

Considerations for GBV Case Management with Adolescent Girls

Barriers to Care

Adolescent girls, like adult women, “in humanitarian settings may face considerable practical barriers to accessing care and support even if they do disclose, including:

- Lack of transportation
- Lack of money to pay for services or transportation to access services
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of awareness of services
- Isolation
- Movement restrictions imposed by decision makers

These barriers are magnified for adolescent girls, who may already be significantly isolated or controlled within their families or by their spouses if married.”¹

Considerations for Adolescent Girls

Principles, skills and interventions for working with adolescent girls will need to be adapted according to development and maturity levels. In-depth information on this can be found in the *Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse Guidelines*.

Below are key considerations:

- Use simple, clear language. Do not use professional jargon, terms or phrases. Some organizations have communication materials such as videos and pamphlets that describe their services. If these materials are available, use them to introduce the idea of individual services. If not, you can speak with the girl using simple language to describe services.
- Do not judge or shame a girl for her beliefs.
- Work with parents, caregivers or other trusted adults and the issues this raises related to safety and confidentiality.
- Know that informed consent processes for engaging an adolescent girl in services or referring her to other services will also be different than with adult women. If the girl is between the ages of 6 and 11, you will

obtain informed assent—an agreement from the girl that she wants to receive services. You will then have to get informed consent from the girl's caregiver. If the caregiver is not supportive or if reaching out to the caregiver is deemed to not be in her best interest, another trusted adult or the girl's caseworker can provide written consent for services, depending on the context. In these cases, you should consider what is most appropriate and ensures the safety of both the case worker and the adolescent girl. The same process applies to girls aged 12 to 14. However, depending on the maturity of the girl, her consent for services can be given 'due weight', meaning that consideration can be given to her views and opinions based on factors such as her age and maturity. For girls ages 15-17, informed consent must be obtained from the girl and, if possible, from her caregiver.

- Use best-interest principles to guide decision-making and actions.
- Utilize age-appropriate referrals and consider the capacity of service providers to work with adolescent girls.
- Consider if girls are married, the need to potentially advocate with husbands (if they are not the perpetrator and it is safe to do so) to allow them to access services.”²

Entry Points

- You can use recreational activities as an entry point to the safe space and case management
- Recognize that there may be barriers for adolescent girls to enter a safe space in certain contexts and consider different entry points for referrals (e.g. schools, education centers, youth centers, places of worship)
- Work with child protection services, the education sector, and the health sector so they understand what is provided by GBV case management
- Work with local or national partners and NGOs to conduct targeted outreach, particularly in areas where there is a high concentration of adolescent girls
- Introduce services to community leadership early on in a safe and practical way in order to make people feel more comfortable about sending their girls there

Activities that Facilitate Talking About GBV Case Management with Adolescent Girls:

Big and Small Balloons

[For Ages 11-14]

[SAY] Today we are going to use our imagination. I want you to forget that we are in this location and try to follow the story I'm going to tell you now... Let's walk around the room. Imagine that you are walking in nature. The weather is amazing today! The sky is blue and the sun is shining. You can feel

the breeze on your skin. You can see colorful balloons in the sky. Some of these balloons are small and some others are big. While walking, I want each one of you to catch with your hands, a small balloon if you're feeling good today and a big balloon if you're not feeling very comfortable today.

(Facilitator note: do not ask girls to identify the type of balloon they chose). After catching the balloon, release it and keep walking until everyone starts walking in one circle.

[ASK]

- How did you feel while walking?
- Was it easy for you to use your imagination and picture a situation and things that don't exist in this room?
- What are the factors that make girls catch a small balloon? What about the big balloon?

[EXPLAIN] Sometimes, girls wake up in the morning and feel very good. Some other times, girls feel like catching a big balloon because they don't feel good or comfortable. It can be due to things that are happening with or around them especially that girls your age might go through a lot of changes and experience pressures in daily life. These girls might have some concerns or challenges they wish to talk about because each big balloon can turn into a small one, but don't necessarily find the right person to talk to.

In our program, someone is trained to listen to the concerns of girls in a very confidential safe space, where any girl can freely express and open up around anything bothering her. The case worker is not someone who gives advice or solutions and doesn't make judgments, she mainly guides girls in thinking of the pros and cons of a solution or a decision that they might want to take.

The case worker is available here at the center or at the safe space during the days where activities are taking place. If you know any girls who have any concerns and might benefit from talking to a Case worker, you can tell her to join our activities or just come and talk to the Case worker directly. The Case worker can also be reached through phone, outside of the center opening hours, if the girl can't go to the center or safe space, if there is an urgent issue she wishes to discuss or even if she prefers to talk to the Case worker through the phone initially.

If she is not able to join the activities, you can also tell her that she can miss call the following number anytime she feels like talking to the Case worker and the Case worker will call her back.

[DO] Distribute IEC materials to the girls and a hotline number, if relevant in your setting.

[ASK] Do you have any questions? We will be around for the coming 10 minutes. If anyone wishes to talk to us about anything, don't hesitate to come to us.

Oceans and Islands

[For Ages 15-18]

[MATERIALS] 2 flip chart papers, 4 A3 papers, 6 A4 papers (they can be used papers)

[DO] Ask the girls to walk around the space, and imagine that they are swimming in an ocean. Place some papers around the room that represent islands. Let the girls know that the white papers represent the islands.

[SAY] Today we are going to use our imagination, I am going to tell you a story and each time I say 'ISLAND', I want you all to find an island to stand on. You are swimming in the ocean, and the water is warm and nice, the ocean is calm for now, you see small colorful fish, nice people around you in small boats, you are happy and enjoying your time, you accidentally get salt water in your eyes and they start to sting and become very red. 'ISLAND!' When everyone is on the island, SAY: Now your eyes feel better and you can see the bright blue sky clearly, it's beautiful! The water is warm and nice so you start to swim again. Suddenly, your skin starts to feel tingly and you see in the distance that there are jellyfish, but it's ok! You have enough time to get to the 'ISLAND!' When everyone is on the 'island', SAY: The jellyfish have gone, you are swimming and playing with the sea turtles, they are bobbing up and down and you feel very happy. You are enjoying the good weather, the sun is wonderful and warm. Suddenly the water starts to become rough and the waves begin to get higher and higher. 'ISLAND!'

When everyone is on the island, SAY: Now we have left the sea, let's come back slowly to this space. You can now step off the island and back in to the room, slowly walk around... STOP.

N.B: With each round you remove some of the papers or make the islands smaller, so the girls have to try to hold each other up on the island!

[ASK]

- In this activity, what did the island represent to girls? **(Make sure the girls mention that the island could be a place or person)**
- In everyday life, girls may experience situations or concerns that make them want to go to an island. What could some of those situations or concerns be?
- What happened when only one island was left? What did the girls do?
- Sometimes girls may feel comfortable in their everyday life, but at times girls may feel uncomfortable for the reasons you already

mentioned and wish to talk about them and find a person they trust to whom they can refer. Or they don't necessarily find the right person to talk to.

[EXPLAIN] In our program, someone is trained to listen to the concerns of girls in a very confidential safe space, where any girl can freely express and open up around anything bothering her.

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Mandatory Reporting

- Understand any mandatory reporting laws that exist for children in your context and how they apply to adolescents and what the potential safety risks may be if followed.
- Mandatory reporting has complexities for adolescent girls and it is important to understand that there are different systems and processes that have a unique impact on this demographic group.
- Because of the lack of agency faced by adolescent girls and the very real impact that reporting will have on their lives, is it important to always remember and consider the guiding principal of safety in your work.

Other Do's and Don'ts for GBV Case Management with Adolescent Girls

Do's	Don'ts
• Have more than one case worker and make sure they provide support on psychosocial services and group psychosocial sessions • Employ a survivor-centered approach by informing adolescent girls about their options and letting them make their own choices • Use an interactive, engaging approach when implementing the above activities • Seek advice and assistance if you don't feel capable of handling certain questions. • Listen to the girls' thoughts without being judgmental • Use examples to explain concepts that might be difficult for the girls to understand • Be neutral, don't react to girls' comments in a shocked or disapproving way • Make it clear that even if girls don't want to access the service now, they can access it in the future • If a girl discloses a case of GBV in the group, acknowledge what she has said, thank her for sharing and for trusting the group and address the issue in more general terms, 'sometimes girls might experience...' Be sure to follow up with her after the activity.	• Label the center for only GBV services • Label a room as GBV services or a counselling room, even if you are in a women's center, as it may stigmatize those who enter it • Force choices onto adolescent girls • Put girls under the spotlight if they disclose something in a group • Use direct language; instead ask them questions that start with 'what do girls...' Instead of 'what do you...' • Judge the girls for their feelings or actions • Give them information without explaining why it's important and what the relevance is of the information

Discussion Prompts:

[Have you talked with your colleague about...]

- What referrals are safe for adolescent girls?
- How to provide a safe referral for adolescent girls if you aren't a GBV specialist?

- What the safety concerns of adolescent girls in this area or site?
- What complexities and difficulties exist around adolescent girls' agency/choices/decision-making?

Discussion Prompts

Scenario: 10 minutes

"Imagine that you heard about a 14 year old girl who was sexually assaulted. She has not come for GBV response services, but sometimes she comes to the center to play. You want to tell her about GBV case management services the next time she comes, but do not want to scare her away. You start thinking about how you are going to first approach her, and how you will talk to her. You remember how important your nonverbal communication is for helping her feel comfortable and safe talking to you.

Discussion: Ask the group to think about how they would first approach her, and how they would talk to her to help her feel safe, respected, and encouraged to come for case management services? Ask them to focus only on their nonverbal communication –their voice, facial expressions, and body language. If they say things like "be friendly," encourage them to think about how they would show this. Ask a volunteer to write these inputs on flipchart paper."³

Activity: Role-Plays

20 minutes

"Instructions: Ask for two pairs to volunteer to do role-plays for the rest of the group. Encourage them to use their own words, but they can use the script as a guide if this is helpful. You can read the scenarios to the whole group so everyone understands the situation for the role-play.

Scenario 1) An older adolescent girl started dating this boy and she likes him a lot, but he has been putting pressure on her to have sex with him. She does not want to, but he makes her feel guilty, saying that if she liked him, she would do what he wanted. One day they were at his house and he tried to have sex with her again. She refused and he got annoyed and asked her to leave. He said to her, "Why did you come here if you were not going to have sex with me?" She wants to know from the case worker if she did something wrong.

Discussion: Ask the volunteers how it felt to do the role-play, and if anything was challenging. Ask the group to provide helpful feedback to the volunteers. Ask if anyone has any additional suggestions for good communication.

Scenario 2) An 11 year old adolescent girl recently started coming to the center. She does not seem very comfortable, and does not talk to anyone. She usually sits in a corner and watches what is happening. You feel like she needs something but does not know how to ask. You decide to approach her.

Discussion: Ask the volunteers how it felt to do the role-play, and if anything was challenging. Ask the group to provide helpful feedback to the volunteers. Ask if anyone has any additional suggestions for good communication.

Scenario 3) You hear that a 17 year old girl in the community has recently been engaged to be married. You are very concerned about her. You want to make sure she has all the support and information she needs. You know that interfering can be harmful, so you think a lot about how to approach her.

Discussion: Ask the volunteers how it felt to do the role-play, and if anything was challenging. Ask the group to provide helpful feedback to the volunteers. Ask if anyone has any additional suggestions for good communication.”⁴



¹ From the Inter-Agency GBV Case Management Guidelines

² From the Inter-Agency GBV Case Management Guidelines

³ Adolescent Girl Champions Workshop, page 5

⁴ Adolescent Girl Champions Workshop, page 11