
Discussion Guide: Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Group discussions with community leaders about sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) can help to raise awareness of risks and rights related to SEA and explore options for better protecting communities. This discussion guide includes suggestions for arranging and leading any group discussion, followed by sample prompts and important ideas for discussing PSEA.

Arranging Discussion Groups (ahead of discussion)

- Identify a comfortable and quiet locations for discussions.
- Limit groups to 15 participants
- Complete discussions within 1.5 hours.
- Ensure lead facilitator has experience and/or training in facilitation. The facilitator must be able to ask probing and clarifying questions, demonstrate comfort and patience when talking about sensitive issues, positively manage negative or harmful comments, and respond appropriately to disclosures of GBV.
- Have a referral list of available services in case of GBV disclosure.
- Where possible, arrange same-sex facilitators for all male or all female discussion groups.

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Greet everyone, share introductions, pleasantries, and gratitude for any recent positive actions.
- Share general information about your organization and program (with any new participants).
- Present the purpose of the discussion.
- Agree to not share stories that identify individuals.

Discussion (30-45 minutes)

- Introduce topic of discussion and begin with a question or other prompts.
- Be sure to review questions/prompts and adapt them for context.
- Avoid “teaching”, talking too much, or arguing. Use prompts to keep conversation going and remember the discussion is also a learning opportunity for you.
- Do not feel pressure to use all questions/prompts.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Summarize key takeaways or ideas from discussion.
- Agree on any points for further discussion and make plans as appropriate.
- Thank all participants.

Prompts/Questions

- Sample Script: We would like to talk to you about something very sensitive and concerning that can happen during emergencies, when people like me work to assist affected communities. Sometimes, some of those people aren't really committed to helping and instead take advantage of those most vulnerable, particularly women and girls. Aid workers might demand favors in exchange for work or assistance. Some aid workers have hurt and even raped children. We want to make sure you're aware of the community's rights to be free from this kind of abuse, and we would like to talk about some ways to protect the community.
- Do you think there are any services/ distribution practices that present significant risks to women and girls?
- Without mentioning any individuals, have you heard any suspicions of bad behavior by aid workers?
- If you heard that someone in your community may have been exploited or hurt by an aid worker, what do you think the best actions would be to protect them and others? Are you aware of services available to them? Do you know where this could be reported?
- Sample scenario (to adapt for context if using): *A widowed woman is alone in the community, the only caretaker for her two young children and her aging father. While in line to register for food distribution, an NGO worker said he will give her an extra kilo of wheat each month if she visits him in the evenings to "keep him company."*
 - Do you think such a situation happens in this community?
 - How would community members react if they knew what was happening to the woman?
 - Do you think the woman might seek help from anyone? Who?
 - How would you respond if the woman confided in you about this situation?

Important Ideas for Discussion

- Assistance from humanitarian agencies is always free. Any requests for payment or exchange is wrong and can be reported.
- Someone who has been exploited by a humanitarian is never at fault. Every person has the right to assistance and the right to be safe from harm and abuse.
- Share information on local reporting options for suspicions of SEA, as well as information on how leaders might be more involved with SEA coordination or complaints mechanisms.
- Share information on available GBV/SEA response services.