

# 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 child maltreatment, a clinical handbook for health professionals <https://bit.ly/3AGcvZW>
- Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused <https://bit.ly/3EDiYpC>
- Strengthening the medico-legal response to sexual violence <https://bit.ly/3V4iCiQ>
- Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a clinical handbook <https://bit.ly/3V6lwUa>
- Strengthening health systems to respond to women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a manual for health managers. <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



**HOW HEALTH PROVIDERS CAN SUPPORT WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE**

**L** Listen closely, with empathy and no judgment.

**I** Inquire about their needs and concerns.

**V** Validate their experiences. Show you believe and understand.

**E** Enhance their safety.

**S** Support them to connect with additional services.

Do no harm. Respect women's wishes.

World Health Organization

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# 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

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## Particular challenges – mandatory reporting

- What can health and other professionals in contact with children and women who experienced violence do?
  - Be aware about the challenges associated with reporting requirements and possible adverse effects
  - Professionals in contact with child and women survivors of violence need to be trained, when and how to communicate about any obligation to report.
  - 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



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# Thank you

For more information, please contact:

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