

# COVID19. A Guide to Gender and Protection Integration

## for all countries and programmes

### WHY IS IT NEEDED?

With the Covid-19 outbreak, women, children and other vulnerable adults are particularly at risk and they might suffer significant consequences due to their existing vulnerabilities and new limitations. Confinement and isolation, disruption of social networks and new stress on households are already increasing gender-based violence, especially domestic violence. School closure can expose girls to sexual violence and unwanted pregnancies. The care burden and disruption of livelihoods are more likely to affect women and girls during this period.

### WHAT MUST BE ENSURED?

These guidelines are considerations and suggestions for response to be adapted and mainstreamed to all programmatic activities, to ensure that [Protection Principles](#) are followed:

- **Prioritize safety & dignity, and avoid causing harm**, preventing and minimizing any unintended negative effects of our interventions;
- **Meaningful Access** to assistance and services - in proportion to need, without barriers and with special attention to vulnerable individuals and groups;
- **Accountability**, by setting up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can feedback and address concerns and complaints;
- **Participation and empowerment**, supporting and developing self-protection, capacities and assisting people to claim their rights.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls should remain at the heart of the planning process and implementation of a response.

### Consider that...

### What you can do is...



The COVID-19 outbreak is **increasing the risk of GBV** (gender-based violence) **including sexual exploitation and IPV** (intimate partner violence) particularly for women and girls. Lockdown and isolation will impact those already living in abusive situations.

- **Include GBV awareness** in all messages to communities
- **Keep referral pathways updated** and in line with current service availability and ensure dissemination
- **Continue support activities** to GBV survivors where possible using remote contact, phone, hotlines and other technologies while taking into consideration safety and confidentiality
- **Support families at high risk of GBV** by checking in on the families and discussing coping strategies



Women make up **large parts of the health workforce and most primary caregivers** to the ill, elderly and children. Their burden is likely to significantly increase putting their health and well-being at risk

- **Support health care workers and caregivers** on identifying warning signs of burnout and stress and provide tips on how to deal with it
- **Encourage** other members of the households especially men and boys **to share in household responsibilities** and caregiving roles.



Women play a major role as conduits of information in their communities, but gender roles may **exclude women from decision-making spaces and restrict their access to information and services** during outbreaks.

- **Design health and safety messages** that targets caregivers to ensure they are keeping themselves safe.

- **Ensure that women are able to get information** about how to prevent and respond to the epidemic in ways they can understand.

- **Explore context specific and traditional means** of communication used by women that do not require gathering and high level of literacy

- **Strengthen the leadership and meaningful participation of women and girls** by encouraging community and religious leaders to engage women and girls in decisions that can affect them



Women might experience **interrupted access to health services** (eg. sexual and reproductive health services and family planning) and shortage of **menstrual health products**.

- **Provide** adequate support or **referral information** on available services for SRHR and FP

- **Consider safe distribution of menstrual health products** and the diffusion and use of reusable products and providing remote MHM information.



Crises pose a **serious threat to women's engagement in economic activities**, especially in informal sectors, and can increase gender gaps in livelihoods and increase vulnerability for the whole family

- **Develop targeted strategies to protect women's livelihoods** and explore **cash transfer** programming, to mitigate the impact of the outbreak and its containment measures



People with multiple and combined vulnerabilities (female-, elderly female- or girl-headed households, migrant women, women with disability, minorities) will be more exposed and have **different needs, capacities and resources** even during the outbreak.

- **Map and understand** the different vulnerabilities and marginalised people in the communities

- **Involve** directly the affected people to develop safe mitigation strategies and meet their needs



Higher demand and unequal supply of food and health supplies may **increase sexual exploitation and safeguarding risks**.

- **Include PSEA** (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) **and Safeguarding awareness** in all messages to the communities

- **Provide safeguarding contacts** and information accessible to children

**For more information and guidance or in-depth support with one specific aspect:**  
[gender-and-protection@tearfund.org](mailto:gender-and-protection@tearfund.org)