

This resource accompanies CARE's [GBV Guidance for Development Programs](#).

GBV principles & approaches

DOs & DON'Ts

How to respond if someone tells you they have experienced gender-based violence

All staff should be able to respond to GBV disclosures in a safe and appropriate way. This means reacting immediately, appropriately, and empathetically when an individual reports that they have been subjected to GBV.

This resource is adapted from the GBV AoR's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) template. It outlines key points for what staff should and should not do. It should be translated, shared with all staff and displayed where staff can access this. Staff should also receive [GBV first-line support training](#).

DO:

- Express appropriate acknowledgment of their disclosure**
For example, say "I'm sorry that happened to you. You deserve to be safe."
- Be aware of any mandatory reporting requirements in your country**
For example, for child abuse.
- Ask if they would like information**
Make sure this is done discreetly and respectfully. If they say yes, give them information about appropriate referral services. If they say no, respect their decision.
- Respect the person's privacy and confidentiality**
Try to find a private place to talk where the person cannot be seen or heard. Reassure them that you will respect their privacy and confidentiality.¹
- Ask if they would like information**
Make sure this is done discreetly and respectfully. If they say yes, give them information about appropriate referral services, using a referral directory or pathway.
- Be clear that help is an option in the future**
Make it clear to affected people that even if they decline help now, they can still access help in the future.
- Respect people's right to make their own decisions**
- Be aware of and set aside your own biases and prejudices**
- Behave appropriately**
By considering the person's culture, age, and gender.

DON'T:

- Exploit** your relationship as a helper
- Ask** the person for any money or favor for helping them
- Make false promises** or give false information
- Exaggerate** your skills
- Force help** on people and don't be intrusive or pushy
- Pressure** people to tell you their stories or ask probing questions
- Share the person's story** with others
- Judge** the people for their actions or feelings