

This resource for **all staff** implementing **development** programs. It accompanies CARE's [GBV Guidance for Development Programs](#).

GBV integration resource:

## Creating GBV Communications Materials

**Many projects create Information, Education & Communication (IEC) materials to support project activities and campaigns. It is important any communications materials which refer to GBV do no harm by following the ethical principles detailed in CARE's GBV guidance for development programs Section I.**

*This resource outlines key points to guide development of posters, leaflets, videos, social media graphics or any other material used to support project activities or campaigns. It has been adapted from Raising Voices' SASA! Activist Toolkit.<sup>1</sup>*

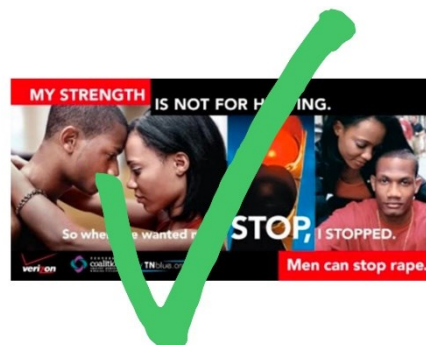
### Maintain the Dignity of the Characters

When creating communication materials about GBV, it is tempting to use images that show women being abused. This approach needs to be used carefully, if done at all. Avoid showing women in undignified positions (i.e., naked, lying on the ground, in the middle of experiencing rape, etc.). While explicit images of acts of violence showing women in powerless and exposed situations may accurately reflect reality, they are rarely effective in helping to change people's attitudes.

Similarly, avoid showing sensationalized depictions of men being highly aggressive or violent; these are undignified portrayals of men. Women and men viewing explicit images such as these rarely want to identify with the characters or the issue that is being represented. Many people may feel ashamed to look at the image and as a result will either ignore it or joke about it, to diminish feelings of shame and embarrassment. The use of explicit images can further marginalize the issue, keeping it taboo instead of encouraging people to discuss it. Try instead to maintain the dignity of the characters by showing women and men as reasonable and thoughtful characters who are able to make positive decisions.

### Portray the Positive

When discussing violence, instead of telling people that violence is bad, show how nonviolent resolution of conflict and nonviolent relationships are positive. For example, instead of showing a picture of a woman being beaten that reads "Stop Gender-Based Violence," it may be more effective to show a picture of a woman and man sitting together discussing a problem, with the male character saying, "I respect my wife; we talk about our problems together. Do you?" Avoid visual representations that portray survivors as victims. Instead, aim to show survivors as empowered people who decided to speak up. Materials that portray the positive and respectful role model and alternative ways of thinking and behaving are more engaging and can help facilitate a process of change.



<sup>1</sup> Raising Voices: SASA! Activist Toolkit for Preventing Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS (Uganda, 2008).

## Help Viewers Engage

When viewers see themselves in the materials and characters, they are more likely to think about the issue and reflect on how it affects them. Materials that show “regular” women and men will help more people identify with the characters. Avoid stereotypes. Take care in how you show the man who is being violent. Making this man into a “monster” (i.e., making him very scary, ugly, or mean) will prevent men from identifying with the character. Showing a man who is not out of control or looking too crazy will help others identify with him and his behavior. Similarly, when showing women, try to make the characters look like women in your community. Show women of different ages and sizes, from different economic levels, or who have a disability. The characters should represent the range of people in your community.

## Avoid Blaming and Accusations

Communication materials should avoid blaming men or particular populations for violence. Accusing men of violence and publicly shaming men in materials often only increases resistance and backlash. It is important to hold men accountable yet not to insult, demean, or demonize them. This will only make them defensive and unengaged. This does not mean that the issue of male responsibility for perpetrating the majority of GBV should not be explored. For example, avoid “xx women were victims of homicide.” Instead, highlight “xx women were killed by a partner.” Depictions of violence that make the perpetrator less visible reinforce problematic perceptions of women as “victims” of crimes that happen to them, as opposed holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

## Further resources on portraying GBV in project and campaign materials

- CARE’s [GBV Communications Policy and Guidelines](#)
- Raising Voices’ [SASA! Activist Kit](#)
- UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF’s [Guidelines on Responsible representation and reporting of violence against women and children](#)
- Gender-Based Violence AoR Global Protection Cluster’s Preliminary guidance on [Developing Key Messages for Communities on GBV & COVID-19](#)
- Sahiyo’s resource guide to [best practice for sensitive and effective reporting on FGC/M](#)