

## Documentation of Day 3 – Gender stream

### Gender-based violence and mental health and wellbeing.

The day focused on gender-based violence & mental health and well-being.

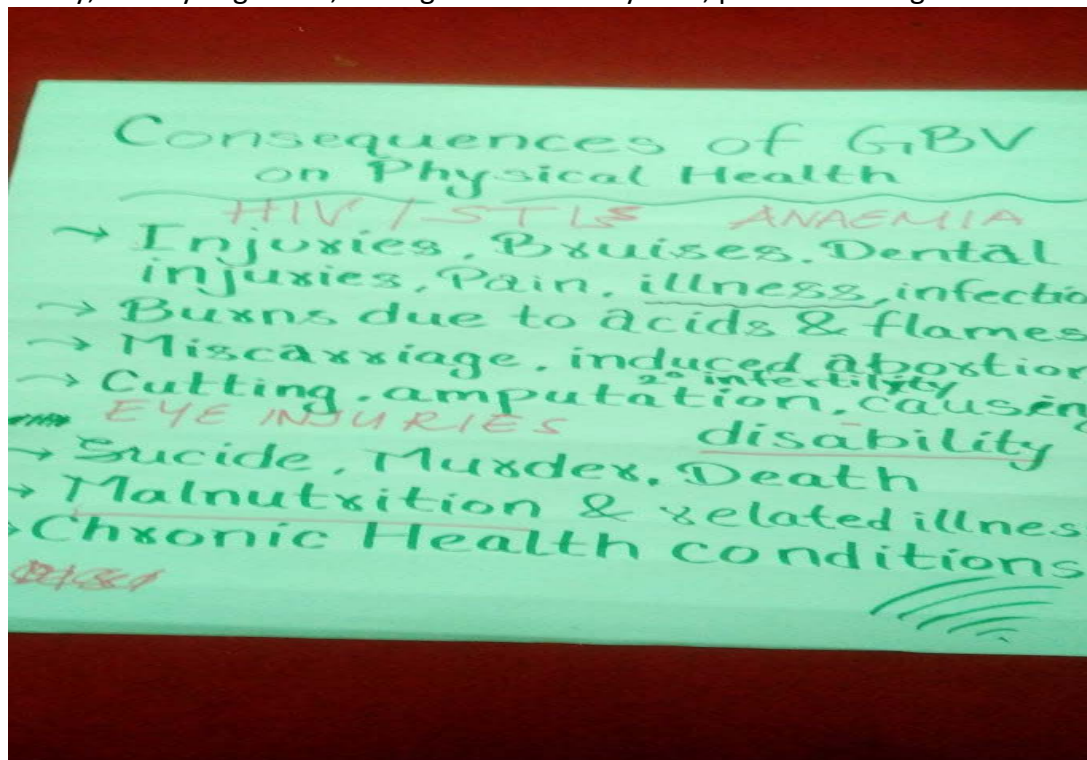
**Gender based violence** is violence against persons because of their gender whether it is against women, transgendered, bisexual persons. Although gender violence affects all genders, women are by far in the majority, with most other victims being children, young boys and girls and LGBTQ+ persons. The focus was therefore on violence against women. Gender based violence should be tackled from both a preventive and service perspective. Health systems are one of the weakest links for both prevention and service. Sadly, statistically women are safer outside the home than in the home or with people they know.

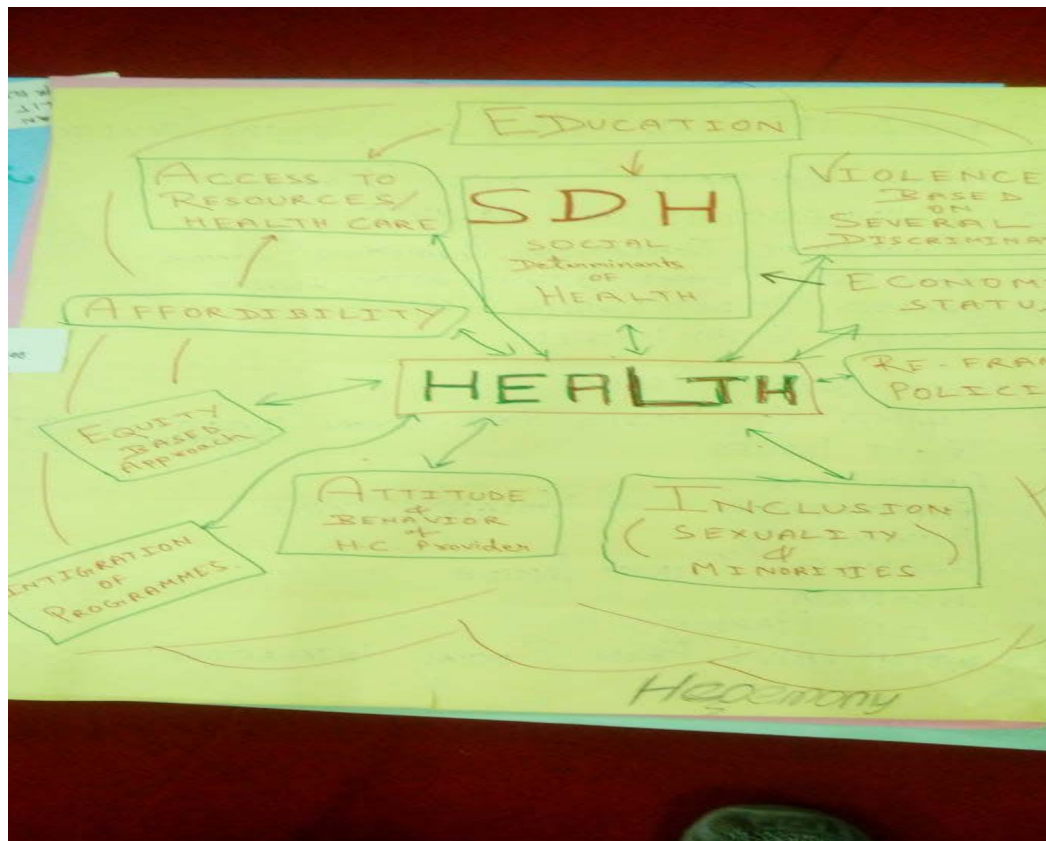
Gender based violence is related to power dynamics – ‘to keep you in your place’. It is a public health issue and a human rights violation.

The group discussed different forms of violence, why it happens and then shared personal experiences of gender-based violence, or witnessing incidents.

### Impact of gender-based violence on individuals and societal institution

In groups we then discussed the impact of gender-based violence on an individual’s physical, mental and sexual and reproductive health and on societal institutions such as the family, society in general, the legal and health system, police and the general environment.





- ## IMPACT OF GBV ON MENTAL HEALTH
- ① POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
  - ② DEPRESSION / AND ANXIETY
  - ③ SUICIDAL TENDENCIES / COMMITTING SUICIDE
  - ④ LOW SELF ESTEEM / INFERIORITY COMPLEX
  - ⑤ FEELING OF NOT BEING USEFUL
  - ⑥ TRYING TO FIX MYSELF
  - ⑦ BODY IMAGE ISSUES
  - ⑧ SHAME (eg HIDING THEIR SEXUAL IDENTITY)
  - ⑨ TRUST ISSUES
  - ⑩ ADDICTION
  - ⑪ TRANSFERENCE OF VIOLENCE / CRIME
  - ⑫ INSECURITY
  - ⑬ FEELING DIRTY INSIDE
  - ⑭ INSOMNIA
  - ⑮ SELF HARMING
  - ⑯ WITHDRAWL FROM SOCIAL INTERACTION
- ILLUSIONS  
OCDs  
HALLUCINATION
- LOSS OF  
MEM
- LOSS OF  
IDENTITY

## **Role of the health system and caring for survivors of gender-based violence**

Next we discussed the role of health systems support survivors of gender-based violence and caring for survivors of gender-based violence.

### **Role of the health system:**

- It is a public health and a social determinant of health
- Need physical, mental and social support
- Recording details is crucial for medico-legal cases
- Referrals to other service
- Medical reports often put down random mental illness diagnoses
- Often women do not ascribe injuries to domestic violence as it usually is a family member

### **Caring for survivors:**

- Emergency treatment for STIs, emergency contraception, HIV prevention
- Treating injuries
- Sensitive counselling
- Referrals to other resources

Importance of educating health professionals.

There was then a focus on counselling and specifically on LISTENING attentively and sensitively. A technique called SOLER was introduced which was practiced in groups of through.

S – Sit square

O – Open posture

L – Lean forward

E – Eye contact

R – Relax

Human connection and feeling safe and comfortable are more important than medication in this context.

## **Mental health**

Mental health was introduced from a personality development approach focusing on transactional analysis theory. We all have the 'parent' 'adult' and 'child' within us and often learn to repeat what we learn from observing our parents.

Often women in particular grow up believing:

You don't exist (birth of a girl in many cultures is not celebrated)

Don't belong

Don't get close to men

Don't succeed or become important

Don't grow up

Don't feel (boys) – don't think (girls)

The linkages between mental wellbeing and violence, conflict were presented by another resource person, using examples from Central and South America. Mental Health as a public health issue continues to be marginalized; the need for public health measures of healing beyond the bio-medical; the need to develop adequate skills and human resources were emphasized.

The session ended with groups working on their projects.