



STUDY GUIDE



ISLMUN

**UNITED
NATIONS
WOMEN**

THERE IS NO BETTER
TELL

Topic: Domestic Violence amidst the Pandemic

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UN Women is an organisation of the United Nations committed to working towards women empowerment, and was formulated to sharpen the impact of gender equality policies of the UN. The entity works directly with groups, organisations and leaders in different countries, advising them on methods through which they can create a more equal society in their spheres. In addition, it also facilitates technical support to countries to assist them in implementing said policies.

INTRODUCING THE COMMITTEE

UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gender inequality is pervasive, with women lacking access to decent employment and facing gender wage gaps. All around the world women and girls are routinely denied access to education and healthcare; they are under-represented in economic and political decision-making and suffer from violence and discrimination. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The main cause of the violence is the perpetrator him or herself: it is very important to keep in mind that a person who has been affected by gender-based violence is never responsible for the perpetrator's actions.

1. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Perhaps the most recognized form, physical abuse may include behaviors such as:

- Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking
- Burning
- Strangulation
- Damaging personal property

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- Refusing medical care and/or controlling medication
 - Coercing partner into substance abuse
 - Use of weapons

2.EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse occurs when an intimate partner seeks to control his/her loved one by:

- Name calling, insulting
- Blaming the partner for everything
- Extreme jealousy
- Intimidation
- Shaming, humiliating
- Isolation
- Controlling what the partner does and where the partner goes
- Stalking

3.SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is not about sex. It is about power, and includes any sexual behavior performed without a partner's consent. Examples include:

- Forcing a partner to have sex with other people (human trafficking)
- Pursuing sexual activity when the victim is not fully conscious or is afraid to say no
- Hurting partner physically during sex
- Coercing partner to have sex without protection / sabotaging birth control

4.TECHNOLOGICAL ABUSE

This form of abuse includes the use of technology to control and stalk a partner. Technological abuse can happen to people of all ages, but it is more common among teenagers who use technology and social media in interact in a manner often unmonitored by adults. Examples include:

- Hacking into a partner's email and personal accounts
- Using tracking devices in a partner's cell phone to monitor their location, phone calls and messages
- Monitoring interactions via social media
- Demanding to know partner's passwords

5.FINANCIAL ABUSE

Any behavior that maintains power and control over finances constitutes financial abuse. Examples include causing a partner to lose their job through direct and indirect means, such as:

- Inflicting physical harm or injury that would prevent the person from attending work

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- Harassing partner at their workplace
 - Controlling financial assets and effectively putting partner on an allowance
 - Damaging a partner's credit score

6.ABUSE BY IMMIGRATION STATUS

There are specific tactics of abuse that may be used against immigrant partners, including:

- Destroying immigration papers
- Restricting partner from learning English
- Threatening to hurt partner's family in their home country

Threatening to have partner deported

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Globally, 35 per cent of women have ever experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, or sexual violence by a non-partner. **This figure does not include sexual harassment. Some national studies show that the number can be as high as 70 per cent of women, and that rates of depression, having an abortion, and acquiring HIV are higher in women who have experienced this type of violence compared to women who have not.**
- Calls to helplines have increased five-fold in some countries as rates of reported intimate partner violence increase because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restricted movement, social isolation, and economic insecurity are increasing women's vulnerability to violence in the home around the world.
- By September 2020, 48 countries had integrated prevention and response to violence against women and girls into COVID-19 response plans, and **121 countries had adopted measures to strengthen services for women survivors of violence during the global crisis, but more efforts are urgently needed.**
- 137 women are killed by a member of their family every day. **It is estimated that of the 87,000 women who were intentionally killed in 2017 globally, more than half (50,000) were killed by intimate partners or family members. More than a third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner.**

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- Less than 40 per cent of the women who experience violence seek help of any sort. **In the majority of countries with available data on this issue, among women who do seek help, most look to family and friends and very few look to formal institutions, such as police and health services. Less than 10 per cent of those seeking help appealed to the police.**
 - At least 155 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, and 140 have laws on sexual harassment in the workplace. **However, even when laws exist, this does not mean they are always compliant with international standards and recommendations, or are implemented and enforced.**
 - Adult women account for nearly half (49 per cent) of all human trafficking victims detected globally. **Women and girls together account for 72 per cent, with girls representing more than three out of every four child trafficking victims. Most women and girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.**
 - In 2019, one in five women, aged 20–24 years, were married before the age of 18. **During the past decade, the global rate of child marriage has declined, with South Asia having the largest decline during this time. Today, the risk of child marriage is highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than one in three women, aged 20–24 years, were married before the age of 18. Child marriage often results in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupts schooling, and increases a girl’s risk of experiencing domestic violence.**
 - At least 200 million women and girls, aged 15–49 years, have undergone female genital mutilation in 31 countries where the practice is concentrated. **Half of these countries are in West Africa. There are still countries where female genital mutilation is almost universal, where at least 9 in 10 girls and women, aged 15–49 years, have been cut.**
 - 15 million adolescent girls worldwide, aged 15–19 years, have experienced forced sex. **In the vast majority of countries, adolescent girls are most at risk of forced sex (forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts) by a current or former husband, partner, or boyfriend. Based on data from 30 countries, only one per cent have ever sought professional help.**
 - School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls. **Globally, one in three students, aged 11–15, have been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the past month, with girls and boys**

equally likely to experience bullying. While boys are more likely to experience physical bullying than girls, girls are more likely to experience psychological bullying, and they report being made fun of because of how their face or body looks more frequently than boys.

- One in 10 women in the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15. **This included having received unwanted and/or offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or offensive and/or inappropriate advances on social networking sites. The risk is highest among young women aged 18–29 years.** In the Middle East and North Africa, 40–60 per cent of women have experienced street-based sexual harassment. **In the multi-country study, women said the harassment was mainly sexual comments, stalking or following, or staring or ogling. Between 31 and 64 per cent of men said they had carried out such acts. Younger men, men with more education, and men who experienced violence as children were more likely to engage in street sexual harassment.**
- Across five regions, 82 per cent of women parliamentarians reported having experienced some form of psychological violence while serving their terms. **This included remarks, gestures and images of a sexist or humiliating sexual nature, threats, and mobbing. Women cited social media as the main channel of this type of violence, and nearly half (44 per cent) reported receiving death, rape, assault, or abduction threats towards them or their families. Sixty-five per cent had been subjected to sexist remarks, primarily by male colleagues in parliament.**

INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

The extent of the problem:

Domestic Violence rates have increased globally by 20% during the COVID-19 pandemic. Women and children living in abusive family systems have been locked up in their homes with their abusers during quarantine. From Germany to China most countries have witnessed an alarming increase in domestic violence cases. 90% of the causes of violence [in this period] are related to the Covid-19 epidemic. Those alarming figures log only cases where women are able to seek help; many cannot make calls because they fear being overheard by abusive partners, or are stopped from leaving home. In Italy activists said calls to helplines had dropped sharply, but instead they were receiving desperate text messages and emails.

In some regions, the number of calls dropped by more than 50%. Experts in the field knew that rates of domestic violence had not decreased, but rather that victims were unable to safely connect with services. Though restrictions on movement have been lifted in most regions, the pandemic and its effects rage on, and there is widespread agreement that areas that have seen a drop in caseloads are likely to experience a second surge. This pandemic has reinforced important truths: inequities related to social determinants of health are magnified during a crisis, and sheltering in place does not inflict equivalent hardship on all people.

One in 4 women and one in 10 men experience domestic violence, and violence can take various forms: it can be physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological.² People of all races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic classes, and religions experience domestic violence. However, such violence has a disproportionate effect on communities of color and other marginalized groups. Economic instability, unsafe housing, neighborhood violence, and lack of safe and stable child care and social support can worsen already tenuous situations. The context of a pandemic that is causing substantial isolation. Economic independence is a critical factor in violence prevention. For many people who experience domestic violence, the financial entanglement with an abusive partner is too convoluted to sever without an alternative source of economic support. The pandemic has exacerbated financial entanglement by causing increased job loss and unemployment, particularly among women of color, immigrants, and workers without a college education. The public health restrictions put in place to combat the spread of the virus have also reduced access to alternative sources of housing: shelters and hotels have reduced their capacity or shut down, and travel restrictions have limited people's access to safe havens. Shelters have made valiant efforts to ease crowding and to help residents move into hotels, extended-stay apartments, or the homes of family members and friends. Though some restrictions have been lifted, many shelters remain closed or are operating at reduced capacity, which creates challenges for people who need alternative housing arrangements. Closures of schools and child care facilities have added to the stress at home. Virtual learning often requires the involvement and supervision of parents and guardians. Some families don't have access to a reliable Internet connection, and child care obligations may fall to friends, neighbors, or family members while parents work or attempt to find work. Some parents are considered essential workers and cannot work from home, and others are required to work virtually. The added stress of balancing work, child care, and children's education has led to a rise in child abuse. Mandated reporters, such as teachers, child care providers, and clinicians, also have fewer interactions with children and families and fewer opportunities to assess, recognize, and report signs of abuse than they did before the pandemic.

Most people who experience domestic violence don't seek help. Medical professionals have an opportunity to identify these patients in health care settings and to provide counseling and connect people with social services. Medical offices can be safe places for patients to disclose abuse. Physical examination findings; a patient's behavior during or while discussing physically intimate components of a breast, pelvic, or rectal examination; or an aggressive partner can be warning signs of possible abuse. In settings such as emergency departments and labor and delivery suites, policies mandate screening for abuse when patients are alone. Evaluation in a clinic or hospital setting permits immediate intervention, including involvement of social

workers, safety planning, and a review of services available to victims and their dependents. Even this opportunity has often been absent in the Covid-19 era. As offices canceled and rescheduled nonurgent clinic visits and moved to telemedicine platforms, safely screening patients for IPV became more difficult. Not only might patients live in areas with unreliable Internet or cellular service, but abusers might be listening in on conversations, leaving patients unable to disclose escalating abuse at home.

Why do some countries have a larger number of domestic violence cases compared to others? Surveys measured whether people thought a husband or partner was justified in beating his wife or partner if she goes out without telling him, argues with him, neglects the children, suspects her of being unfaithful, refuses to have sex, or burns the food.

On average, 36 percent of people thought it was justified in at least one of these situations. Attitudes towards domestic violence varied significantly across the 49 countries with only three percent of people justifying it in the Dominican Republic, in the Caribbean, compared to 83 per cent in Timor-Leste, South East Asia.

Overall, the societal acceptance of domestic violence was higher in South Asia with nearly half the population (47 per cent) justifying it and in Sub-Saharan Africa (38 per cent), compared with Latin America and the Caribbean (12 per cent), Europe and Central Asia (29 per cent).

In 36 of the 49 countries, mainly in South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, women were more likely to justify the behaviour than men.

Country-level factors, especially the political environment, played an important role in the acceptance of domestic violence. For example, this attitude of acceptance was more prevalent in countries which have experienced frequent and severe political conflict within the past five years. Furthermore, the societal acceptance of domestic violence among men was lower in countries with more democratic regimes.

WHAT DOES UN WOMEN DO TO HELP?

UN Women works to prevent and respond to violence, to increase access to services for survivors and to make private and public spaces safer for women and girls. At the global level it works to advance international policies providing support to the United Nations General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, and ensuring that the post-2015 development agenda includes specific targets to end violence against women and girls.

Agreements at the international level provide the basis for UN Women to support countries in adopting and implementing laws and policies aligned with such international standards. To do this, it partners with Governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations and others institutions to build capacity to prevent and respond to violence and to raise awareness of its

causes and consequences.

It provides guidance on preventing violence against women and girls with a focus on changing the attitudes and behaviours which tolerate such violence and perpetuate gender inequality. UN Women does this by identifying good practices and sharing them with relevant stakeholders. It also provides guidance on how to improve the quality of and access to essential services.

Expanding Access to Services: Although progress is being made globally, many women and girls who experience physical and sexual violence still lack access to quality services. Such services include keeping women and girls safe, providing health care for their injuries, responding to their sexual and reproductive health needs, including provision of post-rape care and counselling, and facilitating their access to the police and justice system. UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA and other UN agencies, has developed the Essential Services Programme to improve the quality of and access to services by reaching a global understanding on the range of services and responses required and the corresponding standards for providing such services.

UN Women, in partnership with UN-Habitat and UNICEF, implements the Safe Cities Initiative with a presence in over 20 cities, including New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Kigali, Port Moresby, Quito, Dublin and Sakai. The goal is to reach 35 cities by 2017.

Improving knowledge and evidence: The Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls features detailed guidance on how to implement laws, policies and programmes with access to promising practices, case studies and recommended programming tools from around the world (www.endvawnow.org).

Supporting innovative approaches to ending violence: UN Women manages the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women on behalf of the UN System to provide support to innovative approaches to stem and prevent the pandemic of violence. Since its inception, the fund has provided grants to 426 initiatives in 136 countries, amounting to a total of USD 116 million.

Advocacy: UN Women manages the Secretary-General's campaign UNiTE to end violence against women, which amongst its many activities initiated Orange Day, proclaiming every 25th of the month as a day to raise awareness. It has garnered support for other high-profile initiatives from celebrities, including sports stars in Europe, to raise the profile of the issue.

COMMIT, an advocacy initiative launched by UN Women in 2012, has prompted 60 countries from every region to make concrete pledges to take action on ending violence against women.

Education for prevention: Putting young people at the heart of prevention efforts, UN Women and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have developed a non-formal curriculum to end violence against women and girls, designed for various age groups ranging from 5 to 25 years.

Policies against domestic violence which are successful:

Amsterdam has youth and family centres in each municipality. These easily accessible centres offer an integrated, inter-professional and multidisciplinary approach to helping families, including parent training. Australia's approach includes the creation of social or community networks and enhancing parent-child attachment.

Brazil created the Criança Feliz parent coaching programme in 2017, to reach four million pregnant women and children by 2020. Social workers conduct home visits to very poor families to help them improve the parent-child relationship early on. This programme is based on Unicef's Care for Child Development intervention, which encourages families to be sensitive and responsive, building stronger relationships with children and stimulating early learning through play and communication.

What actions are required during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of preventive measures and action plans to combat domestic violence. Both short- and long-term responses as well as a multidisciplinary approach are required.

First, it is important to have clear prevention strategies and application plans at the governmental level . The amplification of risk factors for violence against women and children and difficulties in accessing protective resources are more common in male dominant environments . This highlights the importance of women's presence in decision-making processes as well as the importance of coordination and communication for combatting domestic violence during confinement. It is essential to find new and innovative ways to provide support to victims through multiple platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also important to bolster violence-related first responder systems. This may include an increase in staff, temporary operations, or training employees to detect and intervene in domestic violence cases. Security- and privacy-related measures must also be taken. Preventive measures for domestic violence must include the expansion of free and easy-to-access national helpline services that are available 24/7 . A coding system for reporting domestic violence without alerting the abuser should also be set up. The expansion of protection services for victims in the current context should be provided, e.g. 'pop-up' groceries . Similarly, it is essential to ensure access to domestic violence shelters and temporary housing for victims .

Guaranteeing the victim's economic safety and strengthening social support for victims are also necessary. It is important to help victims gain economic stability, secure housing and assistance

services . In case of immediate need, direct help in the form of cash or food must be provided. Another key measure for combating domestic violence is to ensure that the justice system is still working and able to respond to cases during lockdown periods. Public awareness campaigns via multiple platforms (e.g. mass media, television, radio, newspaper, social media) are necessary to raise the visibility of the crisis and to urge authorities to take action. These campaigns are also a beneficial way to show the victims that help and support are still available and to inform the public that the restrictions for abusers still apply .Physical isolation is an important risk factor that should be mitigated by keeping in contact with friends and families through digital platforms (e.g. phone calls, SMS, social media, video calls) during confinement. Strengthening community support is another key factor for combating domestic violence. Therefore, it is important to encourage informal support systems and reinforce online communication Protecting potential victims also requires inhibiting the risk factors associated with violent behaviours during confinement, such as banning alcohol sales or limiting access to deadly weapons. It is also necessary to provide a safe environment for frontline healthcare workers and to protect them from violence Many governments and non-profit organizations have already taken important measures to combat domestic violence during lockdown periods. It is important to emphasize that action and policy programs have been widely implemented in countries with high economic statuses. Many low-income countries have not addressed this issue and have taken no actions due to their limited budget and resources. This reality reflects another challenge regarding domestic violence.

Questions a Resolution must answer.

1. What are short term solutions to remove victims from abusive settings? Keep in mind the restrictions posed by the pandemic as well social factors.
2. What are the long term solutions which work on rooting out domestic violence permanently?
3. How to tackle the lack of evidence which is common to cases of domestic violence?

How to provide safe mechanisms for victims to report abuse while in lockdown with their abusers?

