

**CHURCH RESOURCE MANUAL
AGAINST
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
&
PROMOTING GENDER JUSTICE**

CHURCH RESOURCE MANUAL ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER JUSTICE

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CHURCH RESOURCE MANUAL ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER JUSTICE

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INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE

This book has different Bible studies, chosen by individuals who have worked on contextual Bible studies and are aware of the issues of sexual violence and gender justice that churches are grappling with in 21st Century South Africa. A self-discovery tool helps you identify which areas you may benefit from addressing first. If you score low in a particular area during the self-discovery, you can then use the relevant Bible study to look at this issue in more detail. The Bible studies follow a clear layout. You may wish to photocopy the self-discovery pages and Bible study pages to give to others in the group.

Objective: to equip churches to have a positive impact in preventing and responding to sexual violence in their church and community.

The **aim of the resource** is to provide information and tools to enable individuals, local churches and communities to:

- create an awareness of sexual violence and its impact
- explore what the Bible says about it and how its teaching can be applied
- identify if sexual violence happens in their own church and community
- understand their role and responsibility in relation to sexual violence
- create 'safe' environments in churches for survivors of sexual violence
- advocate for appropriate support for survivors as they struggle to come to terms with the consequences of sexual violence

Why is this resource important?

Sexual violence and gender-based violence are forms of violence that occur when an individual uses their power against individuals who are often more vulnerable. Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act. This includes rape and/or physically forcing anyone to have sex or perform sexual activities. Violence can happen within marriages, homes, churches and communities. Violence can be caused by someone known to the survivor or by a complete stranger. Violence can be experienced by anyone, regardless of ethnicity, age or social standing.

There is often shame and guilt felt as well as fear of stigma, discrimination and further violence, which leads to the issue not being reported or spoken of openly. It is important to create an environment in which both men, women, girls and boys feel able to speak about these issues and share their own personal experiences. This resource seeks to empower all members of the church and community and enable them to understand the issues together.

Introduction to gender

Gender is a term used in speaking about men and women and the biological differences between them. Gender is also the way society has defined human beings and their roles. In this way, different behaviour and qualities are thought of as specific to or appropriate for one or other gender. For example a culture and society may say that women should be compassionate, gentle and nurturing, while men

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should be forceful and strong and take leadership. *But is this always true for all men and women in all cultures?* It is important to understand that gender as a construct is not static or monolithic but dynamic and changes with time and circumstances. Therefore, gender as an identity refers to the way an individual perceive themselves as male or female or both or even none.

Unequal power relations

Men and women relate in different ways, experiencing power differently in their relationships. These different power relations occur within the church too, as can be clear in the way particular Bible passages are taught. It is important to note there are conflicting messages in the Bible on the issue of gender roles, for example, in the verses below:

- In Galatians 3:28, the opposite is demonstrated where the full equality of women is affirmed: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all equal in Christ Jesus.'
- 1 Timothy 2:11–12: 'A woman must be a learner, listening quietly and with due submission. I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer over man; she should be quiet.'

Unfortunately, relationships between men and women are not equal, because most societies give men more power over women. These influence shape the way women and men relate to one another in society. Individuals in positions of power can abuse their power leading to psychological, emotional and physical violence. For example, a teacher may entice a student to have sex with him in exchange for good grades.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence. Sexual violence is one of the most destructive and yet least-recognised human rights abuses in the world. As many as one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way – most often by someone she knows, including by her husband or another male family member. It is important to know that sexual violence is more often experienced by women and children, however men can also experience sexual violence.

Sexual violence refers to any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, psychological and emotional harm.

Sexual violence refers to “any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including but not restricted to: rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage / relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and ritual abuse. Sexual violence can be perpetrated by a complete stranger, or by someone known and even trusted, such as a friend,

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colleague, family member, partner or ex-partner.”¹ It is a form of gender based violence as in too often it is directed on an individual because of their gender or sex or sexual orientation.

Sexual violence happens when one person (the perpetrator) abuses the power that they have over another person (the survivor or victim), in a sexual way. In most instances, this takes place in a private or isolated location where there are no witnesses. Evidence of an attack can be blood stains, semen or any physical injuries from the attack. The survivor can experience physical, mental and emotional wounds from a sexual attack.

In most communities, there are very limited resources available to support survivors after the trauma has occurred. If there are no witnesses to the sexual attack, then the survivor may feel that no one will believe them if they report the matter to the police.

It is important for the church and community to understand more about sexual violence and what can cause attacks to happen. The survivor is **NEVER** to blame for the attack. Survivors require care and support as they seek to recover from the trauma. In some countries, sexual violence is a criminal offence and it is important that survivors are supported so they feel able to report the attack to the police and local authorities if this is the case.

Only by discussing sexual violence openly will individuals understand that sexual violence is not acceptable and see that it is possible to prevent attacks from happening.

Examples

Anyone can fall prey to sexual violence and it can take place in many different settings. Examples of sexual violence can include rape, unwanted sexual advances, forced marriage/abortion and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

- **Inter-personal violence:** sexual violence can happen within a marriage or relationship. Such instances are often hidden because they happen within the home, away from public view. This can often be a difficult cycle to break, even if the survivor wants the violence to stop.
- **Harmful cultural practices:** some cultural rites of passage or practices can be harmful. Culture is very important but, if a practice is harmful, it is important to observe closely and try and suggest alternative practices. An example of this may be female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)
- **Stranger violence:** violence carried out by someone who is not known to the survivor

¹Rape Crisis England and Wales, “rape and sexual violence,” <http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/> [18 Nov. 14].

Effects

The effects of sexual violence can be both visible and invisible, affecting people from all parts of the community. Sexual violence can happen anywhere within the community, and to anyone. Sexual violence leaves its victims with long-term psychological and physical trauma, results in damaged relationships within families and communities, and is found within communities in all contexts, including those experiencing conflict.

NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

This book takes a look at many passages from the Bible in order to help Christians gain helpful insights into the impact of sexual violence on our communities and churches, and to suggest ways we can respond.

Using this book – the role of the facilitator

These Bible studies can be used by individuals but more learning is likely to come if the studies are used in small groups such as Bible study groups, Mothers' Union meetings, youth groups or other church groups.

These studies are designed for group discussion and learning. They do not require there to be a 'teacher'. Instead, a facilitator is needed. A good facilitator can help to create a relaxed and open atmosphere where people feel safe and can share their personal thoughts and experiences. The facilitator should seek to build up relationships within the study group. This helps sensitive or difficult issues to be raised and discussed.

The facilitator is likely to be in some kind of leadership role within the church. However, the pastor or minister may not be the best person to facilitate these studies. People might expect them to 'teach' and provide the 'right' answers. The facilitator needs to be comfortable with discussing openly issues that people often shy away from; sex, for example, is not often discussed openly in a group.

The facilitator may require additional support throughout the use of this process, as they are providing support to participants who have experienced sexual violence personally. It may be that the facilitator is reliving their own experiences throughout the sessions.

The structure of this book

This book has a clear layout. Everyone starts by completing the self-discovery tool: this highlights the areas of which people may have limited knowledge or understanding. Each of the self-discovery sections are linked to a Bible study. Ideas are suggested for practical responses, for individuals and churches, but these are by no means exhaustive. There are no doubt many other possible responses. It is important at all times to make sure that survivors are included in planning the response so that it meets their needs properly.

*'Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them.
Start with what they know. Build with what they have.
But with the best leaders, when the work is done,
the task accomplished, the people will say,
"We have done this ourselves."
Lao Tsu, China (700 BC)*

Facilitating group discussions

Well-led group discussions can allow deeper issues to come to the surface and be discussed openly in a more productive way than through a number of individual conversations. Ensuring that all the community have the opportunity to participate is very important and a real skill.

Facilitation is about...

Ensuring:

- everyone has a voice
- everyone is valued for their contribution

Enabling:

- each person to discover their potential
- everyone to work together to tackle common problems

Guidelines for facilitating discussions on sensitive topics

Sexual violence is a sensitive topic and it is important for the facilitator to create the right environment for people to discuss the issue. Consider the following tips when facilitating groups:

- Be aware of the culture of the group. Be aware that some issues may be difficult to talk about openly or in mixed groups.
- When introducing a sensitive topic, think about different ways to present it to the participants, such as through using a role play, telling a story, showing some pictures to demonstrate a problem or asking groups to discuss particular issues. Some people may find it easier to talk about their experiences as if it was a story about someone else. Perhaps suggest that no names are used to enable confidentiality to be maintained.
- Consider breaking up large groups into smaller groups of five or six people. This may need to be done on the basis of gender and age (for example, a group of men who are over 18 years old).
- Nominate a leader for each group who is confident enough to give feedback to the larger group if necessary.
- Ask groups to agree on ground rules so that each person feels free to share their ideas.
- Where possible, ask groups to record people's feedback on paper – through pictures or words. This is a useful record of discussions. Be sensitive to the literacy levels within the group, try and ensure inclusion of everyone regardless of whether they can read and write.
- Use different techniques to make sure one person does not always talk too much. For example, a person can only speak when holding a certain object.
- Ask small groups to present and share their discussions with the wider group using drawings and role play. This enables others to hear their thoughts.
- Try and summarise what has been said frequently, for example after each group has spoken to the wider group. Check that everyone has understood what has been shared.

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- Ensure there are plenty of breaks and fun activities to relieve any tension from the sensitive discussions.

Creating a 'safe' space

It is important to create a space where people feel free to discuss their understanding of sexual violence and talk openly about their experiences. Sexual violence is a traumatic experience and it may take a long time for survivors' trauma to heal. It may take time to create an environment where survivors feel accepted and listened to. It is therefore important to continue to listen humbly to survivors and include them in all aspects of discussion. Try to ensure that separate counselling is available for survivors and that at all times you work to create a 'safe' environment for the survivors and protect them in public discussions.

Guidelines/practical tips:

- Offer support and counselling to any person who would like to talk about their experiences.
- Focus on creating an environment where all individuals feel confident about being involved in discussions. If some people are not participating, ask them privately if there is anything that can be done to help them participate.
- A non-judgmental attitude is important so survivors are encouraged to be open and share their experiences, without fearing what people think of them.
- Listen to survivors: let them know they are being heard. Once they are able to speak about their own experience, survivors can also help care for and support other survivors.
- The survivor may feel unable to express themselves for some time after the attack and may only do so when they feel safe and they trust the person listening.

Confidentiality is an important principle in many fields, and especially when working with survivors of sexual violence. It is important to make sure that any personal information is not shared with others, unless the survivor gives you permission to do so. There are circumstances in which you may need to tell a third party about the attack, for example when someone is reporting sexual violence.

The facilitator's own awareness and understanding of sexual violence

There are key things that each facilitator needs to be aware of when leading discussions on sexual violence.

A. *The facilitator needs to be aware of his/her own attitude to sexual violence*

This means the facilitator should be aware of his/her own beliefs and should disclose any myths he/she may have believed, as well as understanding how culture and beliefs have shaped his/her understanding of sexual violence. This is the first and the most important step: being open about one's own misconceptions and misunderstandings is vital to facilitating impartial discussions and if survivors of sexual violence are to feel included within these discussions. It also allows the facilitator to experience personal growth and learning.

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The self-discovery tool (on pages 10-14) is a tool that enables the facilitator to reflect on and understand their personal attitudes and behaviour around issues of sexual violence. It is important to understand that we all have different views and attitudes to sexual violence. The facilitator may learn from members of the community and be challenged as they listen to individuals' experiences.

B. The facilitator needs to be aware that group discussions may involve survivors of sexual violence.

The facilitator needs to be sensitive in facilitating discussions about sexual violence as some participants may have had painful experiences and may not have received support and treatment to enable healing. It is important to have a trained counsellor at hand or be able to refer survivors to expert care and support.

C. The facilitator needs to be aware of recent incidents of sexual violence in the media

These events may have been reported in the newspapers, or talked about in the community or on the radio. The way these events have been reported will also affect an individual's thoughts and beliefs about sexual violence.

'You must be the change you want to see in the world.'
Mahatma Gandhi

ADAPTING THE BIBLE STUDIES TO USE AS SERMONS

These Bible studies are designed to equip pastors and church leaders with the resources and knowledge they need to be able to help their congregation have a deeper understanding of sexual violence. They will help everyone have a true, unbiased, biblical perspective of the issues around sexual violence.

Each of the topics considered for group Bible study would also provide an excellent basis for sermons. The church has a clear biblical mandate to work among the poor and those who are marginalised in our societies. Often this will include people who have been impacted by sexual violence in a variety of ways. The church has a key role to play in informing its members about sexual violence which teaching is biblically inspired. Church leaders command respect and have authority, not just within their church communities but usually in society at large as well. They are well placed to challenge stigma, unhelpful attitudes and damaging myths, and to advocate for the most vulnerable within society.

Often, church leaders are reluctant to discuss and preach about sensitive issues about sexuality, family relationships, sexual violence and harmful cultural practices. This reluctance allows ignorance to persist, which damages so many lives, and particularly the lives of young people. We need courageous leaders who can speak biblical truth in love and inspire their members to share the love of Christ within their communities. This book takes a fresh look at many Bible passages and the studies here can easily be adapted as a source of sermon materials. Begin by using the background information and the introduction to each Bible study proper to refresh your own thinking and understanding. You may want to research the ideas in greater depth by using the references provided.

When using the Bible studies as the basis for sermons, we recommend careful reading of the passages, followed by reflection. The additional Bible passages given at the end of each Bible study may also prove a rich source of ideas. Consider the likely answers to the discussion questions relating to the biblical passages and use these to provide an introduction to explain the Bible passage and underline the key learning points.

Then consider the discussion questions that relate to today in the context of sexual violence. What key points would come out of these? Use the key findings as a checklist to ensure all the main points are covered in your sermon teaching.

When concluding, look at both the learning objectives and at the practical response. Revisit your sermon notes – what changes do you want to make...?

- in people's understanding and knowledge?
- in people's attitudes and hearts?
- in people's practical response to your preaching?

-What are the challenges you will leave with people? How do you hope they will respond?

-Can you include some case studies, stories and personal experiences in the service that will bring your sermon to life and make it really relevant to the congregation?

SELF-DISCOVERY TOOL ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE²

This tool enables individuals and groups to reflect on and understand their personal attitudes or behaviour while also reflecting on the current situation within their church and community. It serves as a mirror that enables individuals and churches to discover what they know about particular subject areas. It will also help them decide which Bible study might have the most impact on them, individually and as a church, as they seek to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

How to use the tool

There are ten key areas that the tool helps users to reflect on. Each area has a level of 0 to 3. Read each of the descriptions in the boxes for each topic and circle the response that best describes your current knowledge and attitudes. Write the score associated with that description in the space provided.

For example: for the topic ‘understanding of sexual violence’, you feel the description ‘I discuss the issue with others’ best describes your knowledge and actions. This is under ‘level 2’, therefore write ‘2’ in the space provided.

Each section of this tool has a Bible study associated with it (see page numbers in the table below for the relevant study). We recommend that you start with the Bible study related to the ‘key topic’ where you scored lowest. Then, when you have completed that Bible study, return to the tool to monitor the impact the Bible study has had.

There are no right or wrong answers: it is important to ask people to answer truthfully. The tool can be repeated as often as people want. Using it more than once enables people to reflect on how much they have learnt and what changes have occurred in their church and community.

	KEY TOPIC	LEVEL 0	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	What level did you identify with?	Related Bible study page
1	Understanding sexual violence	I do not understand what sexual violence is	I know the basic facts and statistics about sexual violence	I discuss the issue with others	I am able to teach and train others about sexual violence		12

²Adapted from Integral Mission, “GBV – Self Discovery Tool”, <http://integralmission.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/GBV-Self-Discovery-Tool-extended-version-for-C2C.pdf>. [19 Nov. 2014].

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2	Inclusion of survivors of sexual violence	I do not know any people who have experienced sexual violence	I am aware of survivors of sexual violence but make little attempt to include them in activities	I actively seek to include survivors in activities that I facilitate	Survivors of sexual violence are actively involved in discussions, activities and church responses to sexual violence		14
3	Preaching and prayer on sexual violence	There is no preaching or prayer on sexual violence	Sexual violence is mentioned in church occasionally (from the pulpit and in prayer)	Sermons and Bible studies mention sexual violence on a regular basis	I continue to study the Bible in relation to what it says about sexual violence I respond to issues of sexual violence based on these Bible studies		16
4	Gender equality	This is not an issue: men were created to rule over women, and women to serve men	I think that women need to be equal in some spaces in our lives	I believe that men and women are created equal, in God's image, the image of the Trinity	I'm an advocate for gender equality: I speak against inequality in all spaces which leads to sexual violence		18
5	Church leadership	Church leaders show no interest in responding to sexual violence	Church leaders have some understanding of the issues relating to sexual violence	Church leaders actively discuss sexual violence in their church and community	Church leaders listen to survivors of sexual violence and encourage the church to speak out about sexual violence and respond to the needs of survivors		20
6	Prevention	I do not know what causes	I understand that sexual violence	Abusive actions and misuse of	The church promotes loving and		22

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		sexual violence to happen	happens because of an abuse of power in a relationship	scripture are challenged within the church and community	respectful relationships in the church and community		
7	Engaging men and boys	Working with men and boys is irrelevant to ending violence against women (including sexual violence)	I understand there is a need to work with men and boys too, but do not know how	Men and boys must be engaged in all spheres to end violence against women. I make an effort to include them sometimes	Men and boys are included in the conversations on violence against women. We work with men on changing their behaviours, attitudes and practices, and also provide the space for them to become advocates for change		24
8	Care and support (including counselling)	There is no practical counselling or treatment for survivors of sexual violence	There is some knowledge about what treatment and counselling survivors need	I fully recognise the need to support survivors of sexual violence and ask them what support they need	There are established support groups and initiatives to support survivors of sexual violence		26
9	Justice (see note below)	I am not aware what legislation exists in our country regarding sexual violence	I understand the need to seek justice for survivors and report sexual violence to the police	The church engages with the police and courts to ensure perpetrators are prosecuted	The church works in collaboration with others to ensure that laws are enforced and survivors are able to be heard		28
10	Economic empowerment for survivors	I do not think survivors require any	I understand that survivors may have to leave their	The church provides some economic	The church works to include survivors in		30

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		additional financial support	home when they report sexual violence and may require support to gain a secure livelihood	support to survivors if they ask for support. This is a one-off gift	savings and loans groups – seeking to provide holistic support		
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Note: Justice is the responsibility of the legal system (police, courts) within the country. However, it is important that the church and community understand the laws of the land and work with the government to strengthen the legal system with regard to tackling sexual violence effectively.

Questions for personal reflection

- In which 'key topic' did you get a low level?
- Reflect on why you may have a low level.
- What change can you make to improve this low level?
- In which areas did you gain a high level?
- Reflect on whether you could serve the church and community within these areas?

After individuals in the church have used the self-discovery tool, organise church members into small groups for discussions where they can share their experiences of using the tool.

Questions for group discussion

- In which 'key topics' did most people get the lowest level?
- Which area do church members want to focus on first?
- In which key areas did most people get the highest level?
- Discuss some examples of how the church or individuals are responding currently to key areas in which they identified with a high level.

Following discussions, the group can decide which Bible study they would like to do first. The page numbers related to each area are given in the table above.

BIBLE STUDIES

The Bible is the foundation of Christian teaching and so it is important to understand what it says on the issue of sexual violence. This resource uses Contextual Bible Study methodology to help churches understand more about the issue and about their role and responsibilities in responding to sexual violence. The CBS methodology is underpinned on liberation theologies. It follows a dialogical approach to reading the Bible, which allows the context of the reader to engage in mutual dialogue with the context of the Bible. The study questions follow the 4 Cs mnemonic identified as: Reading the Bible in cultural **context** of the reader; **community** – reading the Bible together; **critical** – raising questions that reflect the challenges and contextual challenges of the reader; and **change** (transformation) – the goal of CBS is transformation.

Bible studies are very important:

- for the church to reflect on what the bible says about key issues
- for people to be challenged and encouraged to grow in their faith
- for small groups to learn and share understanding
- for raising critical awareness - conscientization and empowering for praxis

Dealing with concerns

In some cases, there may be some initial resistance to starting the process, for any number of reasons. It is really important to address any concerns at the start and emphasise the benefits of going through the process.

Time-keeping

It is important that you plan the Bible studies to make sure you allow enough time for people to participate fully in the discussions. We have included the full Bible readings referred to in the studies at the back of this book (pages 64-73) to help your planning.

Prayer and worship

It is important to ask participants to be involved in prayer and worship during each session, in order to give them opportunity to 'own' the process. You may wish to ask the church leaders present to lead prayers at the start and end of each session. This will set the appropriate environment, preparing participants for a critical engagement with scripture.

STRUCTURE OF BIBLE STUDIES

Every Bible study contains a first page of information, guidance and tips for whoever is leading the session. This page is not to be read out to the group, but the facilitator should take time to read it and think about the study before the group meets. The facilitator's pages are set out in the following format:

How could this study change us?

First, we list the objectives of the study – what the participants should gain as a result of the Bible study – which fall into three categories:

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KNOWING – these describe the practical knowledge and learning to be gained

BEING – these describe changes to our thinking and understanding, changing our heart and our responses

ACTING – these are the practical responses we can make as a result of our learning

Background information

Before the study, the facilitator needs to read this useful background information and remember the key points.

Tips for the facilitator

These tips can help the facilitator draw out relevant discussion points and experiences. Some of the studies tackle sensitive subjects and it may help, for example, to divide men and women, or girls and boys, into separate discussion groups.

Ideas for practical response

These studies may change how we feel about certain issues – but, ideally, they should lead to action too. As the discussion draws to an end, use the ideas included here to help people focus on practical responses.

BIBLE TEXTS

You can photocopy the Bible texts on pages 64-73, which are all from the New International Version. You may like to have several Bible versions at hand for comparison, especially if people are using other versions. Encourage people to bring their own Bibles.

Sexual violence in the Bible

THE STORY OF TAMAR

Facilitator's notes

The Bible study is used as a tool to engage churches and communities with the issue of sexual violence. Please allow participants to relax, be themselves and express themselves freely without being judged. Often, broaching the subject of sexual violence meets with deafening silence, so this session is aimed at breaking that silence. The key is allowing free expression and opening a way to restoration for those affected by sexual violence.

How will this study change us?

We will EXPLORE...

- that sexual violence does not symbolise a lack of God's love
- that sexual violence is not a curse and can happen in our homes, churches, schools and workplaces
- that sexual violence can happen to anyone and it is NOT the survivor's fault
- that sexual violence can be challenged and prevented
- that restoration is possible for survivors of sexual violence

We will BE...

- more caring, compassionate and supportive towards survivors of sexual violence
- available to listen to survivors' experiences, providing a safe environment for them to be open and vulnerable
- non-judgmental, offering a helping hand where needed

We will ACT....

- in solidarity with those who have experienced sexual violence
- prudently and justly in providing care and support for survivors of sexual violence, including accompanying them to access medical and legal services
- with perseverance to advocate justice and restoration of human relationships, without stigma and discrimination.

Background information

The story of Tamar is an explicit account of orchestrated sexual violence taking place in the house of a God-fearing man, David. The blame lies with a half-brother who is full of lust towards his half-sister, Tamar. He admits to his passion for Tamar and is advised to create a story that would make it easy for him to have access to Tamar. The sexual violence that results has a severe effect on her. She tears her dress and covers herself with ashes as a symbol of mourning that she has been violated.

Tips for the facilitator

Allow participants to express themselves openly about similar experiences in their own lives. You may facilitate this by inviting people to share similar stories to Tamar's from your own community. This may trigger memories of unreported cases of sexual violence or gender-based violence, leaving participants feeling very vulnerable.

Ideas for practical response

It is important to acknowledge that it often takes time for survivors to go through a healing process. Do not be intimidated by fear of explosive and highly charged emotional responses. In most cases, these experiences are not easily expressed and there are few safe spaces or loving environments that allow free expression of these emotions. For some participants this may be the first time they have confided in anyone about a painful experience: this calls for extra care and counselling depending on the severity of the case. It is therefore recommended that a trained counsellor should be present to help deal with cases that may need individual attention.

Bible study: 2 Samuel 13:1–22³

Sexual violence is not just something that occurs in society today. It has occurred throughout history. The story of Tamar illustrates a chain of events that leads to a devastating act: the rape of Tamar. This story is in the Bible as a constant reminder that sexual violence is an abuse of human rights and we need to speak out against it. Together, in partnership with all survivors of sexual violence, we need to stand firm, holding hands in prayer for strength and restoration of broken relationships. We need to say together **'WE ARE SILENT NO MORE!'**

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. Read 2 Samuel 13:1–22 in small groups. Share with each other what you think the text is about and summarise your understanding of the story to the group.
2. Who are the characters in this story and what do we know about them?
3. What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?
4. Why does Tamar acted in that way?

In the context of sexual violence...

5. What are your experiences of sexual violence in the Christian homes and churches?
6. What does God say about sexual violence?
7. What impact does sexual violence have on the survivor?
8. What does God say to men and women who have been raped?

³See, pages 64-65 for the full text.

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9. In what ways do certain cultural beliefs and practices contribute to the vulnerability of women and children to sexual violence?
10. Where can a survivor of sexual violence find support in your community?
11. What are your expectations from the church leaders concerning the issue of sexual violence?
12. What will you now do in response to this Bible study?

The small groups can present their discussion to the plenary group. Creativity is particularly vital here, as individuals may struggle to articulate their responses. A drama or drawing may be the best method for some group.

Key learning points

- Sexual violence can take place anywhere and it is important to create more awareness that survivors are NOT to blame for the violence.
- The process of reclaiming life, healing and restoration after facing traumatic life experiences is not always easy and may take long.

Prayer points

- Pray for healing of the pain and suffering caused by sexual violence (both physical, mental and emotional).
- Pray for the protection of girls such as Tamar who are vulnerable to sexual violence.
- Pray that the perpetrators of sexual violence will repent and change their behaviour.
- Pray for caring and godly men and women who will speak out against sexual violence and seek to protect the most vulnerable
- Pray for justice system that they may be human and compassionate.

Further passages for reading

Here are some more texts that can be read and understood in the same way that Tamar's story has been:

- Genesis 19: 1–12. Sodom and Gomorrah
 - Genesis 34. The rape of Dinah
 - Judges 19: 1–30. A Levite and his concubine
 - Mark 5: 24–34. The woman healed from internal bleeding
 - 2 Samuel 11: 1–26. David and Bathsheba
-

Full inclusion of survivors of sexual violence

Facilitator's notes: How will this study change us?

We will EXPLORE...

- and understand as a church the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment where people can trust each other and all people have the opportunity to serve each other
- and reflect on the concept of what full participation means
- and explore how survivors of sexual violence can participate fully in effective prevention and the response to sexual violence

We will BE...

- able to understand how inclusive Christ is towards all of humanity
- able to seek humbly to understand God's purposes for his church

We will ACT....

- to encourage the full participation of people who have experienced sexual violence
- to restore the dignity of people who have experienced sexual violence
- to bring equality among God's people by fighting injustice in society

Background information

Our cultural and religious beliefs often shape our attitudes. This affects how we behave and how we treat other people. In some communities, churches have spoken out and responded to sexual violence. However, there are many cases where the church has been responsible for encouraging judgmental attitudes and fuelling stigma. This has prevented the full participation of those who have experienced sexual violence. The church has great potential in transforming attitudes and leading the way to end stigma.

It is also important to understand that survivors of sexual violence often struggle with self-stigma. This is the feeling that people are avoiding you or pointing 'accusing' fingers due to a particular reason. It is as if we are to blame, that we are somehow 'unworthy'. This causes low self-esteem, mental suffering and prevents us living life to the full, and becoming all that God intends for us.

Tips for the facilitator

The facilitator needs to explain the concept of 'unclean' in the Old Testament (see Leviticus chapter 15). To be 'unclean' or 'impure' is to threaten others' 'holiness' through contact. 'Unclean' or 'impure' objects or people must be kept separate from holy places or people. Uncleanliness or impurity can arise from sin or from natural conditions such as bodily discharges, illness or touching something that is dead.

Examine Jesus' response towards 'unclean' people (such as those with leprosy, female bleeding or who were dead). Be sensitive to people in the group who may experience self-stigma, for example survivors of sexual violence or people living with HIV.

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Explore the different kinds of participation that we may experience, such as agreeing on decisions together and planning activities together. Consider how participation is encouraged from those of us who have experienced sexual violence.

Discuss how the church can change its judgmental attitudes and fully understand that survivors are NOT to blame for the sexual violence that they experience. Judgmental attitudes are a huge barrier which prevents the church benefitting from the full participation of survivors of sexual violence, and prevents people from seeking the support they need.

Ideas for practical response

How can we understand the feelings that people who have experienced sexual violence feel?

How can we help those of us who have experienced sexual violence to feel we can make a contribution and use our skills and experiences to help others?

In this study, we learn how easily incorrect attitudes can pull families apart. Unhelpful attitudes about sexual violence can pull apart the family of the church in just the same way. We have to change our attitudes if we are to enjoy the full participation that God wants for all of us as his family.

Bible study: John 4:1-30⁴

Jesus deliberately chose to travel through Samaria on his way to Galilee. Other Jews would not have used this route due to the difficult relationships between Jews and Samaritans. They would choose a long route. The meeting with the Samaritan woman was not just by accident but because of God's will. The woman comes to draw water at noon during the midday heat in order to avoid others, due to her past life. When Jesus confronts her about her past and her various husbands, she does not deny it. Her difficult past makes her spiritually thirsty and in need of salvation. All of us are in need of salvation, regardless of our past life. We all need to stand before Christ and ask for forgiveness in order to receive the living water.

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. In your own words, describe the scene from the Bible passage that you have just read.
2. Who are the people in the story?
3. Why do you think the woman came alone to draw water from the well at noon when it was very hot?
4. Why was the Samaritan woman so surprised that Jesus asked her for water?
5. What does Jesus mean when he tells the woman he will give her 'living water'?
6. What sort of things do our societies consider as unclear?
7. What lesson do we learn from the passage about Jesus' contact with the Samaritan woman who the Jews considered as 'unclean'?

⁴See pages 65-66 for the full text.

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In the context of sexual violence...

8. How does self-stigma act as a barrier to providing care and support for survivors of sexual violence today?
9. In what ways can the church make people who feel unworthy and excluded, feel personally welcomed?
10. What do think are the reasons why survivors of sexual violence don't report?
11. Mention some of the ways in which certain cultural beliefs and practices contribute to dehumanization of sexual violence survivors?
1. What are some of the things that we do in the church that exclude others? How can we change these?
12. This is an example of Jesus reaching out to the marginalized and bringing acceptance and healing. What can we do to help survivors of sexual violence feel accepted and loved?

Key learning points

- Jesus clearly shows us that he considers all people equal and that no race or group of people is inferior to others.
- Our attitudes as individuals many prevent our church from being the safe and welcoming community that God intended it to be.
- Judgmental attitudes within the church can lead to a culture of silence and stigma, which prevent those who have experienced sexual violence from participating fully. It can also hinder efforts to prevent those who have experienced sexual violence from finding the care and support they need.
- Sometimes, those who have experienced sexual violence may feel that they have nothing to offer, because of self-stigma. Yet each of us is called to contribute as part of the body of Christ.

Prayer points

- Pray that we can really love everyone as Christ did, following biblical principles, and be a good witness in representing God and sharing his unconditional love with all people.
- Pray that judgmental attitudes in the church will change, so that people who have survived sexual violence can find love and support and share their gifts within the church.

Further passages for reading

- Psalm 139:13–16. Each of us is precious and valued by God
- 1 John 4:7–12. God's love and our love for each other

The body of Christ has experienced sexual violence

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- that we are created in the image of a loving God
- that we are all one in Christ's body: people who have experienced sexual violence and those who have not
- that God considers everyone equal and so should we

We will BE...

- more understanding of how easily people who have experienced sexual violence can feel excluded
- aware of specific needs, not necessarily practical ones, of those who have survived sexual violence. We will not assume we know how it feels to have experienced sexual violence
- more loving of others within our church family

We will ACT....

- with empathy (empathetically)
- with the compassion of Christ
- to challenge unhelpful attitudes against sexual violence
- to encourage a positive church response to embrace the practical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who have experienced sexual violence

Background information

Sometimes the church ignores the fact that sexual violence can happen within the church or that the church family may include survivors of sexual violence. This can cause pain and division and allow ignorance about sexual violence and its impact on the body of Christ to go unchallenged.

It is estimated that one in three women will experience violence during her lifetime. Therefore, this is not an issue the church can avoid.

Tips for the facilitator

People who have survived sexual violence are valued and important members of our church and have much to contribute as part of the body of Christ.

It's important to help people assess critically their own church's attitude towards sexual violence and towards those in the church family who are survivors. What is the ideal situation within a church? What changes need to be made to create this place of welcome, warmth, support and inclusion?

Ideas for practical response

Help the group to imagine that they or someone close to them (wife, daughter, sister, brother etc) experiences sexual violence.

Consider the different needs of those who have experienced sexual violence or those who are trying to support someone who has experienced sexual violence.

Bible study: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27⁵

The body of Christ has experienced sexual violence. The body of Christ is starving. The body of Christ has no proper home. This is because, when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. There is no 'us' and 'them'. We are all affected. Our lives are all connected and woven together and we must build on this sense of being connected.

This passage follows a wonderful description of the spiritual gifts God has given to his church. These gifts are given to individuals but used to benefit the whole church.

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. Explain in your own words what you think the text is about?
2. What are the most important parts of the human body? What happens to the rest of the body when one part of the body is damaged or in pain?
3. How does the church form one body from its many parts? Are verses 12 and 14 referring to one church or to the whole church family – or both?

In the context of sexual violence...

4. Why do our churches sometimes not work together well as one body?
5. Paul's words in verse 13 challenged discrimination against slaves in his day. What would he challenge us about today in the way we discriminate between different groups of people?
6. How can we identify more with sexual violence survivors in our local church and community (verse 26)?
7. Read verse 13 aloud together, changing the words 'Jews' to 'survivors of sexual violence' and 'Gentiles' to 'people who have not experienced sexual violence'. What does it mean to share in the one Spirit?
8. How does this picture of the church as one body challenge us about our relationships with those who have survived sexual violence?
 1. How would we like the church and community to respond to us or those close to us?
 2. How would Jesus welcome those who have survived sexual violence?

Key learning points

- As God's people, we are all one body – sharing the gifts that God has given – not for our benefit but for the benefit of his whole church body.
- God sees only precious children when he looks at us – not poor or rich, not slave or free, not survivors of sexual violence or those who have not experienced sexual violence. We should see people with his eyes too and love each other equally.

⁵See pages 66-67 for the full text.

Prayer points

- Pray that our church will be a place of welcome and hope for all who come into it.
- Pray for people who feel our churches do not understand their needs that they may know that God understands their needs and cares.
- Pray for the change of attitude by church leaders and members towards sexual violence
- Pray that churches around the world will seek to understand the needs of those who are hurting and become places of shared understanding, where the needs of all are met.

Further passages for reading

- Galatians 3:26–28. We are all one in Christ
- Luke 10:27. Love your neighbour as yourself

Gender and restoring relationships

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- the importance of celebrating difference in a way that promote equality
- ways of addressing gender equality and injustice in the church and society
- how to acknowledge and enhance each other's leadership in dealing with sexual violence

We will BE...

- able to work in partnership with each other in preventing and responding to sexual violence
- able to understand God's desire for restored relationships

We will ACT...

- to acknowledge and deal with the fact that survivors' experiences and skills are often ignored in the process of planning sexual violence prevention and care programmes
- to reclaim the roles of women in leadership
- to challenge relationships of power that reduce human beings to mere objects of pleasure

Background information

Over the centuries, women and girls have been discriminated against throughout the world, in different ways. In most cultures, this system is reflected in value systems where sons are valued more highly than daughters. We accept that men and women can be treated differently based on their gender. We justify the fact that men hold positions and power over women. However, the misuse of this power is not what God intended.

Many societies today is characterised by divisions between people, especially between men and women. These divisions have led to poor relationships between men and women. The consequences of this include subordination, oppression, violence and the tendency to treat human beings, especially women and children, as possessions.

'After attending a marriage training workshop, many things have changed in my family. I sit together with my wife, and it has become easy to discuss things. This changes what we do. It creates agreement and harmony. Lots of things have changed with our intimate relationship. Before, there was no discussion about sexual needs: it was the man who decided. Now, needs are expressed without shame as it concerns us both.' Pastor Daniel, Burkina Faso.

Tips for the facilitator

Inequalities between men and women increase people's vulnerability and are an underlying cause of sexual violence. Who needs to take the initiative in breaking down stereotypes relating to gender – men or women, or both? Explain why our response to this question may reflect stereotypes we promote ourselves. The term 'gender' means both sexes should be equally involved – not just women!

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Encourage discussion of how Jesus viewed issues of gender. How did he treat his followers, both men and women, given the cultural views of his day? Share success stories where gender stereotypes have been overcome.

Ideas for practical response

- Encourage the participants to write three or four steps they would take in order to promote gender equality in their local church and community

Bible study: Genesis 1:26–28⁶

This passage from Genesis 1 shows an equal partnership of man and woman, while Genesis 2 presents a God-given order of precedence of male over female, with separate roles accorded to each. Paul draws on this second version in 1 Corinthians 11:7–9. This may appear to be a contradiction, however the roles in Genesis 2 are designed to show the compatible, partnerships of man and woman.

In reading the bible, we recognise that men and women are intricately interconnected. We can reflect on how to relate to each other in a positive, interdependent and mutually supportive way.

Further reading

Add: Gal 3:28

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. In reading the story of the creation of man and women, what are some of the roles for male and female?
2. How are these gender roles to be understood in contemporary society?
3. What does God empower human beings to do (verses 26 and 28)?
4. What does this passage from Genesis 1 reveal about the importance of men and women working alongside each other in relationships of equality?
5. What does this tell us about the relationship between men and women?

In the context of sexual violence...

1. How is the Genesis passage in this study helpful in working out solutions to respond to sexual violence in our society?
2. How do you view the church structures in terms of gender justice?
3. Name five things you will do to restore relationships within your family and church.
4. How can we encourage our churches to challenge gender stereotypes?
5. In what ways can the structures and power relations in our churches be changed in order facilitate for the equality of women and men? List some practical steps that could be taken in Sunday school, youth group, women's group, men's group, church leadership etc.

⁶See page 67 for the full text.

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Key learning points

- God created human beings in his own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). God is beyond gender.
- The image of God can be reflected in inclusive human relationships, showing God in communion, in partnership and in community. (Genesis 1:26–28).
- From Genesis 1:26–28, we can see that the power to subdue and dominate is to be used in stewarding the earth and that we should act with care and justice rather than trying to control other people.
- The dignity of each person consists in being God-like, in caring for and nurturing creation, and in participating in the ongoing process of creation. Woman and man are different but both are created in God's image and are equal.

Prayer points

- Pray for the courage for both men and women to challenge unhelpful stereotypes about male and female roles and to encourage biblical reflection on the subject of gender.
- Pray that the gifts of women will be fully released to benefit our churches and that they will show wisdom and leadership in responding to issues around sexual violence.

Further passages for reading

- Luke 10:38–42. Jesus encourages Martha to sit at his feet and learn, in the same way men did
- John 4:4–26. Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman
- Mark 5:25–34. The woman healed from internal bleeding
- John 8:2–11. The woman caught in adultery
- Gal 3:28. We are all equal in Christ.

Eliminating stigma and discrimination

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- that we are equal in the eyes of God, regardless of what we have done and who we are
- that no one deserves to be treated harshly and there is no justification for sexual violence
- that Jesus is not vindictive but calls for justice where sexual violence occurs
- that Jesus is compassionate and seeks to restore individuals

We will BE...

- more sensitive and compassionate towards other people's vulnerability
- more accommodating and accepting of people who have experienced sexual violence, without judging them
- more understanding and allow everyone to be heard and understood without being subjected to stigma
- less judgmental – by recognising our own lack of understanding or embarrassment – and we will provide safe spaces for transformation to take place

We will ACT....

- like Jesus to those in our community and church who have experienced sexual violence
- as messengers of hope and love to create an environment in our church where ongoing care and support is offered
- as agents of change in creating meaningful campaigns aimed at speaking out against sexual violence and seeking to prevent it
- in a supportive way and journey alongside those affected by sexual violence as they seek to find healing and hope after trauma

Background information

Stigma, discrimination and silence can all worsen the pain caused by sexual violence. These are not often challenged or confronted in public. Talking openly about sensitive issues is often difficult within churches and communities, especially if people do not have correct information about the issue and about what the Bible says. The church can play a vital role in reducing stigma and discrimination and talking openly about the issue of sexual violence.

- **Stigma** is a feeling of being socially unacceptable, resulting in isolation, rejection and shame. It comes through the disapproval, condemnation and rejection of survivors of sexual violence.
- **Self-stigma** means that some survivors of sexual violence are often afraid to report what has happened because of fear of being judged. Sometimes, survivors may feel unworthy or ashamed.
- **Discrimination** means to treat someone differently because of who they are and what they have experienced. Survivors of sexual violence can even be

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discriminated against (or made to feel unwelcome) within their own families and churches.

- **Denial** means refusing to accept something is true. Survivors of sexual violence may not want to accept that they are being abused, because they are afraid of the consequences.
- **Silence** means refusing to talk about something that is true due to fear, lack of knowledge or lack of support.

Tips for the facilitator

Focus on the practical ways in which people who have experienced sexual violence have also experienced stigma and discrimination in churches and communities. Examine what impact that has had on the group, on others and on their families. If survivors have spoken openly about their experiences, ask them to share their experiences of stigma and discrimination with you, to further your understanding. Are we aware of evidence that some people deny that sexual violence can occur in our churches and families? How can we challenge such denial and encourage openness?

Ideas for practical response

Sexual violence calls for practical interventions at both church and community level. This may be through establishing community-based support groups for survivors. Support groups can create meaningful 'safe' spaces, which allow individuals to share their experiences with people who have also experienced violence. Peer group members can offer each other healing, providing solidarity as well as psycho-social, emotional and spiritual mutual support.

Bible study: John 8:1–11⁷

This Bible story tells of a woman caught in adultery. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees set out to test Jesus concerning the Law of Moses with regard to such behaviour. The woman is alone and the whole village is against her. She is vulnerable and accused of a sexual offence, and the law suggests that she should be killed violently. She is being judged. But Jesus treats her with dignity, compassion and love. In doing so, he restores her, healing her brokenness, and asks her to return to her community as a changed person, worthy of God's forgiveness and healing. Is Jesus challenging the Law of Moses?

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles in this story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. Verse 4 of this passage states that the woman 'was caught in the act of committing adultery'. Why, therefore, was it only the woman, and not the man she was with, who was accused of adultery and brought before Jesus and the crowd?

In the context of sexual violence...

4. What did Jesus imply when he said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her"?

⁷See pages 67-68 for the full text.

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5. Why did the Pharisees and teachers of the law walk away?
6. In what ways is the text linking culture and oppression of women?
1. What does Jesus teach us here about how to respond with survivors of sexual violence in our context?
2. How can we apply this text to our own context?

Key learning points

- It is important not to judge others or label them according to their behaviour.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have experienced sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence.
- Seek to engage men and boys to speak out against violence. Not all men are perpetrators of sexual violence.
- Jesus is our role model in being compassionate and willing to expose sexual violence and showing compassion to those affected by it.

Prayer points

- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that he will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence. Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.

Further passages for reading

- Judges 19:1–30. A Levite and his concubine
 - Mark 5:24–34. The woman who bled
 - 2 Samuel 11:1–26. David and Bathsheba
-

Protecting the most vulnerable

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- how sexual violence is more common than we may realise and that both women and men experience sexual violence
- whether sexual violence can also happen within families. That perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers
- whether sexual violence is a violation of human dignity and need to be challenged at all levels

We will BE...

- more aware of how vulnerable young people may be to sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of violence

We will ACT...

- by teaching young people how to protect themselves
- to ensure violence, particularly sexual violence, is not hidden within families
- to provide support for survivors of sexual violence

Background information

Individuals may suffer from different kinds of violence/abuse – physical, emotional or sexual. This Bible study looks at sexual abuse/violence within the family. Many people assume that most sexual violence takes place outside the family but this is often not the case. The act of rape, deeply troubling in itself, also makes HIV infection more likely because of the violence and damage to the delicate skin of the sexual organs.

Tips for the facilitator

- Widen the discussion by considering first the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially young people, to consent to sex against their wishes.
- Divide people into groups according to their gender for the discussion.
- Some participants may have experienced sexual violence themselves. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they feel able to do so, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background.
- Help people by suggesting they tell their own stories by referring to someone else (for example: encourage them to say 'my friend was attacked' rather than 'I was attacked'). This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves. Treat the subject with great sensitivity.
- If possible, find someone with counselling experience to provide support if anyone wants to talk afterwards.

Ideas for practical response

- Discuss what services/resources there are in the community for survivors of sexual violence.
- Can we challenge the local police to do more?
- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services?

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- What training opportunities are there for developing counselling skills?
- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?
- Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.

Bible study: Judges 19:16–29⁸

Sexual exploitation and violence in our communities often goes on unchecked. Too often, no one is willing to speak up about this issue. There are several examples in the Bible where individuals (often women) are not treated with fairness. However, Jesus teaches that all people, both men and women, should be valued as being created in the image of God and treated fairly. As a church, we need to re-examine how Jesus would have us treat women. The church needs to address existing inequalities in gender and encourage men to develop a positive masculinity which shows strength through protecting the vulnerable, demonstrating servant leadership and respect for women.

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. What did the men who pounded at the old man's door want? How does the Bible refer to these men?
2. Why do you think the old man was willing to volunteer the women in the house? Was this not an equally 'disgraceful thing'?
3. What do you feel are the attitudes of the Levite and the old man towards women?
4. How does Jesus' attitude to women compare with that of the men in this passage? Can you think of examples? (John 8:1–11, John 4:7–9)
5. Could you retell this story from the concubine's point-of-view? Consider how she might have felt and reacted.

In the context of sexual violence...

6. Are there ways in which women in our community are valued less than men? Consider cultural practices: for example, early marriage or offering women's sexual services as a sign of good hospitality. How does this contrast to Christ's care and respect for women?
7. How do these practices, and the inequality between men and women, increase women's vulnerability to HIV?
8. How should the church protect women in the community from being abused or treated unfairly?
9. What are our attitudes towards those who have been abused? Do we offer them our support or stigmatise and reject them?

Key learning points

- The church has a responsibility to protect the vulnerable, to speak up against injustice and provide care and support for those who have been abused (Micah 6:8).
- An individual who has been raped or experienced sexual violence may need different types of support and care, including HIV testing, counselling, prayer

⁸ See pages 68-69 for the full text

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support, acceptance, emotional support, reassurance and time to talk confidentially with an understanding person.

- Women are not expendable objects and deserve equal respect and honour (Ephesians 5:25).
- We need to challenge stigma and discrimination against individuals who have been abused, and instead offer them support in meeting their emotional, physical and spiritual needs.
- Discuss how we can work together as a community to prevent abuse/violence and hold those responsible to account.

Prayer points

- Pray that God will reveal situations of violence against individuals in our communities and help us to speak out openly against sexual violence.
- Pray that the church will take responsibility in addressing issues of sexual violence and will love and support survivors.

Further passages for reading

- 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. Our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit
- Matthew 1:18–25. Joseph's treatment and respect for Mary
- John 8:1–11. Jesus and the woman caught in adultery
- Genesis 19:1–11. Lot offers his daughters to be raped to protect his guests (who were angels?)

Jesus Blesses Little Children

Facilitator's notes: How could this study change us?

We will **KNOW**...

- that sexual violence is more common than we may realise and that children are most vulnerable and easy targets to perpetrators
- that sexual violence can happen within families: perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers
- that sexual violence is a violation of human dignity and need to be challenged at all levels
- that sexual molestation kills our children inside out and there is a strong need to curb the spread of this kind of sexual and psychological trauma inflicted to our children for no reason

We will **BE**...

- more aware of how vulnerable children and young people may be to sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of violence
- be more aware of the needs of children searching for healing and support to move on with their lives after experiencing severe trauma
- be of support to families with children who were the victims of sexual violence

We will **ACT**...

- by teaching children and young people how to protect themselves
- to ensure violence, particularly sexual violence, is not hidden within families
- to provide care and support for survivors of sexual violence
- to provide family counselling and specialized children's counselling in dealing with sexual violence and other forms of abuse experienced by children in the hands of adults.

Background information

Children may suffer from different kinds of violence/abuse – physical, emotional or sexual. This may be a secret for the molester could be the sole bread-winner at home and disclosing this may be very difficult or not happen at all. This Bible study looks at how Jesus handles children against cultural bias and practices. He further exerts that it is the children who are closer to the kingdom of God and they too need to be taken seriously. In a context of sexual violence sexual abuse/violence within the family, a big challenge is brought about the text on how Jesus demonstrated on how we need to handle children. Many people assume that most sexual violence takes place outside the family but this is often not the case. The act of rape, deeply troubling in itself, also makes HIV infection more likely because of the violence and damage to the delicate skin of the sexual organs.

Tips for the facilitator

- Widen the discussion by considering first the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially children and young people, to consent to sex against their wishes.
- Divide participants into same-sex groups for the discussion.
- Some participants may have experienced sexual violence themselves. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they feel able to do so, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background.
- Help people by suggesting they tell their own stories by referring to someone else (for example:
 - Encourage them to say 'my friend was attacked' rather than 'I was attacked'). This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves. Treat the subject with great sensitivity.
 - If possible, find someone with counselling experience to provide support if anyone wants to talk afterwards. (This is very important)

Ideas for practical response

- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services for children?
- What training opportunities are there for developing skills for counselling children?
- How can we teach our children and young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?
- Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.
- Learn step by step procedure of reporting the case and practical support and exposure to court proceedings in camera. This will prepare children what to expect in court for sexual –abuse is a criminal offense and needs to go to a justice system.
- Accompanying the child to attend case hearing in court until the verdict is passed in court.
- Start support groups or children's clubs to deal with psycho-social support of children and Advocacy Campaigns creating awareness on the abuse of children both at home and in the community.

Bible study: Mark 10:13-16⁹

This Bible story tells of Jesus paying special attention to the needs of children and blessing them in the midst of his busy lifestyle as a preacher and healer. The Bible tells us that he was always surrounded by people presenting various problems but for him this is not an excuse not to give time to little children. This act surprises his disciples who were trying to protect him by chasing the children away. Jesus' response is a challenge to a cultural bias that does not take the needs of children who are often vulnerable very seriously. He even he challenges the way adults were treating children: he treats them with dignity, compassion and love. In doing so, he restores and heals their brokenness, in this way he demonstrates compassion, love and kindness to children.

Discussion

In biblical times...

2. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
3. What do you think the story is really about?
4. Verse 14 of this passage states that Jesus got angry and said 'let the children come to me! Do not stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God... I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does' He then turn to the children and bless them. What is Jesus saying about the importance of children? In what does this challenges the way we relate and treat children in our context?

In the context of sexual violence...

5. Why did Jesus answer in the way he did?
6. Why did Jesus challenge his disciples in this way?
7. What does Jesus teach us here about how to respond to children who may have encountered various forms of child-abuse including sexual violence in our context?

Key learning points

- It is important to welcome children without prejudice for they are closer to the Kingdom of God.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to children who are presenting various forms of abuse and pay more special attention to those who have experienced sexual violence. Children who are Survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence inflicted on them.
- Referrals are important here to professional help for this area of support is a very specialized field that needs to be dealt with professionalism it deserves including the legal system, for this is a criminal offense.
- Seek to engage men and boys to speak out against violence. Not all men are perpetrators of sexual violence. Jesus is our role model in being

⁹See page 69 for the full text.

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compassionate and willing to expose sexual violence and showing compassion to those affected by it.

Prayer points

- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that he will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence. Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.

Further passages for reading

- Luke 7: 11-17. Jesus heals a Widow's son
- Mark 5:21–24. Jesus heals Jairus's daughter

Godly Marriage and Family in Contemporary Society

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- and understand God's intentions for marriage and families
- and understand that building strong, godly families helps to build strong societies and nations
- that emphasising faithfulness, trust, mutual respect and the dignity of both partners ensures families are stable and provides a positive atmosphere for raising children

We will BE...

- encouraged in our understanding of the value and depth of the marriage relationship
- reminded that God lives and abides in families, no matter what they are going through

We will ACT...

- to mirror the love of God to society in modelling good relationships, repairing broken relationships and mentoring children and youth

Background information

Marriage is God's idea, not humankind's. The Genesis account of the beginning of marriage (Genesis 2:24–25) ends with a statement that expresses four elements that should be part of every marriage:

- **CUTTING OFF:** 'A man shall leave his father and mother' – a new partnership occurs through marriage
- **BONDING:** 'And be united to his wife' – the idea here is that of gluing or permanent bonding
- **UNITY:** 'And they will become one flesh' – the two becoming one
- **INTIMACY:** 'They were both naked... and felt no shame' – the absence of self-consciousness enabled the first couple to enjoy one another without any sense of embarrassment or rejection

Tips for the facilitator

Take time to discuss what makes marriages work. Here are some suggested building blocks for good marriages, to encourage discussion: lifelong commitment, shared identity, faithfulness, clear roles, unreserved love, mutual submission, sexual fulfilment, open communication and respect. Parents should learn to be relaxed when talking about their relationship and about sex in the early years of their marriage. This will make it much easier to be open and relaxed when talking with their children about sex, about how girls become pregnant and the risks of HIV.

Ideas for practical response

Divorce, alcohol and drugs are just some of the ways people try to deal with difficulties in their marriage. However, all of these can make a bad situation worse. There is another way – a better way. It takes three to make a marriage succeed: a husband, a wife and God.

Bible study: Ephesians 5:21–33¹⁰

This Bible study helps us to learn from Paul about the importance of a strong and godly marriage and how this is the foundation for a healthy family. Paul uses this passage to remind the Ephesians about what a godly marriage means (at a time when there was considerable sexual immorality). He then discusses the relationship between children and parents, highlighting the importance of family.

Discussion

1. *In biblical times...*
2. Who instituted marriage? And why was it instituted?
3. What is your understanding of family?
4. What is your experience of family?
5. What does it mean to be a godly man/woman?
3. Why do you think Paul needed to talk to the Ephesians about what a good marriage was?
4. What does it mean to submit to one another within a marriage relationship?
6. Why does Paul compare a good marriage with the church's relationship with Christ?
5. What does Paul highlight as the important qualities of a good marriage?
6. What are the foundations of a strong family?

In the context of sexual violence...

1. How can we understand headship in the context of gender equality?
2. What are some of cultural and current practices that are influencing marriage and family?
3. Mention some of the principles that can enable the couple to remain faithful to each other in all circumstances?
4. How can gender equality between the husband and wife be promoted?
5. What are the consequences of a broken marriage?
6. Do you think husbands and wives today should follow these biblical principles of a strong marriage? And, if so, why?
7. In what ways can we to redefine gender roles that were traditionally assigned to women and men in contemporary society?
8. In what ways are these cultural and current practices impacting negatively and positively on marriage and family?
9. What is the impact of sexual violence on families?
10. In what ways is media influencing marriage and family values and perceptions?
11. In what ways can forgiveness and reconciliation be nurtured and promoted in marriage and family in the context of sexual violence?
12. How can the church facilitated in creating a safe space for women and children in the home?
13. What is the role of the family in society? How can the church help families to be strong and healthy?

¹⁰See page 69-70 for the full text.

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Key learning points

- Paul teaches that a husband should love his wife as Christ loved the church. Both husband and wife need to submit to each other.
- Parents need a good biblical foundation in their marriage to build a strong and healthy Christian family.
- The purpose of marriage is for companionship and mutual support, and for raising children.
- Marriage requires mutual respect, trust and faithfulness. The dignity of both partners should be upheld.
- Sexual violence can have a detrimental effect on the family. So it is vital for a family to be strong and healthy with its foundations in Christ, in order to face challenges.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are vital in order to repair broken relationships.

Prayer points

- Pray that partners will understand and model biblical marriage.
- Pray for families affected by sexual violence.
- Pray for children being raised in unstable family settings.

Further passages for reading

- Genesis 1:26–28. God created man and woman and blessed them both
- Colossians 3:18–21. Instructions for Christian households
- 1 Peter 3:1–7. Guidance for wives and husbands
- Hebrews 13:4. Faithfulness in marriage

Illustration of compassionate Masculinities

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- the will of God in the context of sexual violence
- that Jesus revealed new truths about how we should love our neighbour, which surpass our understanding
- how essential it is for us to show God's love to others experiencing illness and suffering
- that fear can make stigma worse

We will BE...

- more compassionate towards others, and to survivors of sexual violence
- more compassionate and understanding of ourselves (in order to overcome self-stigma)
- more aware and informed about the causes of violence and the fact that no one deserves to be treated with violence

We will ACT....

- by responding with compassionate support rather than judging their personal and sexual lifestyle or the choices they make for their survival
- to challenge self-stigma (the feeling that we are unworthy and shameful and deserve what we get)
- to identify modern and traditional ways for counselling and provide alternative community-based care and support to survivors of sexual violence

Background information

There is a need for increasing knowledge among church leaders of the need to act to support people who have experienced sexual violence. There is also a need for church leaders to then share that knowledge with their church members and communities. Everyone affected by sexual violence has different, and often very considerable, practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which need different resources and responses from within our church. The important thing is to listen to those who have experienced sexual violence – providing an opportunity for them to feel safe and supported.

Tips for the facilitator

It is important to allow participants who have survived sexual violence to share openly about their feelings and views about their experiences. The facilitator needs to be aware of his/her own bias in relation to perceptions towards sexual violence. This awareness is important because we all have pre-conceived ideas about sexual violence that need to be dealt with; not doing so may jeopardise our work with survivors who need a non-judgmental attitude.

The participants may disclose painful and traumatic experiences of sexual violence that need to be handled with sensitivity. The facilitator needs to be cautious and have a skilled counselling facility available so that cases of trauma that require professional help can be referred, should any arise during the study session.

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Ideas for practical response

Help people to be clear about the consequences of stigma, discrimination and denial in their churches and communities. Discuss ways of dealing with each of these.

Bible study: Mark 5: 24–34 and Matthew 1:18-25¹¹

This is a story full of pain, about the struggle for healing of a woman who has been suffering with a haemorrhage for 12 years, despite treatment under various doctors. She has spent all her money on trying to find a cure and is no better for it: in fact, she is getting worse. She has heard about Jesus and comes up through the crowd to touch his cloak. Jesus' response is: 'your faith has restored your health: go in peace and be free of your complaint.'

Discussion

In Biblical times...

1. Who are the main people in the story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
 1. What is compassion?
 2. How does Jesus, Jairus and Joseph show compassion and care to women?
3. How would these the woman with the issues of blood and Mary the mother of Jesus be perceived in Jewish culture?

In the context of sexual violence...

1. What can men learn from the three men about what it means to be a real man?
2. In what ways are men being challenged to show compassion today?
3. Why might survivors of sexual violence not speak out about their experiences?
7. How could the church become a place of acceptance, where those who have experienced sexual violence can speak openly about their experiences?
8. What is preventing the church from speaking out against sexual violence? If it is lack of understanding, how might the church learn more about sexual violence?

Key learning points

- Do not rush to judge others, for all of us have fallen short of the glory of God and sinned in many ways (Romans 3:23–24).
- Women are often blamed for sexual violence while little or nothing is mentioned to the males who perpetrate sexual violence. It is NOT the survivor's fault if they experience sexual violence.
- The church has a responsibility to lead efforts to challenge stigma and discrimination.
- If people living with sexual violence suffer from stigma in the community and church, they may not receive the medical attention they need, in particular medication to prevent HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases.

Prayer points

- We live in a bleeding world, full of pain and misery. Pray that we will hold on to God as we search for new meaning in life.
- Pray that we will rebuild our families and interpersonal relationships that are torn apart because of greed and unforgiving spirit. We pray for restoration of broken relationships with God's unconditional love.

¹¹See page 70-71 for the full texts.

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- We pray for survivors of sexual violence to be filled with God's unconditional love, care and compassion. Pray that they will still know that God is their father in the midst of facing everyday life challenges.
- Pray that the church would be moved with compassion towards the people who sexually violated

Further passages for reading

- John 4:1–26. Jesus and the Samaritan woman
- John 5:1–15. Jesus heals a paralysed man
- Matthew 9:35–38. Jesus has compassion for people with all kinds of troubles

Homosexuality in the Bible

Facilitator's notes: how will this study change the way we think about sexuality?

We will listen, EXPLORE....

- The diversity and complexity of sexuality issues
- The experiences of other people
- Our own experiences as we share them with others
- The 2006 constitutional rights of each individual to express their sexuality
- What the Bible says about sexuality and the different interpretations of the scriptures

We will Be

- Challenged to reconsider our old perceptions on sexuality – heterosexuality and homosexuality.
- Encouraged to know and understand human rights and dignity of each human being.
- Reminded that each person is created in God's image no matter their sexual orientation.

We will ACT...

- with unconditional love and acceptance
- to challenge self-stigma and discrimination against the LGBTI community
- We will seek to engage in mutual dialogue with homosexuals in order to learn and understand them

Background information

Homosexual relationships and unions are officially legalized in South Africa. Despite that South African constitution giving rights to all people to express their sexuality freely, some individuals as well as church leaders in our communities have fundamental objections against homosexuality, and support heterosexuality. They regard homosexuality as unnatural, unbiblical and as threatening the status quo. Many homosexual people conceal their true sexuality because they fear discrimination, exclusion, rejection or attack.

Bible Study: Genesis 19:1-26¹²

This text and many others have influenced tradition and doctrinal authority of most churches who have rejected homosexuality over the ages. The LGBTI people do not identify with the deeds mentioned in the above verses, and see no connection between what they experience themselves to be and what is described in these verses. In order to understand – dialogue and exposure to scientific facts is needed more than mere controversy.

Discussion

In biblical...

1. What are the texts about?
2. When you read a biblical text like this, what prejudices do you carry about homosexuality?
3. What does Lot do to protect them?
4. Look at the text again, what really what the sin of Sodom; is homosexuality or inhospitable, violence and rape (read also Ezekiel 16)?

In context

1. In our social contexts why are homosexual being discriminated and some experience sexual violence?
2. What does it mean to love unconditionally?
3. In what ways can the church promote unconditional love for homosexuals?
4. How can we make the church space become safe homosexuals?
5. How can you attain enough knowledge about homosexuality and what it means to be gay?
6. How did you acquire your knowledge about homosexuality (e.g. from socialisation stereotypes, media, or from first-hand knowledge?)
7. How can you contribute to healing, respect and dignity to bring humanness to my reading of the Bible?

Key learning points

- It is unnecessarily hurtful to speak of homosexuality as sickness or as sin.
- In order to understand life of homosexuals there is a need to listen to their stories and experiences rather than passing judgment on the basis on myths and rumours told about them.
- The genesis of human sexuality is complicated. Some believe that sexual orientation is fixed by biology (hormones, genes, etc.) whereas other hold that sexuality is shaped by psychological and social factors that interact in complex ways. Thus, scholars are still divided about whether sexual orientation is a matter of choice or not but this does not given any the right to judge.

¹²See the full text on pages 71-73.

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Prayer points

- Pray for the courage to understand diversity and complexity of sexuality issues.
- Pray for objective understanding of experiences of other people's sexuality.
- Pray for recognition of grace and law acknowledging the constitutional rights of each individual to express their sexuality
- Pray for the church to heal the hurt and to display God's love for all humans without judging and rejecting other people as sinners or outcasts.

Further passages for reading

- Judges 19
- Leviticus 18:22,
- Leviticus 20:13
- Roman 1:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
- 1 Timothy 1:10

Justice, advocating and Restoration

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- the role of the church in demonstrating clear leadership in responding to sexual violence
- how necessary effective advocacy is in mobilising resources for those impacted by sexual violence
- how best to help people understand their potential for leadership and advocacy roles in responding to sexual violence

We will BE...

- equipped to reflect on leadership attitudes and how leaders speak out against sexual violence
- mobilised to play a role in advocating for justice for those who have experienced sexual violence

We will ACT...

- to encourage individuals, families and those who have experienced sexual violence to consider their potential in taking up leadership or advocacy roles
- to explore opportunities for advocacy within and outside our communities and families
- to create peer support groups for those who have experienced sexual violence, to enable healing and restoration and to enable them to speak out about their experiences and advocate for the rights of survivors of sexual violence

Background information

Justice is not simply about punishing people – it is about putting things right. To seek justice is to want to see laws being implemented, those who have done wrong to be held accountable for their actions and people who have been victims of a crime to receive care and support as they rebuild their lives after the crime.

Advocacy means speaking with and on behalf of others, to explain their needs and concerns to those who have the power to address their needs and create change. We have a biblical mandate to care for marginalised people in society and to challenge injustice.

Tips for the facilitator

As a leader, Nehemiah was personally involved as part of the solution, joining in with the physical work. But he couldn't do it alone – he needed all the community to help build the wall.

Discuss what approaches are needed to promote effective leadership and advocacy. Some suggestions would be: clear understanding, persistence, prayer, passion and effective communication.

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Ideas for practical response

Discuss how we can best encourage people in our churches to act like Nehemiah in the context of preventing and responding to sexual violence.

The Israelites face the problem of a broken wall, which leaves them vulnerable to attack. Consider what 'broken walls' are represented in our community. What are the problems that need to be addressed?

What does the law say about sexual violence in our country? What are the rights of people in our family, church and community?

How can we as leaders stand up for justice, truth and the rights of our family and community members?

Bible study: Nehemiah 4:1–20, 6:15–16¹³

Walls are built to protect homes and communities. If a wall is weak or cracked, it can easily fall. If a wall is broken then the house may collapse. We may think of the Nehemiah's wall in terms of various social structures that sustain and protect the wellbeing of the community. Without them, our communities become more vulnerable to attack. Nehemiah saw the need in his community, and he advocated on behalf of his people to those who were powerful and could help. First, he went to God, in prayer. Then he spoke to the people in authority who had the power and resources that were needed, before he took action.

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. What were the main needs and problems that the Israelites were facing?
2. What leadership qualities did Nehemiah show? Who did he ask to help him?
3. How did other people respond? Why do you think they acted in this way?
4. How did Nehemiah respond to the threats faced in building the wall?
5. What plans did he make to ensure there was good communication during the rebuilding of the broken the wall?
6. What sort of qualities and practices make someone a good or a bad leader?
7. Consider Jesus' model of servant leadership (Matthew 20:26-28). In your understanding, what the meaning of servant leadership according to Jesus?

In the context of sexual violence...

8. Broken walls can be a symbol of broken relationships, families and marriages as a result of sexual violence. Think of some of the ways that these broken family ties can be restored?
9. What do we expect of a leader in our community, in our church or family or country?
10. How do we use our God-given leadership abilities to respond to the issues facing our community?
11. What opportunities are there for us to engage in leadership and advocacy activities in our communities and families?
12. How can we engage and support those who have experienced sexual violence in leadership and advocacy roles?
13. Like Nehemiah, do we need others to support us as we speak out about sexual violence? What kind of support and protection do we need?
14. As individuals, what kind of leadership are we called to show in regard to sexual violence?
15. What attributes do we need as Christians to engage in effective advocacy for those who have experienced sexual violence?
16. List three practical steps you take in order to be involved in justice, advocacy and restoration in your family, church and society?

Key learning points

- We need God's direction to provide both good leadership and identify issues that we may need to advocate for.

¹³See page 72-73 for the full text.

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- The church is well placed to challenge local government and organisations to take more action to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
- Each of us has a responsibility in accompanying, supporting and standing in the gap for those who need us.
- We all need commitment, discernment and empowerment to provide effective leadership and advocacy about sexual violence in our communities.

Prayer points

- Pray that God will show us how we can rely on him for strength, understanding and grace to repair every situation where leadership is lacking or weak and where we face 'damaged walls'.
- Pray for all those who are vulnerable to sexual violence because of poverty.
- Pray for those who care for children who have lost parents, or whose parents are sick, and who are likely to be left without protectors and providers.
- As Christians, we are all called to speak up for those in need. Pray for guidance on how we can all follow Nehemiah's example and take the lead in meeting needs in our communities.

Further passages for reading

- Isaiah 6:8. The prophet Isaiah responds to God's calling
- Micah 6:8. God calls us to act justly and to show mercy
- James 2:14–17. Practical faith revealed in action

Ministering to Practical needs

Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

We will EXPLORE...

- and understand that we are all called to care for and take responsibility for one another
- and know that care and support is a ministry that is underpinned by biblical values and principles
- and affirm that whatever good we do to survivors of sexual violence, we are serving God

We will BE...

- given a deeper understanding of the practical care and support that others may need in the context of sexual violence
- aware of other people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs

We will ACT...

- without discrimination on any grounds
- with respect to humanity of any person regardless of gender, race, social status or circumstances, sexual orientation, beliefs and practice etc.
- to provide support in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those in our community impacted by sexual violence
- to mobilise our churches to meet the needs of people who have survived sexual violence

Background information

There is a need for increased knowledge among church leaders of the need for action to support people in need within their communities. Not just people who have survived sexual violence, but also their children, their families, their husbands or wives. These people have different but practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which need different resources and response from within our churches.

Tips for the facilitator

Encourage people to see that everyone has the capacity to help each other. Even if we are poor, or weak, or sick we still have something to offer. For example, even if we lack money, we could still give our time to sit and listen to survivor's experiences. We can accompany an individual when they go to the health clinic, to provide emotional support.

Ideas for practical response

This study encourages us not just to discuss situations and needs, but to take action to directly meet those needs. Discuss who around us is hungry, thirsty, homeless, lacking adequate clothes or in prison – in both physical and spiritual terms. If no one is adequately meeting their needs, what can we do ourselves?

Bible study: Matthew 25:37–40¹⁴

This powerful passage comes just before the last supper and before Jesus was arrested. It is almost his final teaching point to his disciples and one that applies just as much to us all today. In this powerful and practical passage, Jesus talks about meeting the needs of people who are often forgotten or shunned by society, for example those in prison. His listeners were surprised by his words.

Discussion

In biblical times...

1. What is this passage saying?
2. Who are the different people involved and what are they doing?
3. What does this passage tell us about how we as Christians should care for those in need?

In the context of sexual violence ...

1. In our culture, who carry the greatest burden in caring for the sick?
2. In the passage, whose responsibility is it to look after them?
4. What are the needs of those who have survived sexual violence? Consider their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Do people need care only when they are sick?
5. How can we as Christians, both as individuals and as a church community, meet these needs and provide practical care and support for each other?
6. Do children have different needs from adults? Explain why. How can we provide care and support for vulnerable children in our community, for example those who are orphaned or those who are caring for parents who are sick?
7. What material and economic needs would the survivor have if they would report sexual violence?
8. We may feel we have little to offer to help others, but in this passage, Jesus calls everyone to account for how they have cared for others. Explore the ways in which we could use what little we do have to help others.

Key learning points

- Are there people in our community who are excluded, or whose needs are ignored – for example, because of their age, gender or life experience?
- What does our society lose because of the way we treat these people?
- How can we transform this situation, and ensure that all people can participate fully in the life of our community?
- Be aware as much as possible of the services in your community

Prayer points

- Pray that we can take this message to heart and be mobilised to meet the needs of others, however uncomfortable we may feel about their situation and backgrounds. God's love is unconditional and ours should be too.
- Pray for organisations and NGOs who are responding positively to the needs of the survivors of sexual violence

¹⁴See page 25-73 for the full text.

Further passages for reading

- 2 Corinthians 5:1–3. Our longing for heaven
- 2 Corinthians 5:15. We should not live just for ourselves
- 1 John 3:18. Loving with truth and action
- James 2:14-17. Faith without works is dead.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR ACTIVITIES

This section provides practical guidelines on key areas that we need to consider in preventing and responding to sexual violence:

- **Mapping medical and legal services**
- **Confidentiality**
- **How to handle a disclosure of sexual violence**
- **Supporting those involved**
- **Listening to survivors**
- **Knowing your rights**

Mapping medical and legal services

Why is this important?

- It is important to note that sexual violence is a criminal offence in many countries.
- There are special medical and legal procedures that need to be followed in reporting this type of offence and there are precautions that need to be taken seriously.

There will be occasions when the church needs to refer and support survivors of sexual violence if the individual:

- choose to make a formal report of sexual violence to the police
- needs to seek medical support for any injuries sustained in the attack

It is important for the church to understand what services exist within their communities so they can help the individual get the care and support they may need.

The church can continue to provide support for the individual and continue to listen to their needs even if they receive professional care and support.

Please note: Individuals who have survived sexual violence should receive medical attention within 72 to 120 hours of the attack, to ensure they receive treatment to prevent HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. Even if this timeframe has elapsed, please ensure the individual receives medical treatment immediately.

ACTIVITY (for individuals and churches)

Start by asking the following questions to improve your knowledge of what services are available in your community for survivors of sexual violence.

Medical services

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- Where is the local health clinic?
- Does the clinic have trained nurses and doctors who offer medical attention to individuals who have survived sexual violence?

Please note: It is important to understand that physical evidence can be found on a survivor's body following an attack. If the attack has just happened and if the survivor can receive immediate medical attention, this may assist in a legal case against the perpetrator.

Legal services

- Where is the local police station?
- Does the local police station have someone responsible for handling cases of sexual violence (including rape cases)?
- Is there a law against sexual violence in your country?
- Find out what happens when a case of sexual violence is reported to the police. What evidence is needed to take the case to court? How long does this process take? Where is the nearest court that deals with cases of sexual violence?

Please note: Legal services vary from country to country and sometimes the legal system does not work the way it should. This may be an opportunity to advocate for justice.

Survivor care and support

- Are there counselling services available for survivors to receive counselling?
- Are there 'safe houses' or 'transit houses' in the community where survivors of sexual violence are able to stay while awaiting medical treatment or during the legal process?

Please note: Sometimes, the locations of 'safe houses' and 'transit houses' are kept secret to provide a safe and secure environment for survivors who may be in danger. Please respect the confidentiality of these locations.

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

- As a church, how can you develop relationships with people within each of the services mentioned above?
- Are there practical things the church can do to support survivors, including providing food, counselling, or inviting them to join savings and loans groups that the church runs?
- Raising awareness about sexual violence.

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- Train individuals to participate in the following activity, helping them to understand how they can respond to sexual violence.

ACTIVITY (for individuals and groups)

If you see signs of sexual violence and you think that a child or an adult you know may be exposed to sexual violence, what should you do?

Before you answer, think about what is best for the child or adult, your safety, the type of abuse, how to respect the survivor's dignity and privacy, and the services where you live.

1. Who could you talk to? Should you report the abuse? Why? Or why not? What services exist for the survivor? The end goals are to stop sexual violence and get appropriate care and support for the survivor.
2. In a group, discuss the steps you would take and list them on a piece of flipchart paper.
3. Explore with your group any personal or professional barriers you might experience (ie something that may get in your way or stop you from doing something).

Confidentiality

Why is this important?

Sexual violence is very intimate act of violating the other person so confidentiality must be respected in dealing with such cases. The aim must be to create a safe environment where the survivor of sexual violence is free to express themselves without fear of being judged by those who should be offering help and support. Respectful confidentiality creates opportunities for healing and restoration of dignity.

Guidelines

- The church should seek to treat people with dignity and respect.
- Gossip within the church is sometimes a challenge – this fuels stigma and discrimination instead of the church providing an open, safe space where people can find care and support.
- If someone shares their personal experience with you, do not make promises you cannot keep.
- It is important to share with the individual that there may be limits to keeping confidentiality – for example, if a child has been abused by a parent and is in a dangerous environment at home, there is a legal responsibility to report incidents to the police or social services in some countries. Find out what responsibilities you would have in such a scenario in your country and what you would have to report.

How to handle a disclosure of sexual violence

If an individual talks to you about their own experience of sexual violence, here are some simple steps to help you provide them with appropriate care and support and handle the information sensitively:

When someone tells you about a personal experience of sexual violence:

- Stay **calm** and don't panic.
- Provide a comfortable environment for the survivor to talk. If possible, talk to them in an appropriate, **quiet and confidential** place.
- Do not be alone with an individual of the opposite sex. If the survivor is of the opposite sex to you, invite a trusted individual of the same gender as the survivor to be present too, first asking the survivor's permission.
- **Listen** carefully.
- Tell the survivor of sexual violence that, whatever happened, **it is not their fault**.
- Tell the survivor that you **believe** them.
- Write down the survivor's story in their exact words as soon as you are able to. (This will be helpful if they want to report the attack to the police or courts.)
- Do not presume to tell them what they should have done to avoid the attack.
- Be supportive and **not judgmental**. Disclosure can be scary for a survivor.
- You need to ask only four questions:
 - **What** happened?
 - **Who** did this to you?
 - **Where** were you when this happened?
 - **When** did this happen?

Supporting those involved

After an individual has disclosed sexual violence to you, it is recommended you follow the process described below.¹⁵

¹⁵This has been used with permission of Restored. Restored is an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women. This flowchart has been adapted from their church pack produced by Restored. See the website: www.restoredrelationships.org.

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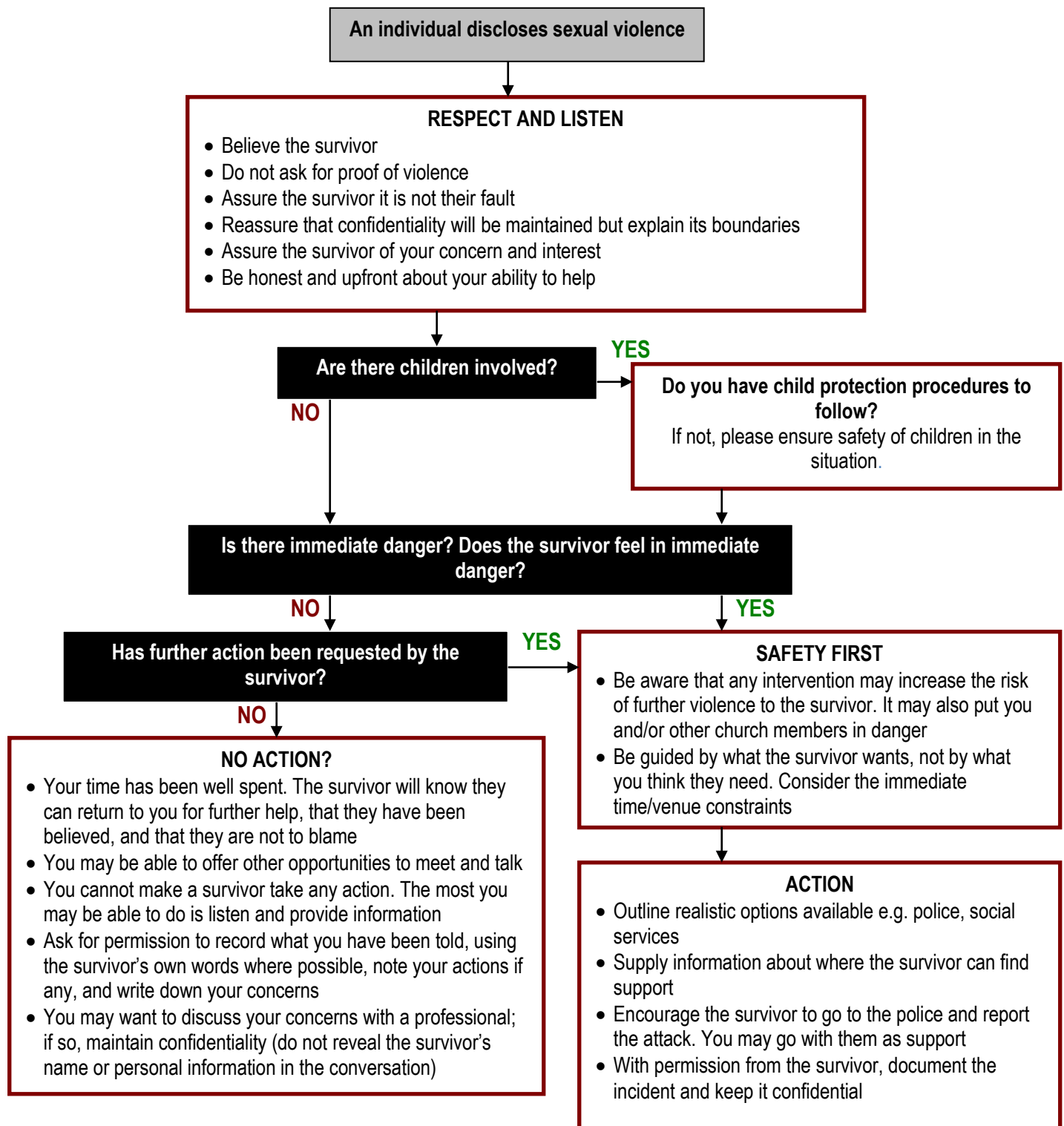


Diagram used with permission from Restored
www.restoredrelationships.org

Guidelines

- Get support – you should not deal with this alone. Contact a member of your church or another facilitator. You should always ensure confidentiality so, when seeking support, you should not give the name of the survivor or any information that could identify them, unless you are speaking to the police.
- Your safety is also very important – make sure you are safe and that you are not putting yourself in a dangerous situation.
- If the survivor is in immediate danger, work with the local authorities or community workers to draw up a plan to ensure the survivor's safety. For example, this could mean the survivor moving to a safe house.

Please note: It is the choice of the individual as to whether they want to report the experience of sexual violence. The role of the church is to provide them with care and support, accompanying them to the police and legal services if necessary. At all times, the survivor needs to be listened to.

Listening to survivors

Survivors of sexual violence often feel that they are not fully heard within the church. It is a challenge for the church to create safe spaces where survivors can receive support and care, as well as healing from the hurt and pain that they have experienced. It is important to note that survivors of sexual violence are members of the community and may even be members of the church congregation.

'Living with trauma of rape is an everyday struggle for me. I feel as if all the people see that I have been violated. I relive this painful experience every time I see the man who raped me....I relive the fear and have sleepless nights when I see the place where I was raped... I do not trust my community at all for I screamed very loud for help but no one came to my rescue. When I reported this in my church, I was told to pray. Yes, I do pray but it does not take the inside pain away...'

The experience of a survivor of sexual violence in South Africa

Counselling

It is often important for survivors to be able to speak about their experiences and receive special support from a trained professional.

There may be trained professionals within the church who are able to meet with the survivor. Alternatively, find out if there are professional services in your community that you can recommend to individuals when they disclose to you.

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Counselling is a process that takes time but in the long term it will allow the survivor to feel heard and begin to heal from the emotional trauma of their attack. It is important to ask survivors if there are practical ways that the church can support them, even if they are receiving professional counselling.

Dos and Don'ts when supporting a survivor

When a survivor shares with you their experience of sexual violence, it is important to remember the following guidelines for what to do and what not to do.¹⁶

Do:

1. Find a safe place to talk.
2. Have someone else present – if this is acceptable to the survivor.
3. Allow time for the person to talk.
4. Listen to what they have to say – and take it seriously.
5. Believe them: their description of the abuse is only the beginning of the story.
6. Give priority to their immediate safety.
7. Empower them to make their own decisions.
8. Support and respect their choices.
9. Give them information about relevant support services.
10. Use the expertise of those who are properly trained.
11. Reassure them that they are not to blame. They do not deserve this and it is not God's will for them.
12. Let them know that what the perpetrator has done is wrong and completely unacceptable.
13. Love and support them.
14. Be patient.
15. Protect their confidentiality.

Don't:

1. Judge the person or what they tell you.
2. Make unrealistic promises.
3. Minimise the severity of their experience or the danger they are in.
4. React with disbelief, disgust or anger at what they tell you.
5. React passively or do nothing.
6. Ask them why they did not act in a certain way.
7. Blame them for the violence.
8. Act on the person's behalf without their consent and/or knowledge.
9. Expect them to make decisions quickly, especially if the perpetrator is someone they know.
10. Make decisions for them or tell them what to do.
11. Encourage them to forgive the perpetrator.
12. If their husband is the perpetrator, do not send them home with a prayer/ directive to submit to their husband/ bring him to church/ be a better Christian wife.
13. Contact the person at home, unless they have agreed to this.
14. Approach the perpetrator for their side of the story: this will endanger the survivor.
15. Discuss what they have told you with anyone else, without their permission.

¹⁶These guidelines have been adapted and used with permission from Restored's church pack on domestic abuse. For a full copy of this resource, please see page 47 for the link to the Restored website. The church pack also includes a list of Dos and Don'ts when dealing with a perpetrator.

Knowing your rights

Awareness of national laws and policies on sexual violence

It is important to be aware of the laws that exist in your country relating to sexual violence. To find out more about these laws, you can speak to your local police or contact the local/national government. The Ministry of Gender or Ministry of Justice are the sector of government responsible for such laws.

Awareness of international legislation and policies on sexual violence

There are international policies and legislation on sexual violence, to which some countries have signed up. Below is some information about the main international agreements that exist to date.

A. CEDAW (*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*)

This is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women across the world.

It was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and was implemented from 1981. Of 193 countries, 187 countries have signed this agreement.

B. UN CSW 2013 Resolutions (*United Nations Commission on the Status of Women*)

Every year, representatives of United Nations member countries gather to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and create policies.

In 2013, the priority theme was: the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

There were agreed resolutions which recognised the need to strengthen legal systems and policies, address structures and underlying causes of gender-based violence, and improve evidence of what interventions work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

C. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995

This was adopted by countries present at the United Nation's 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. The declaration requires all governments to develop strategies or national plans of action. These action plans are to have specific activities to improve the situation of women, including addressing violence against them.

BIBLE PASSAGES¹⁷

STUDY 1: 2 Samuel 13:1–22

¹ In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. ² Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

³ Now Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴ He asked Amnon, 'Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.'

⁵ 'Go to bed and pretend to be ill,' Jonadab said. 'When your father comes to see you, say to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand."' "

⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand.'

⁷ David sent word to Tamar at the palace: 'Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him.' ⁸ So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. ⁹ Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

'Send everyone out of here,' Amnon said. So everyone left him. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand.' And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. ¹¹ But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, 'Come to bed with me, my sister.'

¹² 'No, my brother!' she said to him. 'Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. ¹³ What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.' ¹⁴ But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

¹⁷ Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used with the permission of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

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¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, 'Get up and get out!'

¹⁶ 'No!' she said to him. 'Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.'

But he refused to listen to her. ¹⁷ He called his personal servant and said, 'Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her.' ¹⁸ So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing an ornate robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. ¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

²⁰ Her brother Absalom said to her, 'Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart.' And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.

²¹ When King David heard all this, he was furious. ²² And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

STUDY 2: John 4:1-30

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John ² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

¹¹ 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob,

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who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?’

¹³ Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’

¹⁵ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.’

¹⁶ He told her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’ ¹⁷ ‘I have no husband,’ she replied. Jesus said to her, ‘You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.’

¹⁹ ‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘I can see that you are a prophet.’ ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’

²¹ ‘Woman,’ Jesus replied, ‘believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.’ ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.’

²⁵ The woman said, ‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.’ ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, ‘I, the one speaking to you—I am he.’

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?’ ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

STUDY 3: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

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¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

STUDY 4: Genesis 1:26–28

²⁶ Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'

STUDY 5: John 8:1–11

¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do

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you say?’⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’

¹¹ ‘No one, sir,’ she said. ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’

STUDY 6: Judges 19:16–29

¹⁶ That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the inhabitants of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields.¹⁷ When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, ‘Where are you going? Where did you come from?’

¹⁸ He answered, ‘We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the Lord.^[a] No one has taken me in for the night.¹⁹ We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, the woman and the young man with us. We don’t need anything.’

²⁰ ‘You are welcome at my house,’ the old man said. ‘Let me supply whatever you need. Only don’t spend the night in the square.’²¹ So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

²² While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.’

²³ The owner of the house went outside and said to them, ‘No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this outrageous thing.²⁴ Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don’t do such an outrageous thing.’

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²⁵ But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. ²⁶ At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

²⁷ When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ He said to her, 'Get up; let's go.' But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

²⁹ When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.

STUDY 7: Mark 10:13- 16

13. Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them by placing his hands on them. But his disciples told the people to stop bothering him.

14. When Jesus saw this, he became angry and said, 'Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God.'

15. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does'. 16. Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them by placing his hands on them.

STUDY 8: Ephesians 5:21–33

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' ³² This is a profound mystery—but I

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am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

STUDY 9: Mark 5:24–34

²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'

³¹ 'You see the people crowding against you,' his disciples answered, 'and yet you can ask, "Who touched me?"'

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'

STUDY 9: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

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²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

STUDY 10: Bible Study: Genesis 19:1-26

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. ² “My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.”

“No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”

³ But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. ⁴ Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. ⁵ They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”

⁶ Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷ and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. ⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”

⁹ “Get out of our way,” they replied. “This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

¹⁰ But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. ¹¹ Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

¹² The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, ¹³ because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”

¹⁴ So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, “Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!” But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

¹⁵ With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.”

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¹⁶ When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. ¹⁷ As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!”

¹⁸ But Lot said to them, “No, my lords, please! ¹⁹ Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can’t flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I’ll die. ²⁰ Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn’t it? Then my life will be spared.”

²¹ He said to him, “Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²² But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (That is why the town was called Zoar.)

²³ By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. ²⁶ But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

STUDY 11: Nehemiah 4:1–20 and 6:15–16

Nehemiah 4:1–20

¹ When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, ² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, ‘What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?’

³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, ‘What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!’ ⁴ Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. ⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

⁷ But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. ⁸ They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

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¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, 'The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.' ¹¹ Also our enemies said, 'Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.' ¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, 'Wherever you turn, they will attack us.'

¹³ Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. ¹⁴ After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, 'Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.'¹⁵ When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work.

¹⁶ From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah¹⁷ who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, ¹⁸ and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.

¹⁹ Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, 'The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. ²⁰ Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!'

Nehemiah 6:15–16

¹⁵ So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.¹⁶ When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

STUDY 12: Matthew 25:37–40

³⁷ 'Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ 'The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

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GLOSSARY

ADULT: Any person 18 years and older.

ATTITUDE: Opinion, feeling or position about people, events and/or things that is formed as a result of one's beliefs. Attitudes influence behaviour.

BELIEF: An idea that is accepted as true. It may or may not be supported by facts. Beliefs may stem from or be influenced by religion, education, culture and personal experience.

BLAME: When you feel or declare that (someone or something) is responsible for the sexual violence.

CHILD: Any person under the age of 18.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality is an ethical principle that is associated with medical and social service professions. Maintaining confidentiality requires that the information is protected and only shared when the individual concerned has given permission to do so. All written information is maintained in a confidential place in locked files and only non-identifying information is written down on case files. Maintaining confidentiality means that case details are never discussed with family or friends, or with colleagues whose knowledge of the abuse is deemed unnecessary. There are limits to confidentiality while working with children.

COUNSELLING: The provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving emotional, personal or psychological problems.

DISCLOSURE: The process of revealing information. Disclosure in the context of sexual abuse refers specifically to how a non-offending person (for example, a friend or church pastor) learns about an individual's experience of sexual violence. Individuals will disclose sexual violence differently and disclosure is often a process rather than a single or specific event. Disclosure about sexual violence can be directly or indirectly communicated, voluntarily or involuntarily.

DISCRIMINATION: When one group of people is treated worse than others because of prejudice or incorrect information.

EQUALITY: Is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognizes that their needs are met in different ways. Promoting equality should remove discrimination in the areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

FACILITATOR: A leader who encourages others to share their knowledge, experience and thinking so that people can learn through sharing together.

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FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING: The practice of circumcising young women involving the removal of the sex organ or the sewing up of the vaginal opening.

FORCED MARRIAGE: Is a marriage in which one or both of the people are married without his or her consent or against their will. Forced child marriage is where a girl is forced to marry early, it usually means the end of her education if she is in school and the end of her being able to make important decisions about work, her health and her well-being. Abuse is common in child marriages.

FORGIVENESS: This is letting go of the need for revenge and releasing negative thoughts of bitterness and resentment.

GENDER: The social differences between men and women, or boys and girls that are learned (rather than the sexual differences which are biological).

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will; it is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. Gender-based violence encompasses a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women and girls and several harmful traditional practices, including forced early marriage.

HARMFUL CULTURAL PRACTICES: These are cultural and religious traditions that are harmful physically or emotionally to the individuals involved.

INCLUSION: Is the action of including or of being included within a group or structure.

LEADERSHIP: Is the action of leading a group of people, organization or church, or the ability to do this.

PERPETRATOR: A person who directly inflicts or supports violence or other abuse inflicted on another against his/her will.

RAPE: Forcing a person to have sex against their wishes.

REPORTING: is the action of going to the police and providing a statement and evidence that sexual violence has occurred.

SAFE SPACE: A place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome or unsafe.

SELF STIGMA: The feeling that we are unworthy and shameful.

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SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes. This includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

STEREOTYPE: Ideas about something or someone that have become fixed through being widely used, but which do not necessarily apply in every case.

STIGMA: A feeling of being socially unacceptable, resulting in isolation, rejection and shame.

SUBMISSION: The action of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person.

SURVIVOR: A person who has survived/experienced sexual violence. The term 'survivor' can be used interchangeably with the term 'victim'. Throughout this resource, we use 'survivor'.

TRAUMA: Traumatic experiences usually accompany a serious threat or harm to an individual's life or physical well-being and/or a serious threat or harm to the life or physical well-being of the individual's child, spouse, relative or close friend. When people experience a disturbance to their basic psychological needs (safety, trust, independence, power, intimacy and esteem), they experience psychological trauma.

FURTHER READING AND USEFUL RESOURCE MATERIAL

Further information and resources can be found on the following websites:

- **Restored** www.restoredrelationships.org
Ending domestic abuse: a pack for churches:
<http://www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51/>

- **'We Will Speak Out' coalition** www.wewillspeakout.org
Resources for churches and factsheets:
<http://www.wewillspeakout.org/resources/>

- **Christians for Biblical Equality** <http://www.cbeinternational.org/>
- **Ujamaa Centre** <http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/homepage.aspx>
- **Gender and Development Network** <http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/>
- **Bridge** <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/>
- **Tearfund** www.tearfund.org
- International learning zone: <http://tilz.tearfund.org/sexualviolence>

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