

Gender-sensitive response: Guidance for health facilities

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced people to stay home for long periods, and taken away the livelihoods of some, has created conditions that could lead to gender-based violence (GBV). At the same time, women and girls have unique needs that may be interfered with by various measures taken to curb the spread of the virus.

The following are some guidelines for health facilities to ensure that the needs of women and girls are well catered for during the pandemic.

- Include female health workers in the facility response team.
- Advocate gender balance in the national and regional response teams.
- Sensitize staff to be more alert and look out for abuse cases during this time of crisis. They should then refer the cases to the necessary authorities.
- Provide counseling services for women who may need them.
- Where possible, set up a GBV desk within the facility in partnership with a specialist in the area.
- Collect disaggregated data by gender on Covid-19 infections as well as other hospital visits directly or indirectly linked to the pandemic.
- It is important to let women know that family and reproductive health services are still readily available to them.
- Ensure safe transport for health workers who have to come in early or leave the facility late in the night.

