

**EQUALLY SAFE IN PRACTICE FRAMEWORK
UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE
REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION GUIDE**



knowledge, skills, change

WHAT IS THE FORMAT AND PURPOSE OF THE REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION?

The discussion is envisaged as a follow up to the 'Understanding Sexual Violence' learning e-module. This reflective discussion will focus on linking and embedding key concepts around sexual violence as a form of violence against women (VAWG) and as such the consequence of the power imbalance in society, the forms of sexual abuse can take, increased prevalence on marginalised groups in society, ways our attitudes and actions can all make a difference.

Please refer to [Workshop Facilitation Guide](#) for more information on facilitation principles, your role as a facilitator and ways of tailoring content. Below are suggested reflective questions and key points to cover and be mindful during the discussions.

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- What do you think when you hear the term 'sexual violence'? What forms can sexual violence take? Do you feel more aware of how issues of sexual violence might be relevant to you in your work?
- Think about attitudes and reactions associated with victims/survivors of sexual violence? What are some of the steps you can take to tackle harmful stereotypes in your workplace?
- How common are things like sexist, racist or homophobic language, jokes about rape or sexual violence, or offensive comments about women, in your workplace? Are there ways you feel you could help to challenge them?
- What does consent mean (in the context of sexual activity), and why do you think it's important? What are some of the circumstances in which a person cannot give their consent?
- Why do you think some victims/survivors choose not to disclose their experience/ask for help and support?
- What do you think some of impacts of sexual violence might be on victims/survivors? Who/which groups do you think are at the most likely to be affected by sexual violence?
- Are you aware of the VAWG policies in your organisation? Does your organisation set a clear and safe pathway for support?
- Would you be able to help someone who has experienced sexual violence, appropriate to your role? What are some simple steps you could take to make them feel supported?

- In what circumstances might you need to tell someone about what victim/survivor has shared with you? What concerns do you think they may have about you sharing information, and how can you address these concerns?

KEY POINTS:

- As well as rape and sexual assault, sexual violence can include things like sexual harassment, sharing or threatening to share someone's intimate images without their consent, threatening to rape someone, or exploiting someone who is vulnerable by giving them money, drugs or a place to stay in exchange for sex.
- Although sexual violence can affect anyone, research consistently shows women and girls are most affected by sexual violence. That's why we often hear sexual violence included as a form of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- Some girls and women face particularly high levels of sexual violence, or face sexual violence combined with other types of discrimination related to their identity such as age, race, immigration status, LGBTQ+ identity, and/or disability.
- There are simple steps that can make a person feel heard and supported:
 - **Listen.**
 - **Believe.**
 - **Take what you're hearing seriously.**
 - **Tell them they are not to blame.**
 - **Offer safety, space and support.**
- You may need to take action at some stage, for example, to share information about any child protection concerns but it's important to focus on listening and understanding to what the person needs.
- If you do need to share information, it's important to let the person know what you need to share and why, and to give them as much choice and control in how this is done as you can.
- It's important not to suggest the person is in any way to blame for what happened. The responsibility for sexual violence always lies with the perpetrator – it's they who make the choice to perpetrate violence.

