

WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) is violence against another person because of their gender, gender identity and/or sexual identity. The violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal, economic or cultural.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENDER AND SEX?



Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females (eg our internal and external sex organs).

Gender is an individual choice. It is how someone identifies themselves, for example, someone can be biologically female but identify as male, or someone can choose not to identify as either male or female.

People of all genders can both perpetrate and experience GBV but men are most often the perpetrators and women and children, the victims. It's important to remember that **GBV can affect all people, including women, men, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people.**

FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence, or GBV, is the term used to describe all forms of violence against another person based on their gender.

There are also more specific forms of **GBV** that affect specific groups of people, focus on a specific form of violence, or relate to violence that takes place in a specific place and/or in a specific relationship.

Violence against women (VAW) refers to any act of **gender-based violence** that results in, or may result in, **physical, sexual, or psychological harm** or suffering to women, whether in public or private life.



Sexual Violence (SV)

is a sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim.



Domestic Violence (DV)

is a pattern of behaviour which involves abuse by one person against another with whom they share a domestic relationship.



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

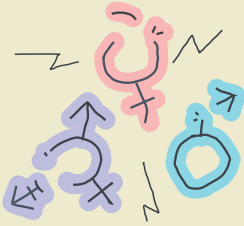
is a pattern of behaviour which involves abuse by one intimate partner against the other. An intimate partner includes current and former spouses and dating partners. IPV can range from one episode that might or might not continue, to severe episodes that continue over a period of years.

FORMS OF ABUSE



PHYSICAL ABUSE:

Any act or threatened act of physical violence towards another causing injury or trauma, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, pushing.



SEXUAL ABUSE:

A broad category incorporating various forms of sexual violence, such as rape, attempted rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, ukuthwala, forced early marriage, marital rape, human trafficking and female genital mutilation.



EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

Any abusive, degrading or humiliating behaviour that isn't physical, which may include verbal abuse, threats to cause emotional pain, manipulation and intimidation, and repeatedly showing jealousy. This often unfolds as a pattern over time to break down another person's sense of identity, self-worth and dignity.



PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE:

Subjecting another person to emotional and verbal abuse which may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.



VERBAL ABUSE:

A form of emotional abuse, including constant criticism, repeated insults and name calling.

CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS ABUSE:



When a partner dismisses the religious, spiritual and/or cultural beliefs of their partner; prevents them from participating in cultural and/or religious ceremonies; forces them to participate in practices not their own; or misuses spiritual practices against them.

ECONOMIC ABUSE:



When one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to money, forcing them to depend on the perpetrator financially. This may also include restricting access to food, clothing, or transport, and denying access to employment, education and training.

WHAT DRIVES GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

The main driver of GBV is gender inequality



Lack of equality between men and women lies at the root of gender-based violence.

Around the world there are those who believe that men are superior to women (physically, intellectually and sexually) and that men have the "right" to dominate and control women.

These harmful, patriarchal beliefs create unequal power relations between men and women. To show their power, many men use psychological, physical, economic and sexual violence against women.



Other contributing risk factors to increased levels of GBV ⁵

- **Poverty and limited economic opportunities** can increase the risk of unemployed or underemployed men perpetrating violence and place women and girls at a greater risk for GBV such as domestic abuse, child and forced marriage and sexual exploitation and trafficking.
- **Misuse and abuse of alcohol** and other substances are also factors that can increase levels of GBV.
- **Low levels of education** are associated with boys perpetrating violence in the future and girls experiencing future violence.
- **Witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child** has been associated with future perpetration of violence for boys and experiencing violence for girls.



Factors that can reduce women and girls' risk of GBV

- **Education** - girls educated to secondary level are less at risk of GBV and boys educated to this level are less at risk of perpetrating GBV.
- **Women's economic empowerment and access to decision-making.**
- **Social norms (rules or expectations of behaviour) that promote gender equality** such as men and boys taking on caregiving roles in the home.
- **Quality services with knowledgeable and trained staff** at police stations, courts, hospitals and care centres.

⁵ <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/300-causes-protective-and-risk-factors-.html>

SOME FACTS ABOUT GBV IN SOUTH AFRICA:

- South Africa has some of the **highest rates of GBV** of any country in the world.
- **A woman is killed** by her intimate partner every **8 hours** according to the Medical Research Council.¹
- On average, **56% of men** report to have used violence against their intimate partner.²
- Between **25% and 40%** of South African women have experienced sexual and/or physical Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in their lifetime.³
- Just under **50% of women** report having ever experienced emotional or economic abuse at the hands of their intimate partners in their lifetime.⁴

¹ *Medical Research Council (2012) Every Eight Hours: Intimate Femicide in South Africa ten years later! [pdf]*

² *Gender Links (2012) Research: Gender Violence 'A Reality in South Africa' (Johannesburg: Gender Links)*

³ <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/gender-based-violence-in-south-africa>

⁴ <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/gender-based-violence-in-south-africa>

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 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

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