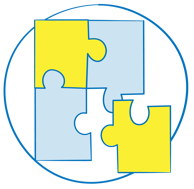
Activity: Root Causes of GBV



Expected duration: 25 mins

Objective: deepen participants’ understanding of root causes of GBV and distinguish causes from factors that contribute to GBV

* Divide participants into groups.
* Draw a GBV tree on a flipchart.
* Ask them to write what they think the causes of GBV are on individual post-its.
* Invite them to affix the post-its on the root of the GBV tree, telling the rest of the group their thoughts as they go.
* Ask the whole group to come and rearrange the post-its so that the most important/deepest causes are the deepest roots.

Key considerations:

* Once the group has finished, power and/or status inequality should be placed as the deepest root, with religion, culture, traditions and norms at the next level up (these are how we learn, understand and enact differences in power and status).
* If there are suggestions like displacement, conflict, poverty, illiteracy, alcohol, drugs and anger - talk through these as a group, using the following discussion questions, to distinguish between causes and contributing factors– placing them as rain around the tree (they help it to ‘grow’):
* If X (poverty, illiteracy, conflict) did no exist, would we still have GBV?
* Did GBV occur prior to displacement?
* Is there still GBV in contexts or families without poverty or illiteracy?
* Does everyone who gets angry still perpetrate GBV?
* Does a man who gets angry or loses control of himself beat up or rape his boss? His friends?
* Drugs, alcohol, unemployment and anger are most often used as excuses and justifications, allowing perpetrators to get away with violence. However, GBV is an intentional choice - perpetrators who abuse their wives do not behave in this way with other people they respect, which shows that it is a choice - they also most often do so in secret, which shows that they realize it is wrong.
* Remind participants that displacement is NOT a cause of GBV, but rather a contributing factor. GBV can be the impetus that compels people to flee; it also occurs during flight and refuge. Regardless of the reason for displacement, the risk of GBV is heightened for asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, and returnees – during and after displacement – especially for women and girls.
* Once everyone’s post-its have been placed at the bottom of the tree, discuss what is displayed: the root causes of GBV are gender inequality, systemic discrimination and unequal power relations. Go through the definitions of each concept as per the below.
* Gender inequalities are deeply rooted in a society’s notions of how women and men “should be” and “should behave” in one’s culture. These preconceptions determine what society expects of men and women, their roles, privileges and limitations. Gender inequality between women and men exists in all societies. It is this gender inequality and these often rigid gender norms that are considered the root cause of GBV. Gender norms are influenced by history, tradition, culture and religion, all of which change over time.
* Systemic discrimination can overlap with other forms of oppression, discrimination and marginalization to further harm and disempower women, girls and others at risk who are affected differently based on their intersecting identities (i.e. race, ethnicity, social class, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, etc.). This form of discrimination is found within institutions, organizational processes and society and results in unequal access to services, assistance and opportunities. In the absence of gender sensitive intersectional responses, different forms of systemic discrimination already faced by women and girls will be exacerbated.
* Unequal power relations between men and women: GBV is an abuse of power. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW, 1993) emphasizes that such violence is “a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to the domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.”
* Explain thatin order to take actions to prevent GBV we need to understand the root causes of GBV and take action to revert those. We need to understand why GBV occurs at a specific time and place. This can be a complex question. In this module we will further reflect on the general underlying causes of GBV: gender inequality, systemic discrimination and unequal power relations, and consider how to use Gender and Power Analysisto delve deeper into the causes and understand how they manifest in a specific setting.

Exercise derived from the Inter-Agency GBV Case Management Training Package, 2017 (<https://www.gbvims.com/gbv-case-management-guidelines/gbv-case-management-training-materials/>).

