

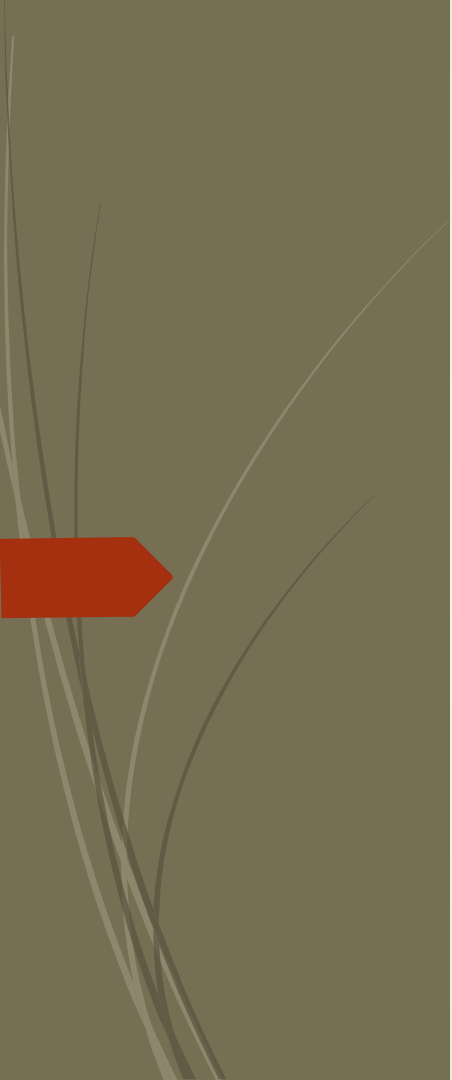
Training for Humanitarian Workers

Gender-Based Violence

Violence Against Women along
the Migrant Journey



Massachusetts General Hospital
Founding Member, Mass General Brigham

- 
- ▶ A country cannot succeed when half its population is undervalued, unprotected & denied agency to decide & act upon their choices

"No Justice: Gender-Based Violence and Migration in Central America."
Wilson Center

Contents

- Definition of GBV
 - Statistics
 - Types
 - Risk Factors
- GBV Context During Humanitarian Crisis
- Screening for GBV
 - Tools
 - Why screening matters



Disclosure

Nothing to Declare



Reflections and Critical Considerations

Hiding in Plain Sight

- Importance of language and access to interpreters
- Importance of slow listening
- Bearing witness
- Somatic complaints can represent psychological distress
- Refer when resources are available





WHAT IS GBV?



Definition

- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships

Gender
Discrimination



Abuse of
Power



Lack of
Respect for
Human Rights



Gender-Based
Violence

What is Gender-Based Violence?

“Gender-Based” is used to describe violence directed at someone based on socially ascribed differences between males and females, also known as gender roles.

“Violence” is defined as any act perpetrated against a person’s will

- Not just physical harm
- Physical, sexual, **threats, coercion, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse**, and deprivation (economic, health, education)
- This includes THREATS of violence



Economic abuse (controlling access to money to keep them financially dependent)

Coercion

Harassment

Sexual assault

Sexual slavery

Femicide

Forms of GBV

Types of Gender-Based Violence

Physical

- So-called honor related crimes (killing, maiming)
- Physical assault (beating, biting, burning, kicking)
- Slavery
- Infanticide/femicide
- Confinement
- Punishments for defying cultural norms
- Female Genital Mutilation

Sexual

- Rape, marital rape
- Sexual abuse and assault
- Online sexual abuse
- Sexual violence as a weapon of war or torture
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation
- Trafficking
- Sexual violence based on sexual orientation

Emotional - Psychological

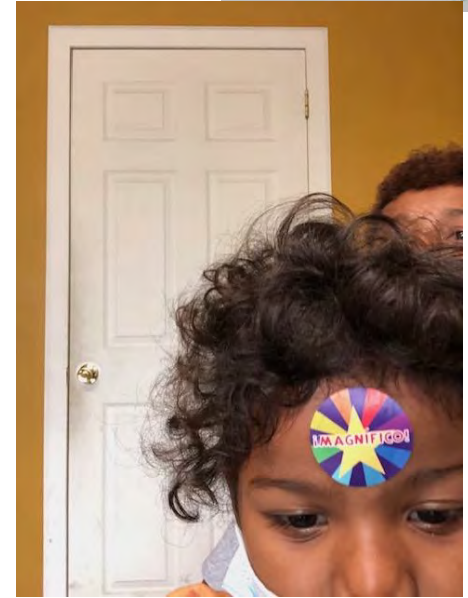
- Verbal abuse
- Confinement
- Forced marriage and child marriage
- Social exclusion based on sexual orientation or gender identity
- Humiliation
- Manipulation

More Subtle Forms of GBV

Deprivation : Denial of access to resources and services

- Denying girls their right to education
- Depriving women of inheritance, property or land ownership
- Giving boys/men preferential access to food or services
- Depriving women of the right to pass on nationality

Gender-Based Violence takes on many different forms, some very subtle, reinforcing the importance of avoiding assumptions and systematically screening for potential violence.



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Defined as one or more self-reported act of physical or sexual violence
by a current or former partner

Physical violence: slapped, pushed, shoved, kicked, dragged, choked, burned
on purpose, threatened with or actually having a gun, knife or other weapon used
on you

Sexual violence: being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not
want to, having sexual intercourse because you were afraid of what your partner might
do, and/or being forced to do something sexual that you found humiliating or
degrading

GBV Risk Factors

Humanitarian programming obstacles

- Failure to address or prioritize GBV in program development
- Lack of gender-sensitive design of programs
- Sexual abuse by humanitarian workers
- Weak links with other assistance and protection programs

Physical factors

- Lack of physical security because of an absence of law and order or presence of armed groups
- Poverty leading to a lack of food, shelter, and education

Judicial barriers

- Lack of access to justice institutions and mechanisms, resulting in culture of impunity for violence and abuse
- Inadequate legal frameworks to protect victims and prosecute aggressors

Social/Political/Cultural factors

- Discriminatory social, cultural or religious laws, norms and practices
- Disrupted family, social and communal structures
- Lack of confidence and trust in social or public institutions

Individual barriers

- Threat or fear of stigma, isolation and social exclusion
- Exposure to further violence from the perpetrator, the community or the authorities
- Lack of information about human rights

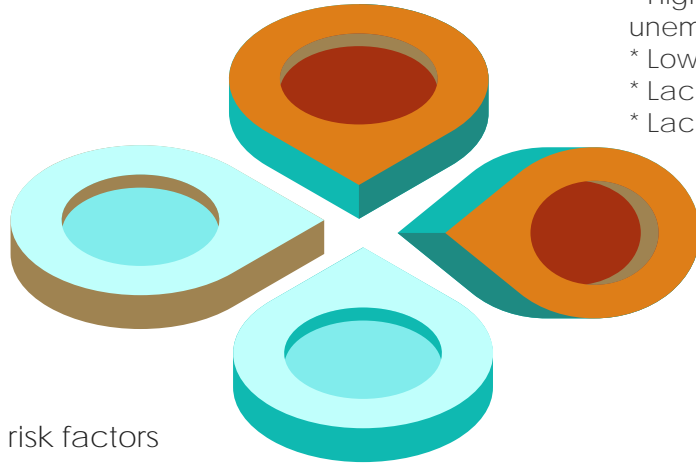
Contributing Risk Factors at Various Levels

Individual risk factors

- * Younger age
- * Short-term relationships
- * Intellectual disability
- * Chronic mental illness
 - * Limited education
 - * Low income or SES
 - * Indigenous status
 - * Drug & alcohol use disorder

Social/cultural risk factors

- * Gender inequality
- * Devaluation of women
- * Cultural acceptance of IPV
- * Social or religious support for IPV
- * Laws against divorce



Community risk factors

- * High levels of crime, poverty, and unemployment
- * Low social cohesion
- * Lack of opportunities
- * Lack of social services for IPV victims

Relationship risk factors

- * Separated relationship status
- * Marital disagreements
- * Poor parenting practice
- * Poor or disparate educational levels
- * Negative attitude towards women
- * History of child abuse or witnessing child abuse as a child
- * Having other sexual partners

Structural Violence of Society

Gender inequality

- Reproductive health
- Empowerment
- Labor market

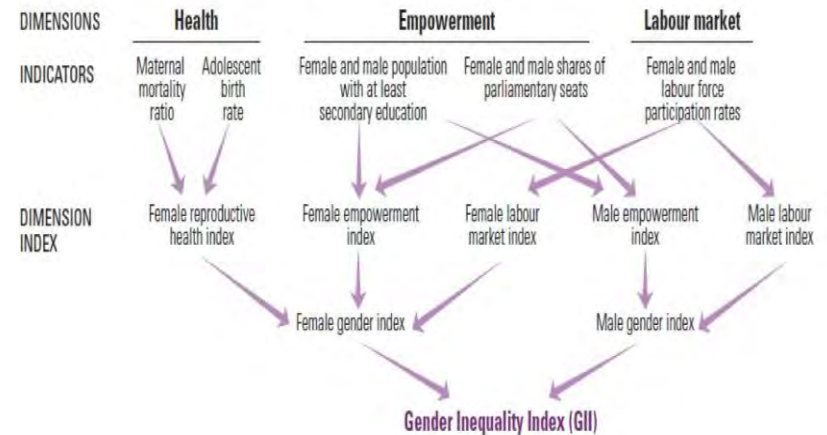
Ineffective justice systems


- Lack of enforcement
- Corruption
- Lack of resources
- 95% of crimes against women in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador go unpunished

Gang culture:

- Women and girls are property
- Can be targeted for torture, rape, murder
- Mechanism of revenge on rival members

Gender Inequality Index (GII)





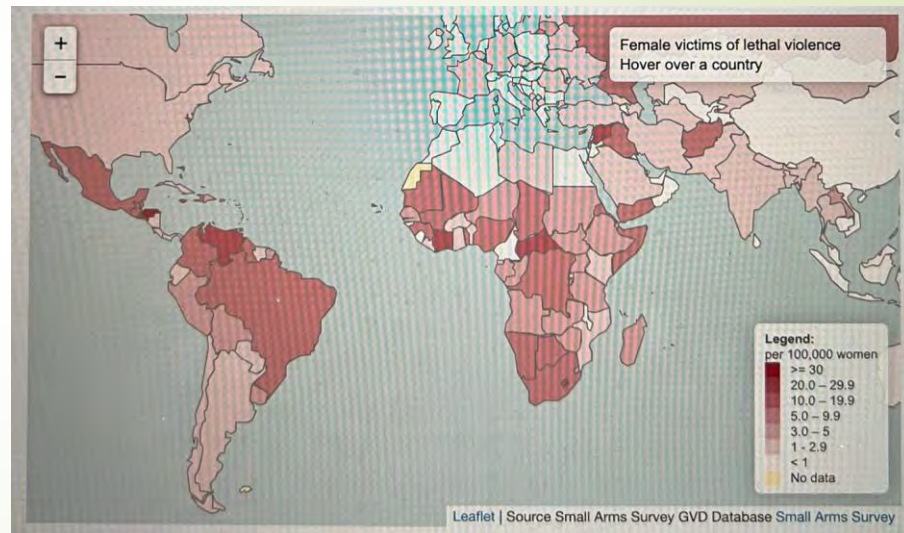
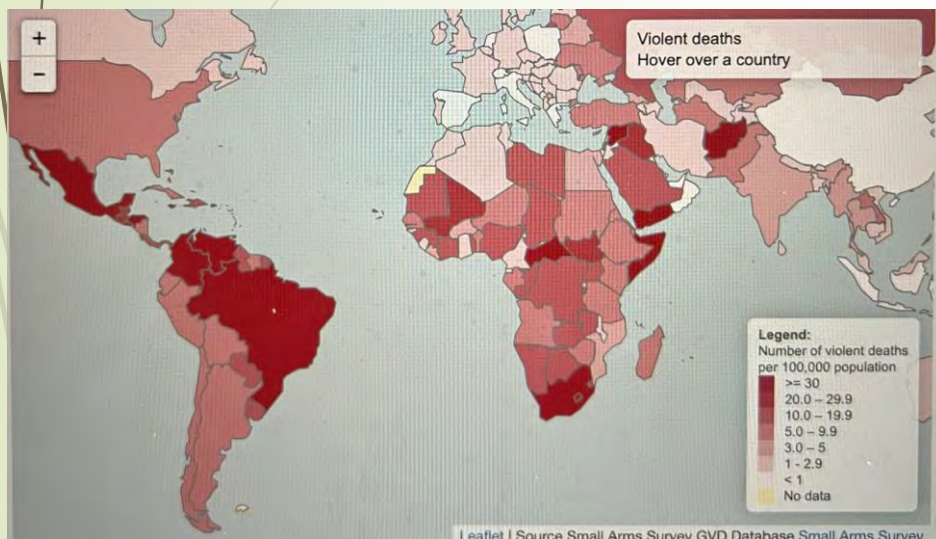
Consequences of GBV



- ▶ Lowers educational achievement
- ▶ Lowers labor market participation
- ▶ Reduces GDP
- ▶ Higher levels of internal displacement
- ▶ Poorer health outcomes
- ▶ Higher maternal and infant mortality rates
- ▶ Worse development outcomes for children
- ▶ GBV affects entire communities where it occurs, and increases the overall sense of instability and vulnerability
- ▶ Consequence: internal displacement and migration
- ▶ Girls and women under sexual violence terrorism have three choices:
 - ▶ report and face disbelief
 - ▶ stay and risk additional violence
 - ▶ flee

Global Violent Deaths 2024

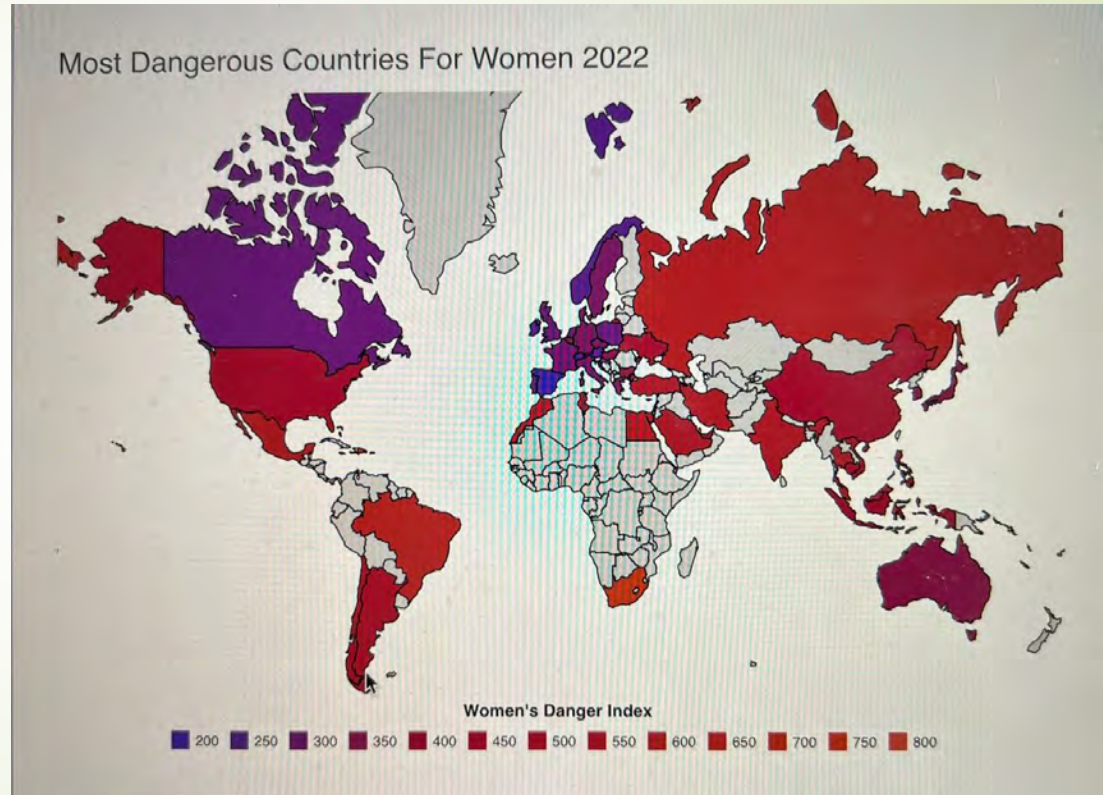
<https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/database/global-violent-deaths-gvd>



Danger Index Most Dangerous Countries for Women 2024

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/most-dangerous-countries-for-women>

- Street safety for women
- Intentional homicide of women
- Non-partner sexual violence
- Intimate partner sexual violence
- Legal discrimination
- Global gender gap
- Gender inequality index
- Violence against women attitudes



Disasters and Complex Humanitarian Settings



GBV During Disaster Settings

Incidence of GBV increases significantly after a humanitarian crisis

- ← GBV went up from 4.6 incidents per 100,000 people per day to 16.3 during Hurricane Katrina in 2006.
- ← Communities' social and traditional fabric breaks down, disrupting roles, and limiting coping mechanisms and avenues for protection
- ← Increased competition for limited resources

Women and girls are at higher risk of GBV in disaster settings, especially of sexual violence

Data on GBV in disaster settings is very limited

GBV remains an underfunded area of humanitarian response

- ← Between 2016 and 2018, GBV services received 0.12% of all humanitarian funding
- ← Only 1/3 of the requested funding for GBV was met

The Haitian Diaspora

Country of Residence	# of Haitian Migrants
USA	705,000
Dominican Republic	496,000
Chile	237,000
Brazil	143,000
Canada	101,000
France	85,000
Bahamas	30,000
French Guiana	22,000
Turks & Caicos Islands	16,000
Guadeloupe	14,000

Figure 2. Map of Common Pathway for Haitian Migrants





Haitian Diaspora

Driving Forces of Migration

Political and human rights violations since Duvalier dictatorships (1957-1986)

Western hemisphere's lowest GDP per capita

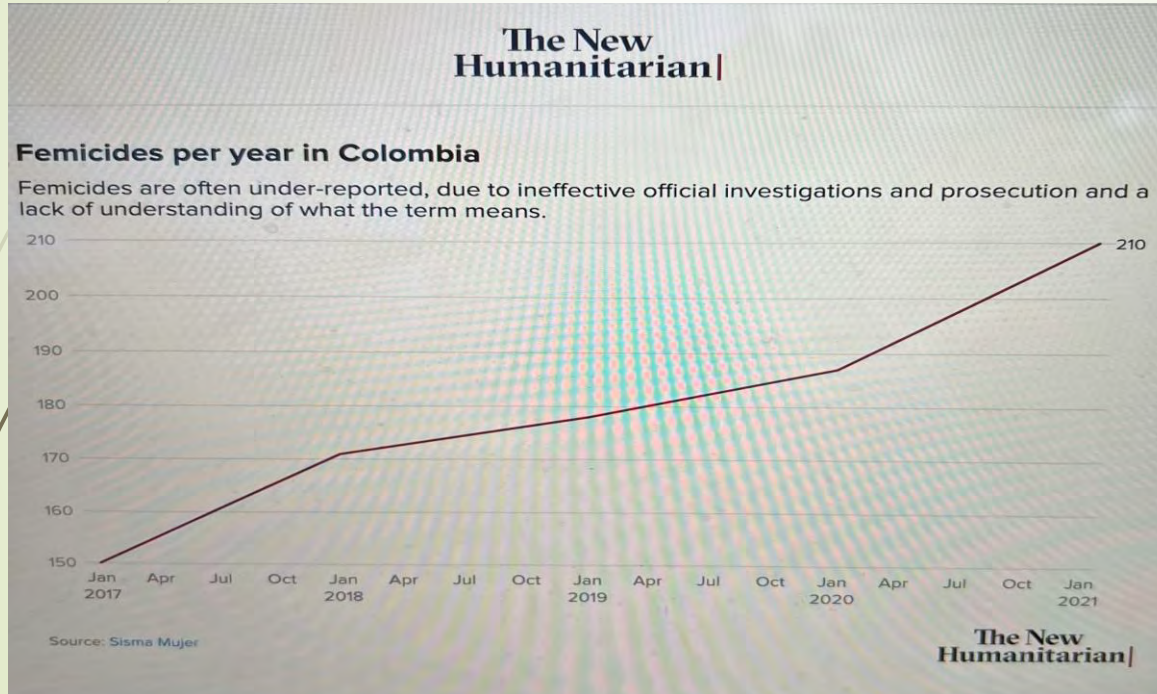
2010 Earthquake: 217,000 deaths, 1.5 million homeless

2016 Hurricane Matthew

July 2021 assassination of Haitian President

August 2021 7.2 magnitude earthquake

Symbolic Terrorism



Darien Gap

Risk of Kidnapping, Rape, Torture, Murder


- Treacherous jungle
- Virtually impassable mountains
- Impenetrable swamps
- Overgrown trails
- Uninhabited
- Unfriendly wildlife
- Mosquitoes
- Limited food
- Drug traffickers
- Paramilitary Colombian guerillas
- Paranoid government police



Migrant Crisis: Mexico-US Border

- ▶ Political turmoil, civil unrest and pervasive violence have forced people to border cities such as Reynosa.
- ▶ Most come north from South and Central America, increased numbers of people are coming from countries like Haiti, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, and Cameroon
- ▶ Options for legal asylum have been severely limited, leaving families to live in organized crime-controlled towns without access to shelter, food, safety, or healthcare.






Sexual Violence to Migrants: Mexico

- ▶ Vulnerable to smugglers (coyotes), gangs, cartels, police
- ▶ 60% of migrants exposed to violence (Doctors without Borders report)
- ▶ 76% of migrants with children experience violence
- ▶ 60-80% of female migrants raped

US Border & Beyond

- ▶ Current US refugee & asylum law does not recognize GBV as its own category warranting protection
- ▶ Women risk abuse in the US





Border Clinics
for Asylum
Seekers
Reynosa and
Matamoros
Experience
with Women
Patients

Pain

Abnormal bleeding

Fertility or pregnancy
problems

Almost all women had
experienced sexual violence


SCREENING



Why Screening Matters ?

GBV can occur in very subtle forms, with invisible psychological and emotional scars. Screening **systematically** removes any stigma associated with GBV, turning it into a regular component of the diagnostic process, thus classifying it as a public health problem.

Screening can take many different forms –
there is not always one right screening question.
It is important for providers to find a way of screening that makes both themselves and the patient feel comfortable.
Making screening part of your routine care will help make you feel more at ease.



Who is at Risk?

- ▶ Single women, particularly during transit and in refugee settings
- ▶ Women with children
- ▶ Sexual violence when collecting water, going to toilet, looking for food, accessing basic services, etc.
- ▶ Sexual transactions for survival, including forced marriages
- ▶ Girls in early marriages
- ▶ Domestic workers
- ▶ Girls in households with one parent
- ▶ Sex workers
- ▶ Women and girls living with HIV, mental illness, and disabilities

Signs of Gender-Based Violence

Injuries
inconsistent
with findings
and/or
explanations

Reluctance to
speak in front
of partner

Chronic pain
GI symptoms
Sleep disorder

- Suicide attempts
- Repeated miscarriages, terminations, stillbirths or preterm labor
- Non-adherence with treatment
- Frequent missed appointments
- Early discharge from hospital

Partner is
aggressive or
dominant, talks
for the woman or
refuses to leave
the room

Depression,
anxiety

Recurring STDs
or UTIs

Foundation of Screening

- GBV is a sensitive topic, where cultural variations, stigma, and shame can be involved
- To screen efficiently, ensure **safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination**

Safety: Take into account the risk to GBV survivors, their families and communities and from perpetrators, families and/or communities

Confidentiality: only GBV survivors can decide if and to whom they want to disclose violence. Share only non-identifying information with consent.

Respect: Informed consent and regard for the choices, wishes, and dignity of survivors

Nondiscrimination: Equal and fair treatment of survivors regardless of age, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics



How to
Create
Psychological
Safety

Safety – the
importance
of inclusion

“I am so glad you are here”

Agency –
the
importance
of choice

“May I ask you about ___?”

“What would help right now?”

“What do you need?”

Curiosity –
Do not
excavate

“Is there any more you would like to tell me?”

“I’d like to hear your story”

“I want to understand”



Psychological safety

- ▶ Trust
 - ▶ “I will not share anything you tell me without your permission”
 - ▶ “What you share stays with me”
 - ▶ “It’s OK if you don’t trust me”

- ▶ Hold space-Practice the Pause-Silence is OK
 - ▶ “Let’s pause for a moment.”
 - ▶ “I believe you”
 - ▶ “Please take all the time you need”
 - ▶ “It’s OK to be_____”



Screening Tool Example

- Are you presently emotionally or physically abused by your partner or someone important to you? (Yes/No)
- Are you presently being hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt by your partner or someone important to you? (Yes/No)
- Are you presently forced to have sexual activities? (Yes/No)
- Are you afraid of your partner or anyone of the following (circle if appropriate): husband/wife/ex-husband/ex-wife/boyfriend/girlfriend/stranger
- (If pregnant) Have you ever been hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt by your partner or someone important to you during pregnancy? (Yes/No)

In closing...invisible right here....

People you work with may have experienced sexual trauma....



Thank you !!

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