



Together we can build safe communities





What does a safe community, free from gender-based violence (GBV) look like?

In a safe community everyone is free from fear, stigma, discrimination or violence because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, HIV status, age, physical or mental abilities or political or religious beliefs.

You can take action to build a safer community! Here are some actions that you can take:

1 Support survivors of gender-based violence

Encourage survivors to speak out about their experiences of GBV. This may include reporting the incident to the local police station. To speak out, does not mean that they have to lay a charge with the police, the survivor can also report to a dedicated centre, like a Thuthuzela Care Centre or a local GBV organisation. (visit www.genderjustice.org.za for a list of TCCs). If the survivor chooses to report to the police, make sure they get a copy of their statement and a case number.

Victims of sexual violence must receive medical attention. The doctor or forensic nurse must make use of an age-appropriate evidence collection kit, they must also fill out a J88 form - this must be done even if the victim chooses not to open a case. If the incident took place within 72 hours, the victim must be offered post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent the likelihood of HIV infection, and emergency contraception, if necessary.



2 Get involved with community policing forums

In Community Safety Forums and Community Police Forums, the South African Police Service and the community work together to fight crime and make communities safer. The more involved you are in community policing forums the more information you can share with the police about what makes you and your community feel unsafe. And you can also share your knowledge about how serious the issue of GBV is in your community and what works to prevent it.

Find out when the Community Forums meet and let them know about anything that makes your community feel unsafe in your streets, homes or where you work.

Consider women and children especially. Are there bushes that need clearing because it's unsafe for women and girls to walk through the area at night? Are there areas that need more lighting? Are illegal shebeens open next to schools? Do roads need fixing? Dealing with these issues can improve the safety of women and girls and reduce GBV.

3 Find people who think like you!

Identify people in your community who also want a community that is safe and free from GBV. Meet together and share information on the issue of GBV prevention and response in your community. You could even approach your local Ward Councillor, Chief or Community Leader and work together on an event such as a community dialogue, workshop or campaign to raise awareness of GBV in your community.



4

Attend ward committee and sub-council meetings

Citizens have the right to attend all ward committee and sub-council meetings. These meetings are essential to find out what projects are planned for your community. You can also present any concerns and/or suggestions at these meetings. You can ask questions about what is being done to stop GBV in your community. Share your own thoughts on GBV and why local government must include GBV prevention in local plans, policies and programmes. Remember that all minutes, progress reports and budget plans are public documents so you can request copies of them. Municipal activities are public activities – challenge any suggestion that municipal work is secret!

5

Take action to monitor and control the sale and abuse of alcohol in your community

Excessive use of alcohol can contribute to an increase in violence by men against their partners, families and the broader community.

Put pressure on your local government to control the abuse of alcohol by closing illegal shebeens and planning awareness campaigns that spread information about the dangers of drinking alcohol, including its physical and mental effect on men and the link between alcohol abuse and GBV.



Offer support to the survivor during court proceedings. Each court should have court support services available to the survivor and their family. If this is not in place, try your best to support them through being present at the hearing and trial, and where possible, explain the process and people involved. Explain why there are delays in the court proceedings (for example rescheduling of court appearances).

Provide emotional and practical support to survivors of GBV. Listen to the survivor. Where possible, link the survivor to specialised GBV counselling services and other services to meet any practical needs they may have (refer to the national GBV call centre details in this pamphlet).

Mobilise your community. Share information with your community about GBV: What it is! What to do if you experience GBV! And how to prevent it!





Please note that Sonke does not offer counselling or other support services to individuals. For information on where to get help visit our website <https://genderjustice.org.za/helpline-numbers/>.

If you or someone you know needs help, please use the national helpline numbers below for assistance.

NATIONAL HELPLINE NUMBERS

National GBV Helpline	0800 150 150
LifeLine South Africa	0861 322 322
AIDS Helpline	0800 012 322
National Counselling Line	0861 322 322
Childline South Africa	0800 055 555
South African Police Service	10111
Legal Aid	0800 110 110
Human Trafficking Helpline	0800 222 777

SONKE GENDER JUSTICE OFFICES

Cape Town

1st Floor Sir Lowry Studios
95 Sir Lowry Road
Cape Town, 8001
T: 021 423 7088

Gugulethu

NY1 Clinic
Opposite Gugulethu Mall
Western Cape
T: 021 633 3140

Johannesburg

4th Floor Stevenson Building
62 Juta Street
Braamfontein, 2017
T: 011 339 3589

East London

Ground Floor
14 Stewart Drive
Berea
East London, 5241
T: 073 233 4560



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