



COVID 19 – GBV support messaging for oPt RCCE strategy

Messages include

- Prevention of GBV including domestic violence and sexual exploitation (PSEA)
- Information about available remote services, especially helplines/updated pathways

To target communities and families in quarantine/isolation, especially vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women in poor households, elderly people, refugees, etc.

To be disseminated on social media, in TV and radio spots and campaigns, with dignity kits and later on, revised in coordination with other sectors.

BACKGROUND

- During this COVID-19 pandemic, where movement is restricted and people are confined in place, and protection systems weaken, women and girls are at greater risk of experiencing gender-based violence and the threat of harmful practices including child, early, and forced marriages especially for girls in disadvantaged and hard to reach areas.
- In Palestine, women spend more time on unpaid care work than men. The outbreak experience means that women's domestic burden becomes exacerbated as well, making their share of household responsibilities even heavier. For many women this comes on top of working full-time from home during the crisis while having to take care of their children.
- Because of their dominant role as caregivers, women tend to take over new roles to ensure the survival and welfare of their families. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, these roles expose women to greater health risks, for instance by taking care of sick or elderly family members.
- The pandemic will severely impact women's economic participation. Women's involvement in the labour market in Palestine is already low and this might be exacerbated by the current crisis, reinforcing low participation in the formal sector, job precarity and inexistent protection.
- Men may also feel pressure in the face of economic hardship resulting from the outbreak and the inability to work, causing tensions and conflict in the household, and possibly leading to violence.
- Disease outbreaks affect women and men differently, and epidemics make existing inequalities for women and girls and discrimination of other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, refugees and those in extreme poverty, worse. At the same time, the very services they require, including safety, security and access to justice services, are disrupted or reduced as resources are diverted to respond to the overall health crisis. In addition, life-saving care and



support to gender based violence survivors (i.e. clinical management of rape and mental health and psycho-social support) may be cut off in the health care response when health service providers are overburdened and preoccupied with handling COVID-19 cases.

As systems that protect women and girls, including community structures, may weaken or break down, specific measures should be implemented to protect women and girls from the risk of intimate partner violence, including by developing and disseminating appropriate prevention messages.

KEY MESSAGES

Target audience	Main message	Instructions to follow
Entire community	GBV prevention	If you are harmed or feel threatened, intimidated or harassed, don't stay silent and seek remote confidential support from toll-free helplines [add helpline number(s)]. You have the right to get help to make it stop and do not have to manage this on your own.
Entire community	GBV prevention	The state of emergency and its necessary restrictions are not an excuse for violence. Act to keep your community safe and say no to violence.
Entire community	GBV prevention	Staying at home because of COVID-19 causes tension. If you find yourself getting so angry or frustrated that you think a disagreement may turn into a fight, take a break and talk about the matter later when everyone is less angry.
Entire community	GBV prevention	If you or someone in your family are feeling threatened or in danger, call the family protection unit of the police. They are available to protect you even during a pandemic.



Men in the community	GBV prevention	Girls and women, especially pregnant women, have a special right to protection during emergencies. Treat every girl and every woman with the same respect you would want people to show your grandmother, mother, your wife, your sister or your daughter.
Men in the community	GBV prevention	Taking care of yourself will benefit your family and is a sign of strength and responsibility. If you feel overwhelmed and tense, seek help. It is normal to feel out of control and to worry how to provide for your family in this situation.
Children in the community	GBV prevention	Don't feel ashamed to ask for help. If you feel like talking about what you have experienced and things that bother you, this can be helpful, too. Toll-free helplines have trusted listeners for girls, boys, women and men of all ages. Call [insert helpline number(s)]
PwD	GBV prevention	If you or someone you know is facing difficulties because of a disability or an injury, help is available. The service providers listed below can help with accessing assistance and providing adapted devices. [Add details of service providers]
Entire community	MHPSS	It is OK if you feel worried or scared by the epidemic. Your feelings are a normal response to a difficult situation. Don't be ashamed to ask for help through toll-free helplines. [Add helpline number(s)]
Entire community	MHPSS	If you are having difficulty concentrating or sleeping, if you are having physical reactions such as headaches, or feeling anxious without a specific reason, these are actually very common responses to a difficult situation.
Entire community	MHPSS	It is easy to forget that in order to take care of others, you need to take good care of yourself, especially at a time when you may be isolated and deprived from your regular social activities. Focus on the things you did well, try to be patient with the changes in



		how you are feeling and reacting and do not hesitate to seek support on toll-free helplines. [Add helpline number(s)]
Entire community	MHPSS	Maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with family and friends by email and phone. Try to keep a regular routine and consistent schedule. This will also help your children to feel more secure.
Entire community	MHPSS	Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions. You will feel better when talking to someone or contacting a helpline. [Add helpline number(s)]
Entire community	MHPSS	Decrease the time watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting as this will increase your tension and worry. Rely on information from reliable sources.
Entire community	MHPSS	If you are feeling sick and show symptoms of COVID-19, consult a doctor immediately. Do not hide it, there is nothing to be ashamed of.
People in quarantine	MHPSS	If you are in quarantine, think about using social media and other forms of technology to set up a support group and to maintain social interactions.