

CLUSTER NEWS FLASH

All Clusters

16 Days of Activism

Special Edition

November 2022

Editor's Note:

This quarter's newsletter comes as a special edition in support of the activities around the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence on Women and Children which run from 25 November to 10 December 2022.

Every year, in all countries, various people and groups observe the 16 Days of Activism in order to raise awareness on the struggles faced by women, children and members of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersexed Asexual Plus (LGBTQIA+) communities.

This year Thušanang Trust has facilitated training on Breaking The Cycle of Gender Based Violence, reaching more than 200 community members and ECD practitioners. Some of the community members will be organizing events in their communities to raise awareness and draw attention to the scourge of violence against women and children.

In this special edition of the *Cluster News Flash* Thušanang wishes to contribute in putting the spot light on this scourge with the hope of drawing attention to some of the subtle forms of gender based violence that do not always capture news headlines, but are just as harmful as the most horrific forms that receive coverage in the mainstream media.

We wish all women and children safety as we enter the festive season.

What is Gender Based Violence?



Gender Based Violence (GBV) violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her gender identity. It "occurs as a result of the normative role expectations and unequal power relationships between genders" (www.saferspaces.org.za).

These normative role expectations may differ from one society to another. It is often referred to as a pandemic due to the fact that it occurs in all societies across the world.

GBV comes in different forms, some of which are overtly violent while others are subtle and not so obvious as a form of violence. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial (or economic or structural). In most cases GBV is perpetrated by people close to or known to the victim such as an intimate partner, relative, friend and neighbor. It can also be perpetrated by strangers. While any person of any gender can inflict GBV, in most cases it is men who perpetrate GBV against women and girls. This is not meant as a denial of the fact that men and boys are often victims of GBV too.

Some of the most common forms of GBV include:

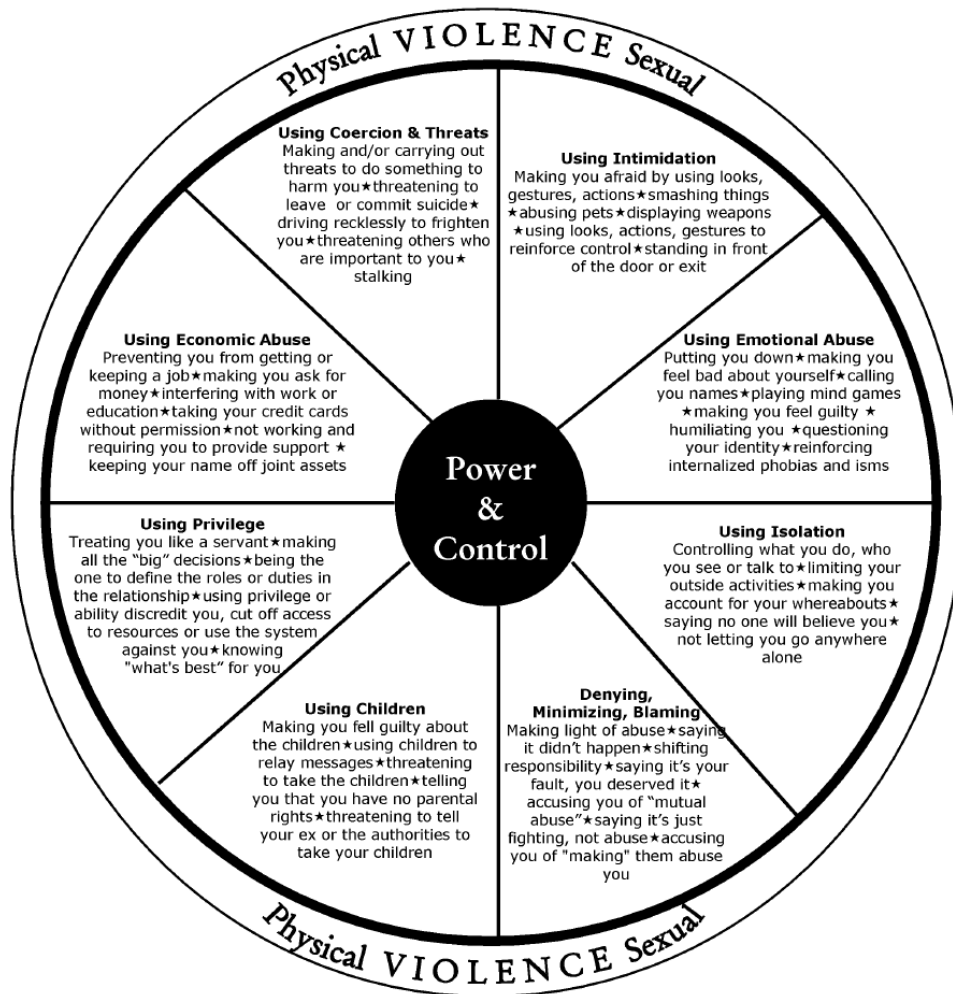
- ⇒ Violence against women and girls
- ⇒ Violence against at LGBTQIA+ people
- ⇒ Intimate partner violence
- ⇒ Domestic violence
- ⇒ Sexual violence

Other subtle ways in which GBV occurs include:

- *Economic violence (where one partner denies the other an opportunity to earn own income or have a say in financial decisions)
- *Emotional violence (where one causes the other to feel ashamed of themselves)
- *Belittling and shaming (making the other person feel less capable)

Regardless of which form it occurs, GBV is abhorrent to society and should not be tolerated. Everyone should do their utmost to rid society of this pandemic.

Power and Control Wheel



*Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
Duluth, Minnesota*

The above image was taken from : www.blackburncentre.org/post/how-the-power-control-wheel-helps-us-understand-domestic-violence

At the heart of it GBV is the way the perpetrator is exercising power and control over the victim. In most cases victims tend to persevere through the abuse and others wonder what is keeping them in the abusive relationship. The above wheel helps to explain some of the complex dynamics that are at play and often keeping the victim under the control of the abusive partner.

The outer ring of the wheel depicts a form of abuse or violence which may be sexual or physical. This may be what everyone witnesses as abuse in a particular relationship. However, what keeps the abuse going are the different forms of control that may accompany the violence, just like the different spokes in a wheel provide support and strength to the wheel itself. For example a husband may often beat his wife, and at the same time using coercion and threats to keep her in the relationship. This would be a situation where the husband may threaten to commit suicide if she left him or threaten to harm her relatives. In another instance the perpetrator of the abuse may use economic abuse where he threatens to withhold money or stop providing for the family if she reports the violence to the police. So as a result of that the victim continues to stay in the abusive relationship, and everyone wonders why isn't she leaving. The perpetrator is using one or a combination of the other forms of control to keep the victim in place. So as a society, especially relatives and friends, we need to take time to understand the complex situation in which the victim may be in and be more supportive before passing judgement. Being judgmental will only serve to victimize the person further.

No Excuse for Abuse?

Men who abuse their female partners always have a “good reason” for doing it. The reality is: that “good reason” is only an excuse. And there is NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE! Here are some excuses:



“I WAS JUST ANGRY”... No amount of anger can justify violence

“IT’S BECAUSE I LOVE HER”... Love does not hurt, Love is not selfish and love is not jealous

“I HAVE SPENT A LOT OF MONEY ON HER”... Still does not give you the right to abuse her

“HER FRIENDS WILL TEACH HER BAD HABITS”... Isolation is a form of abuse and it promotes silence around other forms of abuse

“I DON’T WANT HER TELLING PEOPLE OUR FAMILY ISSUES”... silence on abuse keeps abusive practices in place

“I PAID LOBOLA FOR HER”... Lobola is not a license for abuse and lobola does not take away her human rights

“SHE IS MY WIFE”... Marriage does not amount to entitlement to sexual abuse

“I AM THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD”... Male privileges are not an excuse for violence

“IT IS MY CULTURE”... No culture is worth the tears of another human being



WHAT OTHER EXCUSES ARE USED TO JUSTIFY ABUSE?

Coloring Exercise - A form of self-therapy

Working with colour and drawings can contribute to stress relief and form part of a healing process. Drawing and coloring is usually considered an activity for children. In this edition of *Cluster News Flash* we would like to invite adults to engage in this activity as a way of relaxing your mind, to help stimulate your thinking, to take your mind away from stressful issues and just to have fun.

So take your time, gather some coloring pencils/crayons and start coloring the image on the left. Do not worry about whether it is perfect or not, just let your mind relax and your hands do the work. Use any colour you feel like using for the different parts of the image.

To take the activity further, take a blank sheet, draw yourself and use heart bubbles around it in which you can write your own values for a healthy relationship. What would you like to see as forming your healthy relationship?

You can ask other members of the family also to do theirs individually and then allow each person time to share their drawing and values.. You can all start working to build healthy family relationships based on your values

f @WCYFS

Coloring Activity

#WCYFS #ColoringActivity #HealthyRelationship

a HEALTHY Relationship!

www.womenscenteryfs.org

Above Coloring activity was taken from the Women’s Centre Youth and Family Services: www.womenscenteryfs.org

What can we do about Gender Based Violence?

(Adapted from [www.gov.nl.ca/home/tips and tools](http://www.gov.nl.ca/home/tips_and_tools))

Addressing GBV is a complex matter that requires multifaceted and multipronged interventions. Although we have some of the strongest legislations in South Africa, it will take more than law enforcement to combat gender based violence. It requires everyone to do their part to prevent it from happening and to respond appropriately where it has already happened. Below are some tips for preventing GBV especially for young people:

- ♣ **Recognize the role of gender in the violence:** although there are male victims of gender based violence, most of the time and in most of the cases females are victims while males are perpetrators.
- ♣ **Educate yourself on the root causes of violence:** some of the causes of violence are rooted in patriarchy, some cultural beliefs and values and the structural inequalities.
- ♣ **Challenge sexist and discriminatory language:** violence often starts with language that seeks to put down women and girls or portray them as less human than their male counterparts. Such type of language makes it easier and acceptable when those portrayed as less human are abused. It needs to be challenged and discouraged.
- ♣ **Stop victim blaming:** when women and girls experience abuse, stop asking questions that shift blame on them, such as what were you wearing? Where were you going at that hour of the night? Why were you hanging out with boys?
- ♣ **Stop stereotyping roles of men and roles of women:** parents need to raise their children in environment that help boys and girls to view each other as equals and sharing roles and chores in the household.
- ♣ **Be supportive and believe victims of violence:** when victims share their experiences of abuse, be supportive and believe their story, even if the perpetrator is well known to you and appears innocent in your eyes.
- ♣ **Be a mentor and a champion:** set a good example for others and volunteer your time to raise awareness about GBV. In our community gatherings, let us always make space to talk about GBV.
- ♣ **Remember that violence is a choice and it is preventable:** always choose to resolve disputes and differences without opting to be violent. Choose to express your emotions and frustrations in positive ways that do not include being violent.
- ♣ **Understand and practice consent in your relationships:** boys and men should understand that they are not entitled to women's bodies and that women have the right to refuse consent and that it is OK.
- ♣ **Challenge and report violence:** learn to challenge relatives and friends who perpetrate violence. Silence around violence is one of the aggravating factors to GBV being a growing pandemic in our society.

A society free of gender based violence is possible; it begins with you!

JOIN REAL Fathers!

There is a forum for men that is devoted to write a new script for manhood and fatherhood. They are called **REAL Fathers** which means **Responsible, Engaged And Loving Fathers**. All men, young and old, are invited to join and form groups where they can support each other in setting an example for their children. Use the Project Coordinator's contacts below to find out how you can start a forum in your area. **REAL Fathers Don't Abuse!**

Contact Us

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Useful Numbers To Keep

SAPS Emergency Service: 10 111

GBV Helpline (Command Centre): 0800 428 428

Domestic Violence Helpline: 0800 150 150

Commission for Gender Equality: 0800 007 709

Legal Aid South Africa: 0800 110 110

Childline South Africa (old number): 0800 055 555

Childline South Africa (new toll free number): 116