Caring for survivors of violence – the health sector response

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Multisectoral prevention of violence against women and children

• RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women
  https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-RHR-18.19

• INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children
  https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/inspire-seven-strategies-for-ending-violence-against-children
The health sector response and medico-legal care

- Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused [https://bit.ly/3EDiYpC](https://bit.ly/3EDiYpC)
- Strengthening health systems to respond to women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a manual for health managers. [https://bit.ly/3gBm1GO](https://bit.ly/3gBm1GO)
The LIVES approach

• **L**isten closely with empathy and no judgement
• **I**nquire about their needs and concerns
• **V**alidate their experiences. Show you believe and understand.
• **E**nhance their safety
• **S**upport them to connect with additional services.

Two additional components for children (LIVES CC):

• **C**hild- and adolescent-friendly environment
• **C**aregiver support

World Health Organization
Particular challenges – mandatory reporting

- In some settings women/children can’t access medical care without a police report
- Can erode trust between health care provider and consequently lead to women/children avoiding to seek care

Research shows:

Violence against Women

- MR laws reduce help-seeking for over a third of survivors
- Provider warnings about MR often reduce survivors’ ability to receive the support they seek
- Reports worsen the situation for a majority of survivors
- Violates right to self-determination and autonomy

Violence against children

- MR laws increase the number of reports but no positive outcomes on child health and wellbeing
- Child protection services often under resourced
- Risk that consensual sexual relationships between adolescents trigger reports


Particular challenges – mandatory reporting

• What can health and other professionals in contact with children and women who experienced violence do?
  
  o Be aware about the challenges associated with reporting requirements and possible adverse effects
  o Professionals in contact with child and women survivors of violence need to be trained, when and how to communicate about any obligation to report.
  o At minimum, the obligation to report, where it exists, must be shared by providers to survivors before disclosure so that survivors can make informed decisions and their right to self-determination respected
Thank you

For more information, please contact:

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