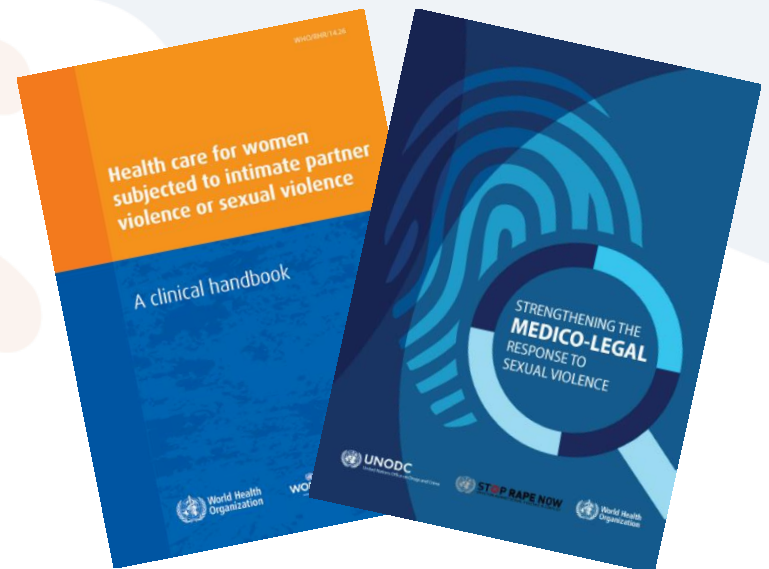


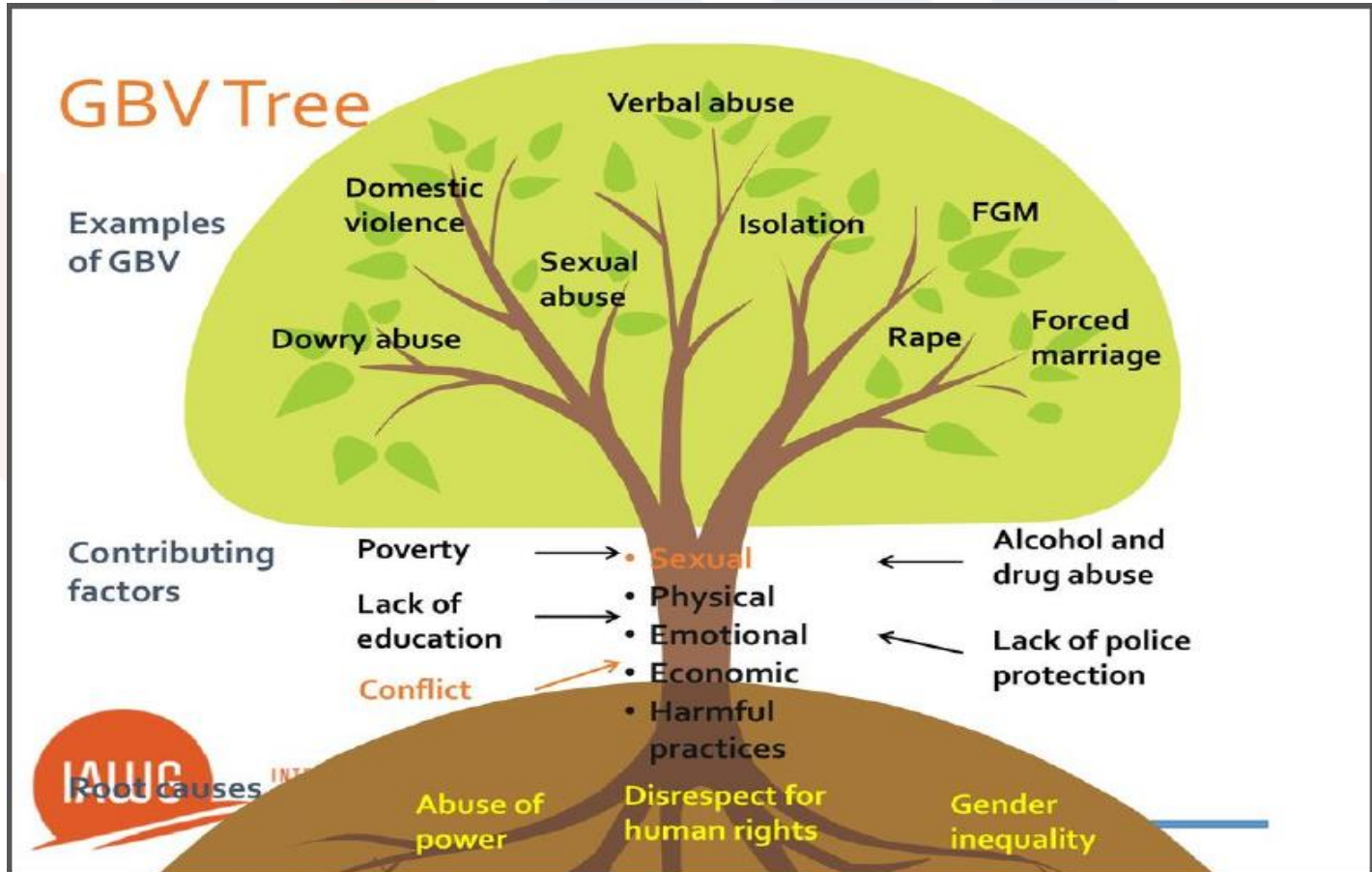
Caring for women
subjected to violence:
A WHO curriculum for
training health-care
providers

Session 9

Clinical care for
survivors of sexual
assault/rape, part 1:
history-taking and
examination



Gender Based Violence

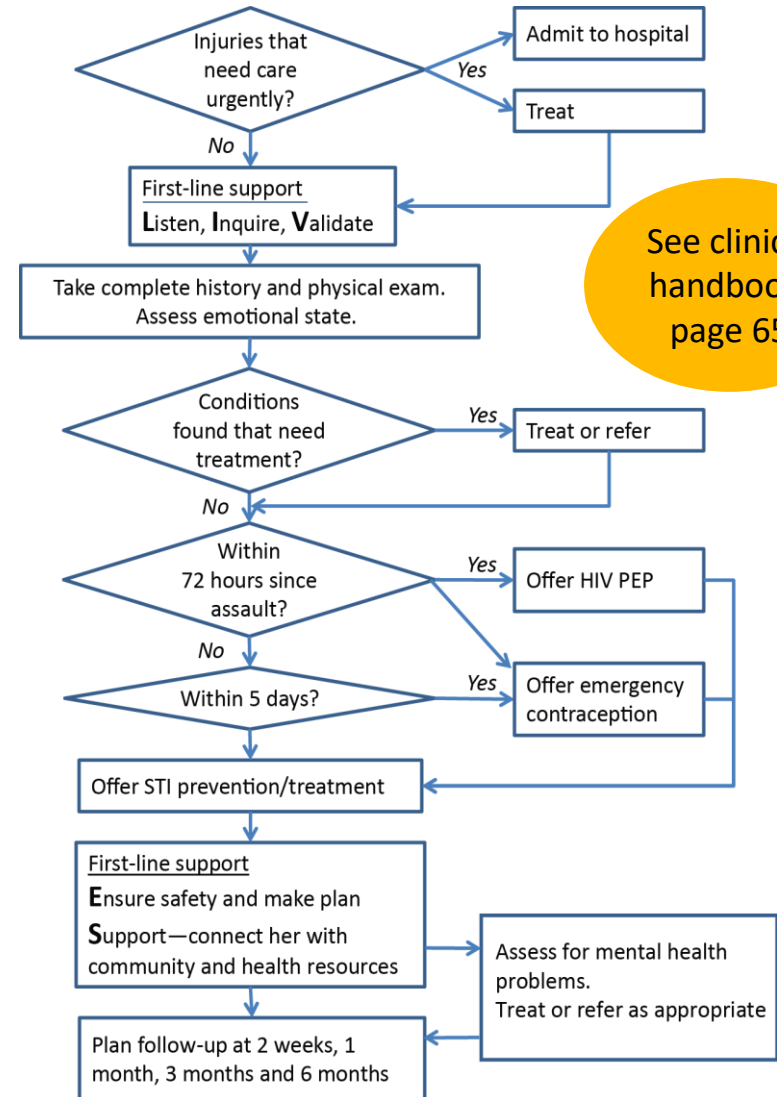


Summary protocol: Pathway for initial care after sexual assault

Immediately refer patient with injuries that need urgent care.

Otherwise:

1. First-line support: **Listen, Inquire, Validate**
2. Take history, examine, assess emotional state, PLUS do full forensic exam if needed
3. Treat any physical injuries
4. Offer PEP for HIV prevention (within 72 hours)
5. Offer emergency contraception (within 5 days)
6. Offer STI prophylaxis/presumptive treatment
7. First-line support part 2: **Enhance safety, facilitate Support**
8. Assess mental health, discuss self-care & plan follow-up visits



See clinical handbook, page 65

Overview

1. Take the history
2. Prepare for physical examination
3. Conduct head-to-toe physical examination
4. Conduct forensic examination – when & what to tell her
5. Treat

General tips

- **Maintain respectful attitude**, calm voice, eye contact as culturally appropriate
- **Ask for consent separately** for history-taking, examination, forensic evidence collection and for reporting/sharing of evidence
- **Avoid distraction** and interruption
- **Take time** to collect all needed information

History-taking

Purposes

- To **guide exam** so injuries can be found and treated
- To **assess risk** of pregnancy, STIs, HIV
- To **guide specimen collection and documentation**

Four parts to history

- General medical information
- History of assault
- Gynaecological history
- Assessment of mental state

Taking history of assault

- ✓ Review any papers
- ✓ Explain why asking: to provide best care
- ✓ Ask **open-ended** questions
- ✓ Listen **empathically**
- ✓ Let her **speak in her own words** at her own pace
- ✓ Assure **confidentiality**

Avoid

- ✗ asking questions **already answered**
- ✗ forcing her to talk about the assault

Date of incident: ____ / ____ / ____ DD MM YY		Time of incident:			
Could you tell me what happened, please?					
Has something like this happened before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
If "yes": When was that? ____ / ____ / ____ DD MM YY					
Was the same person responsible this time? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Physical violence		Describe type and location on body			
Type (beating, biting, pulling hair, strangling, etc.)					
Use of restraints					
Use of weapon(s)					
Drugs/alcohol involved					
In cases of sexual assault	Penetration	Yes	No	Not sure	Describe (oral, vaginal, anal)
	Penis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Finger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other (describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Ejaculation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Condom used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Form, handbook pages 89-98

Assess mental state

	Ask	Observe (but don't judge)
Appearance & behaviour		Clothing, hair Agitated, distracted, restless? Signs of substance abuse
Mood	How do you feel?	For example, calm, crying, angry, anxious, very sad, without expression
Speech		For example, silent, speaking clearly or with difficulty, confused, speaking very quickly or slowly
Thoughts	Have you thought about hurting yourself? Do bad thoughts or memories keep coming back? Do you see the event over and over in your mind?	

Discuss reporting to the police

If...	Then tell her...
...the law requires you to report to police	...you will be doing this, what you must report & to whom
...she wants to go to the police	...forensic evidence must be collected ...what evidence collection involves
...she has not decided whether to go to the police	...evidence can be collected and held

For children & adolescents

- Assess implications of reporting for health & safety
- Explain obligation to report & limits of confidentiality
- Attention to confidentiality if care-giver is perpetrator

Prepare for the exam

1. Communicate

- ✓ Step-wise informed consent
- ✓ Specific support desired? (for example, friend, family member)
- ✓ Choice of sex of provider

2. Have an observer present

- ✓ Preferably a trained support person or female health worker
- ✓ Introduce and explain role of observer
- ✓ Besides the observer, keep the number of people to a minimum

Physical exam: Communicate

- Explain **purpose** of physical exam
- Women may be **sensitive** to being examined/touched
- Assure her that **she is in control**
- **Look** at the woman before you touch her
- At each step, **tell her** what you are going to do, and **ask permission** first
- **Ask often** if she has any questions and if you can proceed

When should a forensic exam be done?

Only when:

- ✓ Forensic science **lab** is available
- ✓ Woman has come **within 7 days** after the rape
- ✓ Woman wants to go to the **police** or reporting is mandatory
- ✓ Trained health-care **provider** is available
- Only medico-legal evidence that can be collected, stored and analyzed should be gathered
- Hymen is a poor marker of penetrative sexual activity or virginity in post-pubertal girls

End Virginitv Testing



Health care professionals must never perform or recommend virginitv testing.