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Section B: Operational Security

Module 9: Gender-based harassment and abuse risks for personnel

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Introduction to the series

The pandemic continues to impact not only the security risks that NGOs may face but also the way risk treatment measures are developed, implemented and communicated to staff.

As we get used to new ways of working with COVID-19, and the focus is, rightly, on the pandemic and its impacts, we must ensure that we do not lose sight of ongoing and emerging security situations and issues.

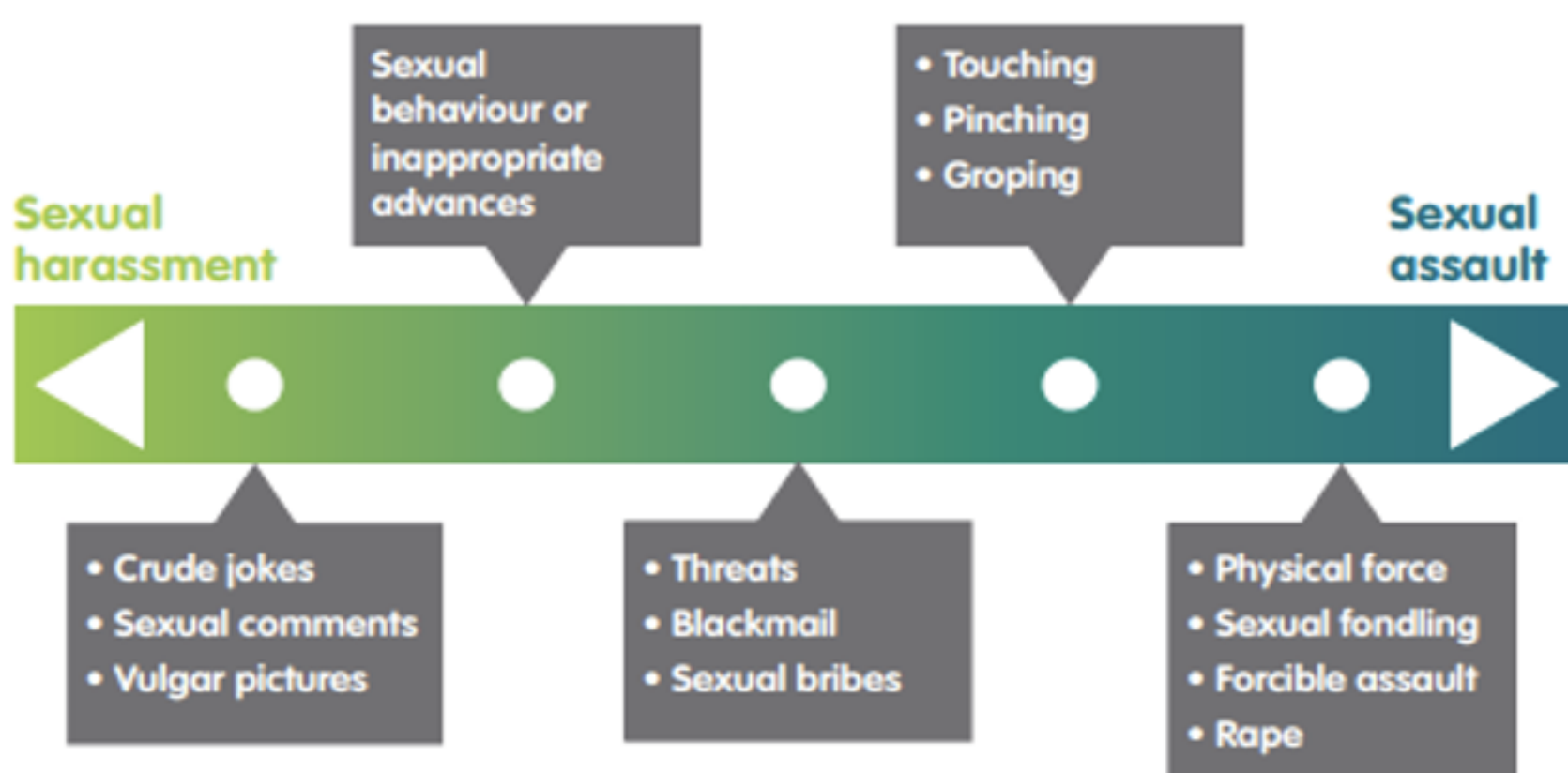### Introduction to the module

With quarantines, lockdowns and work from home orders, gender-based harassment and domestic abuse incidents have shown a sharp increase worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following module is divided into two parts: 1) describes the reasons why this is an important concern to address under the current pandemic,

and 2) offers practical solutions to employers grappling with the issue. Gender-based harassment and abuse include but is not limited to:

- Sexual violence; sexual assault, sexual harassment
- Physical violence; battery, murder
- Psychological violence; bullying, threats, verbal and non-verbal harassment, stalking, coercion, humiliating jokes.

Harassment and abuse are forms of violence, and therefore ought to be assessed and mitigated side-by-side with other security threats. While is it is important that Security Risk Managers (SRMs) work closely with Human Resource professionals to address gender and sexual-based violence, it is equally important that SRMs see these threats as fully falling within their area of responsibility.

Fig 1: Continuum of sexual violence

Sexual harassment — Sexual assault

- Sexual behaviour or inappropriate advances
- Touching
- Pinching
- Groping
- Crude jokes
- Sexual comments
- Vulgar pictures
- Threats
- Blackmail
- Sexual bribes
- Physical force
- Sexual fondling
- Forcible assault
- Rape

Adapted from the continuum of harm developed by the US military (O'Reilly, 2018)

EISF guide (2019) Managing Sexual Violence Against Aid Workers, p.5

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Acknowledgements

Suggested citation

GISF. (2021) *Keeping up with COVID-19: essential guidance for security risk managers, Module B.9. Gender-based harassment and abuse risks for personnel.* Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF). First Edition, March 2021.

Why are gender-based harrassment and abuse risks to personnel important to consider during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Increased likelihood and impact of incidents

Traditional consequences of gender-based harassment and abuse incidents have largely remained the same as they were before the pandemic:

- Personnel facing sexual or gender-based harassment in the workplace or domestic abuse at home may be impacted in terms of health, wellbeing and professional performance. Women and people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity and expression profiles (SOGIE) can be particularly impacted at the institutional and individual level due to their higher vulnerability to these risks, with long-lasting social and mental health effects on survivors.

- Organisations may experience detrimental effects to their reputation and operations, including serious legal consequences. In addition to incidents of harassment at work, domestic violence amounts to billions of dollars lost for employers and for economies with decreased economic output and productivity due to sickness, absenteeism, and turnover.

What is SOGIE (Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression)

SOGIE is a relatively new term that tries to capture the distinctions between biological sex, who individuals are romantically and sexually attracted to, how individuals understand their gender identity and how they express their gender identity …. it foregrounds the idea that individuals have a sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Some categories of SOGIE include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+). - EISF guide (2019) Managing Sexual Violence against Aid Workers, p.9

Disclaimer

While the consequences listed above have not changed, the likelihood or frequency of such incidents have risen, and the impact has become more severe. A quote from UN Women (November 2020):

"Emerging global data has shown an increase in calls to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) helplines, including in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region. For instance, in Argentina, between 20th and 31st March 2020, the number of daily calls to the 144 Helpline for Gender-Based Violence increased by 39 per cent. In Mexico, emergency calls related to VAWG increased by 53 per cent in the first four months of 2020. During March and April 2020, the National Network of Refuges reported a 77 per cent increase in the number of women using their services compared to the same period in 2019". (Source: UN.org article Addressing the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence Against Women and Girls).

The rise in incidents is because the pandemic has reinforced isolation, exacerbated precarious social and economic situations, and limited people's access to support services. In addition, it is more difficult for employers to recognise the risks to their employees, due to social distancing, and more complicated to respond once a threat is recognised. The following sections explain in more detail how COVID-19 has given rise to a greater risk of gender-based harassment and abuse, and made mitigation all the more important.

Useful sources

EISF. (2018) Managing the Security of Aid Workers with Diverse Profiles.

EISF. (2019) Managing Sexual Violence Against Aid Workers: prevention, preparedness, response and aftercare.

UN Women: Handbook for addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work. (2019).

Further information

Insecurity Insight Project: Sexual violence and abuse in the aid workplace and humanitarian settings.

UN Women Campaign: The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19.

Statistics do not tell the whole story

It is known that instances of gender-based, sexual harassment and abuse (including domestic abuse) are generally underreported. Survivors often decline to report incidents because of their fear of being stigmatised or persecuted. Therefore, determining the likelihood of these forms of gender-based violence (GBV) as a risk to staff can be difficult if security managers rely on reported statistics. Because these cases are typically under-reported, it is even more critical for employers to understand the increased risk to their staff and organisation. Many do not report sexual harassment or domestic abuse out of concerns that their report will not be dealt with seriously or confidentially, and that, as a result, they may face legal, social, personal or physical retaliation. In addition, submitting a report may be stressful or re-traumatising, especially when requiring proof from the survivor.

A rule of thumb

"As a rule of thumb, the estimated prevalence of cases within a given population should be considered indicative of the level of prevalence amongst staff." – Key informant interview

While both men and women can be survivors of domestic abuse and sexual and gender-based violence; statistics show that the majority of cases are perpetrated against women. However, incidents affecting men and members of the LGBTQI+ community are also severely underreported.

(Source: <u>EISF. (2019) Managing Sexual Violence Against Aid Workers: prevention, preparedness, response and aftercare, pg. 6</u>). Quite often, members of the LGBTQI+ community intentionally choose to keep their identity a secret because being open about their sexuality is illegal in the place where they work.

📖 **Further information**

<u>Moving Beyond the Numbers:</u> What the COVID-19 pandemic means for the safety of women and girls (UNICEF, 2020).

Reduced safeguards and support pathways

The growing worldwide economic crisis is translating into higher unemployment. Economically, women are likely to suffer disproportionately more than men as a result of COVID-19 and downsizing. For some, the reduction of staff includes cuts to HR, which has left middle management with power over job security and led to vulnerabilities and an increase in sexual harassment towards personnel. With less oversight and when positions are being cut, women are more vulnerable to exploitation of hiring practices and/or abuses of power (either of a sexual nature or involving gender-based discrimination). Women in general are more likely to be laid off (See sources listed in further information below).

According to interviews with key interlocutors, pathways for support have narrowed due to reduced funding and downsizing of specialised support programmes for people experiencing sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and abuse. In addition, medical services and health centers have been temporarily disrupted or made harder to access as attention has shifted to COVID. While some organisations have scaled up to take on COVID-related programming, an increase or change in staff combined with high demand and low shortage of hygiene supplies may have created limited access to staff medical attention or Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits.

📖 **Further information**

<u>UN Women</u> Article (September 2020) COVID-19 and its economic toll on women: The story behind the numbers.

<u>UKAID VAWG</u> Helpdesk Research Report No. 248 (2020): Violence against women and girls

Greater risks in the digital space

There has been an increase in cyber harassment, particularly through employer-provided technologies such as mobile phones and computers. When in an office, workers may have had the ability to physically avoid a harasser/perpetrator or to have witnesses, but when isolated in a remote working situation, harassment may be more difficult to avoid. A UN Women brief (April 2020) on the topic noted that cyber violence against women has increased in the form of "physical threats, sexual harassment, stalking, zoombombing and sex trolling. Specific cases have been documented by media and women's rights organisations of unsolicited pornographic videos displayed while women were participating in online social events, threats of violence and harmful sexist content, and "zoombombing" during video calls showing racially charged and sexually explicit material to the unexpecting participants." (<u>UN Women Brief (April 2020): Online and ICT-facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19, pg. 3</u>).

Milder forms of harassment can also take place. For example, a woman working from home can be called for a meeting in which her male superior insists on using video cameras even though she is uncomfortable. In another situation, a colleague may make inappropriate remarks regarding the person's home or appearance in a video call. Increased use of chat and video functions for communication may encourage harassers/perpetrators who would otherwise refrain from making face-to-face remarks.

Improving technological infrastructure for digital and information security is a priority to support online safe spaces for everyone. In countries where governments are using online platforms as a form of repression

(See textbox: Online risks to HRDs and other public profiles), identities need to be protected online. Minimum standards for online safety need to be put in place to ensure maximum protection for staff.

📖 Further information

UN Women Brief (April 2020): Online and ICT-facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19

UN Women Article (June 2020) Take Five: Why we should take online violence against women and girls seriously during and beyond COVID-19

Solo Protect Report November 2020

GISF: Security To Go: A risk management toolkit for humanitarian aid agencies: module 4, Digital Security.

Travel risks still exist

During COVID-19, travel (particularly international travel) has become less frequent. Yet, women who travel during the pandemic domestically or internationally have reported experiencing higher levels of violence and harassment. They also face greater vulnerability to being stranded as environments can change very quickly. Street level violence, unsafe lockdowns and poorly managed restrictions have given rise to increased numbers of harassment cases. This not only puts travellers at physical risk, but can also further affect mental health, compounded by difficulties in accessing support.

Transportation routes and systems shutting down during COVID (e.g. buses, trains, difficulty travelling through regions for work due to lockdowns) also pose a safety risk for staff not having reliable and safe transportation to and from work and home. In some environments, private security companies (PSCs) have been effectively made gatekeepers with significant power

Online risks to Human Rights Defenders and other public profiles

The pandemic has exacerbated online risks and threats of civil rights organisations suppression by local authorities. During COVID-19, an increase in cyber-attacks against female Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and activists has been observed. Targeted attacks are being made against female and diverse SOGIE profile HRDs by antagonists through online naming and shaming, the public release of personal information (doxxing) and online harassment that sometimes results in physical violence.

📖 Further information

AccessNow: Digital rights in the COVID-19 fight

over freedom of movement in order to enforce lockdowns and other measures. When women in such societies have to move outside the home to carry out household responsibilities (e.g., fetching firewood, water or going to the market), there is an increased risk that PSCs will ask for sexual favours in exchange for freedom of movement and access to scarce resources.

🔍 Useful sources

Maiden Voyage E-Learning Modules

Good practice for security risk management: Gender-based harassment and abuse risks for personnel

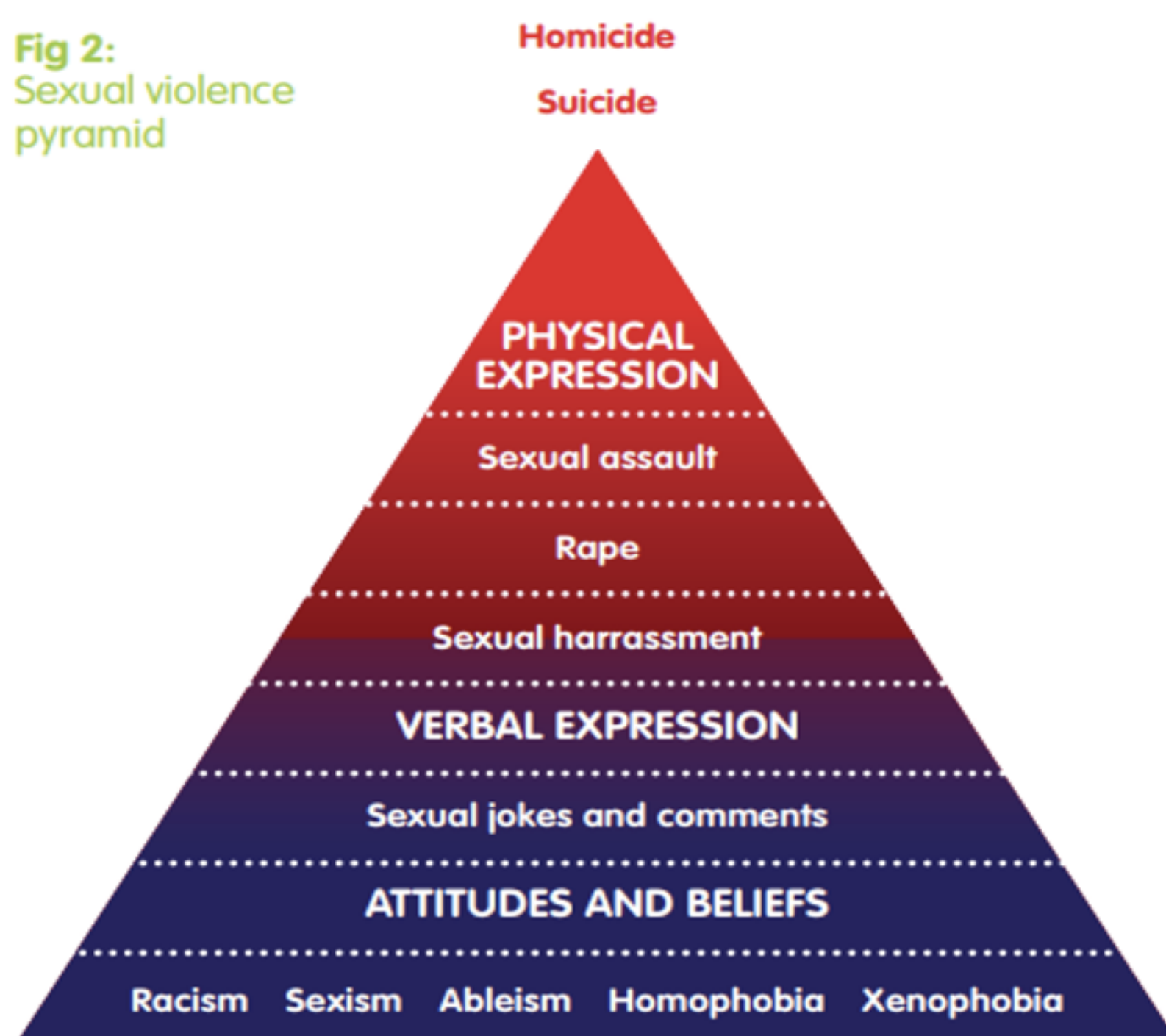## Build a culture of respect for gender equality and diversity

The risk of gender-based harassment and violence (at work or at home) rises when an organisation's culture appears to permit, tolerate or dismiss the importance of these risks. A work environment that permits "less offensive" forms of harassment tends to implicitly sanction more serious risks. In light of this, there are several steps you can take to build a positive work environment that emphasises preventing gender-based violence.

- Make a concerted effort to know your staff, their needs, and understand who is more vulnerable to domestic and workplace abuse. Take action when identifying early signs.
- Be flexible with staff working from home and understand the additional stress that it may bring. People living in situations where there is limited physical space, limited privacy

and additional tasks expected to be performed (such as childcare) are particularly vulnerable. Note that additional stress can aggravate domestic abuse.

- Be aware of the increased frequency and evolving modes of sexual abuse and harassment online. Take proactive steps to prevent this happening in the workplace.
- Ensure transparency regarding how reports of sexual harassment and/or domestic abuse are managed to alleviate mistrust and encourage reporting. Improve confidence among staff that information shared will be treated confidentiality and be stored securely in line with data-protection and anti-discrimination obligations.
- Address staff fears of experiencing retaliatory action, losing their jobs or experiencing further violence or harassment, if they believe that the reporting system is ineffective.
- Provide clear formal and informal reporting procedures (written and verbal), and anonymous reporting, to all staff. Where in-person reporting and feedback channels are suspended due to COVID and social distancing, ensure other channels are identified preserving survivor safety, confidentiality and sensitivity. Communicate policies in an effective way.

Fig 2: Sexual violence pyramid

Homicide
Suicide

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION

Sexual assault

Rape

Sexual harrassment

VERBAL EXPRESSION

Sexual jokes and comments

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Racism   Sexism   Ableism   Homophobia   Xenophobia

Adapted from the Pyramid of Violence by CCASA

EISF guide (2019) Managing Sexual Violence Against Aid Workers, p.21

- Consider conducting an anonymous survey in the organisation to assess the quality of the organisational culture, occurance of incidents, and quality of response.
- Encourage staff to express concerns and share stories. Social dialogue is necessary to end violence and harassment at work
- Establish zero-tolerance policy towards violence and harassment at work and ensure perpetrators are held accountable.
- Include measures to integrate gender equality into occupational safety and prevention policies and strategies to address violence, including procedures on prevention, assistance and case review to address sexual harassment and domestic abuse.

🔍 Useful sources

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[International Finance Corporation (July 2020) COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence: Workplace risks and responses](#)

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Provide appropriate training to reduce risk

Responding to sexual harassment and domestic abuse incidents requires sensitivity and care. Specific training can help change behaviour and prepare staff to prevent and respond to incidents. For example, providing comprehensive sensitivity training to all staff can give them a better understanding of gender-based issues. Generally, it is important that training is infused with soft skills and gender-nuanced language to enhance effectiveness.

Other recommended trainings and briefing practices include:

- Training to make staff aware of their roles and responsibilities to prevent and address gender-based violence and sexual harassment and abuse. This can also generate staff input and feedback to assist in improving policy and procedures related to these issues. Key staff (e.g., HR managers, security personnel and management in general) may not have the skills to deal with such incidents, and so it is important to provide them with this training.

- For general staff, consider a comprehensive workshop on how to respond to sexual harassment and domestic violence. These workshops should include information on signs to look for, sensitivity training, language to adopt, how to centralise care around the affected person and post-incident follow up processes.
- Consider providing training to a number of staff members who can act as focal points on receiving incident reports from affected staff; giving staff multiple avenues to report. These individuals can also be trained in Psychological First Aid.
- Providing training for managerial positions on how to manage reports and take appropriate disciplinary actions can help prevent incidents of sexual harassment from escalating.
- Train staff to take an Empowered Bystander Approach, which is a strategy for reducing incidents of sexual assault and gender-based violence, focusing on the Bystander (e.g. third party who is a witness to or suspects an incident) and encourages them to proactively identify, speak out against and report incidents in order to discourage them from happening. Staff taking small actions can prevent a situation from escalating and help to create a context to avoid issues growing.
- In addition to formal training, consider informal safe spaces and forums to air grievances, share concerns and exchange information regarding issues at work and home. Listening and learning to staff feedback will help to remove barriers and provide more tailored help.
- Briefings and training should address gender and provide opportunities for questions and open discussion so that staff feel comfortable asking security-related questions regarding their specific profile. This can be discussed in a generic manner so as to not single out or bias one particular profile.

🔍 Useful sources

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[UN Women (2019) Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work](#)

[UNHCR (December 2020) Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in UNHCR's response to Sexual Misconduct (Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment](#)

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Ensure guidance is localised and updated

Gender-based violence and domestic abuse are global issues, and appropriate prevention and response measures will vary from context to context. All organisations should consider developing localised guidance for addressing gender-based violence and domestic abuse. A good example is the UN's "Aide Memoir". Required for all country offices, this must be updated with specific information regarding domestic abuse and sexual harassment, including referral pathways that have been researched, several websites, contact and police phone numbers (GBV police unit). Additional location-specific information is required regarding:

- Local laws
- Psychological care, descriptions of providers and area of expertise, online and face-to-face resources and practitioners, experiences working with a range of personal profiles
- Access to Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kit, with identified female PEP kit custodian
- Local organisational focal points
- Medical assistance with highlighted specifics on doctors available and their gender
- Outline of material assistance
- Legal support with legal advice and contacts for GBV lawyers
- Safety assistance
- Information on insurance and coverage
- Information on local shelters and support for childcare

A gender-nuanced checklist should also be included in security plans, evacuation points, and concentration points, along with what needs to be available in these locations and travel arrangements.

🔍 Useful sources

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United Nations Security Management System Manual (November 2019) Gender Inclusion in Security Management Ch. 7: Understanding support structures in country and developing the Gender Aide Memoire.

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Questions to consider:

- Is a woman required to have a male guardian or consent of male guardian to exit the country?
- Do children require certified permission of parent or father?
- Are the local police a safe point of contact for dealing with sexual violence?

Ensure incident management procedures are reliable

Failure to take complaints seriously, weaknesses in managing cases, or breaking confidentiality in whistleblowing processes will undermine trust between staff and the organisation, and discourage staff from reporting incidents in the future. Suggested components of a strong incident management system include:

- Systems for reporting and/or making complaints should be transparent, confidential and effective. If not managed properly, this will affect trust and future reporting as well as put employees at higher risk.
- Be sensitive, understanding, and empathetic to the survivors' situation. Use a survivor-centered approach to practice compassion and address the situation in a non-judgmental manner.
- Provide counselling for the survivor. A peer advisor or support system to respond where there is no counsellor available may serve as an alternative in some circumstances. Give the options to survivors to choose the counsellors they want to see, whether male or female.
- Provide an anonymous reporting option.
- Liaise with HR departments to organise leave, transfers, or special requests.
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality is safeguarded during workplace investigations.
- Ensure investigations are gender-responsive. This means taking into account gender norms, gender inequalities and the situations of vulnerability and risks faced by staff with diverse SOGIE identities at work.

- Avoid nondisclosure agreements to encourage open dialogue.
- Integrate HR support into incident reporting and response. Procedures and information regarding domestic abuse and sexual or gender-based harassment may affect national and international staff differently.
- Information, reported through whatever route, needs to be captured in global incident statistics, as it is important for the organisation to have comprehensive incident statistics.
- However, note that survivors should always reserve the right not to report an incident.
- If several harassment cases are unreported in an organisation, this can be indicative of underlying mistrust in the system (that can lead to greater consequences if not addressed).

🔍 Useful sources

UN Women Virtual Knowledge Center for Women and Girls: Effective complaints procedures.

📖 Further information

ICoCA. Guidelines for Private Security Providers on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

National Network to End Domestic Violence Technology Safety

Invest in the right people

Personnel may be less likely to report incidents or matters because they are concerned that the report recipient will be unsympathetic to their situation. While this is not always the case, there are some ways to pre-emptively address this risk:

- Consider the diversity of your team, and try to offset any barriers to access (e.g., only having male cisgender leadership) by training focal points to serve as access points for reporting and complaints. (Note: the term cisgender refers to a person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a man who was born male and identifies as a man is cisgender).
- Having female security officers can be a big step in helping to manage sexual harassment and domestic abuse incidents. In more conservative cultures, women may be perceived negatively if they are seen spending time with a man that is not their relative, and therefore may be more comfortable speaking to a woman.
- Ensure recruitment processes are transparent and fair to limit sexual harassment and discrimination in the hiring process.
- Explicitly encourage women to apply for security-related positions in vacancy announcements.

📖 Further information

GISF (2012) Gender and Security: Guidelines for mainstreaming gender in security risk management

GISF (2018) Managing the Security of Aid Workers with Diverse Profiles

Consider mental health a priority

Although sexual, gender-based harassment and domestic abuse are not solely mental health issues, they have an immense impact on staff mental health and wellbeing. Here are a few things to consider:

- Mental health is an enormous concern for all staff worldwide at this time. It is important to continue investing in programmes to support good mental health that may have emerged during the pandemic, making sure that the gains that have been made are consolidated.

- LGBTQI+ groups have an increased risk of suffering mental health issues, adding an additional burden. Policies and procedures to deal with sexual and gender-based harassment and abuse should also look at supporting mental health conditions for this particular community. This includes reducing stigma around diverse SOGIE profiles within the organisation.
- Mental health norms and practices vary around the world. It is important that organisations design and invest in programmes that are appropriate and well-received by staff in the countries where they live and work.

📖 **Further information**

GISF Theme Site: Mental health and wellbeing

UN: Mental Health Matters: A healthy workforce for a better world

Spotlight on: Domestic Abuse

The shadow pandemic

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guttierez spoke about in his declaration on April 6, 2020 (Source: Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19 - UN chief video message), an increase in domestic violence and abuse is a serious outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic, calling it the "Shadow Pandemic". With work from home orders, quarantines and lockdowns, there has been an increase in the likelihood and severity of domestic abuse incidents. As illustrated in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) March 2020 report COVID-19 and violence against women: What the health sector/system can do (see source below):

- The likelihood that women in an abusive relationship and their children will be exposed to violence is dramatically increased, as family members spend more time in close contact and families cope with additional stress and potential economic or job losses.
- Women may have less contact with family and friends who may provide support and protection from violence.

- Women bear the brunt of increased care work during this pandemic. School closures further exacerbate this burden and place more stress on them.
- The disruption of livelihoods and ability to earn a living, including for women (many of whom are informal wage workers), will decrease access to basic needs and services, increasing stress on families, with the potential to exacerbate conflicts and violence. As resources become more scarce, women may be at greater risk for experiencing economic abuse.
- Perpetrators of abuse may use restrictions due to COVID-19 to exercise power and control over their partners to further reduce access to services, help and psychosocial support from both formal and informal networks.

📖 **Further information**

WHO/Human Reproduction Programme/Research for Impact "COVID-19 and violence against women: What the health sector/system can do" (26 March 2020)

🔍 **Useful sources**

Gender in Humanitarian Action (2019) The COVID-19 Outbreak and Gender: Key advocacy points from Asia and the Pacific

Plan to support staff who are victims of domestic abuse

Strategies for domestic abuse should meet survivor's specific needs, wishes and best interests. Below are recommendations for employers to help staff dealing with domestic abuse:

- Make clear to employees that they can report domestic violence incidents, that this concerns the organisation and that the organisation can provide some support.
- Ensure complaint channels are open and efficient. Ensure staff have trust in the mechanisms for reporting and support.

- Provide protection from dismissal to ensure victims can maintain their source of income while leaving an abusive domestic situation.
- Provide flexible leave (paid or unpaid) so that victims may seek and use support services, attend court appointments, seek safe housing and pursue psychological support on dealing with domestic violence.
- Provide financial support in the form of advances for services.
- Provide a list of support services and their contacts.
- Provide safe transport for victim-survivor and family in leaving an abusive situation.
- Help with logistics and financing when a victim and/or family needs to move to a safe location.
- Partnering with local organisations to develop country-level information can help improve cost effectiveness and consolidate information.

Useful sources

[Guidance for Victims/Survivors of Domestic Abuse: A guide for UN personnel. 2020;(November).](#)

Conclusion

Gender-based, sexual harassment and domestic abuse incidents have shown a sharp increase worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, harassment and abuse are forms of violence, and therefore fall under the purview of Security Risk Managers (SRMs) as threats to assess and mitigate. Organisations should therefore consider the following when reviewing their capacity to deal with incidents of gender-based violence and domestic abuse:

- Instances of gender-based, sexual harassment and abuse (including domestic abuse) are generally underreported. Therefore, it is even more critical for employers to understand the increased risk to their staff and organisation.
- While both men and women can be survivors of domestic abuse and sexual and gender-based violence; statistics show that the majority of cases are perpetrated against women. However, incidents affecting men and members of the LGBTQI+ community are also severely underreported.
- Pathways for support have narrowed due to reduced funding and downsizing of specialised support programmes for people experiencing sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and abuse.
- There has been an increase in cyber harassment, particularly through employer-provided technologies such as mobile phones and computers.
- Women who travel during the pandemic domestically or internationally have reported experiencing higher levels of violence and harassment.
- The risk of gender-based harassment and violence (at work or at home) rises when an organisation's culture appears to permit, tolerate or dismiss the importance of these risks. Employers should focus on building a positive work environment that emphasises preventing gender-based violence.
- Training and briefings are important for raising awareness and preparing staff to prevent and respond to incidents. Several tools and trainings have been developed by GISF in the guide, (GISF, 2019) Managing Sexual Violence against Aid Workers: prevention, preparedness, response and aftercare.
- Organisations should consider developing localised guidance for addressing gender, sex-based violence and domestic abuse -- such as the "Aide Memoir" that has been developed by the UN.
- A gender-nuanced checklist should also be included in security plans, evacuation points, and concentration points, along with what needs to be available in these locations and travel arrangements.
- HR support should be integrated into incident reporting and response.
- Procedures and information regarding domestic abuse and sexual or gender-based violence may affect national and international staff differently. Be aware of this and ensure the policies are nuanced accordingly.

Systems for reporting and/or making complaints should be transparent, confidential and effective. If not managed properly, this will affect trust and future reporting as well as put employees at higher risk.

Note that survivors should always reserve the right not to report an incident.

Personnel may be less likely to report incidents or matters because they are concerned that the report recipient will be unsympathetic to their situation. While this is not always the case, there are some ways to pre-emptively address this risk by considering the diversity of your team, and trying to offset any barriers to access.

Although sexual, gender-based harassment and domestic abuse are not solely mental health issues, they have an immense impact on staff mental health and wellbeing. It is important that organisations design and invest in programmes that are appropriate and well-received by staff in the countries where they live and work.

Strategies for domestic abuse should meet survivor's specific needs, wishes and best interests. It is ultimately important that organisations make clear to their employees that they can report domestic violence incidents, that this concerns the organisation and that the organisation can provide some support.

B.9. GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT AND ABUSE RISKS FOR PERSONNEL