



MESSAGES ON
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

WWW.MESSAGESFORMOTHERS.CO.ZA

7 OCTOBER 2020



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WHAT IS GENDER BASED VIOLENCE?
2. AM I BEING ABUSED?
3. HOW TO STOP A FRIEND FROM BECOMING AN ABUSER?
4. HOW TO SPOT AN ABUSER?
5. HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION?





1. WHAT IS GENDER BASED VIOLENCE?

Before you can spot signs that someone in your community is a victim of #GBV, you need to know that there is a wide spectrum of abusive and violent activities that fall under this kind of violence.

Physical violence – all forms of physical abuse ranging from the smallest amount of force to murder - the violence does not have to cause physical injury or scarring to be considered abuse!

Emotional and psychological violence – including gas-lighting, emotional manipulation and verbal, financial abuse. Gas-lighting is making someone doubt their own experiences of reality or their sanity.

Obstetric violence – the abuse of women during labour and birth within in the health care system

Institutional violence – sexism in the workplace, being unheard or dismissed by institutions meant to protect you.





2. AM I BEING ABUSED?

Sometimes, #GBV can be incredibly subtle so as to confuse the victim. In cases of emotional and psychological violence, the effects may not be visible but they are there.

If you find that you:

- are unhappy in the relationship, but fear alternatives
- ditch friends and sideline your family to please your partner
- critique yourself through your abuser's eyes, ignoring your own instincts
- feel responsible and take the blame for something they did
- defend your abuser when others point out what's happening
- try to "rescue" them from themselves
- believe that nobody else could ever want to be with you
- change your behavior in response to guilt; your abuser says, "I can't live without you," so you stay

You may be experiencing abuse.

Helplines (keep trying they may be busy)

- GBV Command Centre Call 0800 428 428; Send a "Please Call Me" by dialling *120*7867# SMS 'help' to 31531
- People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) www.powa.co.za tel: 0800 029 999
- Lifeline's Domestic Violence line 0800 150 150
- Tears Foundation www.tears.co.za tell dial *134*7355# or 010 590 5920
- South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) www.sadag.org – has many helplines 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 456 789 or 0800 20 5026 and others

Sources:

1. Healthline (<http://ow.ly/BZPd50Awlm9>)
2. Messages for Mothers (<http://ow.ly/8LK950Awlma>)





3. HOW TO STOP A FRIEND FROM BECOMING AN ABUSER?

If you're reading this and you're a man, you are obviously committed to stopping #GBV. To continue to be a part of the solution, it's important that you speak to other men about GBV and the societal attitudes that make it so pervasive.

You should worry if you've heard a male friend say or hint at to any of these statements:

- We cannot and can never separate or divorce.
- I cannot live without her.
- I have had sex with a drunk person.
- I have ignored someone asking me to stop continuing a sexual act.
- She cheated on me, so I had to punish her.
- I believe that when she says 'NO', she means 'YES'.
- I spent money on her – she owed me sex, so I took what she owed me.
- She was dressed like she wanted sex

If you've heard these from a friend, you should check on their family, and share some of the resources attached here with friends:

- Afrodaddy, Getting Men to Talk about Manhood and GBV - <http://ow.ly/VSzW50AwHjC>
- Eusebius McKaiser, The psychology of toxic masculinity - <http://ow.ly/7Gry50AwHjG>
- Promundo Global website - <http://ow.ly/xJov50AwHjF>
- The Good Men Project website - <http://ow.ly/R1p050AwHjH>
- The Mask you Live In documentary - <http://ow.ly/Z7FY50AwHjD>

Sources:

1. Sonke Gender Justice (<http://ow.ly/8GLC50AwHjI>)
2. South African Government (<http://ow.ly/t1ki50AwHjB>)





4. HOW TO SPOT AN ABUSER?

Often, we're looking for abuse in the victims. But abusers can be right in front of our noses. Here a few warning signs that someone might be violent and you may need to check in on their domestic partners and family:

HUMILIATION:

- Verbal abuse
- Demeaning the victim either privately or publicly
- Embarrassment or humiliation of partner in front of others
- Harassment of partner at work

CONTROL AND SHAME:

- Use of threats (not just physical)
- Complete control over joint finances and property
- Spying e.g. monitoring partner's email or social media accounts
- Unrealistic expectations e.g. dinner on the table by a certain hour
- Telling partner everyone thinks they are crazy or wrong

BLAME:

- Blames partner and others for any and all problems they encounter
- Using guilt to control partner e.g. saying "You made me do this"
- Accusing victims of abusing them

ISOLATION:

- Keeping partner from seeing family and friends
- Convincing partners that certain friends or family are 'bad news' and should be avoided
- Actively working to turn others against you
- Interrupting plans you make with friends or family

Sources:

1. UNISA (<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/Gender%E2%80%93based-violence>)
2. New Hope for Women (<http://www.newhopeforwomen.org/abuser-tricks>)
3. Healthline (<https://www.healthline.com/health/signs-of-mental-abuse#emotional-neglect-and-isolation>)





5. HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION?

Step 1

LISTEN:

Make yourself available to listen to survivors and victims who want to confide in you. Don't worry about knowing the right thing to say, or the right questions to ask. Listening is about creating a space for someone to share as much as they want to, without pressure or judgment. If your friend asks for your advice and you are unsure, you can say to them "I don't know but we can find out together/I can try to find out."

Be sure to acknowledge the bravery and courage it takes to speak about something this difficult.

"Deep listening is the kind of listening that can help relieve the suffering of another person. You can call it compassionate listening. You listen with only one purpose: to help him or her to empty his heart... Because you know that listening like that, you give that person a chance to suffer less. If you want to help [them] to correct [their] perception, you wait for another time... You just listen with compassion and help [them] to suffer less. One hour like that can bring transformation and healing." - Thich Nhat Hanh

Step 2

BELIEVE THEM:

According to #PeopleOpposingWomanAbuse, only 1 in 9 survivors of #GBV come forward and report their cases to the police. A big reason for this is that survivors often feel that they will not be believed.

You can help by just believing the survivor when they tell you their story.

If you can and want to do more, check out #RapeCrisis campaign for victim-centered justice processes, including dedicated #sexualoffencescourts, that respect the survivors' stories (see <http://ow.ly/03u450AwJ48>).





Step 3

OFFER SMALL PRACTICAL ACTS OF KINDNESS:

As overwhelming as #GBV can be, there are practical ways in which you can help survivors and victims and their families.

Share important information on where survivors can seek support.

Contact any of the organisations listed here to see if they could use volunteers.

Donate to or volunteer with the Angel Network (<http://ow.ly/z4Ng50AwJJh>) to put together care packs for survivors of sexual assault.

If you make packs, you can donate them to your local #ThuthuzelaCareCentre. A #ThuthuzelaCareCentre is a one-stop centre where survivors can give their statement, undergo a forensic exam and receive crisis counselling all in one place. See a list of these at <http://ow.ly/tCL850AwJji>

