

- Equip yourself with important phone numbers and helplines that you may reach during an emergency and think about ways in which you may safely place a call and seek necessary support
- In the event that you need to leave your home very quickly, try to safely store important documents, any items you consider essential, and some cash, that you can take with you in an emergency
- Remember this is a period for physical distancing with social solidarity, so do not disengage
- Consider remaining connected with your well-wishers through phone or other means

How can one access help and services ?

1091 **All India Women's Helpline (for women in distress)**
Connects the caller to the police control room

1098 **Childline (for vulnerable children)**
To report any incidence of child marriage, child trafficking, violence against children

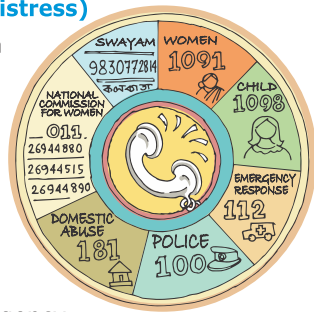
112 **Emergency Response Support System**

- Single number based response for any emergency assistance from Police, Health, Fire and Rescue and other services
- Includes a special feature for a panic call- after dialing 112, press power button on your smart phone 3 times quickly to activate panic call. In case of feature phone, after dialing 112, long press '5' or '9' key to activate panic call
- Women and children, can use 112 India mobile App to activate SHOUT feature, which alerts registered volunteers in vicinity for immediate assistance apart from activating the emergency response centre (ERC)

100 **Police Emergency Service**
Connects the caller to the police control room (ERC)

181 **Women's Helpline for addressing Domestic Abuse**

- Provides immediate and 24 hour emergency response to women affected by violence across the country
- Women can also call the helpline in medical emergencies as well as to find information about a variety of government services and schemes



011 26944880
011 26944515
011 26944890

National Commission for Women Helpline

- Provides access to trained social workers and counselors
- Facilitates access to a range of services including linkage to police, legal support, shelter services and information on laws and rights

9830 7728 14

Swayam Helpline (Kolkata)

- Operated by the NGO Swayam based in Kolkata
- Has trained mental health counselors/therapists to provide survivor-centered services, while ensuring confidentiality
- This number has been specially activated during the lockdown; service available from Mondays to Fridays from 10 am to 2 pm

How to help those in need ?

- Listen to the girl/woman closely, with empathy and without judging
- Inquire about her various needs and concerns- emotional, physical, social and practical
- Validate the woman's experience. Show her that you understand and believe her. Assure her that she is not to be blamed
- Enhance her safety. Discuss a plan to protect herself from further harm if violence occurs again
- Support her by helping her to access information, services and social support



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**Addressing
Gender Based Violence (GBV)
during COVID-19**

What is GBV ?

- Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females
- Includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty
- Deeply rooted in gender inequality in our society
- Both women and men experience GBV but the majority are women and girls



How is COVID-19 perpetuating the rise of GBV ?

- Rise in existing inequalities for women and girls, as well as discrimination. Women may face higher risk of violence
- Reduced mobility, confinement within the household and lack of social connectivity during the outbreak may compound the situation for women who experience or are at risk of violence, within relationships



- Women from marginalized groups including migrant families may be at heightened risk of violence, as they face sudden economic uncertainties, food and health insecurity
- Increased care giving and household responsibilities for women including taking care of sick family members.

- Self-isolation for women in coercive or violent relationships with a perpetrator who may become more abusive when there is no other outlet.
- Increase in different forms of gender-based violence including intimate partner violence

COVID-19 - GBV Risks to Adolescent Girls

It has also been observed that GBV against adolescent girls have been heightened during Covid-19 pandemic and it needs especial emphasis

Sexual exploitation and abuse

- Sharp rises in exposure of adolescent girls to sexual exploitation, harassment and other types of gender-based violence due to economic insecurity
- Opportunities to perpetrators to exploit adolescent girls' need to attain basic necessities to survive. This also includes commercial sexual exploitation, with perpetrators grooming families facing economic hardship to sell their girl children, or grooming girls online (in contexts where girls have internet access)

Poor education outcomes

- Lead to more girls dropping out before they complete their education, especially girls living in poverty, with a disability or living in rural isolated places due to closure of schools

Risk of Child marriage and early pregnancy

- The phenomenon of child marriage has been found to take place unabated and is happening at the same rate during non-lockdown phase if not more, as many cases might go unreported
- Several reported CM cases are not being intervened due to the involvement of Police and administration in the COVID response
- Rise in forced and teenage pregnancies due to lack of access to reproductive health services, this may lead to unsafe abortions among GBV survivors

Risk of quarantine measures and unpaid care

- Increased exposure to abusers at home due to restricted mobility are invariably leading to an increase in maltreatment and abuse
- Girls are expected to support in not only managing the household duties of cooking, cleaning, obtaining water and firewood, but also in care giving

Increase in sexual reproductive health risks

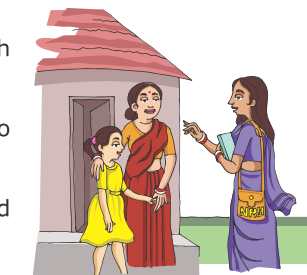
- Evidence indicates healthcare resources directed at adolescent girls are at risk of being diverted towards addressing the pandemic
- Challenges in accessing menstrual hygiene products and sexual and reproductive health services will exacerbate girls existing reproductive health risks

Witnessing domestic violence

- Children and adolescents who witness domestic violence are at serious risk for long-term physical and mental health problems
- They may act out in negative ways such as fighting with family members or demonstrating aggressive behaviour, having low self esteem and trouble making friends"

What can be the approaches ?

- Strengthen the leadership and meaningful participation of women and girls in all decision-making processes in addressing the COVID-19 outbreak
- Ensure that girls and women are able to get information about how to prevent and respond to the epidemic in ways they can understand
- Health workers who are part of response to have basic skills to respond to disclosures of GBV
- Prioritizing access to sexual and reproductive health services
- Alternative health care facilities may be requested to take on the caseload of GBV survivors
- Psychosocial support to be available for those affected by the outbreak and are also GBV survivors
- Promote women's/girls' economic empowerment strategies and social protection to mitigate the impact of the outbreak
- Mental health, Psychosocial support (MH & PSS) and stigma prevention for those affected by the outbreak and are also GBV survivors
- Prevention of violence – Understand the needs of women & girls with or without families, in homes or on the move; Promote helplines and create linkages with Police; related to PSS and services



What to do ?

If you are facing violence at home, please remember

- Help is available, you are not alone
- The violence perpetrated against you, is not your fault
- It is your right to live your life free of violence

Have a safety plan in place

- If confinement at home implies increased risk of violence for you, consider reaching out to family, neighbours, friends or any frontline/community based workers such as ASHAs, AWWs who could come to your rescue if there is an emergency
- Consider and plan for alternate locations with friends or family, where it may be safe for you to stay, away from the perpetrator, if necessary

