



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Do's, Don'ts & What to say to GBV survivors

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any harmful act **against a person based on social differences between males and females**. It includes acts that cause physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats, force, and other limits to liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private. GBV may affect men, women or children, but it mostly affects women and girls in all societies.



GBV may affect the **health, mental health, security or financial situation of the survivor** and the person can be directed to the relevant support services.

****Violence is never the fault of the person that experiences it and all persons should be treated and supported with respect.****

DO'S:

- ✓ **DO know the available services** in your area and share accurate information.
- ✓ **DO listen** and ask about the needs and threats.
- ✓ **DO ask** if there is someone trusted that could support.
- ✓ **DO ask for permission** if you contact someone on a survivor's behalf (i.e. Police or organisation), unless it is a life-threatening situation.
- ✓ **DO respect** the right of the person to make their own decisions, but consider that children may not be able to make their own decisions.
- ✓ **DO treat** any information shared **as a secret**.
- ✓ **DO speak in a supportive way** and reassure the survivor **that violence is never their fault**.

DON'TS:

- ✗ **DO NOT provide false information** or make false promises.
- ✗ **DO NOT offer your own advice**, make comparisons with others, or assume you know what is best.
- ✗ **DO NOT try to mediate, to take sides** or to find a solution with the person who caused harm.
- ✗ **DO NOT share any information** about the incident or about the person to anyone, except if you have the consent of the survivor.
- ✗ **DO NOT ask for details or try to learn** what happened later.
- ✗ **DO NOT doubt, judge** or contradict what someone tells you.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY:

- ✓ “I believe you.”
- ✓ “Our conversation will stay between us.”
- ✓ “I will try to support you as much as I can, but I am not a professional and will inform you on where you can find help.”
- ✓ “How can I support you?”
- ✓ “What happened was not your fault.”
- ✓ “I am sorry that this happened to you.”
- ✓ “Does this place feel safe for you? Is there another place where you would feel more comfortable having this conversation?”
- ✓ Thank you for sharing this with me.”

AVOID:

- ✗ “It could have been worse. You are lucky that something more awful did not happen.”
- ✗ “It is not your fault, but maybe you shouldn’t have done something to provoke it.”



AVAILABLE SERVICES FOR GBV SURVIVORS

Ask the survivor about **their immediate needs**. Remember that if the person has experienced sexual violence in the last 72 hours or physical abuse, you should tell them to visit the nearest hospital as soon as possible. In 72 hours or three days since the incident, there is still time to get treatment to prevent HIV infection and to help prevent pregnancy.

If **they feel afraid and unsafe**, please encourage them to contact the Police (number: 100) or one of the helplines below for support. Violence against anyone, woman, man or child, is a criminal offence punished by the Greek law and victims of violence can be protected by the Greek state. **If you are a witness to an act of violence of any type**, you are obliged by law to call the Police directly while the incident is taking place, and police intervention might be lifesaving. **For violence against persons under 18 years old**, you are obliged by law to inform the Police, not only while the incident is occurring.



HELPLINES

Police 100	Ambulance 166	Emergency 112
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- **Violence against Women 15900:** SOS Helpline of GSDFPGE providing support to women (*Greek, English*)
- **Trafficking 1109:** A21, legal and psychosocial support to persons at risk of trafficking and persons who have fallen victims of trafficking (*interpretation in more than 200 languages is available*)
- **Emergency Social Assistance 197:** EKKA Protection Helpline, Information, Guidance, Psychosocial Support and Referral (*Greek, English*)
- **LGBTQI+ 6971693446:** Emantes Helpline (WhatsApp), Information and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) refugees in Greece (*operates mostly through text and Google translate, but interpretation is available in different languages, if requested*)



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