



# Responding to disclosures of gender based violence

Workshop pre-reading and further resources



# Welcome & look after yourself

Thank you for joining our workshop 'Asking and responding to disclosures of gender based violence for student union officers.' This course includes a combination of pre-reading material and a 1.5 hour webinar in our virtual classroom. You will have received separate instructions on how to access our virtual classroom.

It should take you no more than an hour to go through the following pre-reading material. The aim is to provide some initial information about the subject and to start you thinking about some of the issues that we will cover in the webinar.

We hope you find the pre-reading material useful and look forward to meeting you online soon!

Gender based violence is an emotive topic. It's something you have come across in your professional life but also that may have affected you personally.

While you work through this activity pack, please look after yourself. Remember to take breaks if you need to. If at any point you feel upset by any of the content, take some time out before continuing.

You might also find it helpful to call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0808 2000 247) if the training triggers any personal experiences of abuse that you might have experienced. Further support is available at <https://avaproject.org.uk/need-help/>

# What is covered in this course?

This course includes around 2.5 hours of learning. Our aim is to provide you with an awareness of what gender based violence and sexual violence is, is so that you are better prepared to deal with disclosures in your role as a student union officer. More specifically, by the end of the course, you will:

- ✎ Understand the definition of gender based violence, including sexual violence, rape and sexual harassment
- ✎ Understand the role of universities and student unions in tackling gender based violence
- ✎ Know some signs and risk factors related to gender based violence
- ✎ Understand more about intersectionality and gender based violence
- ✎ Know how to ask and respond to disclosures of gender based violence
- ✎ Know where to look for support at your university and from specialist services
- ✎ Have some tools to help keep you safe and well in your role

# What is gender based violence?

Understanding what gender based violence is and what behaviours are considered to be abusive is crucial to being able to respond effectively to survivors.

Our starting point is to think about the umbrella term 'gender based violence' and then the course will look at the different types of gender based violence.

Gender based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person because of their gender.

The term 'gender based violence' is often used interchangeably with the term 'violence against women'. The term 'gender based violence' highlights the gender dimension of these types of acts; in other words the subordinate status of women in society. It is important to note that men and boys may also be survivors of gender based violence.

## **Examples of gender based violence include:**

- Sexual assault and rape
- Domestic violence/abuse
- Stalking and harassment
- Forced marriage and so called honour based violence
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Trafficking and prostitution





# Sexual violence & rape

Sexual violence is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual abuse can happen online – for example, someone could be forced to make, view or share child abuse images or videos or take part in sexual activities on conversations online.

Rape is defined as non-consensual penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth. Non-consensual means you didn't freely agree to have sexual intercourse.

It wouldn't count as consent if:








-  you were subjected to violence or threats of violence
-  violence or threats of violence were made against someone else to force you to consent
-  you were asleep, unconscious, drugged or incapacitated by alcohol
-  your disability meant you were not able to communicate your lack of consent.

Some examples of **sexual violence** include:

Rape: vaginal, anal, oral  
Sexual assault with an object  
Refusal to practice safe sex or allow  
contraception  
Forced into pornography  
Intimate image abuse or 'revenge porn'  
Female genital mutilation  
Sexual abuse of children  
Forced sex after childbirth  
Religious prohibitions ignored

Deliberately infecting with STIs  
Threats to get compliance  
Sexual insults  
Forced prostitution  
Forced sexual acts with others  
Sexual acts with animals  
Cutting or disfiguring breasts  
Chemicals poured into labia  
Sexual harassment

**Sexual harassment** can include:

-  someone making sexually degrading comments or gestures
-  your body being stared or leered at
-  being subjected to sexual jokes or propositions
-  e-mails or text messages with sexual content
-  physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances and touching
-  someone displaying sexually explicit pictures in your space or a shared space
-  offers of rewards in return for sexual favours

# What is domestic abuse?

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Physical – for example, pushing, suffocating
- Sexual – for example, rape, forced prostitution
- Financial – for example; denying basic necessities, forcing someone to commit fraud
- Psychological – for example; stalking, blaming the survivor for the abuse
- Emotional – for example; verbal insults, humiliation

Forced marriage and so called honour based violence are also forms of domestic abuse.

The definition above includes controlling and coercive behaviour. These types of abuse were made a criminal offence in 2015.

You may receive disclosures of sexual violence that are happening in the context of domestic abuse.

## Can you write down three more examples of each of these forms of abuse?

Physical:

Sexual:

Financial:

Psychological:

Emotional:



## Financial abuse

- Making someone account for every penny spent
- Denying basic necessities and making person feel 'cheap'
- Withholding finances
- Stealing money
- Not allowing someone to work
- Refusing to pay child maintenance
- Opening accounts or taking out credit in someone's name
- Forcing someone to commit fraud
- Forcing someone to handover benefits/salary
- Destroying property so money has to be spent on replacements
- Forced labour – domestic servitude

## Physical violence

- Murder
- Suffocation, choking
- Throwing objects
- Shooting, stabbing
- Pushing or shoving
- Slapping or punching
- Twisting arms
- Breaking bones
- Bending fingers back
- Pouring over acid
- Using an object as a weapon
- Banging head
- Kicking, Biting
- Burning
- Punching or kicking tummy
- Forcing to take drugs
- Destroying property
- Tying up, starving
- Beating so no bruises show
- Stamping on toes

## Psychological & emotional abuse

- Verbal insults and belittling
- Humiliation
- Playing mind games
- Controlling what someone does, where she goes, who she sees
- Making threats
- Blaming someone for abuse
- Making light of abuse
- Denying abuse happened
- Threat of deportation
- Preventing someone from learning English
- Stalking and harassment
- Causing exhaustion
- Demanding unreachably high standards
- Causing someone to live in constant fear
- Making someone beg for food, money, etc.
- Withholding affection
- Enforcing trivial demands
- Use of 'black magic'

# Digital control

- Accessing text, email or online accounts to gather information or monitor a victim
- Using GPS tracking/GEO tagging devices to find victim's location
- Installing surveillance/spyware software on computer or mobile phones
- Account takeovers / hacking
- Threats to send/share images
- Constant communication
- Using webcams
- Flaming
- Outing
- Posting abuse
- Blackmail, sexting, revenge porn
- Impersonation
- Trolling
- Reputation damage

# Stalking and harassment

Stalking is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed. Some examples of stalking are:

- Regularly giving unwanted gifts
- Making unwanted communication
- Damaging property
- Repeatedly following you or spying on you
- Threats.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour from someone else that makes you feel distressed, humiliated or threatened. Examples of harassment include:

- unwanted phone calls, texts, letters, emails or visits
- abuse (verbal or online)
- physical gestures or facial expressions
- images and graffiti.

# Female genital mutilation (FGM)

According to the World Health Organisation, female genital mutilation (FGM), comprises of “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.” A harmful practice with no health benefits, FGM can cause long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological trauma; and in some cases, death.

# Forced marriage

‘A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.’

(Forced Marriage Unit, 2010)

# Sexual exploitation

Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

# So-called honour based violence

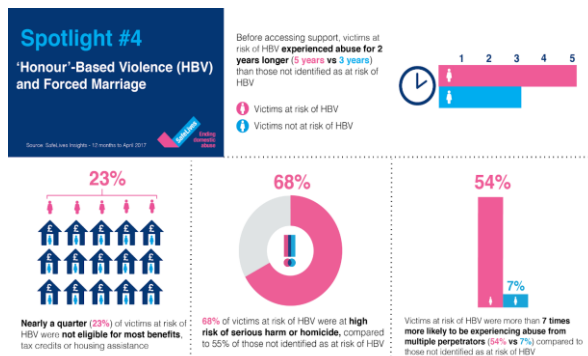
The Crown Prosecution Service and Association of Chief Police Officers define HBV as:

- “Honour based violence” is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community’.

The definition is supported by further explanatory text:

- “Honour Based Violence” is a fundamental abuse of Human Rights
- There is no honour in the commission of murder, rape, kidnap and the many other acts, behaviour and conduct which make up “violence in the name of so-called honour”.

See the image below and read more here: <https://safelives.org.uk/spotlight-4-honour-based-violence-and-forced-marriage>



# Gendered nature of violence

Violence against women and girls is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights violations. Research tell us that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.

- *‘Globally, an estimated 736 million women—almost one in three—have been subjected to intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (30 per cent of women aged 15 and older).*
- *Most violence against women is perpetrated by current or former husbands or intimate partners.*
- *Of those who have been in a relationship, almost one in four adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 (24 per cent) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband.*
- *Globally, 6 per cent of women report they have been subjected to sexual violence from someone other than their husband or partner.*
- *In 2019, one in five women, aged 20–24 years, were married before the age of 18.*
- *15 million adolescent girls worldwide, aged 15–19 years, have experienced forced sex.*
- *School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls.*
- *One in 10 women in the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15.’*

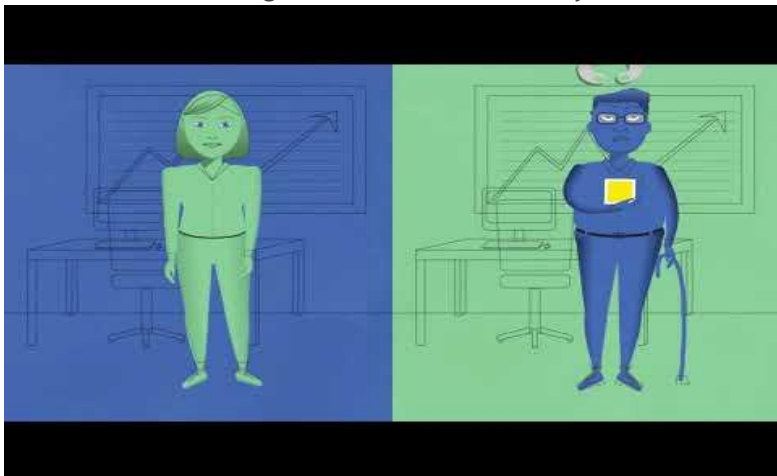
# Intersectionality

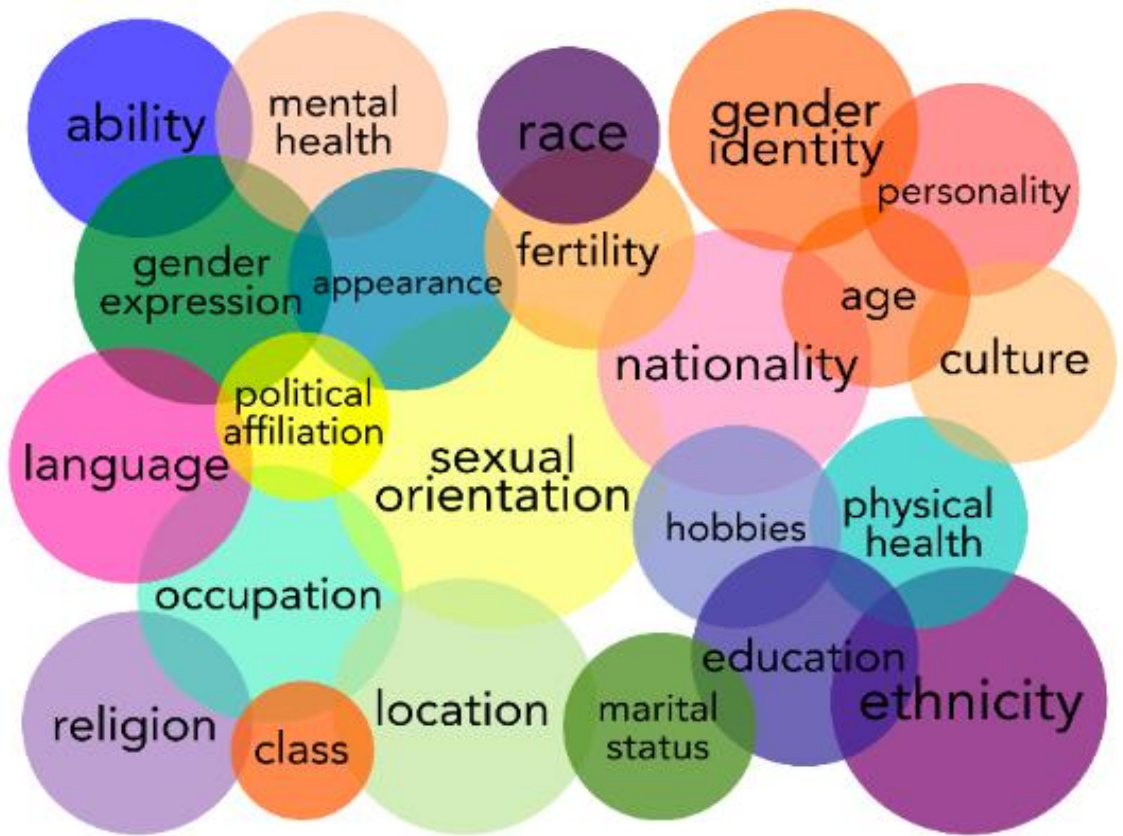
Gender based violence happens across all parts of society. However, this does not mean that everyone experiences it in the same way.

People may experience different types of abuse and different challenges getting the support they need because of the many different parts that make up an individual's identity - and particularly if someone experiences oppression as a result.

To start you thinking about this topic now, please watch the video to understand intersectionality and then take a few minutes to look at the image on the following page and have a think about who you are - young, older, mother, professional, having a disability, liberal, single, Asian

*Video - Google what is intersectionality video*







## Further resources

Gender based violence support services:

<https://avaproject.org.uk/need-help/>

Breathing Space: support and self care resources for survivors: <https://www.breathingspace-ava.org.uk/>

Navigating burnout and secondary trauma during Covid-19 (and beyond):

<https://avaproject.org.uk/covid-19-resources/supporting-yourself-during-through-covid-19/>



# Thank you!

[www.avaproject.org.uk](http://www.avaproject.org.uk)

Email [training@avaproject.org.uk](mailto:training@avaproject.org.uk) with any issues

If you need any support you can call:

- ✎ The National Domestic Abuse Helpline: **0808 2000 247**
- ✎ Samaritans: **116 123**
- ✎ Mind: **0300 123 3393**