Group work: Risks & Benefits of Seeking Support

Expected duration: 15 mins

Objective: understand the risks and benefits associated with a survivor seeking support

* Divide the participants in groups.
* Assign half of the groups to discuss the question regarding the benefits of seeking support and the other half to discuss the risks. Emphasize that the groups should consider these questions from the perspective of a survivor.
* Request one group for each question to debrief in plenary and ask if the other groups have anything to add.
* Reinforce key considerations below.

Possible benefitsfor a survivor to seek support:

* Access to life-saving support when in distress.
* Access to safe, confidential and professional medical care in a timely manner that could prevent HIV and unwanted pregnancy.
* Access to other services that provide more dignity and comfort, including options for safety and psychosocial support.
* Access to support that may prevent further violence from occurring.

Possible risks for a survivor to seek support, i.e. some of the barriers for survivors to report GBV incidents:

* Possibility that the survivor’s friends, family and/or community will find out, which can lead to being stigmatized, kicked out of their home or community, and/or exposed to more violence.
* Possibility that the perpetrator(s) finds out other people know what happened, leading to retaliation by harming or even killing the survivor.
* Possibility that service providers are exposed to threats and violence by the perpetrator or community if they are seen as helping a survivor.
* Possible insensitive response by service providers/justice actors if they are not trained properly.
* Besides these risks, other common barriers for reporting could be lack of awareness about services, shame, cultural beliefs, belief that the violence is normal or not serious enough to report, financial barriers, lack of transportation, fear of losing children, fear of getting the offender in trouble etc.

Content derived from the IASC Pocket Guide – How to support survivors of GBV when a GBV actor is not available in your area – Training Package, 2018 (<https://gbvguidelines.org/en/pocketguide/>).

