

## Participant Handout: What Is Gender-Based Violence?

(From The ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth and Promundo. 2008. *Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Transformation: The Group Education Manual*. New York, NY and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: The ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth and Promundo, 306.

[http://www.acquireproject.org/archive/files/7.0\\_engage\\_men\\_as\\_partners/7.2\\_resources/7.2.3\\_tools/Group\\_Education\\_Manual\\_final.pdf](http://www.acquireproject.org/archive/files/7.0_engage_men_as_partners/7.2_resources/7.2.3_tools/Group_Education_Manual_final.pdf).)

In many settings, most laws and policies use “family violence” or “domestic violence” to indicate acts of violence against women and children by an intimate partner, usually a man. However, there has been an increasing shift toward the use of “gender-based violence” (GBV) or “violence against women” to encompass the broad range of acts of violence that women suffer from intimate partners, family members, and other individuals outside the family. These terms also draw focus to the fact that gender dynamics and norms are intricately tied to the use of violence against women (Velzeboer et al. 2003).

Below is a definition of gender-based violence and violence against women based on the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993:

...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring **in public or in private life**.

...shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to the following:

- Physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring **in the family**, including battering, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, nonspousal violence, and violence related to exploitation
- Physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring **within the general community**, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution
- Physical, sexual, and psychological violence **perpetrated or condoned by the state and by institutions**, wherever it occurs.

For reference, the WHO definition of violence is: “The intentional use of physical force or power, **threatened or actual**, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

### Reference

Velzeboer M, Ellsberg M, Clavel Arcas C, García-Moreno C. 2003. *Violence against Women: The Health Sector Responds*. Washington, DC: Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and World Health Organization (WHO).

## Sources

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World Health Organization (WHO). 2018. Definition and typology of violence. WHO website.

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[http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.36\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf).