



# The Federation of Obstetric & Gynaecological Societies of India

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Dear FOGSIAN's,

Today, I want to share a very grave yet often ignored issue that we come across in our professional and personal life, that is, violence against women and girls.

Violence against women is often socially tolerated and sanctioned. It covers a host of abusive behaviour and action that is directed towards women by the virtue of the fact that they are women. Unfortunately, the women survivors of violence have limited access to relief and services due to many reasons, one of the most poignant reasons being the view that violence, especially inside homes is the personal matter of the family or the women enduring it. Meanwhile, Men may also face violence at home, however, the severity and the multi-dimensional impact of violence is more adverse on women than men. As evident by this fact that '1 in 3 women throughout the world experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner [WHO 2013]'. Thus, violence against women is health concern and not just a human rights issue.

It is no revelation that women subjected to domestic violence do seek medical help, including for their injuries, even if they do not disclose about the abuse or violence. The healthcare provider is likely to be the first professional, who comes in contact with the women and they can provide the first line support to survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and domestic violence<sup>1</sup>.

**Identify women who may be subjected to violence if she has**

- Ongoing health issues such as stress, anxiety or depression
- Thoughts, plans or acts of self-harm
- Injuries that are repeated or not well explained
- Unwanted pregnancies

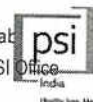
**Ask direct or indirect questions\* about violence for e.g. (\*Ensure confidentiality and safety)**

- "I have seen many women with problem like yours who have been experiencing trouble at home"
- "Does your husband bully you or insults you?"

**Provide First-Line Support that involves five simple tasks-LIVES**

- **Listen-** Listen to women with empathy and without judging them
- **Inquire about needs and concerns-** Assess and respond to her various needs and concerns
- **Validate-** Assure her that she is not to be blamed
- **Enhance Safety-** Discuss a plan to protect herself from further harm
- **Support –** Support her by helping her connect to information, services and social support. Based on her need, refer her to nearest Crises Intervention Centre, District legal Service Authority, Mental Health Counsellor, social worker and at a minimum, share the Women Helpline Number (#181)

<sup>1</sup> WHO Clinical and Policy Guidelines





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As healthcare providers, we can play a critical role in supporting women facing violence and step up to our responsibility in providing comprehensive patient care. To start with, we can undertake the steps mentioned in the adjoining diagram.

I encourage you to include the above mentioned steps in your patient care routine.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alka Kriplani  
President, FOGSI

Dr. Hrishikesh Pai  
Secretary General, FOGSI