

Consequences SGBV

Consequences

SGBV consequences can be multifaceted and can have major impact on adult or child survivors; families; and the community.

Consequences for Women

- Women can suffer **physical consequences** including: death; suicide or attempted suicide; serious injuries; injuries during pregnancy; unwanted early pregnancy; STIs including HIV/AIDS; and vulnerability to disease.
- The consequences of SGBV can also be **psychological** and these can include: acute stress, depression, distress, emotional numbness, lack of concentration, isolation, withdrawal, extreme disorientation, difficulties with intimate relations, etc.
- Women can also suffer **social consequences** which include: rejection by the family; family breakdown; social rejection and isolation; stigma; withdrawal from social and community life; and more.

Consequences for Men

- In conflict situations, sexual violence is inflicted on men as means of disempowerment, dominance and as a way to undermine their masculinity.
- The same physical, psychological and social consequences suffered by women above can also apply to male survivors of SGBV.

Consequences for Children

- Survivors of SGBV may vent their frustrations on their children and others.
- Children who grow up in violent homes learn that violence and aggression are acceptable ways of expressing emotions or resolving conflicts. It is in these ways that violence is reproduced and perpetuated.¹
- A child who has undergone or witnessed violence may become withdrawn, anxious or depressed on the one hand; on the other hand, the child may become aggressive and exert control over younger siblings or other children.²
- Young people are especially at risk of sexual abuse and this can have lasting consequences for their sexual and productive health. The costs can include unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, physical injury and trauma.³
- The below points highlight some reactions of children as a result of abuse categorized by age group:
 - **Under 5 years old:** regressive behavior, soiling, wetting, clingy, sleeplessness, nightmares, loss of new learned skills, minor illnesses, nail biting, crying.
 - **6-12 years old:** tearfulness, depression, sleep problems, poor concentration, restlessness, anxiety and fear, aches and pains, regression, aggression, repetitive play, not eating properly.
 - **Over 13 years old:** risk taking; hyperactive; substance abuse; defiance; no discipline; poor school work; sleep problems; anxiety; anger; social isolation; withdrawal; apathy; hopelessness; suicidal ideas; lack of trust; lack of concentration; lack of interest (e.g. school); and poor self-esteem.

¹ Causes and Effects of GBV. Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003. Available online at: <http://www.stopvaw.org>

² Gender-Based Violence: An Advocacy Guide for Grassroots Activists in Uganda. CARE Uganda, 2001

³ Ibid



Consequences for Families

- SGBV threatens family structures; children suffer emotional damage when they watch their mothers and sisters being battered; homes may break up, leaving the new female heads of household to struggle against increased poverty and negative social repercussions.⁴
- In families, SGBV creates an unpredictable and frightening environment. Children learn to fear the abuser, and they worry about the parent who is being abused.

Consequences for the Community

- Individuals who are abused – or who have been denied opportunity – cannot fully participate in community life. Their ability to share their energy, ideas, skills, talents and opinions with their families, communities, and so on is lost when their bodies and minds are damaged by SGBV.
- The community also pays a high price for SGBV. Businesses lose money due to the ill health of employees who are abused. Responding to SGBV including law enforcement, health services, court and legal proceedings, and social services requires both money and staff.⁵

⁴ Causes and Effects of SGBV. Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, 2003. Available online at: <http://www.stopvaw.org>

⁵ Gender-Based Violence: An Advocacy Guide for Grassroots Activists in Uganda. CARE Uganda, 2001