

## Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

by Building Effective Healthcare Systems: Practice-based Knowledge & Lessons Learned

### Background

Gender-based violence (GBV) poses a pervasive threat to women and girls globally. In a recent 16 Days of Activism Against GBV webinar, WI-HER joined hands with the WHO, Dovenet-Nigeria, and EngenderHealth to discuss ongoing GBV response efforts both within Nigeria and globally and the role the health sector plays in working to prevent and eliminate GBV.

Through this [webinar](#) and learning brief:

- Explore successes, challenges, and the indispensable role of healthcare workers in providing survivor-centered care.
- Learn how integrating GBV support into routine healthcare is crucial, considering the difficulties survivors may face in accessing services.
- Discover strategies to seamlessly embed GBV survivor support within regular healthcare services.
- Discover how WI-HER, EngenderHealth, DOVENET, and WHO strengthened primary and secondary healthcare systems in Nigeria and beyond to proactively respond to GBV, paving the way for more resilient and supportive healthcare systems.

### Challenges in Addressing GBV in the Healthcare System

Efforts to improve GBV prevention and response are often hampered by funding/resource gaps, particularly in rural areas; a lack of coordination among service providers; mistrust in the system providing GBV services; and stigma and cultural norms hindering reporting and access to care by victims and survivors. The panelists recommended the following approaches to confront these challenges.

### SPEAKER INFO



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## Key Takeaways

### How to Overcome Common Healthcare Challenges in Responding to the Needs of GBV Survivors:

Adopting a whole health system approach is critical to ensuring a comprehensive response to GBV. Begin by applying the [LIVES approach](#)—Listen, Inquire, Validate, and Enhance Safety and Support. Use this approach as a starting point for survivor-centered care for survivors.

### GBV Care Reforms:

- Institutional and health policy reforms demand the development of dynamic GBV screening tools and registers integrated into the health systems for streamlined and improved documentation and care.
- Establish gender focal persons in facilities, integrate survivor-centered care into existing health services, and strengthen support for staff at healthcare facilities to enhance the responsiveness of healthcare systems to GBV.

### Collaboration Strategies:

Strengthen collaboration with communities and women's rights and community-based organizations through active engagement with community influencers and various stakeholders. Sensitize police and other service providers on issues related to GBV and ensure federal and state ministries are part of the process when establishing GBV referral directories. These activities not only help to achieve buy-in but also foster a multi-sectoral response.

### Proactive Support:

Proactive support entails providing clinical inquiry protocols and safe spaces within healthcare facilities and community centers. Offer one-on-one, confidential counseling for survivors and health education for the community at large; make [referrals](#) to other services, such as legal aid; and work with families of survivors to sensitize them to the needs of survivors.

### Data Utilization:

Data is critical to improving services and programs. Measure attitudes/practices of healthcare workers towards GBV to address stigma and gaps in care and track changes in attitudes immediately after training and over time, recognizing increased reporting as a positive sign of improved trust in healthcare workers and awareness-building activities. Include GBV indicators in national reporting platforms and use data decisively to identify areas of improvement. Tailor interventions for a more targeted and impactful response.

## Lessons Learned in Scaling Interventions:

- Leveraging data for advocacy and active engagement in the budget cycle is paramount in scaling interventions. Take proactive steps through ongoing and repeated training with flexible modalities, such as conducting adult learning, competency-based training, and skill-focused training.
- Create tailored community materials for effective engagement with communities and address cultural and societal barriers head-on to encourage reporting of GBV.

## Achievements in GBV Initiatives:

Implementing functional action plans at the healthcare facility level and establishing multi-sectoral task forces contributed to improved documentation and capacity-building efforts in five states in Nigeria, successfully enforcing laws against harmful practices like FGM in Nigeria and creating designated budget lines. These achievements underscore the progress made in GBV response & prevention initiatives.

## A Way Forward

To further enhance your understanding and contribute to the ongoing efforts against GBV, explore the following resources:



[Watch the Complete Webinar.](#)



[View the Slide Deck.](#)

## Additional Resources

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Guidelines for the Health Sector Response to Gender-based Violence](#): Access comprehensive information for health sector responses to GBV, particularly during humanitarian emergencies.
- [USAID IHP Nigeria](#): Learn more about the USAID Integrated Health Program in Nigeria, which focuses on training healthcare workers and collaborating with ministries to address GBV.
- [MOMENTUM Country and Global Leadership \(MCGL\) Project](#): Explore community-level interventions undertaken under the MCGL project, led by EngenderHealth and implemented by organizations like DOVENET, to address GBV.
- [NOFIC Ebonyi](#) is a government tertiary facility that provides free services to fistula clients; learn about their initiatives to combat GBV.
- [A Health Manager's Manual](#): Explore a manual for health managers that provides insights into implementing institutional reforms for GBV care and establishing referral linkages.
- [Participatory Curriculum for Training Providers](#): Dive into a participatory curriculum designed for training providers, with a focus on adult learning, competency-based approaches, and skills development.



Visit [WI-HER.org](http://WI-HER.org) to learn more about our work in GBV prevention and response.