

★ New modules  
for health managers

# **Caring for women subjected to violence: A WHO training curriculum for health care providers. Revised edition, 2021**



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ISBN 978-92-4-003980-3 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-003981-0 (print version)

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Supporting materials (i.e. handouts, resources for exercises and slide deck) can be accessed online here:  
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240039803>

**Facilitator's Guide**



## Acknowledgements

This curriculum draws on the work of many people around the world dedicated to preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls. WHO would like to thank all of those who contributed and who shared their training exercises and experiences, many of which have been incorporated into this manual.

The curriculum was developed by WHO's Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (SRH) (Avni Amin, Claudia García-Moreno and Megin Reijnders) in collaboration with WHO's Regional Office for the Americas/Pan-American Health Organization (Alessandra Guedes and Constanza Hege).

An initial draft was developed in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the University of Michigan: Myra Betron, Michele Decker, Nancy Glass, Zaynab Hameeduddin, Jane McKenzie-White, Sophie Morse and Vijay Singh. Earlier versions of the curriculum were piloted with health-care providers in Bahamas and Guyana (by JHU and PAHO), Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Uganda, and Zambia (by WHO/SRH) and with midwives in East Timor by Angela Taft and Kayli Wild. SRH also used the

materials in a training of trainers in Geneva in July 2018 and in a virtual training of health managers from 12 countries from East and Southern Africa in 2020.

WHO/SRH thanks the consultants and interns who supported the initial organization of the curriculum development, Floriza Gennari, Erin Hartman and Thais de Rezende.

WHO/SRH gratefully acknowledges the curriculum advisory board members for all their contributions and inputs throughout the development process and review of drafts: Kiran Bhatia, Jan Coles, Anne Catherine Deleon, Kelsey Hegerty, Lisa James, Ana Flavia Lucas d'Oliveira, Grace Mallya, Soroja Pande, Lourdesita Sobreyega-Chan, Jinan Usta and Silvie Lo Fo Wong.

SRH also would like to thank the following individuals for their review of drafts of the curriculum: Anna Baptista, Jennifer Breads, Jovita Ortiz Contreras, Claire Mathonsi, Rose Olson, Caroline Rodriguez, Sarah Siebert, Angela Taft, Kusum Thapa and Kayli Wild.

Sara Johnson and Ward Rinehart developed the structure and co-wrote the instructions for the exercises contained in the curriculum.

## Purpose and overview

Violence against women, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence, is pervasive globally and leads to significant physical and mental health problems. Thus, it is a public health issue that demands a concerted response from health-care providers and health systems worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed guidelines for the health-care sector: *Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines* (2013) and an accompanying clinical handbook *Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: clinical handbook* (2014). This in-service curriculum, based on these documents, aims to provide health-care providers with the knowledge and basic skills to implement the WHO recommendations in their clinical practice. Training providers is key to improving the health system's response to violence against women.

### First-line support

**L** Listen,  
**I** Inquire  
**V** Validate  
**E** Enhance safety  
**S** Support

This curriculum is designed to provide health-care providers, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, with a foundation for responding to domestic/ intimate partner violence

and sexual violence against women. The curriculum seeks to build skills and to address providers' attitudes towards survivors of violence. Participants will learn how to provide women-centred clinical care, including identifying women experiencing violence, providing first-line support through the LIVES approach (Listen, Inquire, Validate, Enhance safety and Support), providing essential clinical care for survivors, and identifying local support resources. They will learn to reflect on their own attitudes and understand survivors' experience. The curriculum emphasizes compassionate, empathic provider–patient communication.

This curriculum is based on WHO's clinical handbook. Participants and facilitators are advised to keep the handbook handy for reference throughout the training.

Training is an important component of an overarching health system response to violence against women. Health services managers and health policy-makers also have responsibility for strengthening planning, coordination and human resource management;

establishing policies and protocols; and monitoring and evaluating the provision of care to survivors of violence. Four new modules have been added to the revised 2021 edition, while the earlier content remains unchanged. Three of the new modules are specifically targeted at health managers to assess and improve facility readiness, including capacities of the health workforce and infrastructure. One new module is aimed at both – providers and managers – to improve integration of prevention interventions into existing health services or interventions. Managers and policy-makers are advised to consult *Strengthening health systems to respond to women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a manual for health managers* (WHO, 2017) for comprehensive guidance on improving health system readiness.

The clinical guidelines on which this training is based do not specifically address children, adolescent girls (under age 18) or men. Nonetheless, actions described may also be valuable for these population. They also apply to domestic violence more broadly – that is, violence by family members other than an intimate partner. Facilitators are encouraged to review *Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused: WHO clinical guidelines* (WHO, 2017) for recommendations for a child- and adolescent-centred response.

### Who is this training for?

This training curriculum is primarily designed for practising health-care providers, particularly doctors, nurses and midwives. Parts of it may also be useful to other cadres of health-care providers, including psychologists, social workers, nurse assistants, community health workers and lay counsellors. Sessions 14–17 are also targeted to health managers.

### Participant-centred learning

This curriculum uses a participant-centred approach to learning – an active, collaborative, inquiry-based approach to teaching and training. Also known as learner-centred education, participant-centred learning emphasizes that the trainee is an active participant. Participant-centred learning actively engages the trainee wherever possible, rather than relying only on facilitators. Learners actively participate in knowledge and skills

### Aim of this training

To foster understanding of and develop the basic skills to implement the recommendations of the WHO clinical and policy guidelines and clinical handbook on responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women.

development through case studies, guided discussions, participatory reflection exercises, videos and readings. This process supports critical reflection, emotional engagement, skills development and the ability to put knowledge into practice.

### Competency-based training

This competency-based curriculum enables development of the knowledge and skills to provide comprehensive, high-quality care to women who are subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual

### The four objectives of the training

1. Demonstrate **general knowledge** of violence against women as a public health problem.
2. Demonstrate behaviours and understand values contributing to **safe and supportive services for survivors**.
3. Demonstrate **clinical skills** appropriate to one's profession and specialty to respond to violence against women.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of how to **access resources and support** for patients and for oneself.

violence. Each session supports one of four objectives (see box) while fostering unique competencies. Table 1 presents the titles and competencies of the training sessions. The objectives and capacities for this training were defined through an expert review process.

**Table 1. Sessions, objectives and competencies**

No.	Session, objective, competencies
1	<b>Understanding violence against women as a public health problem</b> <i>Objective 1.</i> Demonstrate general knowledge of violence against women as a public health problem <i>Competencies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Know the epidemiology of the different forms of violence against women at global and local levels.</li><li>■ Know the health consequences of violence against women.</li><li>■ Understand the role and limitations of health-care providers in responding to violence against women.</li><li>■ Know about the WHO clinical and policy guidelines and clinical handbook on responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women.</li></ul>
2	<b>Understanding the survivor's experience and how providers' values and beliefs affect the care they give</b> <i>Objective 2.</i> Demonstrate behaviours and understand values contributing to safe and supportive services <i>Competencies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Demonstrate self-awareness of one's beliefs, assumptions, potential biases and emotional responses that can affect interactions with survivors of violence against women.</li><li>■ Understand the circumstances and the barriers that women experiencing violence face when seeking support.</li><li>■ Recognize the importance of having empathy with survivors.</li></ul>
3	<b>Guiding principles and overview of the health response to violence against women</b> <i>Objective 2:</i> Demonstrate behaviours and understand values contributing to safe and supportive services <i>Competencies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Know the guiding principles of providing woman-centred care in a culturally appropriate way.</li><li>■ Understand how to apply the guiding principles for women-centred care in your practice.</li></ul>

No.	Session, objective, competencies
4	<b>Provider–survivor communication skills</b> <i>Objective 2:</i> Demonstrate behaviours and understand values contributing to safe and supportive services <i>Competency:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicate empathically and effectively with patients/survivors.</li> </ul>
5	<b>When and how to identify intimate partner violence</b> <i>Objective 3:</i> Demonstrate clinical skills appropriate to one’s profession and specialty to respond to violence against women <i>Competencies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understand the minimum standards that need to be met to enquire about and respond appropriately to violence against women.</li> <li>■ Recognize the signs and symptoms that suggest intimate partner violence.</li> <li>■ Understand when and how to ask about intimate partner violence.</li> <li>■ Demonstrate appropriate ways to ask about intimate partner violence.</li> </ul>
6	<b>First-line support using LIV(ES), part 1: <u>L</u>isten, <u>I</u>nquire, <u>V</u>alidate</b> <i>Objective 3:</i> Demonstrate clinical skills appropriate to one’s profession and specialty to respond to violence against women <i>Competencies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Know the content of first-line support (LIVES).</li> <li>■ Demonstrate skills in offering the first three elements (listening, inquiring and validating) of first-line support to survivors who disclose abuse.</li> </ul>
7	<b>Know your setting: identify referral networks and understand the legal and policy context</b> <i>Objective 4:</i> Demonstrate knowledge of how to access resources and support for patients and for oneself <i>Competencies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understand the role of other services in caring for survivors of violence against women.</li> <li>■ Know what resources are available in the community.</li> <li>■ Know the legal and policy context, including health-care providers’ legal obligations, with regards to the local and national response to violence against women.</li> </ul>
8	<b>First-line support using (LIV)ES, part 2: <u>E</u>nhancing safety and providing <u>S</u>upport</b> <i>Objective 3:</i> Demonstrate clinical skills appropriate to one’s profession and specialty to respond to violence against women <i>Objective 4:</i> Demonstrate knowledge of how to access resources and support for patients and for oneself

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