

## 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 pathways<sup>56</sup> in place to certain service providers (see, for example, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs<sup>57</sup>). 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 shelter<sup>58</sup> may need to be considered. Legal recourse may also need to be sought, or a restraining order put in place by police or courts.

<sup>56</sup> 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.

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

<sup>58</sup> 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)<sup>59</sup> organizations provide professional and legal services to help survivors understand their rights, secure protection orders (e.g., apprehended violence order<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> 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.

<sup>60</sup> 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.

<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup>
- **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.<sup>63</sup> 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.

<sup>62</sup> 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.

<sup>63</sup> 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?