

TOOL SUITE 4 ADDRESSING GBVH AND BUILDING RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES

Tools to help companies create respectful workplaces and respond to gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH)



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APPLICABLE IFC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1. Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts focuses on environmental and social management systems (ESMS) that help companies integrate plans and standards into their core operations so they can anticipate environmental and social risks posed by their business activities and avoid, minimize, and compensate for such impacts as necessary.¹ A good management system provides for consultation with stakeholders and a means for complaints from workers and local communities to be addressed. It is key under PS1 to focus on gender-sensitive stakeholder engagement with specific, inclusive, and meaningful consultation with women to analyze gender differences in identification of risk, and GBVH impacts during the life cycle of a project.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2. Labor and Working Conditions

Labor and Working Conditions covers working conditions, protection of the workforce, operational health and safety, third party workers, and workers involved in the supply chain. With regards to sexual harassment and GBVH, PS2 requires compliance with national employment and labor laws (which may prohibit sexual harassment and GBVH) and addresses the health and safety of the workforce and protection of potentially vulnerable workers.² A Guidance Note on PS2 specifies that IFC clients should “take measures to prevent... sexual harassment... within the workplace.” It applies to workers directly engaged by the client (direct workers), workers engaged through third parties to perform work related to core business processes of the project for a substantial duration (contracted workers), as well as workers engaged by the client’s primary suppliers (supply chain workers).³ IFC’s Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Department screens new investment projects for GBVH risk.⁴ IFC requires all but the lowest risk clients to include and implement anti-GBVH and gender equality promoting provisions in their human resource policies and will monitor implementation during portfolio supervision.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4. Community Health, Safety, and Security

Community Health, Safety, and Security requires evaluating evaluation of health, safety, and security risks and impacts on communities, including risks stemming from worker influx and the establishment of preventative and control measures, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.⁵ Additional focus is placed on, amongst other issues, an assessment of risks posed by security workers, checking that they are not implicated in past abuses, investigating all allegations of unlawful or abusive conduct, and adopting specific measures to prevent and address these risks, including the provision of confidential channels for reporting incidents and providing support.⁶

¹ [IFC Performance Standards Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts](#), January 1, 2012; IFC Guidance Note 2: Labor and Working Conditions, January 1, 2012.

² IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability, January 1, 2012; IFC Guidance Note 2: Labor and Working Conditions, January 1, 2012.

³ IFC. [Addressing Gender and Gender Based Violence in IFC Projects](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2018.

⁴ Internal IFC documents and procedures.

⁵ EBRD, IFC, and CDC. [Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2019.

⁶ [IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability](#), January 1, 2012; IFC Guidance Note 4: Community Health, Safety, and Security, January 1, 2012.

OVERVIEW: Tools to Address Gender-Based Violence and Harassment and Create Respectful Workplaces

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) is defined as “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty”.⁷ GBVH disproportionately affects women and girls across their lifespan, but can impact anyone, and can include sexual, physical, economic, and psychological abuse in domestic, community, or workplace settings. (See Box 4A, below, for definitions of workplace GBVH.) GBVH can include physical violence or injury, as well as more subtle or less obvious forms of harassment, coercion, or extortion. GBVH occurring on the job can create a hostile work environment, causing employees stress, anxiety, and fear. It can also disrupt concentration, which can lower productivity and/or increase turnover.⁸ GBVH is an issue that cuts across all the Tool Suites in this Toolkit, due to the impacts on all genders in the workforce, supply chain, and community.

The cost of GBVH extends beyond the individuals and families who experience it. Regardless of whether GBVH occurs in the workplace, the costs for businesses can be significant. A World Bank Group report estimates that across five countries, the cost of certain forms of GBVH⁹ is between 1.2 to 3.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP),¹⁰ and figures from the private sector mirror similarly significant costs. A 2017 study by CARE found that nearly one in three female garment factory workers in Cambodia had experienced sexual harassment in the past 12 months, costing the industry USD 89 million per year as a result of turnover, absenteeism, and presenteeism.¹¹ In Peru, private sector companies lose more than USD 6.7 billion a year—comparable to 3.7 percent of GDP—highlighting the significant underrecognized costs of GBVH.¹² In fact, research¹³ indicates that sexual harassment claims can be even more detrimental to corporate reputation than fraud, as illustrated by the seismic shifts of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements.¹⁴

⁷ Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC), [Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery](#), p. 5. Geneva: IASC, 2015.

⁸ M. Ellsberg and L. Heise, [Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists](#). Washington DC: World Health Organization and PATH, 2005.

⁹ Intimate partner violence (IPV).

¹⁰ Countries include Australia, Bangladesh, Peru, United Kingdom and Vietnam. J. Klugman, L. Hanmer, S. Twigg, T. Hasan, J. McCleary-Sills, and J. Santamaria, [Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2014.

¹¹ CARE, [‘I know I cannot quit.’ The Prevalence and Productivity Cost of Sexual Harassment to the Cambodian Garment Industry](#). Canberra: CARE Australia, 2017.

¹² A. Vara Horna, [Violence against women and its financial consequences for businesses in Peru](#). Peru: GIZ, 2013.

¹³ S. Does, S. Gundemir, and M. Shih, [“Research: How Sexual Harassment Affects a Company’s Public Image,” Harvard Business Review](#), 2018.

¹⁴ A. Allan, [How Businesses Can Take the Lead in Combatting Gender-Based Violence](#). *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2019.

Any company seeking to address GBVH must ensure that it is meeting minimum obligations to provide a safe workplace by addressing bullying and sexual harassment and taking steps to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace. Tackling GBVH and respectful workplace issues also presents an important opportunity to enhance company culture and values, staff wellbeing, and the productivity of the company. All initiatives must be survivor centered (**BOX 4I**).

BOX 4A | Definitions: Scope of Workplace Gender Based Violence and Harassment

Workplace violence and harassment is pervasive, and it affects all countries, occupations, and work arrangements.¹⁵ The problem consists of a range of unacceptable behaviors or threatened behaviors that aim at or result in physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm, including gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).¹⁶ These behaviors are incompatible with a respectful workplace culture and a productive business.

In 2019, the International Labor Organization (ILO) formalized the right of employees to work in an environment free from workplace violence and harassment through Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment. The convention brings together principles of equality and non-discrimination with workplace health and safety to “address violence and harassment that occurs in the course of, linked with or arising out of work, both in the formal and informal economy, and whether in the private or public sector”.¹⁷ These behaviors are linked with or arise out of work, including:

- in the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work
- in places where the worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities
- during work-related trips, travel, training, events, or social activities
- through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies
- in employer-provided accommodation, and
- when commuting to and from work.¹⁸

Convention 190 notes that domestic violence can affect employment, productivity, and health and safety, and that governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations

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¹⁵ International Labor Organization, [Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work Convention No. 190, Recommendation No. 206, and the accompanying Resolution](#), 2019.

¹⁶ International Labor Organization, [Violence and harassment in the world of work: A guide on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206](#), 2021.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Definition adapted from: International Labor Organization, [Violence and harassment in the world of work: A guide on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206](#), 2021.

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and labor market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to recognize, respond to and address the impacts of domestic violence.¹⁹ For further information on other international laws and conventions, see **TOOL 4.4: Guidelines on Potential Legal Obligations Involving GBVH**.

Prior to the ratification of ILO Convention 190, several ILO instruments related to occupational safety and health (OSH) set out to protect workers' safety and health, including from the risk of violence and harassment. They include the Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155) and Recommendation (No. 164), 1981; as well as the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981.

Definitions of workplace bullying, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and domestic violence are outlined below and in the Respectful Workplaces Sample Policy in **TOOL 4.12**.

Workplace Bullying: Workplace bullying is unreasonable and often repeated behavior that undermines a person's health, safety, confidence, or dignity.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, uncomfortable, humiliated, or intimidated.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA): Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.²⁰

Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It also includes sexual relations with a child, in any context, defined as a human being under the age of 18 years.

Sexual Assault: Sexual activity with another person who does not consent. It is a violation of bodily integrity and sexual autonomy and is broader than narrower conceptions of "rape," especially because (a) it may be committed by other means than force or violence and (b) does not necessarily entail penetration.²¹

Domestic and Sexual Violence (DSV): Domestic violence is conduct, or the threat of such conduct, committed by a person against another person with whom the offender is in a domestic relationship that constitutes physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse. It may consist of a single act or a number of acts that form part of a pattern of behavior, even though some or all of those acts when viewed in isolation may appear to be minor or trivial.


¹⁹ International Labor Organization, [Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work Convention No. 190](#), 2019.

²⁰ UNHCR, [What is sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment?](#)

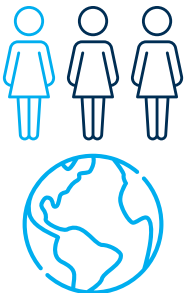
²¹ UN Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 2017, pg. 6.

Research has shown a correlation between infrastructure projects and rising rates of GBVH, from incidences of onsite harassment to an increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and domestic and sexual violence (DSV) within project-affected communities (including both incidents involving workers and those driven in part by project-related impacts within the community).²² In situations where these issues are not addressed, the infrastructure sector can create and/or exacerbate dynamics leading to GBVH incidents. Beyond the workplace impacts, the occurrence of incidents of GBVH is a violation of fundamental human rights, and what happens in the immediate workplace is intimately connected with what happens offsite. Taken together, the risks to individuals, to communities, to business, and to reputation have prompted many companies to also recognize opportunities to change onsite behavior and address issues in the broader community by taking a proactive stance on combating GBVH. Companies have an opportunity to not only create standards in terms of acceptable work conduct and atmosphere in the workplace and employee conduct in communities, but also provide support for employees who may experience violence at home.

As companies increasingly recognize the growing imperative to address GBVH in-house and as community stakeholders, this Tool Suite provides guidance and tools to help companies understand these issues, take measures, and set expectations for behavior and support services. In addition, this Tool Suite recognizes that GBVH is frequently connected to, and a symptom of, broader ‘respectful workplace’ issues (i.e., workplaces that are free from bullying and harassment). While the tools presented here are often focused on GBVH, they can also be used to support the development of workplaces that are free from all forms of violence and harassment.²³



In some countries, GBVH IS ESTIMATED TO COST UP TO 3.7% OF GDP.



ONE IN THREE WOMEN WORLDWIDE have reported experiencing either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime.

Sources: J. Klugman, L. Hanmer, S. Twigg, T. Hasan, J. McCleary-Sills, and J. Santamaria, [Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2014, and UN Women, ["Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women."](#)

²² L. Berger, [How a Community-Led Response to Sexual Exploitation in Uganda Led to Systemic World Bank Reform](#). Accountability Research Center, Accountability Note 3, 2018.

²³ IFC, [Respectful Workplaces: Exploring the costs of Bullying and Sexual Harassment to Businesses in Myanmar](#). Washington, D.C.: IFC, 2019.

BOX 4B | IFC E&S Support Linked to IFC Performance Standards**IFC GBVH Due Diligence and Risk Screening**

Environment and Social (E&S) Specialists at the IFC are required to undertake gender and GBVH due diligence.²⁴ When a project is at the design stage, the E&S Specialist responsible for the project at the concept review stage completes the Gender and GBVH Contextual Risk Screening Tool (an internal IFC document)²⁵. The level of risk of a project related to GBVH depends on a range of data points and questions, such as national laws, GBVH prevalence rates, labor influx, use of security, etc. By asking the client questions about its gender and GBVH-related policies, procedures, and grievance mechanisms, the specialist can initiate the conversation about gender and GBVH risks with the client and identify the level of risk associated with the project. Below are some examples of how IFC works with clients to apply gender-related requirements of the Performance Standards:²⁶

IFC is working with an investment client in West Africa to implement mitigation actions to address the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse by project employees or contractors against local community members. IFC is working with the client on ethical and survivor-centered responses and mechanisms should an incident occur.

At a chemical manufacturer in India, IFC noted there were no female employees. Women are often not hired in the sector because it is assumed that such jobs entail hard physical labor and are dangerous. However, given technology changes, modern chemical plants need little physical labor and can in fact be safer than other industries. The IFC team worked with the company on developing a female employee-friendly plant through a physical redesign of the factory operations, focused recruitment efforts to increase female employees, and updated human resource policies. This helped shift the employment footprint, and the company managed to employ 45 women for its first 630 roles.

IFC Advisory programs such as the [Respectful Workplaces Program](#) have also taken steps to address harassment, including GBVH, with over 50 private sector companies across various countries, including, for example, in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands²⁷, and in the garment sector in other countries, where as part of the Better Work program, IFC promotes anti-sexual harassment training for workers and managers.²⁸

²⁴ IFC, *Assessing Gender and GBV Risks in Projects: A Guide for IFC E&S Specialists*, 2019.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Examples from IFC's [Addressing Gender and Gender Based Violence in IFC Projects](#). Washington, D.C.: IFC, 2018.

²⁷ See IFC's [Respectful Workplaces Program](#).

²⁸ For more information, see "[Better Work's Sexual Harassment Prevention Training sparks changes in attitudes and behavior](#)," 2017.

TOOL SUITE 4: Tools to Address Gender-Based Violence and Harassment and Create Respectful Workplaces

Any company seeking to address gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) must ensure that it is meeting minimum obligations to provide a safe workplace by addressing bullying and sexual harassment and taking steps to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace. These steps are essential to building a respectful corporate culture and will allow you to support your employees further by responding to domestic or sexual violence that may occur outside the workplace.

Tool Suite 4 offers support, practical suggestions, and examples of strategies to address GBVH. This toolkit is meant to provide a comprehensive guide of options—companies should pick and choose tools, or portions of tools, to use depending on their current needs and capabilities. The tools can be used as rough guides, or can be followed verbatim, but should always be tailored to the specific context of the organization and the contexts in which it operates. All initiatives must be survivor centered (see **BOX 4I**).

TOOL	TARGET UNIT	GOAL
↓ TOOL 4.1: Road Map for Using Tools in Tool Suite 4	All Readers	Introduces how all the tools in this Tool Suite work together
↓ ASSESS AND PREPARE: Tools 4.2–4.8		
↓ TOOL 4.2: The Business Case for Respectful Workplaces	All Readers	Explains how GBVH can affect your businesses, employees, and the communities in which you operate
↓ TOOL 4.3: Guidelines for Finding and Assessing Available GBVH Data	Community Engagement, Employee Assistance, Internal Communications, Human Resources, Legal, Medical, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Gender Focal Points, Security, and Unions	Provides guidance on identifying and assessing GBVH data specific to your company
↓ TOOL 4.4: Guidelines for Potential Legal Obligations Involving GBVH	Human Resources and Legal	Outlines legal obligations involving GBVH that may apply to your company

↓ TOOL 4.5: Service Provider Guidelines	Community Engagement, Employee Assistance, Internal Communications, Human Resources, Legal, Medical, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Gender Focal Points, Security, and Unions	Identifies what supports are available in the locations your business operates
↓ TOOL 4.6: Gender Smart Safety	Occupational Health and Safety, Human Resources, Medical and Legal	Provides an overview of gender smart safety and a case study
↓ TOOL 4.7: Respectful Workplaces Staff Engagement Survey	Human Resources and Unions	Includes sample questions that can be included in employee engagement surveys
↓ TOOL 4.8: Terms of Reference for GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Assessment	Human Resources and Gender Focal Points	Provides a sample ToR for independent specialists to conduct employee interviews and surveys about GBVH
↓ ADDRESS: Tools 4.9–4.14		
↓ TOOL 4.9: Checklist for Publicly Committing to Address GBVH and Model Respectful Behavior	Executive Board, Senior Management, and Human Resources	Outlines steps leadership teams can take to demonstrate commitment to addressing GBVH
↓ TOOL 4.10: Identify Key Staff for GBVH Focal Points and Contact Team	Senior Management and Human Resources	Offers guidance on selecting staff to serve as focal points
↓ TOOL 4.11: Guidelines for GBVH Focal Point Training	Human Resources, Training and Development and Union	Provides guidance on training focal points
↓ TOOL 4.12: GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Guidelines and Sample Policy	Executive Board, Senior Management, and Human Resources	Offers guidance and examples of workplace policies, procedures, and reporting and investigation mechanisms

<p>↓ TOOL 4.13: Raising Awareness and Communication of GBVH Commitments and Approaches</p>	<p>Executive Board, Senior Management, Communications and Public Relations, Human Resources, and Unions</p>	<p>Provides information on how to improve employee awareness through training and everyday reminders</p>
<p>↓ TOOL 4.14: Guidelines for Self-Care for Respectful Workplaces Focal Points/Contact Team</p>	<p>Human Resources and Focal Points/Contact Team</p>	<p>Outlines resources to support focal points and the contact team</p>

↓ **MONITOR AND SUSTAIN:** Tool 4.15

<p>↓ TOOL 4.15: Developing a Theory of Change for Interventions Involving GBVH</p>	<p>Human Resources, Training and Development, and Focal Points/Contact Team</p>	<p>Examples of how to monitor progress through a theory of change</p>
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TOOL 4.1

Roadmap for Using Tools in Tool Suite 4

- » **GOAL:** Introduces how all the tools in this Tool Suite work together
- » **TARGET UNITS:** All readers

Purpose: The purpose of this Roadmap is to guide organizations to use the tools and resources within this Tool Suite to address gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) as a workplace issue and to build respectful workplaces that enhance business value by improving employee and community well-being.

Audience: Private sector companies and relevant staff, including those leading community outreach, employee assistance programs, internal communications, HR, legal, medical, OHS, gender focal points, security, and unions.

How to use this toolkit: Before embarking on the journey to create a safer and more respectful workplace, you will need to decide the extent to which your company will address gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH). At a minimum, you need to ensure that you are meeting your obligations to provide a safe workplace and are committed to taking action. This means you will need to address **bullying and sexual harassment**

and take steps to **prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace**. Once you have made progress on these issues, you will have built the corporate culture that will allow you to further support your employees by responding to domestic or sexual violence that may occur outside the workplace. (Key definitions can be found in Box 4A).

- **Start by:** addressing bullying and sexual harassment and preventing SEA connected to the workplace
- **Then:** support employees by responding to domestic and sexual violence

Approach: Treat employees as allies when addressing GBVH. Employees will respond better if you ask them to help you to prevent and respond to GBVH than if you treat them as potential perpetrators. Link your GBVH initiatives to company values.

Companies have an opportunity to not only create standards in terms of acceptable work conduct and atmosphere in the workplace and employee conduct in communities, but also provide support for employees who may experience violence at home.

1. **ASSESS AND PREPARE:** The first step to addressing GBVH in your company is to understand the extent to which it is an issue within your company, the associated legal obligations and contexts, available resources, and employee perceptions and workplace conditions.
 - › **Assess the Situation:** Begin by reading the business case in **TOOL 4.2** to understand how GBVH affects your business, employees, and the communities in which you operate. **TOOL 4.3** provides guidance on identifying and assessing GBVH data specific to your company, while **TOOL 4.4** outlines legal obligations involving GBVH that may apply to your company. The checklist in **TOOL 4.5** identifies ways to research what supports are available for survivors and perpetrators of GBVH in the locations that your business operates.
 - › **Understand employee perceptions and conditions:** The overview of gender smart safety and the case study in **TOOL 4.6** can provide insights to inform a gender safety audit. **TOOL 4.7** includes sample questions that can be included in your employee engagement surveys to assess how safe your employees feel at work and how likely they are to raise issues with you.
 - › **Hire an independent specialist:** Since you should not ask your employees about their personal experiences of GBVH, you must hire an expert. If you want to conduct interviews or survey employees, **TOOL 4.8** includes a sample terms of reference (ToR).

TIP: IFC clients receive specialized support from IFC E&S specialists linked to IFC performance standards. See the summary in Box 4B.

2. **ADDRESS:** As companies prepare to implement GBVH initiatives, ensure that initiatives are supported by leadership and dedicated staff who receive adequate training, resources, and other support. All initiatives must be survivor centered (see **BOX 4I**).
 - › **Ensure leadership commitment:** Leadership commitment is fundamental to addressing GBVH in your workplace. Without leadership commitment, any actions you take to address GBVH will fail. Leadership commitment could involve allocating resources, agreeing to targets, committing time to participate, upholding standards, and being held accountable for results. The business case in **TOOL 4.2** can help engage the leadership team and win their commitment, and **TOOL 4.9** includes a checklist to help leaders publicly commit to addressing GBVH and model respectful behavior.

TIP: Do not progress to the next steps until you have secured leadership commitment.

 - › **Identify and train key staff to be focal points for GBVH:** Choose staff that are respected in the workplace. Include staff from HR, OHS, community engagement, and others who have a role in employee well-being. Ensure that you have one senior management sponsor. **TOOL 4.10** includes guidance on choosing staff. Once focal points have been selected, conduct training to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about GBVH. The training should include information on the business case to address GBVH, definitions and concepts of GBVH, fundamentals

about preventing GBVH and effectively supporting survivors of GBVH and managing perpetrators. **TOOL 4.11** offers more information on training focal points.

TIPS:

- *Levels of seniority are not important as long as the staff you choose are supported to fulfil their role. However, it is important to pick one senior management sponsor to help elevate the profile of GBVH actions.*
- *Participation must be voluntary. Do not force staff to lead GBVH initiatives, as many people are affected by GBVH and may not want to be reminded about their experiences.*
- *Focal points must have the resources to do their job well. Ensure that staff have paid time to undertake their GBVH focal point role.*
- *The training must be based in a survivor-centered approach, as training that is not survivor-centered is likely to cause harm (see **BOX 4I** for details).*

- › **Develop GBVH and respectful workplace policies and procedures:** Review and update existing policies, procedures, and reporting and investigation mechanisms (if any), or develop them if they do not exist. **TOOL 4.12** includes guidance and a sample policy.

TIPS:

- *Policies should clearly articulate that disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated, give examples of disrespectful behavior and its consequences (which should be handled on a case-by-case basis), and identify where to report GBVH and what support will be provided for affected employees.*
- *Reporting mechanisms must be survivor-centered and should include multiple channels: informal, formal and/or online, including at least one anonymous way to report disrespectful behavior.*
- *Investigate and resolve all issues raised in a safe and confidential manner by a trained team.*
- *Make sure that disciplinary action is commensurate with the impact of the GBVH.*

- › **Foster employee awareness:** Improve employee awareness about the company's GBVH commitment and initiatives by providing training and everyday reminders, such as posters in the workplace. **TOOL 4.13** offers more information and materials.

TIPS:

- *Training should make employees aware about what actions they can take if they experience, witness, or hear about GBVH. Awareness should be raised through training and practicing scenarios. For more information on the bystander approach, see **TOOL 4.9**.*
- *Do not start raising employee awareness until you have completed the earlier actions in this roadmap. Raising awareness about GBVH will create expectations about a company response. You should be ready to accept disclosures and support survivors before raising awareness.*

- › **Support focal points to drive progress and change:** Consider debriefing with other focal points or GBVH service providers or counselors, offering refresher training, providing acknowledgement and/or rewards, recognizing and celebrating their efforts and successes, and encouraging self-care. **TOOL 4.14** provides information and materials to support focal points.

TIP: Form relationships with service providers so that focal points have immediate access to support if needed.

- 3. MONITOR AND SUSTAIN:** Monitor progress and institutionalize mechanisms to ensure continued improvement and sustained progress in addressing GBVH. It is essential to ensure that incidences of GBVH and responses are monitored and evaluated, and the approaches taken are reviewed as necessary. You should maintain a confidential record of complaints and actions taken, including details of support to survivors and disciplinary actions taken, and adjust actions at the company level as needed based on lessons learned. Additional steps include tracking changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. **TOOL 4.15** provides examples on how to monitor these aspects at your company through a theory of change (TOC), while **TOOL 4.7** can be revisited to collect data through employee engagement mechanisms.

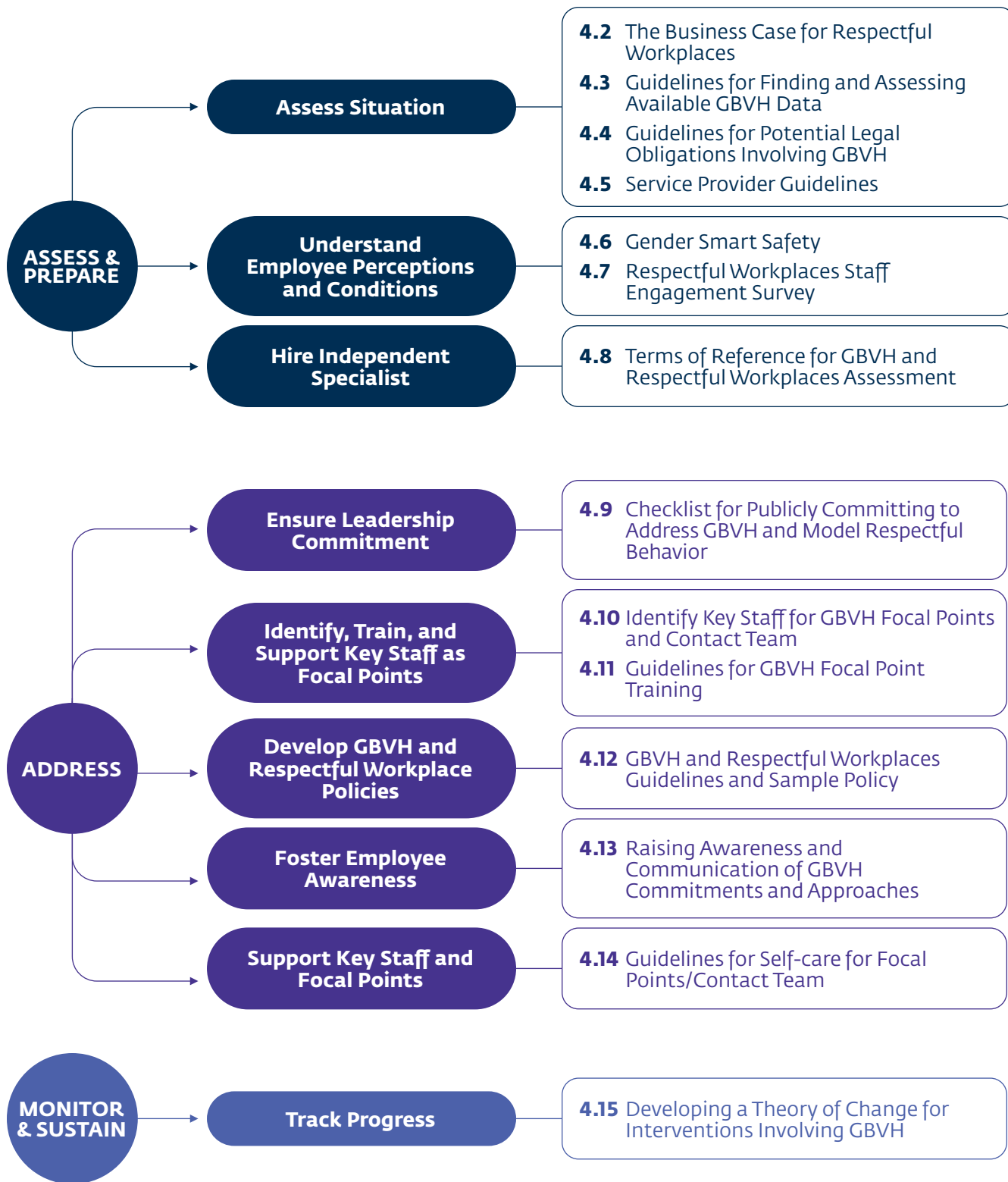
TIPS:

- Confidential records of complaints can help you track trends and highlight recurring problems (e.g., are certain departments more prone to complaints than others? Are employees in certain types of roles more likely to experience GBVH?)
- Do not adopt targets on decreases in GBVH incidents reported. Disclosure may increase after implementation of GBVH initiatives in the short-to medium term as corporate culture and trust in the company improves.

The journey to create a safer and more respectful workplace by addressing GBVH issues at the workplace takes time and continued efforts can help build a stronger company culture. A sustained focus on learning and adjusting approaches to GBVH, especially around responding in a survivor-centered way to incidents of GBVH, will help enhance employee trust in company commitments and encourage others to report issues.

Tackling GBVH and respectful workplace issues also presents an **important opportunity to enhance company culture and values, staff wellbeing, and the productivity of the company.**

Acknowledgments: This Tool Suite was co-developed through a partnership between the Respectful Workplaces Program, Gender and Economic Inclusion Group (GEIG) and Sustainable Infrastructure Advisory (SIA). The authors of Tool Suite 4 on Addressing GBVH and Building Respectful Workplaces are Shabnam Hameed (Previous Global Lead, Workplace Responses to GBVH, GEIG) and Inka Schomer (Senior Gender and Infrastructure Advisor, SIA). Special thanks to Adriana Eftimie (Gender Lead for Infrastructure - Sustainable Infrastructure Advisory) and the peer reviewers Ana Luiza Almeida E Silva (GBVH and Respectful Workplace Advisor, GEIG), Amy N. Luinstra (Acting Global Co-Manager and EAP Lead, GEIG), Sarah Twigg (Program Manager Women in Work, Sri Lanka, GEIG), Katherine Heller and Jennifer Scott (Senior Gender Advisors, SIA) for their important input. The editor for the Tool Suite was Mark Toner and design and layout was by Rikki Campbell Ogden.



ASSESS AND PREPARE: TOOLS 4.2–4.8

The first step to addressing gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) is to understand the extent to which it is an issue within your company, the associated legal obligations and contexts, available resources, and employee perceptions and workplace conditions.

Among the steps you can take to prepare to develop your company's response to GBVH:

- Read the business case in **TOOL 4.2** to understand how GBVH affects your business, employees, and the communities in which you operate.
- Access guidance on finding and assessing GBVH data specific to your company in **TOOL 4.3**.
- Access guidance on legal obligations about GBVH that may apply to your company in **TOOL 4.4**.
- Research what supports are available for survivors and perpetrators of GBVH in the locations that your business operates. Use the guidance in **TOOL 4.5**.
- Conduct a gender safety audit. For an overview of gender smart safety and a case study, see **TOOL 4.6**.
- Include questions in your employee engagement surveys to assess how safe your employees feel at work and how likely they are to raise issues with you. Adapt the sample questions in **TOOL 4.7**.

Important note:

- Do not ask your employees about their personal experiences of GBVH. If you want to conduct interviews or survey your employees about GBVH, you must hire an expert. You can access a sample terms of reference (ToR) for an independent specialist in **TOOL 4.8**.

IFC clients will receive specialized support in assessment from IFC E&S specialists linked to the IFC performance standards. See Box 4B in the Overview for more information.

TOOL 4.2

The Business Case for Respectful Workplaces

- » **GOAL:** Explains how GBVH can affect your businesses, employees, and the communities in which you operate
- » **TARGET UNITS:** All Readers

A respectful workplace is a safe workplace that is free from all forms of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), where employees and others associated with the company treat each other with dignity, courtesy, and respect. The key to addressing GBVH and respectful workplace issues is grasping key definitions.

Definitions:

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH): GBVH is an umbrella term that covers a range of behaviors, including sexual, physical, psychological, and economic abuse. What sets it apart from other types of violence and harassment is that it is directed at people because of their sex or gender, or disproportionately affects people of a particular sex or gender.²⁹ GBVH is rooted in gender inequality and unequal power, which can leave people, especially women and girls, vulnerable to violence and harassment and prevent them from reporting it.

Prevalence: Rates of GBVH increased during COVID-19.³⁰ Before the pandemic, one in three women worldwide reported experiencing either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime.^{31,32} Anyone can experience GBVH, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or intersex status; however, some forms of GBVH are most commonly experienced by women and girls. Other factors that increase the risk of experiencing violence include race, income, religion, ethnicity, age,³³ sexual orientation, or disability.³³

Impact: GBVH affects individuals their families, and communities and affects the business bottom line. In some countries, GBVH is estimated to cost up to 3.7 percent of GDP.³⁴ GBVH can occur in the workplace and can cause employees stress, anxiety, and fear, disrupt concentration, and affect their physical and psychological well-being.

²⁹ WHO, [Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence](#), 2013.

³⁰ Shelby Bourgault, Amber Peterman, and Megan O'Donnell, [Violence Against Women and Children During COVID-19— One Year On and 100 Papers In: A Fourth Research Round Up](#). Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development (CDG), 2021.

³¹ UN Women, [“Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women.”](#)

³² This data is being used as a proxy for prevalence of all forms of GBVH, given limited research and prevalence data on different forms of GBVH.

³³ These issues often “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects in systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination. This is often referred to as intersectionality.

³⁴ J. Klugman, L. Hanmer, S. Twigg, T. Hasan, J. McCleary-Sills, and J. Santamaria, [Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2014.

GBVH directly affects the financial performance of companies. GBVH can increase health and safety risks, reduce employee engagement and productivity, increase absenteeism and presenteeism³⁵, accelerate turnover of employees, and cause lasting damage to public image, business reputation, and social license to operate³⁶. GBVH's effects on workplace culture can be significant: Disengaged workers have 49% more accidents, 60% more errors and defects, 37% higher absenteeism, and almost 50% greater voluntary turnover.³⁷

IFC research from Fiji shows companies lose almost 10 days of work per employee each year due to lost staff time and reduced productivity³⁸; and similar costs have been found in Papua New Guinea³⁹, Myanmar⁴⁰, and Solomon Islands⁴¹. In Peru, it is estimated that GBVH costs private businesses approximately USD 7 billion each year.⁴²

By addressing GBVH, employers can:

- **Help fulfill employers' duty of care**—all employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace.
- **Improve staff health, safety, and wellbeing** by creating an environment that is safe and supportive, where every individual is treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect.
- **Increase staff engagement and loyalty**, which can improve employee motivation and teamwork, and decrease absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover.
- **Position the organization as an employer of choice**, as the organization will become known as a good place to work. This will help the organization attract and keep the best people.
- **Demonstrate corporate social responsibility** by creating positive perceptions of the company in the community and mitigating against costs that would otherwise be borne by the community.

Together, these factors drive and strengthen financial performance. Creating respectful workplaces is every employer's responsibility, and that includes proactively and ethically addressing workplace GBVH should it arise.

³⁵ Presenteeism occurs when staff have compromised productivity due to GBVH and respectful workplace issues.

³⁶ While there isn't a universally accepted definition, social license to operate is the idea that there is more to running a business successfully and sustainably than legal and regulatory compliance, and that companies need to earn the support of the community and society in which they operate. It means ongoing acceptance by the people who live in the area of impact or influence of a project; it is also a form of risk management against delays, conflict, and additional costs (World Bank. 2014).

³⁷ Emma Seppälä and Kim Cameron, "[Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive](#)," Harvard Business Review. Brighton, Massachusetts, 2015.

³⁸ IFC, [The Business Case for Workplace Responses to Domestic and Sexual Violence in Fiji](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2019.

³⁹ IFC, [Workplace responses to Family and Sexual Violence in PNG: Measuring the Business Case](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2021.

⁴⁰ IFC, [Respectful Workplaces. Exploring the Cost of Bullying and Sexual Harassment to Business in Myanmar](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2019.

⁴¹ IFC, [The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands-Executive Summary](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2019.

⁴² A. Vara Horna, [Violence against women and its financial consequences for businesses in Peru](#). Lima, Peru: GIZ, 2013.

BOX 4C | Measuring the Business Case for Workplace Responses to Family and Sexual Violence in PNG

GBVH is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, and gender equality in the workplace can improve outcomes in addressing GBVH. Recent research in Papua New Guinea found a correlation between the gender balance of the workforce, the level of support that companies provide to respond to family and sexual violence, and positive outcomes.⁴³ Researchers found less acceptance of family and sexual violence, higher reporting of family and sexual violence, fewer days lost to the impacts of family and sexual violence, and more helpful responses.

BOX 4D | IFC Respectful Workplaces Program

IFC’s Respectful Workplaces Program seeks to enhance business value by addressing gender-based violence and harassment, including customer and client aggression, workplace bullying, and sexual harassment, domestic and sexual violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse connected to the workplace. The program supports the private sector in emerging markets to create safe and resilient workplaces through demonstrating the business case for action and providing businesses with advisory services, resources, and tools to help them address the issue. For more information, visit the [Respectful Workplaces Program](#) website.

⁴³ IFC, [Workplace responses to Family and Sexual Violence in PNG: Measuring the Business Case](#). Washington D.C.: IFC, 2021.

TOOL 4.3

Guidelines for Finding and Assessing Available GBVH Data

- » **GOAL:** Provides guidance on identifying and assessing GBVH data specific to your company
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Community Engagement, Employee Assistance, Internal Communications, Human Resources, Legal, Medical, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Gender Focal Points, Security, and Unions

Data is a crucial tool for understanding gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH). Data on GBVH can be obtained from different sources, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches. Qualitative methods in GBVH research include interviews, focus groups, and observations, among other approaches. Quantitative methods in GBVH research produce information that can be summarized in numbers and can be useful for drawing conclusions about a broader group. Quantitative methods include surveys, case management tools, client satisfaction surveys, pre/post tests, etc.⁴⁴ Mixed methods is a research approach in which researchers collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study—for example, a cross-sectional survey combined with qualitative data collection activities.

Official statistics are usually compiled and produced by national statistical offices and are based on data from surveys and/or administrative sources. It is important to note that for GBVH, these sources often capture only a fraction of the actual prevalence⁴⁵ and incidence⁴⁶ of violence. Other sources can include sample surveys. These may not be statistically representative, but they are useful when no other statistically representative⁴⁷ information is available, or when organizations dealing with reported cases of violence against women have limited case records on hand (such as the police, health, justice, or and social services).

It is important to note that for GBVH, **official sources often capture only a fraction** of the actual prevalence and incidence of violence.

When considering data about GBVH:

- Not all countries will have comprehensive data about all forms of GBVH

⁴⁴ The Global Women's Institute, George Washington University, [Gender-Based Violence Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation with Refugee and Conflict-Affected Populations: A Manual and Toolkit for Researchers and Practitioners](#).

⁴⁵ Prevalence refers to the number of persons within a demographic group (e.g., female or male) who are victimized during a specific time period, such as a person's lifetime or the previous 12 months.

⁴⁶ Incidence refers to the number of separate victimizations, or incidents, perpetrated against persons within a demographic group during a specific time period.

⁴⁷ A statistic is representative if it represents the attributes of a known parameter in the population. When the statistic does not represent the population parameter, it is called unrepresentative.

- Most countries will not have data on workplace bullying, sexual harassment, or sexual exploitation and abuse connected to the workplace
- You can use proxies to assess GBVH risks
- The most commonly used proxy for all forms of GBVH is intimate partner violence. Data from the UN Women Global Database on Violence Against Women can be found [here](#).
- Causes and risk factors that can exacerbate GBVH include:
 - › High levels of gender inequality, including gender stereotypes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and unequal gender-based power relations
 - › Low levels of GBVH services
 - › Remote worksites
 - › Labor influx/use of transient workers
 - › Use of military or private security forces
 - › Heightened fragility due to recent or ongoing conflict
- Other data sources for GBVH and gender inequity include:
 - › [The WEF Global Gender Gap Report](#): Benchmarking report across 153 countries on progress toward gender parity, including the prevalence of GBVH.
 - › [The World Bank Group's Gender Data Portal](#): Source of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics including country-level GBVH statistics.
 - › [UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific](#): Assessment of men's experience of violence, including their perpetration of violence against others.
 - › [UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women](#): A 'one-stop shop' for information on prevalence and measures undertaken by governments to address violence against women.
 - › [USAID Demographic and Health \(DHS\) Program STATcompiler](#): Tool to collate demographic and health indicators across more than 70 countries, including prevalence data on women's experience of sexual violence and physical violence.
- You may also be able to source industry-specific data of GBVH risks. Most of the data available is company- or country-specific and may not be comparable. However, it may still be helpful to build your company-specific business case.

How do you know if the data is reliable?

Generally speaking, quantitative data about prevalence that is collected by the national statistical office is the most accurate. However, there are variations in how countries collect data. UN Women analyzed the country data available globally and standardized the findings.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ UN Women, [Global Database on Violence Against Women](#).

When you assess other sources of quantitative data, check the sample size and how the sample was chosen. Small sizes can indicate that the data findings may not be statistically significant.⁴⁹ The choice of sample size may also bias the data collected. If the sample has been chosen for convenience⁵⁰, it may not necessarily be bad data, but the sample size needs to be large enough for the findings to be reliable. In many instances, GBVH researchers chose a sample of convenience where participants can opt in as they want to ensure that participation is voluntary.

Qualitative data is very useful to gain a more nuanced understanding of the issues. Qualitative data is usually context specific and can investigate dynamics and response to GBVH at the company and community level. Qualitative data is not usually useful to establish prevalence, however, the data will give you more of an understanding of the experience of those experiencing GBVH and those who respond to GBVH. It can also identify strengths and challenges with policies and procedures.

Mixed methods research that involves both qualitative and quantitative data can be helpful as it can triangulate findings giving you an overall view of prevalence and more detailed descriptions of experience and processes. Remember though, that all data is only as good as the research methodology that underpins it. For more information about conducting research on GBVH, see the [World Health Organization's guidelines on researching violence against women](#)⁵¹.

GBVH can affect workplace culture and lead to employee disengagement.

Disengaged workers have

49% MORE ACCIDENTS

60% MORE ERRORS & DEFECTS

37% HIGHER ABSENTEEISM

and an almost

50% INCREASE IN VOLUNTARY TURNOVER

Source: Emma Seppälä and Kim Cameron, "[Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive](#)," *Harvard Business Review*, 2015.

⁴⁹ Statistical significance indicates that an effect you observe in a sample is unlikely to be the product of chance

⁵⁰ For more rigorous results, a randomized controlled trial (RCT) is used. An RCT is an experimental form of impact evaluation in which the population receiving the program or policy intervention is chosen at random from the eligible population and a control group is also chosen at random from the same eligible population. H. White, S. Sabarwal, and T. de Hoop, "Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)," *Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 7*, Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, 2014.

⁵¹ M. Ellsberg and L. Heise, [Researching violence against women: practical guidelines for researchers and activists](#). World Health Organization, 2005.

TOOL 4.4

Guidelines for Potential Legal Obligations Involving GBVH

- » **GOAL:** Outlines legal obligations involving GBVH that may apply to your company
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources and Legal

Many levels of laws that are relevant to gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) may apply to your company, including international laws and conventions and national laws. International laws and conventions that may apply include, among various others:

- **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** CEDAW is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. The CEDAW Committee adopted General Recommendation No 19 on violence against women in 1992.
- **Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW):** Several internationally agreed norms and standards relate to EVAW, which should guide the response on GBVH by national legal systems and public policy frameworks⁵². For more information, visit the [UN Women site](#).
- **International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment and accompanying Recommendation (No. 206):** The framework set out in these instruments provides a clear roadmap for preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the world of work.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child:** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children⁵³.

While not all countries have ratified these conventions (or aligned with their norms and standards), they represent international good practice and can provide guidance on what your company could do.

National laws that may apply include:

- Constitutional provisions. Many countries have specific provisions involving protecting human rights and non-discrimination. It should be noted that disadvantage is often based on social identity, which may be across dimensions such as gender, age, location, occupation, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), among other factors.
- Specific laws prohibiting:
 - › Workplace bullying
 - › (Workplace) sexual harassment

⁵² At least 155 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, and 140 have legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace. But challenges remain in enforcing these laws, limiting women and girls' access to safety and justice.

⁵³ While you should not employ child labor, children may be affected by your company's activities in your areas of operations.

- › Domestic violence
- › Sexual assault
- › Sex with minors
- Most countries also have industrial relations laws or occupational health and safety laws that may mandate employers' duty of care and outline procedures for reporting, resolving, and monitoring GBVH cases. Some countries also have laws or regulations that mandate that employers provide training to select or all staff to prevent and respond to GBVH.
- While it is important that your policies and procedures are consistent with national laws, you may choose to exceed the mandated minimum to bring your company in line with good practice. The best and most succinct place to start is the ILO Convention and Recommendation (mentioned above).

Many companies may also have contractual obligations about preventing and mitigating GBVH involving buyers, investors⁵⁴, or lead contractors. For detailed information and advice, seek help from:

- Your legal department or legal experts in-country specializing in GBVH
- Department of Labor or equivalent in your country
- GBVH advocacy organization or service providers⁵⁵ in your country. Not all GBVH organizations specialize in workplace-related GBVH, so shop around. Some important aspects to pay attention to when selecting an organization include expertise in:
 - › GBVH related to the workplace
 - › Legal obligations in the countries that your company operates in
 - › Knowledge of international good practice including a survivor-centered approach
 - › An established and verifiable track record in providing advice to the private sector

Remember that you do not need to become an expert in GBVH for your company to respond. Your job is to focus on company initiatives and refer to experts when needed. You can draw on expertise that already exists.

You can find out more about the laws that may apply to your company from the following resources:

- [UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women](#): A 'one-stop shop' for information on prevalence and measures undertaken by governments to address violence against women.

⁵⁴ IFC's [Environmental and Social Performance Standards](#) define IFC clients' responsibilities for managing their environmental and social risks. The 2012 edition of IFC's Sustainability Framework, which includes the Performance Standards, applies to all investment and advisory clients whose projects go through IFC's initial credit review process after 1 January 2012. Various Performance Standards exist at the IFC that have relevance for the gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) and infrastructure nexus.

⁵⁵ GBVH service providers are entities that can provide access to services—health, psychosocial, legal/security, safehouse/shelter, livelihood to survivors.

- [The OECD Social Institutions & Gender Index \(SIGI\)](#): Cross-country measure of discrimination against women in social institutions through formal and informal laws, social norms, and practices across 180 countries.
- [World Bank Group Women, Business, and the Law](#): Data on the laws and regulations that restrict women's economic opportunities in 190 economies, including violence.
- [World Bank Compendium of International and National Legal Frameworks](#): Provides a set of practical tools that not only inform about existing laws, but also provide a baseline to help countries identify opportunities to intensify their action on GBVH.

BOX 4E | Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives Addressing GBVH

Many companies have also made commitments to address GBVH through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives at a global, country, or community level. Examples of contractual or CSR initiatives to address GBVH include:

- **Waka Mere:** Fifteen of the largest companies in the Solomon Islands committed to measures to promote gender equality in the workplace. Through the Waka Mere Commitment to Action, they work toward at least one of three goals: promote more women in leadership, build respectful and supportive workplaces, and increase opportunities for women in jobs traditionally held by men.
- **CARE and Diageo:** CARE International and Diageo plc, a multinational beverage company operating in more than 180 countries, requires suppliers to specifically prohibit harassment and is now developing an improved global standard and Dignity at Work policies across its operations (based on ILO Convention 190). For instance, among its smallholder farmer supply chain, Diageo is now analyzing the experiences of both male and female barley farmers in Ethiopia, including looking at issues of GBVH in farming and crop harvest as well as bringing goods to market (e.g., risks in utilizing transport, etc.).
- **Primark:** To respond and prevent GBVH in its suppliers' factories, Primark is developing programs to support more gender-friendly workplaces by building a network of partners and focusing on the use of workplace committees as one way to report, investigate, and deal with GBVH. In India, staff across 13 factories were trained on GBVH and their participation in their factory's internal complaints committee was encouraged.

Sources: IFC, [Waka Mere Commitment to Action](#), Business Fights Poverty, "[CARE and Diageo: Tackling Violence and Harassment at Work](#)," 2018; Associated British Foods, "[Tackling Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in the Workplace](#)," 2021.

TOOL 4.5

Service Provider Guidelines

- » **GOAL:** Identifies what supports are available in the locations your business operates
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Community Engagement, Employee Assistance, Internal Communications, Human Resources, Legal, Medical, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Gender Focal Points, Security, and Unions

How to use this resource or tool: Companies need to know how to support their employees who have experienced gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), and often this means working with service providers. This tool provides a structure to compile key information about support services for survivors of GBVH, which can include medical, psychosocial, legal/security, safehouse/shelter, and livelihood support. It is important to have this information on hand—especially in case of emergencies.

This document outlines different survivor support needs that may be necessary and outlines principles that should guide how you screen potential service providers based on survivor needs and quality of service provision. For guidance on how to select key staff to be focal points for GBVH and work together as a contact team, see [TOOL 4.10](#).

Companies do not need to always start from scratch, as many countries already have established referral pathways⁵⁶ in place to certain service providers (see, for example, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs⁵⁷). These providers can be used if the sources are trusted and verifiable.

Different situations will require different responses: The company's responses need to be guided by your duty of care and the other legal obligations outlined in [TOOL 4.4](#). They also must respond to survivors' needs. Consent of the survivor is key for follow-up actions, which depend on the nature of the incident. Non-physical forms of workplace bullying and harassment may require counseling, while physical or sexual assault may require medical attention. Many forms of violence and harassment connected to the workplace may be criminal and as such, you may want to refer survivors to legal assistance and/or police. If there is an immediate threat of violence, you may want to refer the survivor to the police for police protection. If the survivor is scared and the current accommodation is unsafe, then a safehouse and shelter⁵⁸ may need to be considered. Legal recourse may also need to be sought, or a restraining order put in place by police or courts.

⁵⁶ GBV Referral Pathway provides information to contact points on GBVH/or survivors with a one-stop guide that includes all services presently being offered in a country or area.

⁵⁷ See UN OCHA Bahama's [Referral Pathway for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence](#).

⁵⁸ A safehouse provides immediate security, temporary refuge, and support to GBV survivors escaping violent or abusive situations. This resource (if available) can be provided to survivors (and often their children) who are in imminent danger. Admission is usually contingent on specific criteria. Safehouses are usually in undisclosed and/or protected places to protect the safety of survivors.

Below is a brief summary of the different focus areas of service providers and what they should provide:

Case management:

What is it: GBVH case management is a structured and supportive method for providing help to a survivor who may need to access more than one service.

Who needs it: Survivors of GBVH who need information about all the support options available to them so they can address the issues and problems facing them.

Key Considerations: GBVH case management is important because of the range of services a survivor may need. It is important that this care is coordinated and that survivors are not re-traumatized (e.g., by repeating details of the incident). See the example of Bel isi PNG in Box 4F.

Medical:

What is it: Medical services encompass provision for a survivor's health and wellbeing by a doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professionals after an incident of GBVH. Medical services can also play a pivotal role in the identification and prevention of GBVH and evidence provision in legal cases.

Who needs it: Survivors may require medical attention in the case of physical or sexual assault.

Key Considerations: It is important to remember the window for survivors to receive treatment for certain medical treatments and health services. For example, health facilities can provide treatment to prevent HIV within 72 hours of an incident and prevent unwanted pregnancy within 120 hours of an incident. It is essential that medical care is trauma-informed (see the principles in **BOX 4I**).

Psychosocial:

What is it: Psychosocial support is usually provided by GBVH specialist organizations and involves providing emotional and psychological care to a survivor of GBVH. Psychosocial support builds on survivors' capacities and positive coping mechanisms by focusing on the strengths and resources of the survivor.

Who needs it: Survivors who have emotional, social, mental, and spiritual needs during (e.g., if they are currently in a domestic violence relationship) or after an incident of GBVH may need psychosocial support.

Key considerations: Both survivors of non-physical and physical forms of GBVH can benefit from psychosocial support. Attention needs to be paid to cultural norms around accessing psychosocial support such as counseling in different contexts.

Police and Law Enforcement:

What is it: The police are often the first responders or point of contact in GBVH cases. They are responsible for gathering evidence, ensuring survivors obtain medical treatment, and finding them suitable alternative accommodation (when needed).

Who needs it: Survivors who want to formally report an incident, capture evidence, and access specialist support including a range of protection measures (if there is an imminent threat of harm) need access to the police and law enforcement. Positive initial contact with police is crucial for survivors of violence as they navigate the justice system.

Key considerations: In many countries, specialized police units or specially trained officers support survivors (e.g., family violence, child protection, and sexual offenses units). However, care should be taken to ensure police and law enforcement are trained in survivor-centered approaches (see details of the principles in **BOX 4I**) and do not engage in victim blaming or forced reconciliation between the parties.

Legal:

What is it: Legal (aid)⁵⁹ organizations provide professional and legal services to help survivors understand their rights, secure protection orders (e.g., apprehended violence order⁶⁰ or restraining order), and pursue criminal cases. Some legal aid organizations also focus on family law, which is a legal practice area that includes issues involving family relationships such as divorce, child custody, and child maintenance.

Who needs it: Survivors may have multiple legal challenges associated with their abusive situation, and therefore need to have access to the appropriate legal services required to secure and maintain their (and their families') safety and wellbeing.

Key considerations: In many countries, legal provisions to protect survivors are insufficient. Legal organizations can interact with key actors within the justice system in order to build capacity, develop laws, and improve enforcement of existing GBVH laws.

Security:

What is it: Many companies use the services of private security companies to provide armed or unarmed security services and expertise to watch, secure, or guard business premises, compounds, transport, or other properties.

Who needs it: GBVH survivors who need additional safety may need support from company security services (e.g., screening for perpetrators at workplace entrances or accompaniment to their car at night).

Key considerations: Security staff should be trained in GBVH prevention and response. Care should be taken to ensure that the presence of security does not increase the risks of GBVH, as security forces have been implicated in perpetrating GBVH in some situations.⁶¹

⁵⁹ In some countries, survivors may be able to access legal aid organizations free of charge. In others, survivors may be charged fees to access services.

⁶⁰ An apprehended violence order is a court order issued to protect an individual who has a reasonable fear of violence or harassment from a specified person.

⁶¹ World Bank Group, [Environment and Social Framework \(ESF\) Good Practice Note on Gender-based Violence – English](#), 2018.

BOX 4F | Bel isi PNG Case Management and Safehouse Service

Bel isi PNG offers employees case management and safehouse services and provides business leaders with transformational tools to support change in the workplace and community. Bel isi PNG directly addresses the escalating cost and impact of family and sexual violence on companies. Its Case Management Centre is open weekly and the Safehouse operates 24 hours a day but will only accept clients through referrals from the Centre. For more information, visit the organization's [website](#).

Principles of Survivor Care

The following principles should guide survivor care from service providers.

- **Survivor-centered approach:** Seeks to empower the survivors by prioritizing their rights, needs, and wishes. It means ensuring that survivors have access to appropriate, accessible, and good quality services. This encourages employees to come forward and seek support because they know they can expect the service providers to take their experience seriously and respond to it ethically and fairly. There are three key principles to the survivor-centered approach: respect, confidentiality, and safety.⁶²
- **Best interest of the child:** Generally refers to an approach that decides what type of services, actions, and orders will best serve a child, as well as who is best suited to take care of a child.⁶³ It is akin to a survivor-centered approach that prioritizes the rights, needs, and wishes of the child but also takes into consideration the child's developmental stage.
- **Trauma-informed care:** Focuses on not re-traumatizing the survivor by ensuring that the physical environment, processes, and interactions are welcoming and do not require the survivor to relive the trauma repeatedly (e.g., through having to recount abuse multiple times).
- **Assets-based approach:** Focuses on the survivor's strengths instead of trying to identify deficits. This approach may include asking the survivor about existing support networks and helping them to utilize these networks. This principle promotes the self-esteem and coping abilities of individuals and communities.

⁶² For more information, see the [definition of the survivor-centered approach](#) at the UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

⁶³ For more information on the best interest of the child, see [Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child](#). Geneva, Switzerland: UNHCR, 2008.

Strategies to Find Good Service Providers

Globally, many service providers are developing GBVH services that are survivor centered and in the best interest of the child. Often, services will have a specialist unit that can provide better responses. When searching for service providers in the countries where your company operates, ask others about the quality of the services available. Good sources of information in-country may include ministries of women's affairs, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Certain groups require specialist service (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, and agender (LGBTQIA). Survivors with a disability may also need support from specialized service providers. It should also be noted that certain factors that increase the risk of experiencing violence include race, income, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability and therefore special care may need to be taken to protect survivors from perpetrators in such cases.

Guiding Questions to Identify Service Providers

The questions below provide an initial guide for information to gather on-site or in-country from GBVH service providers.

- Name of service provider?
- What services do they offer?
- Who do they offer services to? Note: some services may only offer services to women and children, while some survivors such as LGBTQIA populations may need specialist services.
- Can a person refer themselves, or is there a referral process?
- What is the best way to contact the service provider? What is their phone number and address?
- If it is a crisis or emergency, can they give immediate assistance?
- What is their area of operation/coverage?
- Are the staff well-trained, appropriately hired (for their gender-equitable views and non-violent behavior), and adequately supervised and supported?
- Does the service demonstrate the principles of survivor care?

TOOL 4.6

Gender Smart Safety

- » **GOAL:** Provides an overview of gender smart safety and a case study
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Occupational Health and Safety, Human Resources, Medical and Legal

What is Gender Smart Safety: Gender smart safety is a way of assessing and responding to occupational health and safety risks with a gender lens.

Business Rationale: Gender Smart Safety in a workplace helps ensure all work tasks are safer for all employees. It helps employers identify specific hazards faced by employees of all genders who are carrying out specific work tasks.

Recognizing gender differences in the workforce is essential to ensure the safety and health of all genders. These differences should be considered when developing policies for addressing occupational health and safety (OHS) hazards in the workplace, including gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).^{64,65} For instance, in the past the effects of occupational safety and health hazards on women were misjudged, because the standards and exposure limits to hazardous substances were created based on male populations and laboratory tests.⁶⁶ Other examples include the physical demands of heavy work, the ergonomic design of workplaces, and the impact of the length of the working day on those with caring responsibilities.^{67,68,69} Today, there is growing recognition of sex and gender differences in terms of occupational health and safety hazards in the workplace, including GBVH.

Gender Smart Safety challenges cultural norms in respect to how different genders should approach work tasks and focuses on actual exposure to hazards and perceptions of risk as experienced by all genders. Companies have a unique opportunity to integrate universal design features in the workplace by building physical, learning, and work environments that are usable by a wide range of people, regardless of gender, age, size, or disability status. For example, universal design features at work could include automated doors, sloped entrances, broad passages, larger fonts for signs, and mitigating GBVH risk through, for instance, better lighting and security. While universal design promotes access for individuals with disabilities, it also benefits others in the workplace.

⁶⁴ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, [Summary Annual Report 2014](#).

⁶⁵ ILO, [Safety and health at work](#).

⁶⁶ F. Valentina, [Women workers and gender issues on occupational safety and health](#), 2010.

⁶⁷ V. Forestieri, Information note on Women Workers and Gender Issues on Occupational Safety and Health. Geneva: ILO, SafeWork, 2000.

⁶⁸ C. Peters and P. Demers, [Gender Differences in Occupational Exposure Assessment for a National Surveillance Project](#). *Epidemiology*, 2019.

⁶⁹ E. Sorrentino, V. Rosa, D. Montwrosso, and A.M. Giammariolos, [Gender issues on occupational safety and health](#). *Annali dell'Istituto superiore di sanita*, 2016.

The result of a focus on Gender Smart Safety is that employers can increase the number of employees who can carry out specific work tasks safely. They benefit from improved performance and productivity because they have a physically and emotionally safer workforce, which can enhance staff retention and a company's reputation.

BOX 4G | Improving Jobs for Women in Papua New Guinea

The Gender Smart Safety Program helps companies identify risks and improve safety for women workers in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The program was developed by the Business Coalition for Women, with the support of IFC. Three companies with operations in PNG—Oil Search, St Barbara (mining), and New Britain Palm Oil—participated in the initiative. The main GBVH issues related to women's safety in the workplace included the threat of violence, including sexual harassment; workplace bullying in the form of gossiping causing emotional harm and distracting women from focusing safely on their tasks; and travel to and from work when waiting for or travelling on company transport.

Actions taken to address GBVH risks included introducing fixed nightshift signs enabling female housekeepers identify when rooms were occupied by men; providing the option to employees to wear trousers instead of skirts at work; adding trained gender-smart contact officers to provide advice and a secure point of contact to report harassment; encouraging discussion around harmful gossip as an interruption to teamwork and productivity; and dedicated seats for females or families in company transportation to and from work. One company's response to its gender-smart safety audit meant that the percentage of women who felt happy about their safety at work rose by 18 percent. For further support on gender smart safety, contact IFC's [Gender and Economic Inclusion Group](#).

TOOL 4.7

Respectful Workplaces Staff Engagement Survey

- » **GOAL:** Includes sample questions that can be included in employee engagement surveys
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources and Unions

Employee Engagement Surveys aim to measure and assess how motivated and engaged your employees are to perform their best at work. From these surveys, you can gain insight into employees' thoughts and attitudes towards their work and the overall environment, including gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).

You may want to include a few questions about GBVH to assess the extent of the issue and to gauge if workplace responses are effective. Do not include detailed questions about GBVH in your engagement survey, as this may cause employees trauma and/or may put employees at greater risk. If your company wants to collect more detailed information about GBVH, see the terms of reference (ToR) to hire an expert to conduct interviews or survey employees in [TOOL 4.8](#) and additional tips for conducting surveys in Box 4H.

Sample Questions for Engagement Surveys:

1. In the past four weeks, I felt distracted, tired, or unwell at work because of (respond yes if one or more apply)
 - A) Workplace bullying which includes jokes, sabotaging a person's work, and yelling
 - B) Workplace sexual harassment, which includes staring or leering, unwelcome touching, patting, or kissing
 - C) Problems at home

Response: Yes/No

This question will help you to assess the impact of different forms of GBVH on employees while minimizing the need for disclosure of incident details by survivors. It's recommended that all surveys address bullying and sexual harassment and provide examples as above. Companies that are providing support to employees affected by domestic violence should also include the question about problems at home. Note that the question on problems at home has been designed to minimize retraumatizing survivors by avoiding graphic descriptions and reduce that chances of retaliation if employees are completing the survey from home. See definitions of the different forms of GBVH in Box 4A or see the Respectful Workplaces Sample Policy in [TOOL 4.12](#).

2. If I saw, heard about, or experienced bullying or sexual harassment at this workplace (and had problems at home), I would feel comfortable asking a company representative for help.

Response: Yes/No

This question will help you to assess how comfortable employees are seeking help and how much trust they place in the company's disclosure management process.

3. Incidents of bullying or sexual harassment at this workplace (and problems at home) are taken seriously and responded to with sufficient support and in a timely manner.

Response: Yes/No

This question will help you to assess how employees feel about your company's commitment to responding to GBVH.

BOX 4H | Tips on Conducting Workplace Staff Engagement Surveys on GBVH and Respectful Workplaces

Tip: Encourage staff to answer the questions as honestly as they can, as their responses will help the company to build a respectful and supportive workplace.

Confidentiality: Participants should not provide their names or other identifying details. Any information that a staff member may provide as part of the survey that could identify them must be kept confidential. Confidential information should only be disclosed if there is a risk to a staff member's safety.

Support services: Service provider details should be provided in case staff filling out the survey feel like they need GBVH services. For more information on service providers, see [TOOL 4.5](#).

Communication about the survey and results: You should communicate with employees to engage them in the staff engagement survey. Use multiple channels, including CEO messaging, staff e-mails or company's social media posts, posters, screensavers, and discussions in staff meetings. Once the survey is complete, you should share the results of the survey and next steps with employees to build engagement. An aggregate summary of the results of this survey should be distributed by the company to all staff.

TOOL 4.8

Terms of Reference for GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Assessment

- » **GOAL:** Provides a sample ToR for independent specialists to conduct employee interviews and surveys about GBVH
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources and Gender Focal Points

The purpose of the sample terms of reference (ToR) below is to recruit a specialist on gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) and work to undertake an assessment of the impact of GBVH on your business, employees, and/or the communities in which your company operates and to make recommendations so that your company can improve its responses to GBVH.

It is generally recommended that you start with addressing bullying and sexual harassment and take steps to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace. Once you have made progress on these issues, you will have built the corporate culture that will allow you to support your employees further by responding to domestic or sexual violence that may occur outside the workplace. Each company using this sample ToR should assess what stage they are in terms of responding to GBVH.

This assessment must be carried out by an individual or firm that has demonstrated experience in GBVH principles, including the survivor-centered approach, best interest of the child, trauma-informed care, and assets-based approach.⁷⁰ Individuals or firms that do not follow these principles could cause harm by retraumatizing survivors or putting employees and themselves at risk of retaliation.⁷¹ An external expert can also help with impartiality at the company level.

The individual or firm should also have demonstrated experience in workplace issues so the recommendations align with relevant employment laws and practices. If a company does not have the resources to hire a GBVH expert, it could consider seeking guidance from reputable online resources on next steps.

Note: An initial GBVH and respectful workplaces assessment can help companies understand the different kinds of GBVH affecting employees and impacting community members, employee/community members' knowledge and attitudes towards GBVH, and help-seeking behaviors. It usually allows companies to develop necessary training, support, or referral services for staff and communities. Certain individuals or firm will be able to offer technical advisory throughout this process and use the data and information from GBVH and respectful workplaces assessments to advise on company actions beyond the initial assessment stage.

⁷⁰ For more information on these principles, see the service provider guidelines in [TOOL 4.5](#).

⁷¹ For more information on ensuring that an assessment is conducted safely and ethically, see [WHO Guidelines on Conducting Research on Violence Against Women](#).

Sample Terms of Reference for External Expert

Overview

GBVH is experienced in workplaces around the world. Global studies have documented the costs to business due to disrespectful behaviors in workplaces. GBVH occurring on the job can create a hostile work environment, causing employees stress, anxiety, and fear. It can also disrupt concentration, which can lower productivity and/or increase turnover. Violence that occurs away from the worksite such as domestic and family violence can also affect employee safety and wellbeing and impact job performance. GBVH has financial consequences for individuals and businesses as it can increase health and safety risks, reduce employee engagement and productivity, increase absenteeism and presenteeism⁷², turnover of employees, and damage companies' public image, business reputation, and social license to operate.

Anyone can experience GBVH, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or intersex status. While men also experience forms of GBVH such as sexual harassment in the workplace, it is more often experienced by women and children. Other factors that increase the risk of experiencing violence include race, income, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

[*Company name*] is committed to a respectful workplace free of GBVH and is supportive of our employees and community members who may have experienced GBVH connected to the workplace. [*Company*] is conducting an assessment to understand the different kinds of GBVH affecting employees and impacting community members, employee/community members' knowledge and attitudes towards GBVH, and help-seeking behaviors so that we can develop necessary training, support, or referral services for staff and communities.

Objective

The aim of this ToR is to better understand:

- The different kinds of GBVH that happen in workplaces in [*insert country*] and [*Company name*] specifically,
- The policies and procedures at the country and company level on GBVH,
- The types of people who may be at risk,
- What managers and workers think about these issues,
- The responses currently available through the company and the community, and employee and community members' perceptions about these responses, and
- What else might help the company better manage these issues both internally and at the community level.

⁷² Where staff have compromised productivity due to GBVH and Respectful Workplaces issues.

The assessment should inform recommendations that will strengthen [company name]'s response to GBVH. You may want to consider improvements in:

- Policies
- Raising awareness about GBVH and addressing victim blaming
- Responding to GBVH in a survivor-centered, best interest of the child, trauma-informed, assets-based way, including how to report/receive disclosures, how to conduct investigations, survivor support, and proportionate disciplinary action
- Bystander action
- Monitoring and evaluation, including employee feedback through employee engagement survey⁷³.

Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive assessment exploring (but not limited to) the topics above.⁷⁴

Consultants will be expected to undertake this assessment through surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews, and by reviewing policies, procedures, and data. Consultants should not ask employees about their personal experiences of GBVH.

Consultants must maintain confidentiality (unless the incident warrants escalation) and ensure discussions are handled with appropriate concerns for survivors' rights, needs, and wishes.

All findings should be kept strictly confidential. Individual experiences should not be included in the findings directly and no individuals should be forced to disclose experiences of GBVH. If individual cases are disclosed and need to be escalated, there should be a mechanism in place to handle the disclosure, provide help to the survivor, and protect the confidentiality of the complainant unless staff wish to publicly report their experience.

Quality of Research

The quality of GBVH research by the consultant and data collection is determined by the extent to which data collection procedures are put in place and the principles of do no harm, informed consent, and anonymity are incorporated.⁷⁵ A range of mechanisms need to be put in place by the consultant to ensure and assess the quality of data collected. This includes:

- The use of a standardized and detailed training package for enumerators (if used).

⁷³ See [TOOL 4.7](#) for questions on employee engagement surveys.

⁷⁴ Depending on the size of the company and resources available, specify the assessment range. Decide whether to survey all employees or just a sample and define a sampling methodology. Confidentiality is key.

⁷⁵ M. Ellsberg and L. Heise, [Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists](#). Washington DC: World Health Organization, 2005.

- Clear explanations of the principles that consultants, interviewers, and enumerators must follow to ensure the research does no harm.
- Close supervision of interviewers during data collection, including interview observation, spot checks on data collected, etc.
- Quality control of data input, analysis, and peer review.
- Ensure sufficient self-care and debriefings for consultants, interviewers, and enumerators.⁷⁶

Research and data collection processes need to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be aware that during the research process information may be revealed regarding personal experiences with GBVH.
- Make it clear to participants that information shared in the context of the assessment will be kept anonymous and confidential (unless the incident warrants escalation).
- The consultant must know how to identify trauma and have information available to refer individuals to service providers as needed.
- Include details about service providers to interview participants. At a minimum, consultants have an ethical obligation to provide a respondent with information or services that can help their situation.
- Escalation processes must be established prior to the beginning of any research activities that clearly outlines what should happen if employees, community members, researchers, or other stakeholders are at imminent risk of serious harm due to workplace violence and harassment connected to the company. The processes must respect confidentiality, be survivor-centered/in the best interest of the child and trauma informed. The guidelines should include who to contact and in what timeframes.

Escalation procedure for situations where there is imminent risk of serious harm include:

- Researchers will immediately report any serious safety issue to the company key contact.
- The company key contact will collect any relevant information related to the serious safety issue and report to the management team (via email).
- The company key contact will convene a virtual meeting of the management team (by video or phone conference) within 24 hours of receiving the report.
- The virtual meeting will review the case and determine a course of action.

⁷⁶ USAID, [How to Embed Self- and Collective Care in Organizations Addressing Gender-Based Violence](#), 2022.

- The company key contact will be responsible for implementing the decided course of action and reporting back to the management team.
- The company key contact will prepare a confidential incident report, including actions taken and final outcomes, to be shared with the management team and kept on record.

Deliverables

- Study methodology and questions to be posed to staff, including safety and ethical considerations that will be applied (see above requirements), and policies and data to be reviewed.
- Draft report
- Final report with key recommendations for company action.

It is generally recommended that you start with addressing bullying and sexual harassment and take steps to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace. Once you have made progress on these issues, you will have built the corporate culture that will allow you to support your employees further by responding to domestic or sexual violence that may occur outside the workplace.

ADDRESS: TOOLS 4.9–4.14

Based on the understanding developed from the ‘Assess’ tools, the ‘Address’ tools empower companies to take action on gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) and build a respectful workplace. To avoid further harm, all activities should be based on a survivor-centered approach which, in turn, is based on the principles of respect, confidentiality, and safety (see **BOX 4I**, below). Here are the steps to follow:

- **Ensure Leadership Commitment.** Leadership commitment is fundamental to addressing GBVH in your workplace. It must be gained before moving on to subsequent steps and actions, or the GBVH efforts will fail. Use the business case to engage your leadership team and gain commitment (see **TOOL 4.2**), and then as a first step publicly commit to address GBVH and role model respectful behavior. See the checklist in **TOOL 4.9**.
- **Identify and train key staff to be focal points for GBVH:** Choose staff that are respected in the workplace and have a role in employee well-being, along with at least one senior management sponsor. **TOOL 4.10** includes guidance on choosing staff. Once focal points have been selected, conduct training to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about GBVH. The training should include information on the business case to address GBVH, definitions and concepts of GBVH, and fundamentals about preventing GBVH, effectively supporting survivors, and managing perpetrators. **TOOL 4.11** offers more information on training focal points.
- **Develop GBVH and respectful workplaces policies and procedures:** Review and update existing policies, procedures, and reporting and investigation mechanisms (if any), or develop them if they do not exist. **TOOL 4.12** includes guidance and a sample policy.
- **Foster employee awareness:** Improve employee awareness about the company’s GBVH commitment and initiatives by providing training and everyday reminders, such as posters in the workplace. **TOOL 4.13** offers more information and materials.
- **Support focal points to drive progress and change:** Consider debriefing with other focal points or GBVH service providers or counselors, offering refresher training, providing acknowledgement and/or rewards, recognizing and celebrating their efforts and successes, and encouraging self-care. **TOOL 4.14** provides information and materials to support focal points.

BOX 4 | Key Principles to the Survivor-Centered Approach

One important way you can create a respectful workplace culture and remove barriers to disclosure is to apply a survivor-centered approach to managing disclosures when they arise. A survivor-centered approach seeks to empower the employee by prioritizing their rights, needs, and wishes.⁷⁷

This approach encourages employees to come forward and seek support because they know they can expect the company to take their incident seriously and respond to it ethically and fairly.

There are three key principles to the survivor-centered approach:

The first principle is respect—appreciating and valuing the complainant’s experiences, decisions, and actions. It is about active listening, being non-judgmental, and showing respect. It means the employee feels more trusting of the support from you. It encourages a complainant to tap into their strengths and resilience—and accept that they know what is best for them.

The second principle is confidentiality. The employee’s confidentiality should be respected and protected. Their informed consent is important to this process—this means making sure they understand your obligations if they proceed with a complaint. In certain contexts and circumstances, it may be a legal requirement to break confidentiality. **TOOL 4.12** provides further guidance on this issue.

The third principle is safety. This is important to ensure employees feel safe to seek help or make complaints, but also to maintain their safety and dignity once they do.

⁷⁷ Learn more about the [survivor-centered approach](#) at UN Women.

TOOL 4.9

Checklist for Publicly Committing to Address GBVH and Model Respectful Behavior

- » **GOAL:** Outlines steps leadership teams can take to demonstrate commitment to addressing GBVH
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Executive Board, Senior Management, and Human Resources

Model Behavior and Speak Out

Commitment to address gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) by a company's board of directors and senior management helps drive changes in company culture. It is important for leaders to model positive behavior and publicly demonstrate their company's commitment to preventing GBVH **to build confidence that complaints will be taken seriously.**

Steps a company can take include:

- **Board and CEO messaging and behavior** to raise awareness that GBVH is not tolerated and that workers who witness, hear about, or experience GBVH should raise concerns.
- **Recognition of workers** who make efforts to address GBVH and have adopted good practices. Company reward or praise in meetings, for example, can help encourage others to reflect on and change their behavior.
- **Establishing a senior manager tasked with driving change**, as well as other individuals who can play an important role in preventing and responding to GBVH. Focal points should demonstrate an interest in addressing GBVH (and have the right values), and the role should be included in their work program, with realistic time allocated to the role. Regular performance reviews should focus on role, tasks, and results. Regular reporting to the board can be explored to enhance accountability.
- **Agree how to communicate clear and consistent messages** about GBVH, both internally and externally with communities and service users. Simple, culturally sensitive messages about the behavior that is expected of employees are most effective (for example, "we support a safe and respectful workplace for all").

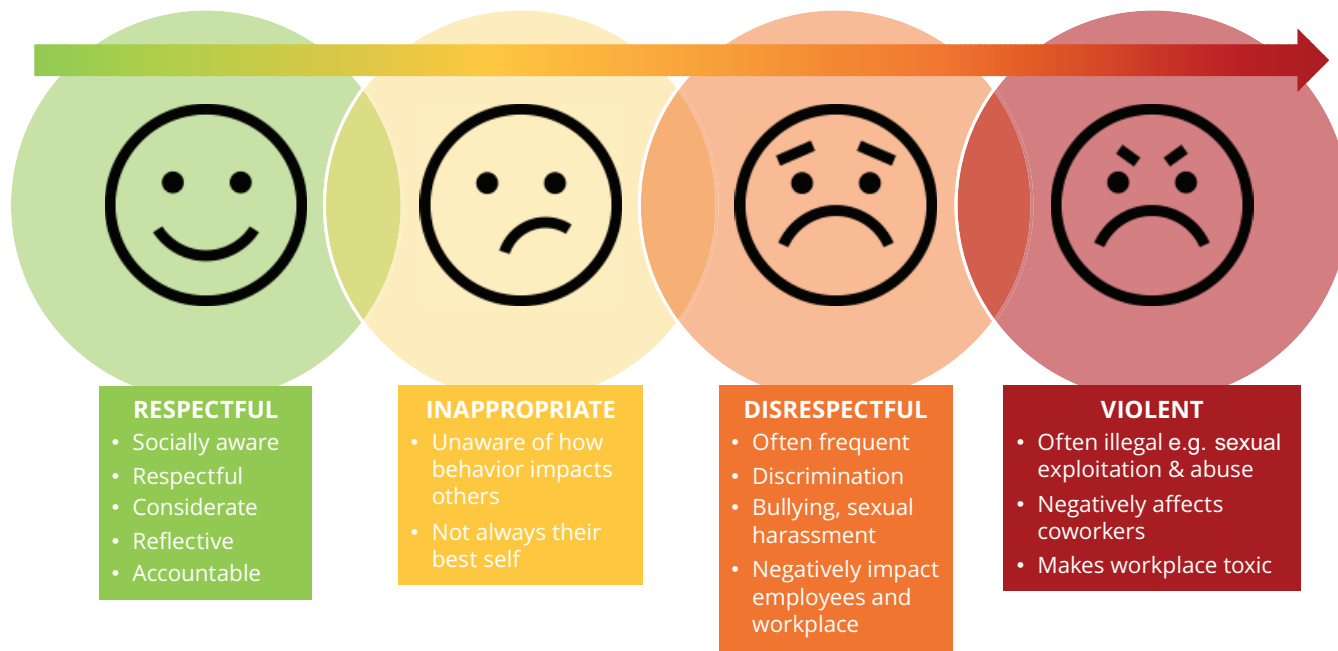
Encourage Workers to Think about Respectful Behavior on a Spectrum

Respectful workplaces operate in the GREEN, where a company's values are lived out, conflict is resolved respectfully, employees treat each other with respect, and when people make mistakes, they are reflective and hold themselves accountable. Any behavior that is not in the green zone of respectful behavior requires a response—but what

those responses look like varies depending on the context and level of the behavior and possibility for harm. Employees can shift across the spectrum in different contexts, so while they might appear to be in the green in some contexts, they may not be in others.

Encourage workers to reflect on their conduct and strengthen respectful behavior.

FIGURE 4A | Workplace Behavior Spectrum



Treat Employees as Allies

Treat your employees as allies when addressing GBVH. Employees will respond better if you ask them to help you prevent and respond to GBVH than if you treat them as potential perpetrators. Link your GBVH initiatives to company values.

Allyship in the workplace unites employees by increasing engagement and activating company values. Being an ally means contributing towards company action on GBVH and supporting survivors. Companies should encourage allyship as it can help destigmatize GBVH and protect survivors.

Encourage Bystander Action

Being an active bystander means being aware of when someone’s behavior is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to oppose it. A bystander is somebody that is not directly involved in the abuse as a perpetrator or survivor but witnesses or hears about the GBVH.

Bystander action can include diffusing a situation to protect someone from harm, supporting someone affected by GBVH by checking in on their wellbeing, speaking up and challenging a perpetrator of GBVH, or reporting the incident. It should be acknowledged that bystander action by staff can be more challenging if senior staff or management are the perpetrators. It is crucial that company leadership are role models of bystander action.

Different situations may require different responses, and it's important that employees prioritize safety when taking action. For further guidance on company policies and associated actions, see [TOOL 4.12](#).

Key steps a company can take to promote bystander action include:

- Introduce the idea of active bystanding and link it to company values (i.e., everyone in an organization has a responsibility to uphold company values).
- Emphasize that different situations will require different responses as an active bystander (e.g., report, speak up, support, and defuse).
- Stress to employees that active bystanding is not a step-by-step process. The response depends on the context, but if a situation is causing serious harm, then you should report it.

Support Employees

When issues are raised, employees should be encouraged to access support services (see [TOOL 4.5](#)), and complaints should be taken seriously and acted upon. If issues are not addressed, employees will lose trust in the company and will stop raising issues, impacting staff morale and wellbeing and the company bottom line. It is key that details of support services are kept up to date and shared with employees and community members. See guidelines on service providers in [TOOL 4.5](#). Bystanders who report incidents should be protected by similar principles applied to survivor care, including confidentiality.

Complaints should be taken seriously and acted upon. If issues are not addressed, employees will lose trust in the company and will stop raising issues, impacting staff morale and wellbeing and the company bottom line.

Important Things to Remember

Move Beyond Individual Action: Move away from messaging that overemphasizes individual action and focus instead on messaging that is inclusive (i.e., everyone in an organization has a responsibility to intervene when they witness or become aware of workplace violence taking place inside and outside the physical workplace).

Relying on singular employees or champions is inadvisable as it can undermine the long-term sustainability of GBVH actions that need to be embedded at a company level and upheld by employees collectively in order to have an impact. Overreliance on individual champions also threatens sustainability of actions against GBVH if certain staff rotate, leave a company, etc. Given that GBVH is rooted in gender inequality and unequal power which can leave people, especially women and girls, vulnerable to violence and harassment, it is key that female employees do not shoulder the responsibility of prevention and response.

Long Timeframes and Continued Action: Communicate that addressing GBVH is a long-term endeavor and that changes take time. Tell employees and community members what activities you plan to implement and when, and how these activities work together to address GBVH. This will help manage expectations on what can be achieved through each individual GBVH intervention. It is also critical to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for GBVH actions to ensure continued improvement and sustained progress.

Companies should note that it is normal if complaints increase in the short to medium term—this is a helpful indication that the actions taken are working. Companies should also steer away from zero tolerance approaches (see Box 4J).

Don't Perpetuate Stereotypes: It is important that we do not perpetuate stereotypes when we address GBVH. GBVH is a cause and consequence of gender inequality, and we should not reinforce norms that perpetuate gender inequality. **Steer away from language, images, or actions that suggest that men are stronger than women or need to protect women.**

Some people can be more vulnerable to violence based on race, income, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Any communication or action to address GBVH should not exacerbate vulnerabilities. For instance, GBVH communications should not describe one racial group as 'worse' than another. Stick with simple culturally sensitive messages about the behavior that is expected of employees.

Training is Not a Silver Bullet: Training can be a powerful medium to increase people's knowledge or skills or to improve attitudes. However, many GBVH issues may need to be addressed by structural changes such as improving procedures, changing company culture that is not aligned with company values, or changing work practices that may expose employees to risk (e.g., not providing safe transportation to and from night shifts).

Stay Curious and Humble: Addressing GBVH in the workplace is a relatively new field. No one knows all the answers, and we need to learn together. Expect that while some initiatives may go better than expected, there will be some challenges. It's important to continuously learn from our actions. For more information, see the monitoring and evaluation guidance in [TOOL 4.15](#).

BOX 4J | Guidance on Zero Tolerance Approaches

A zero-tolerance approach to workplace violence and harassment may have unintended effects. Zero tolerance messaging often is interpreted to mean that only very serious incidents can be reported and acted upon. For instance, many people may not report sexually explicit jokes if they believe someone will be terminated. This can lead to underreporting and escalation, as employees may wait until they believe the situation is serious enough to report. Perpetrators of violence may also retaliate if they believe their employment may be terminated. In instances where the terminated employee is the sole family breadwinner, the family may be significantly adversely impacted by the company's action.

It may also be challenging to implement zero tolerance policies, especially in countries where there are high levels of GBVH, as it may lead to a large proportion of workers being terminated. It may be more useful to implement proportionate disciplinary action and limit termination of employment to the most serious cases.

TOOL 4.10

Identify Key Staff for GBVH Focal Points and Contact Team

- » **GOAL:** Offers guidance on selecting staff to serve as focal points
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Senior Management and Human Resources

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) focal points are designated company representatives who can act as the first point of contact for workplace GBVH issues. Ask focal points to work as a team (contact team) so that they can support each other in this role and to prevent overreliance on individuals.

Choose staff that are respected in the workplace. Include staff who have a role in employee and community wellbeing (e.g., community outreach, employee assistance programs, internal communications, HR, legal, medical, OHS, gender focal points, security, and unions).

The GBVH Focal Points/Contact Team can:

- Raise general awareness about workplace GBVH
- Respond to disclosures of violence and harassment in a survivor-centered way
- Support and coordinate employee access to available workplace and community support from the first point of contact to when they no longer require assistance
- Encourage and accept notification from employees about perpetrators in the workplace and appropriately escalate these allegations so that they can be investigated
- Identify, through participation in monitoring and evaluation activities, any barriers to accessing GBVH policies that employees may face, and address the barriers identified.

Diversity matters. Remember to include focal points of all genders so employees can be comfortable speaking about issues that they might not want to disclose to people of the same or other genders. Try to include employees that reflect the ethnic and religious diversity of the workforce. It may also be important to consider other elements of diversity and inclusion (e.g., diverse age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.).

Does seniority matter when choosing focal points? Levels of seniority are not important if the staff you choose are supported to fulfil their role. It is however important to include one senior management sponsor to help ensure management engagement and oversight of respectful workplaces initiatives. This sponsor should be a person with oversight of focal points and who can support them to undertake their duties in line with company GBVH commitments.

How many focal points should be on a contact team? It is important to have an adequate number of employees on the contact team so that all employees have access to a team member when required. The number of focal points needed will depend on the size of the company and its geographic spread⁷⁸. There should ideally be a focal point that can be accessed face to face by any employee at any time. The company should consider having focal points at each location and focal point on all shifts.

How do we choose our focal points? Management can nominate focal points (as long as staff can choose not to participate), call for expressions of interest, or hold elections.

Participation must be voluntary. Do not force staff to lead GBVH initiatives, as many people are affected by GBVH and may not want to be on the contact team. Do not ask people for reasons if they do not want to be on the contact team.

Key considerations:

1. It is important that the contact team is resourced to do its job well. Ensure that its members have paid time to undertake their focal point role, that their work program reflects their responsibilities, and that their responsibilities are also discussed and acknowledged in performance reviews.
2. Provide training and support so focal points feel confident in performing their duties. **TOOL 4.11** offers guidance on training GBVH focal points. Training should be led by experts (possibly external), and it should cover definitions and dynamics of workplace violence and harassment and build the focal points' skills to undertake their responsibilities (see above). Training must be based in a survivor-centered approach, as training that is not survivor-centered is likely to cause harm. Consider forming relationships with service providers such as counselors so that focal points have immediate access to support if needed. See **TOOL 4.5** for further guidance on selecting service providers.

⁷⁸ In small businesses, the functions of the contact team may be performed by a single focal point.

TOOL 4.11

Guidelines for GBVH Focal Point Training

- » **GOAL:** Provides guidance on training focal points
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources, Training and Development, and Union

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) focal points are designated company representatives who can act as the first point of contact for workplace GBVH issues. Ask focal points to work as a team (referred to as the contact team) so that they can support each other in this role. It is important that they receive training to build their knowledge and skills on workplace responses to GBVH so that they can undertake their roles effectively. Untrained focal points may cause serious harm because they may reinforce unhelpful norms, give incorrect advice, retraumatize survivors, or burn out due to a lack of boundaries.

The contact team training should:

1. Improve focal points' knowledge of:

- › GBVH, including definitions and examples. Training may focus on issues such as bullying and harassment, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse—with the specific content varying depending on the scope of your company's GBVH policy.
- › Drivers, dynamics, and impact of GBVH on the individual, business, and community.
- › Overview of context-specific issues around race, income, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability that can increase the risk of experiencing violence.
- › Survivor-centered approaches (see [BOX 4I](#)).
- › Laws relevant to GBVH in your jurisdiction.
- › Support and protective services available in the community for survivors and perpetrators of GBVH. See [TOOL 4.5](#) for more information on service providers.
- › The company's GBVH policy and practices (see [TOOL 4.12](#)).
- › Any mandatory reporting requirements.
- › Self-care (see guidelines for self-care in [TOOL 4.14](#)).

2. Improve focal points' attitudes about:

- › Gender stereotypes
- › Nondiscrimination
- › Minimization of violence
- › Victim-blaming attitudes
- › Pressure on survivors to disclose and/or formally report perpetrators⁷⁹

⁷⁹ For more information about why this is not good practice, see the survivor-centered approach guidance in [BOX 4I](#).

3. Improve focal points' skills to:

- › Communicate effectively about respectful workplaces
- › Respond to disclosures of GBVH in a survivor-centered way, including discussing options for the survivor and referring them to GBVH service providers
- › Investigate allegations of GBVH and to make recommendations to management (if focal points are also involved in investigations)⁸⁰
- › Establish appropriate boundaries and self-care (see [TOOL 4.14](#))
- › Undertake monitoring and evaluation activities (see [TOOL 4.15](#))

In any training focused on adults, it is important to recognize that adults benefit most from learning experiences that are problem-based and collaborative rather than just the provision of information. Embedding elements of these principles into training content (e.g., breakout groups, role play, question and answer sessions, and practical homework exercises) is key to ensuring the learning experiences are effective.

Consider engaging employees in short scenario-based training regularly to help them to develop the skills to raise issues if they witness, hear about, or experience workplace violence and harassment. All training should be led by experts and engagements should include meetings with relevant service providers.

It is recommended to conduct a pre-and post-training questionnaire capturing participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards addressing GBVH as a workplace issue. Companies may want to consider adding a follow-up survey six months later to track longer-term outcomes of training and identify any follow-up training needs.

⁸⁰ Training in investigating GBVH in a survivor-centered way should be provided to any focal points involved in investigations. All focal points may not need to receive this training.

TOOL 4.12

GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Guidelines and Sample Policy

- » **GOAL:** Offers guidance and examples of workplace policies, procedures, and reporting and investigation mechanisms
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Executive Board, Senior Management, and Human Resources

This Gender-Based Violence and Harassment (GBVH) and Respectful Workplaces Guidelines and Policy Sample can be used by businesses to create or revise policies to address workplace violence and harassment. The purpose of the sample policy below is to help companies make changes to existing policies or adopt a new policy to recognize the impact of GBVH on your business, employees, and/or the communities in which your company operates and to ensure company policy helps improve the responses to GBVH.

At a minimum, businesses need to ensure that they are meeting their obligations to provide a safe workplace. This means businesses will need to address **workplace bullying and sexual harassment** and take steps to **prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace**. Once the business has made progress on these issues, it will have built the corporate culture that will allow it to support employees further by responding to **domestic or sexual violence (DSV)** that may occur outside the workplace.

TIPS:

- *Treat employees as allies when addressing workplace violence and harassment. Employees will respond better if they are asked to help prevent and respond to workplace violence and harassment than if they are treated as potential perpetrators.*
- *Link GBVH and respectful workplaces initiatives to company values.*

This document contains a suggested structure for your GBVH and respectful workplaces policy, sample text, and tips.

A GBVH and Respectful Workplaces policy can be a standalone document or incorporated into existing policies, such as a HR Handbook. This sample policy should be customized to ensure that the workplace strategies suit the size and needs of each business. The tips in this document will help you to customize your policy.

Many companies already have codes of conduct, policies, or procedures in place to address workplace violence and harassment. Companies may have specific obligations around workplace violence and harassment under national law or to investors, buyers, or other stakeholders. This guidance should not displace existing company approaches, but can be used to review and revise them as needed. It is also important to raise awareness of these policies and procedures (see [TOOL 4.13](#)).

Purpose

The purpose of the GBVH and Respectful Workplaces policy is to ensure a respectful and safe working environment, free from all forms of workplace violence and harassment including workplace bullying and sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace. *[add if the policy covers domestic and sexual violence: and to develop a supportive workplace in which survivors of domestic and sexual violence (DSV) feel safe to come forward and seek support.]*

Workplace violence and harassment are unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances by anyone employed by or associated with the company. Cases will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and according to the principle of proportionality.

The company is committed to maintaining a work environment that demands respect for the dignity of individuals, and where everyone feels comfortable raising issues or concerns regardless of who the offender may be or what position they may hold in the company.

TIP: Update this section to reference company values and relevant existing workplace policies such as those addressing health, safety, and environment, and anti-discrimination.

Scope

This policy covers all employees, including:

- Full time, part time, casual, temporary, or permanent employees
- Executives and management
- Contract or consultant workers, and
- Volunteers, vocational and work experience placements, and apprentices.

This policy is not limited to the workplace or work hours and includes virtual work environments and interactions. This policy extends to all places and functions that are work related, including:

- Whenever or wherever employees may be because of their work duties, including during and after business hours, on-site or offsite, such as at conferences or work-related social functions, and employer-provided transportation
- Employee treatment of other employees, clients, and all people encountered during their work duties.

Employees who are harassed by third parties during their work, such as customers or clients, can also be supported by this policy.

TIPS:

- Update the scope of who is covered to reflect the company structure
- Add any other company obligations in relation to workplace violence. For instance, does the company have obligations to ensure that workplace violence and harassment are addressed in its contracting or supply chain?

Employee rights and responsibilities

All employees are entitled to:

- Work free from workplace violence and harassment
- The right to make an enquiry or complaint under this policy in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimized
- [Add if the policy covers DSV: The right to seek support if they are affected by DSV.]

All employees must:

- Complete relevant training on this policy
- Follow the standards of behavior outlined in this policy
- Offer support to people who experience workplace violence and harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint
- Avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures
- Treat others with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

Managers and supervisors must also:

- Model appropriate standards of behavior
- Take steps to educate and make staff aware of their obligations under this policy
- Intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behavior
- Act fairly to resolve issues and implement workplace behavioral standards, making sure relevant parties are heard
- Help resolve complaints informally if this is the preference of the survivor
- Refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to HR management for investigation
- Ensure those who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimized; extend similar protection to alleged perpetrator(s)

TIPS:

- *It is important that anyone who hears about, witnesses, or experiences workplace violence and harassment is encouraged to raise the issue. Consider bystander training for all employees and community members in the business' area of operation (see **TOOL 4.9**).*
- *All incidents of workplace violence and harassment, no matter how large or small or who is involved, require managers and supervisors to respond rapidly and appropriately.*

Definitions

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is unreasonable, and often repeated, behavior that undermines a person's health, safety, confidence, or dignity.

Examples of behaviors, whether intentional or unintentional, that may be workplace bullying include⁸¹:

- Abusive, insulting, or offensive language or comments that may reference, among other characteristics, race, religion, ethnicity, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, or class
- Unjustified criticism or complaints
- Aggressive and intimidating conduct
- Repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment that are unfair, unjust, and/or unreasonable
- Ridiculing, humiliating, or belittling a person
- Practical jokes or initiation
- Making fun of a person by referencing, among other attributes, a perceived or real disability, a physical or mental characteristic, their race or the color of their skin, their religion or a symbolic representation of their religion they are wearing, ethnicity, age, gender identity or sexual orientation, or class.
- Spreading gossip or malicious rumors about a person
- Deliberately excluding a person from work-related activities and social events
- Setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines without reasonable explanation
- Setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level
- Deliberately changing work arrangements to inconvenience a person
- Sabotaging a person's work by, for example:
 - › Denying access to supervision, consultation, or resources
 - › Withholding information or supplying incorrect information
 - › Hiding or destroying documents or equipment
 - › Not passing on messages, or
 - › Purposely doing something to get a person into trouble in other ways
- Interfering with a person's personal property.

⁸¹ From WorkSafe.qld.gov.au. For a definition of bullying, see WorkSafe Queensland's [definition](#) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) [Respect in the Workplace Policy \(Bullying and Harassment\)](#).

Not all behavior that makes a person feel upset or undervalued at work is workplace bullying. Differences of opinion and disagreements are generally not workplace bullying, however; in some cases, conflict that is not managed may escalate to the point where it becomes workplace bullying.

Workplace bullying does not include reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way by the person's employer in connection with the person's employment.

Reasonable management actions include, but are not limited to:

- Setting realistic and achievable performance goals, standards, and deadlines
- Fair and appropriate rostering and allocation of working hours
- Transferring a worker to another area or role for operational reasons
- Deciding not to select a worker for a promotion where a fair and transparent process is followed
- Informing a worker about unsatisfactory work performance in an honest, fair, and constructive way
- Informing a worker about unreasonable behavior in an objective and confidential way
- Implementing organizational change or restructuring, and
- Taking disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment where appropriate or justified in the circumstances.

TIP: *When training or raising awareness about the policy, it is important to provide examples of workplace bullying (and other forms of workplace violence and harassment) so employees understand what kinds of behaviors are unacceptable and should be reported.*

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which is offensive, humiliating, and intimidating.

Sexual harassment can take various forms. It can involve conduct such as:

- Staring or leering
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature
- Unwanted invitations for sex
- Persistent requests or forcing a person to go on a date
- Intrusive questions about a person's sexuality or body
- Unwanted sexual advances or requests via social networking sites

- Sending or making a person view sexually explicit content such as pictures, posters, screensavers, emails, internet sites, and social media messages
- Intrusive contact or conduct of a sexually suggestive nature, including outside of working hours, either in-person or via other means such as SMS or social media
- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against someone
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, patting, or kissing
- Sexual assault⁸²

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment—it does not have to be repeated.

Both men and women can experience sexual harassment at work, however, it is most commonly experienced by women.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment—**it does not have to be repeated.**

There are two types of sexual harassment in the workplace:⁸³

- Quid pro quo sexual harassment
- Intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment sexual harassment.

Quid pro quo sexual harassment reflects inappropriate use of power and occurs when some type of employment benefit is made (or perceived to be) contingent on sexual favors in some capacity. It includes requests for sexual favors, unwelcome advances, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when either of the following conditions is met:

- Agreeing to such request or conduct is made or perceived to be a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- The request or conduct is explicitly or implicitly used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual.

Usually, quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs between someone in a position of power and a subordinate.

Intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment sexual harassment occurs when there are frequent or pervasive unwanted sexual comments, advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

⁸² Defined as sexual activity with another person who does not consent. It is a violation of bodily integrity and sexual autonomy and is broader than narrower conceptions of "rape," especially because (a) it may be committed by other means than force or violence, and (b) it does not necessarily entail penetration.

⁸³ For more information, see U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [Policy Guidance on Current Issues of Sexual Harassment](#).

It is not usually deemed an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment if the activity in question was a single attempt at initiating a sexual or romantic relationship that was neither reciprocated nor repeated.

TIP: *It is important to differentiate quid pro quo sexual harassment from other forms of sexual harassment, as those that engage in this form of harassment are breaching the duty of care that they have towards their subordinates. Any proven cases of quid pro quo harassment warrant strong disciplinary action.*

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.⁸⁴

Sexual abuse is actual or threatened unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It also includes sexual relations with a child, in any context, defined as a human being below the age of 18 years.

Add if the policy covers domestic and sexual violence:

Domestic and Sexual Violence (DSV)

Domestic violence is conduct, or the threat of such conduct, committed by a person against another person with whom the offender is in a domestic relationship that constitutes physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse. It may consist of a single act or a number of acts that form part of a pattern of behavior, even though some or all of those acts when viewed in isolation appear to be minor or trivial.

A person is in a domestic relationship with another person if:

- they are or have been family members; or
- they are the parents of a child or are persons who have or have had parental responsibility together for a child; or
- they are or were in an engagement, courtship, or customary relationship, including an actual or perceived intimate or sexual relationship of any duration; or
- one person is a domestic worker in another person's household.

Family member includes all members of a person's family, whether related by blood, adoption, marriage, or custom.

Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion by any person regardless of their relationship to the survivor, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

⁸⁴ UNHCR, [What is sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment?](#)

Survivor means the person or persons adversely affected by DSV. Anyone can experience DSV, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or intersex status.

Perpetrator means the person or persons who commit, or threaten to commit, an act or acts of DSV.

TIP: Update the definition of domestic violence, domestic relationship, and family in accordance with the laws of the country. Note that you do not need to update the definitions of sexual violence, survivor, or perpetrator. If no law exists in your country, use the sample text.

Workplace violence and harassment complaints procedure

An employee who believes they or someone else may be experiencing workplace violence and harassment (including workplace bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation, or abuse connected to the workplace) should contact their supervisor, a designated company contact person [insert title—e.g., GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Contact Team or HR/contact details], or raise the issue through the anonymous reporting system [*insert online portal/web address/suggestion box*].

If an employee does not feel comfortable approaching their supervisor, for example because their supervisor is the alleged perpetrator or is related to the alleged perpetrator, the employee should report the incident to a contact person (who has been designated by the employer and equipped with the training and resources to respond appropriately) or through the anonymous reporting system.

The supervisor, designated contact person, and company are obliged to act upon the information in accordance with the procedures described in this policy.

TIPS:

- Reporting mechanisms should include multiple channels, informal, formal and/or online, and at least one anonymous way to report.
- Anonymous complaints may be more difficult to investigate and resolve if the complainant can't be interviewed. Accordingly, the company should encourage employees to report workplace violence and harassment to their supervisor or to a designated contact person to ensure an effective investigation.
- The business should publicize the policy and how to report workplace violence and harassment extensively (e.g., through team meetings, posters, on the intranet, etc.)
- Update this section with any external reporting mechanisms.

Workplace violence and harassment resolution procedure

The employee can request an informal resolution or formal investigation to resolve the complaint.

More severe forms of workplace violence and harassment such as quid pro quo harassment and physical or sexual assault may require a formal investigation and/or reporting to police.

Informal resolution

If the employee chooses to resolve the complaint informally, they will be given the opportunity to tell the person responsible that they find their behavior offensive and ask them to stop. The complainant may wish to ask a colleague, supervisor, or designated contact person to be present. If the complainant does not feel comfortable confronting the perpetrator, or if the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal investigation should be undertaken.

TIPS:

- *Informal resolutions can be encouraged for less severe conduct, but employees should always be given the option of a formal investigation.*
- *Disciplinary action cannot be taken without a formal investigation.*

Formal investigation

A formal investigation will be undertaken by a gender-balanced panel whose members have been trained to conduct investigations in a survivor-centered way. Larger organizations can hire a specialist or a firm.

Investigations should be conducted in a confidential manner and will protect the privacy of persons involved to the utmost extent possible (if consent has been obtained by the complainant).

This should include the following:

- Interview with the complainant as to the alleged event(s)
- The complainant should be given an opportunity to express their preferred outcome from complainant process, with the understanding that an alternative outcome may be deemed more suitable by the investigative team
- Interview with the respondent as to the alleged event(s)
- Interview with the respondent as to the alleged event(s)
- Interview with any witnesses or anyone else who may have any information regarding the complaint
- Review any evidence—for example, the complainant may have text messages that show evidence of bullying or sexual harassment, e-mails, social media, screenshots, CCTV.

Confidentiality must be fully maintained throughout the investigation process. To the greatest extent possible, no information regarding the complaint or the parties involved shall be provided to anyone outside of the investigation process without the approval of all parties involved.

If the complaint is about a criminal allegation or covered by a mandatory reporting requirement, the company may support the complainant and/or directly report the issue to the police or mandatory reporting body.

TIP: Update this section with any requirements from national labor codes, enterprise agreements, or other obligations, and with applicable criminal and mandatory reporting requirements.

Determining the outcome of a formal investigation

The investigative team should recommend the outcome of the formal investigation based on whether workplace violence and harassment occurred and the severity of the harassment.

The following factors can help determine whether the workplace violence and harassment occurred:

- Whether the conduct included any of the actions listed in the policy
- Whether the conduct was patently offensive
- Whether the conduct would have breached the dignity or respect of a reasonable person in the circumstances
- Whether the conduct is a criminal act such as physical assault, rape, or sexual contact with a minor.

The following factors can help determine the severity of the harassment:

- Whether the conduct was verbal, physical, or both
- How frequently the conduct was repeated
- Whether the alleged perpetrator was a coworker, a client, third party, or supervisor
- Whether others joined in perpetrating the violence or harassment
- Whether the violence or harassment was directed at more than one individual, and
- Whether the violence or harassment was directed towards a minor.

Whether or not any given behavior qualifies as workplace violence and harassment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the impact on an individual, consideration will also be given to whether the conduct created an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for coworkers of the survivor or members of the community.

In relation to sexual harassment, the intent of the perpetrator is not relevant. Statements like “I didn’t mean to harass” will not be considered. It is the impact of the behavior which is considered. When considering conflicting evidence as to whether conduct was welcome or unwelcome, the company will look at the totality of the circumstances, noting that just because someone does not object to inappropriate behavior at the time does not mean that they are consenting to the behavior.

The recommendations of the investigative team should be reviewed and a final outcome determined by the CEO or their nominee.

TIP: *Some jurisdictions and/or enterprise agreements require external review if an employee is to be terminated for misconduct. Check local laws and company obligations and update this section accordingly.*

Communicating the outcome of the investigation

Upon completing the investigation of a workplace violence and harassment complaint, the company will communicate its findings and intended actions to the complainant and alleged perpetrator.

Workplace violence and harassment is found to have occurred

Where workplace violence and harassment has been found to have occurred, the appropriate outcome will be focused on getting the perpetrator to cease the harassing behavior, taking proportionate disciplinary action and providing support to the complainant.

Outcomes include:

- Remediation between the complainant and the perpetrator and support for their reintegration into their respective roles within the workplace
- Disciplinary procedures as deemed appropriate given the severity of the behavior, which may include referral to counseling or training, reassignment, withholding of a promotion, temporary suspension without pay, final warning, termination, or other actions.⁸⁵

In all cases where harassment has been found to have occurred, support services or counseling will be made available to the complainant.

TIPS:

- *Disciplinary action should be proportionate to the impact of the harassment.*
- *The finding of any quid pro quo sexual harassment generally should automatically result in termination of the perpetrator, suspension without pay, or final warning.*

Workplace violence and harassment not determined/has not occurred

If the investigation cannot determine that workplace violence and harassment has occurred or determines that it did not occur, this finding will be communicated to the complainant in an appropriately sensitive manner.

⁸⁵ Some jurisdictions these measures may only be applicable with a formal investigation and a judicial decision.

If, after the investigation, it is found that the complainant has maliciously or recklessly made a false accusation, the complainant will be subject to sanctions. In such an event, the company will also take appropriate action to restore the reputation of the accused.

TIP: *The complainant should be provided with support services or counseling if needed, even if there was no finding of workplace violence and harassment. Support should also be provided to an alleged perpetrator who has been wrongly accused.*

Recordkeeping

In all cases and whatever the outcome following a formal investigation, a record of the complaint and the outcome will be recorded and stored in a secure centralized filing system. These files will be kept separate from employee files, however where any employee has been found to have committed workplace violence and harassment and breached this policy, a notation of that finding will be included in their personnel file.

TIPS:

- *The business may want to consider creating a procedure for recordkeeping that complies with any privacy obligations and details how online and hard copy records will be kept confidential.*
- *Some countries have national laws about recordkeeping in relation to sexual harassment. Update this section accordingly.*

Add if the policy covers DSV:

Support for employees affected by DSV

The company encourages any employee affected by DSV to seek support by disclosing the DSV to a member of the contact team [*insert title/contact details*]. These staff members have received training and will support you by referring you to support services within the community and accessing support under this policy.

Referral to support services

The company will assist employees affected by DSV to access available and appropriate support and protective services in the community, including medical and psychosocial support, counseling, emergency accommodation, police protection, and welfare services by facilitating contact with these services.

TIPS:

- *Companies may, if feasible, directly provide support and protective services.*
- *Update this section with names and contact details of internal and external support and protective services.*

Safety planning

To ensure the safety of employees and the workplace in general, the company, in consultation with the employee, will assess the risk of DSV to the employee and the workplace and make reasonable adjustments to the work schedule and work environment. In consultation with the employee, the company may undertake safety measures to avoid harassing contact, including but not limited to:

- Changing the employee's span of hours or pattern of hours and/or shift patterns
- Redesigning or changing the employee's duties
- Changing the employee's telephone number or email address
- Relocating the employee to another work site/ alternative premises
- Providing safe transportation to and from work for a specified period
- Supporting the employee to apply for a Protection Order or referring them to appropriate support; and
- Taking any other appropriate measure including those available under existing provisions for family friendly and flexible work arrangements.

TIP: Update this section to only include safety planning measures that the company can provide. The sample text above is only an indicative list.

Leave

An employee experiencing DSV can request paid special leave to attend medical or counseling appointments, legal proceedings, relocation to safe accommodation, and other activities related to DSV.

An employee who supports a person experiencing DSV may take sick leave, including but not limited to accompanying them to court or hospital, or to care for children or other dependents.

Employees who are employed in a casual capacity may request unpaid special leave or unpaid sick leave to undertake the activities described above.

The amount of leave provided will be determined by the individual's situation through consultation with the employee and the DSV contact team, and management where appropriate.

TIPS:

- Consider updating this section with details of how much leave the business will grant without requiring senior management signoff.
- Create a procedure for escalating leave requests in excess of standard provisions to management.

Other support

The company may, where feasible, provide financial and other support to survivors of DSV to access medical and psychosocial support, counseling, emergency accommodation, security, and welfare. These may include but are not limited to:

- No/low interest loans
- Salary advances
- Direct payment of medical costs
- Upfront payments for medical costs to be recouped from the employee's health insurance
- Providing or facilitating access to childcare
- Providing security upgrades to the employee's home, and
- Providing safe transportation to access support services or to and from accommodation.

TIP: Only include any supports that the company may provide in this section.

Evidentiary requirements

If the company requires proof of DSV, this may be provided in the form of a document—as agreed upon by the company and employee, and issued by the police, a court, doctor, district nurse, maternal and child health care nurse, family support center, counselor, member of the clergy, or lawyer—or a statutory declaration.

TIP: Providing evidence of DSV may create a barrier to disclosing DSV and asking for help. Keep evidentiary requirements to a minimum and update this section accordingly.

Perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence

If an employee is concerned that they will perpetrate DSV and voluntarily comes forward to seek assistance, the company will, if feasible, provide or facilitate counseling for the employee.

Provision of counseling will not prejudice the company's right to peruse disciplinary action against employees who commit DSV.

Any allegation of employees perpetrating DSV will be dealt with in accordance with the workplace violence and harassment complaints and resolution procedures described above.

TIPS:

- *If the employee affected by violence and alleged perpetrator are both employees at the business, the company will need to take steps to support the survivor of violence and manage the alleged perpetrator (providing or facilitating counseling and/or investigating and resolving the complaint and/or referral to police in consultation with the survivor). Undertake a risk analysis in consultation with the survivor and separate the survivor and the alleged perpetrator, if needed. Ensure that different contact team members support each employee to minimize the risk of bias.*

- *The company may not have jurisdiction to undertake investigations that do not have a connection to work. Seek legal advice if you are unsure.*
- *You may report criminal allegations to the police or other relevant statutory body but ensure that you consider the wishes of the survivor, regardless of whether he/she is an employee, to minimize the potential for further harm. Seek advice from a GBVH service provider if you are unsure.*
- *Always provide the contact details of support services and/or police to any complainant who alleges that an employee is perpetrating DSV.*

Confidentiality

The company is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of complaints and investigations about workplace violence and harassment [add if the policy covers DSV: and disclosures about DSV].

Information about workplace violence and harassment will only be shared with the consent of the complainant [add if the policy covers DSV: or the employee who discloses DSV], unless a breach of confidentiality is necessary to protect the employee or another person or company from serious harm, or where required by law.

The company will take disciplinary action, including and up to dismissal, against those who breach confidentiality.

TIPS:

- *Train the contact team to maintain confidentiality, including consequences for breaching confidentiality.*
- *Mark all documents about workplace violence and harassment as strictly confidential with a warning that a breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action.*
- *Store all documents about workplace violence and harassment securely.*

Protection against reprisals

An employee will not be discriminated against on the basis of reporting or disclosing workplace violence and harassment, or experience or perceived experience of workplace violence and harassment.

Reporting of any alleged workplace violence and harassment will not have any impact on employees' employment or promotion prospects with the company. Employees who make a complaint under this policy will be protected against any retaliation by the alleged perpetrator or any other representative of the company.

The company will take all appropriate measures to minimize the risk of any victimization or reprisals against the complainant or the alleged perpetrator and shall ensure all staff, including management and supervisory staff, are informed that the company will not tolerate victimization or reprisals.

In the event management is made aware of any victimization or reprisal or threat of any victimization or reprisal taking place as a result of a complaint of workplace violence and harassment being lodged, appropriate support services shall be made available to the complainant and disciplinary action shall be taken against the perpetrator in accordance with the company procedures for breach of a company policy.

In the event management is made aware of any victimization or reprisal or threat of any victimization or reprisal taking place outside of the workplace, appropriate support services shall be made available to the complainant and, where appropriate, the act or threat may be reported to the police.

Escalation processes

If you are unsatisfied with the reporting processes under this policy, for example due to the unavailability or non-responsiveness of designated contact team members, or if you believe your confidentiality has been breached, or if your concern is not resolved, you can raise the issue through the company's grievance resolution process.

TIP: Update this section with details of the grievance process, including where to find the process and who to contact.

False accusations

False accusations of workplace violence and harassment can have serious effects on innocent persons. If, after the investigation, it is found that the complainant has maliciously or recklessly made a false accusation, the complainant will be subject to sanctions. In such an event, the company will also take appropriate action to restore the reputation of the accused.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is good practice to undertake regular and at least annual monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the policy to identify the uptake of provisions of this policy, any barriers to access, and any positive and negative impacts on individuals and the business. Possible monitoring indicators include:

- Number of focal points/contact team members by gender
- Number of focal points/contact team members who received training on Respectful Workplaces by gender
- Number of managers/supervisors who received training on Respectful Workplaces by gender
- Number of employees/consultants/contractors who received training on Respectful Workplaces by gender

- Number of disclosures/complaints received by type of workplace violence and harassment (workplace bullying, sexual harassment, DSV, SEA) by gender
- Number of and type of support provided by gender
- Number of complaints investigated by type of workplace violence and harassment (workplace bullying, sexual harassment, DSV, SEA) by gender
- Number of disclosures/complaints resolved by type of workplace violence and harassment (workplace bullying, sexual harassment, DSV, SEA) by gender

The monitoring and evaluation data should be used as a learning tool that consolidates the strengths of the implementation of this policy and identifies any challenges.

TIPS:

- *Some countries mandate certain data to be collected in relation to workplace violence and harassment, especially workplace sexual harassment. Update this section accordingly.*
- *If the company has implemented an effective Respectful Workplaces program, the number of disclosures/complaints should rise in the short to medium term and then reduce in the longer term when company culture has improved.*

TOOL 4.13

Raising Awareness and Communication of GBVH Commitments and Approaches

- » **GOAL:** Provides information on how to improve employee awareness through training and everyday reminders
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Executive Board, Senior Management, Communications and Public Relations, Human Resources, and Unions

It is important that employees are aware of what action they can take if they witness, hear about, or experience workplace violence and harassment. To support this, companies must clearly communicate to employees and communities about the actions they have taken around gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).

However, raising awareness and communicating about GBVH will also create expectations about a company's response, so GBVH-awareness raising initiatives should start only when the company is ready to accept disclosures and support survivors by completing the actions associated with **TOOLS 4.9–4.12** in this Tool Suite. In particular, it is important that the company has policies and procedures in place and the Respectful Workplaces focal points/contact team are well-trained and resourced.

Awareness-raising materials should be co-designed with select employees to ensure that they are appropriate, meaningful, and effective. Ultimately, communication activities should not only raise awareness, but also enhance company accountability for addressing GBVH.

In developing communication materials, consider including information about the following:

- Definitions and examples of workplace bullying and harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and domestic and sexual violence (DSV)
- The Workplace Behavior Spectrum, which demonstrates how behavior falls on a spectrum and that self-reflection and action can move the company culture to be more respectful (see Figure 4A in **TOOL 4.9**)
- Impact of GBVH on the individual, business, and community
- Laws relevant to workplace bullying and harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and domestic and sexual violence
- Support and protective services available in the community for survivors and perpetrators of workplace violence and harassment

- › When raising awareness about support services and protective services for sexual exploitation and abuse and domestic and sexual violence, consider including information about medical and psychosocial support, counseling, emergency accommodation, police and legal protection, and welfare services
- › Some of these services may also apply for more severe forms of sexual harassment, and counseling may also apply for bullying
- The company's Respectful Workplaces policy and procedures (see the guidelines and sample policy in **TOOL 4.12**), including the names and contact details for the contact team, and
- Any mandatory reporting requirements.

It is important that all genders⁸⁶ are included in awareness-raising activities, as workplace violence and harassment can adversely affect women, men, children, and those who do not identify as male or female. Certain forms of violence, such as sexual harassment, SEA, and DSV, are often gender-based and predominantly affect women and girls and those who do not conform to gender norms.

- Ensure that communications materials are written in a language which employees understand. In addition, consider providing information in various formats including online and offline, written materials, and visual and verbal explanations.
- Provide regular policy reminders and updates. For example, provide reminders of expected behaviors, policies, and any updates at the commencement of employment or during induction and at least annually during professional development, staff training days, or any other suitable occasion.
- Regularly engage employees in short scenario-based training to help them develop the skills to raise issues if they witness, hear about, or experience workplace violence and harassment.
- Invite external specialists to give presentations.

There are a few golden rules when it comes to raising awareness for respectful workplaces:

- **Treat your employees as allies.** Employees will respond better if you ask them to help you to prevent and respond to workplace violence and harassment than if you treat them as potential perpetrators.
- **Link your initiatives to company values.** Having company values that link to the work on GBVH and Respectful Workplaces will help your employees understand what the company stands for, as well as their responsibilities and rights.

⁸⁶ A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex beyond the binary framework of male and female.

FIGURE 4B | Example of Respectful Workplaces Awareness Raising Campaign



Source: IFC Respectful Workplaces Program

GBVH communications strategy

A communication strategy on GBVH needs to outline the target audience, the context of the issue, the intended outcomes, the key messages, the preferred medium (some options are outlined below), and the preferred messenger(s) for the communication activities. It is also important to allocate sufficient resources and staff time or experts to the rollout of the communication strategy.

Approaches to raise awareness and enhance communications can include (but are not limited to):

A series of micro-trainings to be delivered through 10-minute Toolbox Talks: A key to communicating around issues of GBVH is breaking the issue into key topics and discussion points so that supervisors and staff can talk about the issue at events such as Toolbox Talks⁸⁷. Topics could include, for example, key definitions and terms of GBVH, highlights of policies, ways to disclose incidents, support available to survivors, etc.

⁸⁷ A Toolbox Talk is an informal group discussion that focuses on a particular safety issue at the workplace. For more information, see: Harvard University's [Toolbox Talks](#).

Onboarding video for new employees: An onboarding video can be used as a training and communication tool which explains the company commitments on GBVH and walks the new employee through the policies and procedures in place. It is critical that this video focuses on the company values and also incorporates key elements of company culture to orient the employee. It can feature leadership and staff interviews, document the company journey, and highlight progress made on GBVH at the workplace, such as changes in awareness, employee wellbeing, etc.

Posters or informational pamphlets at the workplace: One way for companies to enhance communication is to put up posters or distribute pamphlets at the workplace and regional offices. The messaging should be easy to understand (e.g., minimize use of jargon), meaningful to the person receiving it, seen by the intended audience, and memorable. Materials used to raise awareness on GBVH initiatives at the company must not use images that could be upsetting to employees, especially survivors.

Social media campaigns: Social media is an effective tool to mobilize action, create dialogue, and foster discussions. Companies can leverage social media by developing content (e.g., WhatsApp images or cartoons, Twitter and other social media content) that can be shared by and with senior leadership and employees in the organization (see an example in Figure 4B, above). Companies need to realize that social media campaigns are most effective when they are embedded in other activities such as face-to-face and on-the-ground activities. An overreliance on social media will not be effective beyond some initial public relations⁸⁸. With all communication activities, and especially larger campaigns, it is recommended to test the content and messaging with a smaller sub-group before launch.

GBVH webinar or in-person all staff trainings: There may be an identified need to roll out webinars and further coaching to take a deeper dive into issues and update the understanding of key GBVH concepts and company procedures. If an external expert is hired for this engagement, collaboration with the company's HR department will be essential.

⁸⁸ Partners for Prevention, "[Using social media for the prevention of violence against women](#)," Bangkok, Thailand: Partners for Prevention, 2013.

TOOL 4.14

Guidelines for Self-Care for Respectful Workplaces Focal Points/ Contact Team

- » **GOAL:** Outlines resources to support focal points and the contact team
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources and Focal Points/Contact Team

Encouraging self-care is a vital part of supporting employees to fulfil their role as a Respectful Workplaces focal point, given the potential exposure to disclosures of distressing events. Self-care is the process of looking after one's own health and wellbeing using the knowledge and information available to them. Not practicing good self-care can negatively impact physical and psychological health.

Consider reminding focal points to:

- Maintain boundaries by not getting personally involved in gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) cases and referring survivors to service providers for support. Remember that focal points are not counselors, and that counseling should be undertaken by a professional.
- Debrief with other focal points or GBVH service providers or counselors. The company can provide paid time to do this.
- Use positive coping mechanisms to practice self-care regularly and proactively. Positive coping mechanisms help maintain a balance between private and professional life, as well as help overcome, as positively as possible, stressful periods or situations. Coping mechanisms can include regular exercise, getting enough sleep, laughing, socializing, religious prayer, or seeking counseling. Everyone has different things that work for them, so they should be encouraged to find approaches that suit their preferences, interests, and abilities.
- Reflect on negative coping mechanisms. Sometimes focal points use coping mechanisms like excessive drinking or social isolation to cope with stressful situations, but these strategies often aren't sustainable, and can result in dangerous or unhealthy consequences when used consistently over time.

The company can consider:

- Subsidizing self-care activities
- Providing paid time for self-care activities.
- Encouraging peer support opportunities (e.g., regular debriefs).

MONITOR AND SUSTAIN: TOOL 4.15

The journey to create a safer and more respectful workplace by addressing gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) issues at the workplace takes time and continued efforts. Developing systems to monitor progress and adjust activities based on lessons learned will drive ongoing changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. **TOOL 4.15** provides examples on how to monitor these aspects at your company through a theory of change (ToC) that can help build a stronger company culture, while **TOOL 4.7** can be revisited to collect data through employee engagement mechanisms.

TOOL 4.15

Developing a Theory of Change for Interventions Involving GBVH

- » **GOAL:** Examples of how to monitor progress through a theory of change
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources, Training and Development, and Focal Points/Contact Team

When companies commit to addressing gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), it is useful to define a theory of change for how these goals will be reached. A theory of change (ToC) is a document that explicitly outlines how the company intends to achieve the expected outcome, and how actions taken will support reaching that outcome.

A theory of change (ToC) can be used as a strategic planning tool and can help capture your company's approach to addressing GBVH issues. It can help your company plan interventions and track how change has happened in the short, medium, and long term. It can be used to measure if the interventions have had the intended impact at the company level. ToCs should be developed in consultation with key staff involved in the GBVH project or intervention. A sample ToC for GBVH interventions is outlined below in Table 4A.

When developing a ToC for a GBVH intervention, key steps can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Using **TOOL 4.2** for guidance, develop a strong business case and use this to secure the leadership team's commitment to specific actions and targets in the short, medium, and long term. Draw from GBVH data specific to a country and research the GBVH laws in the country context before shaping your ToC (See **TOOL 4.3** for guidance).
- It is important to understand GBVH issues in your sector and how they relate to a company's workforce to understand the impact on your business, its employees, and the communities in which it operates.
- Articulate outcomes—the different areas in which you would like to see change occur, such as increasing staff knowledge and skills or attitudes towards GBVH issues.
- For each desired outcome, identify specific interventions and the related outputs, such as the number of trainings delivered or policies developed on GBVH, and clarify the link between each activity, its outputs, and the intended outcomes—the envisioned change in the company. Ensure that the link between activities, the related deliverables, and the intended change is clear and achievable.
- Identify any assumptions, risks, or variables that need to be addressed or controlled to ensure success.
- Determine how successful implementation of the ToC will be measured—what will count as a success. How often will achievements be assessed, and how will course corrections take place?

Definitions

- **Impact:** Should capture the broader social change that is occurring at the company level due to a project or set of actions on GBVH.
- **Outcome:** Outcomes measure the changes that result from what a project or action does at the company level.
- **Output:** Products, services, or facilities that result from an organization or project's activities. These are often expressed quantitatively (for example, the number of participants at a GBVH training or a percentage of participants from a target group such as middle management).
- **Activity:** The activity of an organization or project, the way the organization chooses to deliver a project, or day-to-day actions on GBVH. Activities are within an organization or project's control.

Clarify assumptions

It is important to clarify assumptions in any ToC, as they will inform outcomes and impact at the company level. For example, one assumption that is often made is that training staff increases awareness on GBVH and ultimately may change behavior. It is important to measure behavior change if this is the intended impact of training.

Another assumption that is often made in GBVH interventions is that incidents will decrease—this is often not the case, especially in the short-term because underreporting is so common and increased awareness of GBVH among staff should lead to greater reporting. Discuss your assumptions with key staff and GBVH experts to ensure that they are realistic.

Establish timelines and allocate resources

- You should associate timelines with key activities so there is an understanding of when the activities and outputs will occur and when you will measure outcomes and impact. A timeline will help manage stakeholder expectations on what activities will take place and will remind you to monitor for outcomes and impact.
- It is also critical to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for activities and personnel to ensure sustained progress in addressing GBVH.
- Companies should ensure that incidences of GBVH and the responses to it are sufficiently monitored and evaluated, and that lessons learned are incorporated into the company's GBVH strategies.

TIP: Keeping confidential records of complaints can help your company track trends and highlight recurring problems (e.g., whether certain departments are more prone to complaints than others).

TABLE 4A | Example Theory of Change for GBVH Interventions

	INDICATORS AND AREAS TO TRACK	TOOLS TO EVALUATE ACTIONS
Activities: The interventions undertaken		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct GBVH research by <i>date</i> • Review policies by <i>date</i> • Train GBVH focal points • Review training by <i>date</i> • Deliver [<i>names and titles</i>] trainings to staff and community members by <i>date</i> • Develop communications material by <i>date</i> • Disseminate communications material by <i>date</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research conducted (yes/no) • Policies reviewed (yes/no) • Number of GBVH focal points training conducted • Trainings reviewed or updated (yes/no) • Number of trainings delivered • Number of communication materials developed • Number of communications materials disseminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research document • Policy documents • Training materials • Communication documents • Metric on communications disseminated
Timeline: Assign a timeline for each activity and ensure monitoring of outputs (see below)		
Assumptions: GBVH polices, training and communication materials will increase staff and community members awareness on GBVH and support them to raise issues and access support		
Outputs: The immediate result of the activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research conducted • Policies reviewed • Focal points trained • Trainings conducted • Communication materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of research finalized • Numbers/names of policies revised and adopted • Number of GBVH focal points trained (disaggregated by gender) • Number of staff who participate in training (disaggregated by gender) • Number of people reached (disaggregated by gender) with communication materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized research reports • Finalized policies • Attendance list • Evaluation forms • Metrics on communications disseminated

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	INDICATORS AND AREAS TO TRACK	TOOLS TO EVALUATE ACTIONS
Outcomes: The medium-term changes that result from the activities.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge, skills, and attitude to address GBVH • Increased confidence in company's GBVH policies • Increased use of GBVH policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in training who report increased knowledge, skills, and attitude to address GBVH (disaggregated by gender) • Number of staff reporting that they would feel comfortable raising GBVH issues with a company representative (disaggregated by gender) • Number of staff reporting that they believe that the company takes GBVH seriously (disaggregated by gender) • Number and type of grievances raised under the company GBVH policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post training questionnaire • Employee engagement surveys
Impact: The broader social change that results from the activities.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better support for survivors of GBVH • Increased business benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of issues resolved (disaggregated by gender) • Number and type of supports provided under the company GBVH policy (disaggregated by gender) • Number of staff reporting workplace impacts of GBVH (disaggregated by gender) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints and resolution data • Employee engagement surveys

Selected Resources for Further Reading

Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

- Australian Human Rights Commission, "[Effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment: A Code of Practice for Employers](#)," 2008.
- Australian Human Rights Commission, "[Effectively preventing and responding to sexual harassment: A Quick Guide](#)," 2008.
- Ellsberg, M., and Heise, L., [Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists](#), Washington DC: World Health Organization and PATH, 2005.
- Jewkes, R., Dartnall, E., and Sikweyiya, Y., "[Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Perpetration of Sexual Violence](#)," Paper for the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Pretoria, South Africa: Medical Research Council, 2012.
- UK Equality and Human Rights Commission, "[Sexual Harassment and the Law: guidance for employers](#)," 2017.
- UN Women/ILO, "[Handbook: Addressing Violence and Harassment Against Women in the World of Work](#)," 2019.
- Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center, "[New Workplace Toolkit](#)," 2016.
- World Bank Group, [Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in World Bank Operations: Taking Stock After a Decade of Engagement \(2012-2022\)](#), Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023.
- World Bank Group, "Violence against women resource guide," 2014.
- World Health Organization, "[Putting women first: Ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women](#)," Geneva: World Health Organization, 2001.

Costing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

- Ashe et al., "[Methodological Approaches for Estimating the Economic Costs of Violence against Women and Girls](#)," WhatWorks and UK Aid.
- IFC, "[Case Study: Assessing Gender-Based Violence with Companies in PNG](#)," Washington, DC: IFC.
- International Labour Organization, "[Sexual Harassment at Work Factsheet](#)," Geneva: ILO, 2016.
- Santos, Cristina, "[Costs of Domestic Violence: A Life Satisfaction Approach](#)," *Fiscal Studies* 34 (3): 391–409, 2013.

- Sen, A., *Gender and Cooperative Conflicts, Persistent Inequalities*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Seppälä, Emma, and Cameron, Kim, "[Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive](#)," *Harvard Business Review*, 2015.

Defining Sexual Harassment

- Australian Human Rights Commission, "[Recognizing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace: Information for employees](#)," Sydney: AHRC, 2014,

Communications Materials on Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence

- [Communications x-Change](#), hosted by the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University.
- Partners for Prevention, "[Using social media for the prevention of violence against women](#)," Bangkok, Thailand: Partners for Prevention, 2013.

IPV/Domestic Violence

- Business in the Community, "[Domestic Abuse: A Toolkit for Employers](#)," 2018.

Gender-Based Violence and Harassment and Private Sector Interventions

- IFC's [Respectful Workplaces Program](#).
- EBRD, IFC and CDC Group, "[Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector](#)," 2020.
- IFC, "[The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands](#)," 2019.
- IFC, "[The Business Case for Workplace Responses to Domestic and Sexual Violence in Fiji](#)," 2019.
- IFC, "[Gender-Smart Business Solutions Case Study: Addressing Gender Based Violence with Companies in Papua New Guinea](#)," 2017.
- Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development's (ICED), "[Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Infrastructure Tool](#)," 2019.
- International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), "[Gender-based violence in global supply chains: Resource Kit](#)," 2016.
- Netherlands Enterprise Agency and CNV, "[Violence @ work: A guide for SMEs to prevent violence in the workplace](#)," 2020.
- UN Women, "[A Global Women's Safety Framework in Rural Spaces](#)," 2018.

Energy, Cities, Water, and Transport

- Dominguez Gonzalez, Karla; Arango, Diana Jimena; Mccleary-Sills, Jennifer Diane; Bianchi Alves, Bianca, "[Violence Against Women and Girls Resource Guide: Transport Brief.](#)"
- Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development's (ICED), "[Violence against Women and Girls, Infrastructure and Cities,](#)" 2017.

Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FCS) and Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

- UNFPA, "[Gender-based Violence: Donor Advocacy Brief on Critical Services during COVID-19,](#)" 2020.
- World Bank, "[Addressing the Needs of Women and Girls in Contexts of Forced Displacement: Experiences from Operations,](#)" 2019.
- IOM, "[Institutional Framework for Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Crises,](#)" 2018.
- Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR, "[Interagency Gender-Based Violence Case Management Guidelines-Providing Care and Case Handling Management Services to Gender-Based Violence Survivors in Humanitarian Settings,](#)" 2017.
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), "[Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action,](#)" 2015.
- World Bank, IADB, GWU, and ICRW, "[Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Resource Guide,](#)" 2015.
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- UNHCR, "[Guidelines for Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies,](#)" 2005.

COVID and Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

- IFC, "[COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence Workplace Risks and Responses,](#) 2020.
- Ruxton, S., & Burrell, S. R, "[Masculinities and COVID-19: Making the Connections,](#)" 2020.

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