies for risk management.
- Services must work with all agencies including health, social services, justice and policing services to coordinate risk assessment and management approaches.

Effective Communication and Participation by Stakeholders in design, implementation and assessment of services

Women and girls need to know that she is being listened to and that her needs are being understood and addressed. Information and the way it is communicated can empower her to seek essential services. All communication with women and girls must promote their dignity and be respectful of them.

Guidelines

- Service providers must be non-judgmental, empathetic and supportive.
- Women and girls must have the opportunity to tell her story, be listened to, and have her story accurately recorded and to be able to express her needs and concerns according to their abilities, age, intellectual maturity and evolving capacity.
- Service provider must validate her concerns and experiences by taking what she says seriously, not blame or judge her.
- Service providers must provide information and counselling that helps her to make her own decisions.

Informed consent and confidentiality

All essential services must be delivered in a way that protects the woman or girl's privacy, guarantees her confidentiality, and discloses information only with her informed consent, to the extent possible. Information about the woman's experience of violence can be extremely sensitive. Sharing this information inappropriately can have serious and potentially life threatening consequences for the women or girls and for the people providing assistance to her.

Guidelines

- Services have a code of ethics for the exchange of information (in accordance with existing legislation), including what information will be shared, how it will be shared and who it will be shared with.
- Service providers working directly with women and girls are informed about, and comply with, the code of ethics.
- Information relating to individual women and girls is treated confidentially, and stored securely.

- Women and girls are supported to fully understand their options and the implications of disclosure.
- Service providers understand, and comply with, their responsibilities with respect to confidentiality.

Data collection and information management

The consistent and accurate collection of data about the services provided to women and girls is important in supporting the continuous improvement of services. Services must have clear and documented processes for the accurate recording and confidential, secure storage of information about women and girls, and the services provided to them.

Guidelines

- Ensure there is a documented and secure system for the collection, recording and storing of all information and data.
- All information about women and girls who are accessing services is stored securely including: client files, legal and medical reports, and safety plans.
- Ensure accurate data collection by supporting staff to understand and use the data collection systems, and providing them adequate time to enter data in data collection systems.
- Ensure data are only shared using agreed protocols between organizations.
- Promote the analysis of data collection to assist in understanding the prevalence of violence, trends in using the essential services, evaluation of existing services and inform prevention measures.

Linking with other sectors and agencies through referral and coordination

Linking with other sectors and agencies through coordination, such as referral pathways, assist women and girls receive timely and appropriate services. Referral processes must incorporate standards for informed consent. To ensure the smooth navigation of the different essential services for victims and survivors, protocols and agreements about the referral process with relevant social, health and justice services, including clear responsibilities of each service, need to be in place.

Guidelines

- Procedures between services for information sharing and referral are consistent, known by agency staff, and communicated clearly to women and girls.

- Services have mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of referrals processes.
- Services refer to child specific services as required and appropriate.

2.3 Foundational elements

For services and service delivery to be of high quality, States and the health, police, justice and social services sectors must ensure there are strong foundations in place to support these efforts.

Comprehensive legislation and legal frameworks

States should have a comprehensive legal framework that provides the legal and judicial basis for victims/survivors' seeking health, social services, justice and policing services.

Governance, oversight and accountability

Governance, oversight and accountability are required to ensure that the State's duty to provide quality essential services is met. Elected and government officials are encouraged to support these efforts by facilitating dialogue on whether and how guidelines should be implemented; determining the quality of service standards, and in monitoring compliance with service standards and identifying systemic failures in their design, implementation and delivery. Women and girls need to have recourse when essential services are denied, undermined, unreasonably delayed or lacking due to negligence. Accountability is vital to ensuring essential services are available, accessible, adaptable and appropriate. Accountability is enhanced by participation by stakeholders in design, implementation and assessment of services.

Resources and financing

Resources and financing are required to build and sustain each sector as well as an integrated

coordinated system that has capacity and capability to provide quality essential services that effectively and efficiently respond to violence against women and girls.

Training and workforce development

Training and workforce development ensures that sector agencies and coordination mechanisms have the capacity and capability to deliver quality services, and that service providers have the competency required to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. All service providers require opportunities to build their skills and expertise and to ensure their knowledge and skills remain up to date.

Monitoring and evaluation

Continuous improvement by sectors, informed by regular monitoring and evaluation, is needed to deliver quality services to women and girls experiencing violence. This relies on collection, analysis and publication of comprehensive data on violence against women and girls in a form that can be used to gauge and promote quality service provisions.

Gender sensitive policies and practices

Policies in each sector and for coordination mechanisms need to be gender sensitive as well as integrated into a National Action Plan to Eliminate Violence against Women. For each sector to work with and alongside other services in an integrated way to provide the most effective response to women and girls subjected to violence, each sector policies should be linked with a national policy.

CHAPTER 3:

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

3.1

Essential services guidelines framework

The Framework for the Essential Services Guidelines for the delivery of quality essential services incorporates four interlinked components:

- **Principles** which underpin the delivery of all essential services.
- **Common characteristics** which describe a range of activities and approaches that are common across all areas and which support the effective functioning and delivery of services.
- **Essential services and actions** which set out the guidelines required for services to secure the human rights, safety and well-being of any woman, girls or child who experience intimate partner violence and or non-partner sexual violence. Essential services are grouped into three sector specific areas: **health, justice and policing and social services**. They are underpinned by a fourth element: essential actions for **coordination and governance of coordination**.
- **Foundational elements** which must be in place to enable the delivery of quality services across all essential services and actions.

Essential Services Package: Overall framework diagram

Principles	A rights based approach	Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment	Culturally and age appropriate and sensitive
	Victim/survivor centred approach	Safety is paramount	Perpetrator accountability
Common characteristics	Availability	Accessibility	
	Adaptability	Appropriateness	
	Prioritize safety	Informed consent and confidentiality	
	Data collection and information management	Effective communication	
	Linking with other sectors and agencies through referral and coordination		

Essential services and actions	Health	Justice and Policing	Social services
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of survivors of intimate partner violence 2. First line support 3. Care of injuries and urgent medical treatment 4. Sexual assault examination and care 5. Mental health assessment and care 6. Documentation (medico-legal) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevention 2. Initial contact 3. Assessment/investigation 4. Pre-trial processes 5. Trial processes 6. Perpetrator accountability and reparations 7. Post-trial processes 8. Safety and protection 9. Assistance and support 10. Communication and information 11. Justice sector coordination 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crisis information 2. Crisis counselling 3. Help lines 4. Safe accommodations 5. Material and financial aid 6. Creation, recovery, replacement of identity documents 7. Legal and rights information, advice and representation, including in plural legal systems 8. Psycho-social support and counselling 9. Women-centred support 10. Children's services for any child affected by violence 10. Children's services for any child affected by violence 11. Community information, education and community outreach 12. Assistance towards economic independence, recovery and autonomy

Coordination and governance of coordination	
National level: Essential actions	Local level: Essential actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Law and policy making 2. Appropriation and allocation of resources 3. Standard setting for establishment of local level coordinated responses 4. Inclusive approaches to coordinated responses 5. Facilitate capacity development of policy makers and other decision-makers on coordinated responses to VAWG 6. Monitoring and evaluation of coordination at national and local levels 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of formal structures for local coordination and governance of coordination 2. Implementation of coordination and governance of coordination

Foundational elements	Comprehensive legislation and legal framework	Governance oversight and accountability	Resource and financing
	Training and workforce development	Gender sensitive policies and practices	Monitoring and evaluation

CHAPTER 4:

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

United Nations Instruments (treaties and soft law norms)

Commission on the Status of Women 57th Session, Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, available at [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions\(CSW_report_excerpt\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf).

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, available at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, available at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx.

Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, available at www.un.org/documents/ga/res/40/a40oro34.htm.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, available at www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.ht.

Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, available at www.un.org/en/pseataforce/docs/gudelines_on_justice_in_matters_involving_child_victims_and.pdf.

UN Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems, available at www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UN_principles_and_guidelines_on_access_to_legal_aid.pdf.

Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in

the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, available at www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reforms/crimeprevention/Model_Strategies_and_Practical_Measures_on_the_Elimination_of_Violence_against_Women_in_the_Field_of_Crime_Prevention_and_Criminal_Justice.pdf.

Tools and resources

Special Rapporteur on violence against women, including its causes and consequences – various reports available at www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues?Women?SRWomen?Pages?SRWomenIndex.aspx.

United Nations, Secretary-General's In-depth Study on Violence against Women, available at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/SGstudyvaw.htm.

UN Women, Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice: 2011-2012, available at www.progress.unwomen.org/pdfs?EN-Report-Progress.pdf.

UN Women, Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women, available at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/handbook-for-nap-on-vaw.pdf.

UN Women, Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women, available at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook/Handbook%20for%20legislation%20on%20violence%20against%20women.pdf.

UN Women, the various modules and information in the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women, available at www.endvawnow.org.

