

# FACT SHEET

## GBV AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

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### INTRODUCTION

Violence against children (VAC) and GBV can't be treated as separate **issues**. They often share common causes or "risk factors", happen in the same homes, can have similarly disastrous effects and consequences, and intersect at adolescence when young women are most vulnerable.

VAC is an "umbrella term" that includes various forms of violence including physical, sexual, emotional and psychological violence.



The consequences of GBV and VAC are many and affect the physical and mental health of the survivors in both the short and the long term. They may experience severe physical injuries, unwanted pregnancies and exposure to HIV or other sexually transmitted infections. They might develop mental health issues that may lead to self-harm, isolation, depression and suicidal attempts. Trauma and stigma caused by GBV can prevent someone from seeking job opportunities or attending school.

### HOW TRAUMA IS FELT AND CARRIED IN OUR BODIES

Experience traumatic event - bodies carry the memory of that event - brain is also imprinted with this experience - in a moment of fear, brain tells body to "fight, flight or freeze"- This is the body's trauma response system.

This messaging system is important for when we are in a threatening situation. The problem is, that sometimes, after a scary experience, even when we are in situations that are actually safe, we will experience triggers that make us feel like we are back in that traumatic situation. If we are exposed to on-going trauma, our body's trauma response system may overfunction, which is why we feel on edge all the time.

GBV is a manifestation of the unequal power relations between women and men. The roots of this violence can be found in a web of cultural issues including social norms around women, girls, boys and men and gender-nonconforming individuals' roles in society; and economical issues such as poverty, unemployment and legal issues (legislation that doesn't protect women or is not enforced).



### DID YOU KNOW?

NEARLY **720 MILLION SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN** HAVE NO LEGAL PROTECTION FROM CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AT SCHOOL

THE CHIDLINER HOTLINE RECORDED AN INCREASE OF **30%** IN CALLS IN 2020



**ALMOST 1000 CHILDREN WERE MURDERED AND ALMOST 25 000 WERE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED** IN 2019/2020

IN 2016, **40%** OF YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF SEXUAL ABUSE, PHYSICAL ABUSE, EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES

### THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT VAC

- Challenging gender stereotypes and roles in your homes and communities
- Rejecting any kind of violence against women and children
- Rejecting abuse and reporting abusers
- Teaching children values of gender equality
- Protecting children from exposure to violence and harmful content on the internet and social media

### RESOURCES

- Childline 08000 55 555 (Childline) any time of the day or night
- Child Welfare South Africa: 0861 4 CHLD (24453) / 011 452-4110 / e-mail: info@childwelfare.org.za