



Module 4

# SOCIAL SERVICES

---

Essential Services Package for  
Women and Girls Subject to Violence  
*Core Elements and Quality Guidelines*





# MODULE 4

Social Services

The Essential Services Package comprises five Modules:

Module 1. Overview and introduction	Module 2. Health	Module 3. Justice and policing	Module 4. Social services	Module 5. Coordination and governance of coordination
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction to essential services package</b> 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Context 1.3 Purpose and scope 1.4 Language and terms	<b>Chapter 1: Introduction to essential health services</b> 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms	<b>Chapter 1: Introduction to essential justice and policing services</b> 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms	<b>Chapter 1: Introduction to essential social services</b> 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms	<b>Chapter 1: Introduction to essential coordination and governance actions</b> 1.1 Introduction 1.2 Purpose & scope 1.3 Language and terms
<b>Chapter 2 Common principles, characteristics and foundational elements</b> 2.1 Principles 2.2 Common characteristics of quality essential services 2.3 Foundational elements	<b>Chapter 2 Framework for essential services package</b> 2.1 The overall framework 2.2 Unique features of the framework specific to essential health services	<b>Chapter 2 Framework for essential services package</b> 2.1 The overall framework 2.2 Unique features of the framework specific to essential justice and policing services	<b>Chapter 2 Framework for essential services package</b> 2.1 The overall framework 2.2 Unique features of the framework specific to essential social services	<b>Chapter 2 Framework for essential services package</b> 2.1 The overall framework
<b>Chapter 3 How to use this tool</b> 3.1 Essential services guidelines framework	<b>Chapter 3 Guidelines for essential health services</b>	<b>Chapter 3 Guidelines for essential justice and policing services</b>	<b>Chapter 3 Guidelines for essential social services</b>	<b>Chapter 3 Guidelines for essential coordination and governance actions</b>
<b>Chapter 4 Tools and resources</b>	<b>Chapter 4 Tools and resources</b>	<b>Chapter 4 Tools and resources</b>	<b>Chapter 4 Tools and resources</b>	<b>Chapter 4 Tools and resources</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Development of these guidelines would not have been possible without:**

The courage of the many women who have experienced violence and have spoken out about their experiences and the activists, especially from women's organizations located across the globe, who have advocated for appropriate service provision and support for women subjected to violence.

The efforts by governments who are taking actions towards ending violence against women through legislative reforms, policy initiatives and implementing prevention and response programmes.

The main donors for the UN Joint Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, the Governments of Australia and Spain.

The cross-sector practitioners, researchers, government representatives who attended and participated in the Global Technical Consultation on the Social Services Sector's Response to Violence against Women and Girls which contributed to the development of the guidelines (details of participants available at [www.endvawnow.org](http://www.endvawnow.org) and click on Essential Services).

The ongoing commitment of the UN system to develop programmes and actions responding to violence against women. The UN agencies engaged in supporting the adaptation and/or development of these guidelines have shared their time and knowledge to ensure that we continue to improve the provision of services for women and girls subject to violence. The agency representatives are thanked for their commitment and input: Tania Farha and Riet Groenen (UN Women), Luis Mora and Upala Devi (UNFPA) as well as the participation and inputs from UNICEF colleagues, Ms Theresa Kilbane, Ms Clarice Da Silva e Paula and Mr Peter Gross.

The consultants who assisted in the development and/or adaption of the guidelines, Ms Janice Watt and Ms Sue Finucane.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES 6**

---

1.1 INTRODUCTION 6

1.3 PURPOSE AND SCOPE 8

1.4 LANGUAGE AND TERMS 9

---

**CHAPTER 2. FRAMEWORK FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES PACKAGE 6**

---

2.1 THE OVERALL FRAMEWORK 8

2.2 UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE FRAMEWORK SPECIFIC TO ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES 14

---

**CHAPTER 3. GUIDELINES FOR ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES 18**

---

3.1 GUIDELINES FOR ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES 8

3.2 GUIDELINES FOR FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS SPECIFIC TO ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES 8

---

**CHAPTER 4: TOOLS AND RESOURCES 20**

---

## CHAPTER 1.

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

These guidelines for **essential social services** aim to provide guidance for the design, implementation and review of quality social service responses for women and girls subject to all forms of gender-based violence. The guidelines focus on low to middle income countries in stable settings. They are also applicable in high income countries.

The guidelines are part of the **Essential Services Package** which aims to provide all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence with greater access to a set of essential quality and coordinated multi-sectoral services.

The Essential Services Package reflects the vital components of coordinated multi-sectoral responses for women and girls subject to violence and includes guidelines for health services, justice and policing services, coordination and governance mechanisms as well as social sector services.

The guidelines for essential social services should be read in conjunction with Module 1: Overview and Introduction which sets out the principles, common characteristics and foundational elements that apply across all essential services. The guidelines are also complementary to the guidelines for health services (Module 2), police and justice sectors (Module 3), and coordination and governance of coordination (Module 5).

### 1.2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE GUIDELINES

The guidelines are designed to be a practical tool to assist countries to meet their extensive international commitments to eliminate and prevent violence

#### Quality social services

The provision of quality social services forms a vital component of coordinated multi-sectoral responses for women and girls subject to violence. Social services comprise a range of services that are critical in supporting the rights, safety and wellbeing of women and girls experiencing violence including crisis information and help lines, safe accommodation, legal and rights information and advice. Research and practice suggests that the manner in which services are provided has a significant impact on their effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

Key to maintaining women and girls' safety is an understanding of the gendered nature of violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, and providing services within a culture of women's empowerment. This includes ensuring that services are women-focused, child-friendly, are non-blaming, and support women and children to consider the range of choices available to them, and support their decisions.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.popcouncil.org/research/expanding-the-evidence-base-on-comprehensive-care-for-survivors-of-sexual-v>  
See also: Arango, D, et al, *Interventions To Prevent Or Reduce Violence Against Women And Girls: A Systematic Review Of Reviews*, Women's Voice and Agency Research Series, 2014, No.10, The World Bank, and Issues No. 6 December 2006; Services for victim/survivors of sexual assault Identifying needs, interventions and provision of services in Australia Jill Astbury <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/i6.html>.

The guidelines define the minimum requirements for a set of essential social services that together provide a quality response.

The scope of these guidelines for essential social services is largely those services that respond to women and girls. Whilst the guidelines may be applicable to other forms of violence against women, they have mainly been developed to respond to those women and girls experiencing intimate partner violence, and non-partner sexual violence, including the specific needs of girl mothers and their children. The focus is

primarily on the response to violence against women and girls (and their children) after the violence has occurred and taking action on the early signs of violence, or intervening to prevent the reoccurrence of violence.

The guidelines are complemented by the focus of UNICEF, which, amongst other things, works to ensure all children live free from violence. There has been significant guidance and responses developed for children as victims of violence.

### 1.3 LANGUAGE AND TERMS

**Coordination** is a central element of the response to violence against women and girls. It is required by international standards that aim at ensuring that the response to violence against women and girls is comprehensive, multidisciplinary, coordinated, systematic and sustained. It is a process that is governed by laws and policies. It involves a collaborative effort by multi-disciplinary teams and personnel and institutions from all relevant sectors to implement laws, policies, protocols and agreements and communication and collaboration to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Coordination occurs at the national level among ministries that play a role in addressing this violence, at the local level between local-level service providers, stakeholders and, in some countries, at intermediate levels of government between the national and local levels. Coordination also occurs *between* the different levels of government.

**Core elements** are features or components of the essential services that apply in any context, and ensure the effective functioning of the service.

**Essential Services** encompass a core set of services provided by the health care, social service, police and justice sectors. The services must, at a minimum, secure the rights, safety and well-being of any woman or girl who experiences gender-based violence.

**Gender based violence** is “any act of violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or

that affects women disproportionately”.<sup>2</sup>**Governance** of coordination has two major components. The first component is the creation of laws and policies required to implement and support the coordination of Essential Services to eliminate or respond to violence against women and girls. The second component is the process of holding stakeholders accountable for carrying out their obligations in their coordinated response to violence against women and girls and ongoing oversight, monitoring and evaluation of their coordinated response. Governance is carried out at both the national and local levels.

**Intimate partner violence** is “the most common form of violence experienced by women globally . . . and includes a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by a current or former intimate partner, without her consent. Physical violence involves intentionally using physical force, strength or a weapon to harm or injure the woman. Sexual violence includes abusive sexual contact, making a woman engage in a sexual act without her consent, and attempted or completed sex acts with a woman who is ill, disabled, under pressure or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Psychological violence includes controlling or isolating the woman, and humiliating or embarrassing her.

---

2 CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 19, para 6.



Economic violence includes denying a woman access to and control over basic resources.”<sup>3</sup>

**Multi-disciplinary response teams** are groups of stakeholders who have entered into agreements to work in a coordinated manner to respond to violence against women and girls within a community. These teams are focused on ensuring an effective response to individual cases and may contribute to policy making.

**Non-partner sexual violence** “refers to violence by a relative, friend, acquaintance, neighbor, work colleague or stranger”.<sup>4</sup> It includes being forced to perform any unwanted sexual act, sexual harassment and violence perpetrated against women and girls frequently by an offender known to them, including in public spaces, at school, in the workplace and in the community.

**Quality guidelines** support the delivery and implementation of the core elements of essential services to ensure that they are effective, and of sufficient quality to address the needs of women and girls. Quality guidelines provide ‘the how to’ for services to be delivered within a human rights-based, culturally-sensitive and women’s-empowerment approach. They are based on and complement international standards and reflect recognized best practices in responding to gender-based violence.

The **social services sector** provides a range of support services to improve the general well-being and empowerment to a specific population in society. They may be general in nature or provide more targeted responses to a specific issue; for example responding to women and girls experiencing violence. Social services for women and girls who have experienced violence includes services provided by, or funded by government (and therefore known as public services) or provided by other civil society and community actors, including non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations.

**Social services** responding to violence against women and girls are specifically focused on victims/survivors of violence. They are imperative for assisting women’s

recovery from violence, their empowerment and preventing the reoccurrence of violence and, in some instances, work with particular parts of society or the community to change the attitudes and perceptions of violence. They include, but are not limited to, providing psycho-social counselling, financial support, crisis information, safe accommodation, legal and advocacy services, housing and employment support and others, to women and girls who experience violence.

**Stakeholders** are all government and civil society organizations and agencies that have a role in responding to violence against women and girls at all levels of government and civil society. Key stakeholders include victims and survivors and their representatives, social services, health care sector, legal aid providers, police, prosecutors, judges, child protection agencies, and the education sector, among others.

**Victim / survivor** refers to women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing gender based violence to reflect both the terminology used in the legal process and the agency of these women and girls in seeking essential services.<sup>5</sup>

**Violence against women (VAW)** means “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”<sup>6</sup>

3 UN Secretary-General’s Study, *supra* note 1, para 111- 112.

4 *Ibid.* at para 128.

5 UN Secretary-General’s Study, *supra* note 1, notes the ongoing debate the terms victim and survivor. Some suggest that “the term “victim” should be avoided because it implies passivity, weakness and inherent vulnerability and fails to recognize the reality of women’s resilience and agency. For others the term “survivor” is problematic because it denies the sense of victimization experienced by women who have been the target of violent crime”. Therefore, these guidelines use the term “victim/survivor”.

6 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Article 1.

## CHAPTER 2.

# FRAMEWORK FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES PACKAGE

## 2.1

### OVERALL FRAMEWORK

The Framework for guidelines for the delivery of quality essential social services incorporates four interlinked components:

- **Principles** which underpin the delivery of all essential services
- **Common Characteristics which** describe a range of activities and approaches that are common across all areas and which support the effective functioning and delivery of services.
- **Essential services** which set out the absolute minimum required services to secure the human rights, safety and well-being of any woman, girls or child who experience intimate partner violence and or non-partner sexual violence
- **Foundational elements** which must be in place to support the delivery of each essential service.

### Essential Services Package: Overall framework diagram

Principles	A rights based approach	Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment	Culturally and age appropriate and sensitive
	Victim/survivor centred approach	Safety is paramount	Perpetrator accountability
Common characteristics	Availability	Accessibility	
	Adaptability	Appropriateness	
	Prioritize safety	Informed consent and confidentiality	
	Data collection and information management	Effective communication	
	Linking with other sectors and agencies through referral and coordination		

Essential services and actions	Health	Justice and Policing	Social services
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification of survivors of intimate partner violence</li> <li>2. First line support</li> <li>3. Care of injuries and urgent medical treatment</li> <li>4. Sexual assault examination and care</li> <li>5. Mental health assessment and care</li> <li>6. Documentation (medico-legal)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prevention</li> <li>2. Initial contact</li> <li>3. Assessment/investigation</li> <li>4. Pre-trial processes</li> <li>5. Trial processes</li> <li>6. Perpetrator accountability and reparations</li> <li>7. Post-trial processes</li> <li>8. Safety and protection</li> <li>9. Assistance and support</li> <li>10. Communication and information</li> <li>11. Justice sector coordination</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crisis information</li> <li>2. Crisis counselling</li> <li>3. Help lines</li> <li>4. Safe accommodations</li> <li>5. Material and financial aid</li> <li>6. Creation, recovery, replacement of identity documents</li> <li>7. Legal and rights information, advice and representation, including in plural legal systems</li> <li>8. Psycho-social support and counselling</li> <li>9. Women-centred support</li> <li>10. Children's services for any child affected by violence</li> <li>10. Children's services for any child affected by violence</li> <li>11. Community information, education and community outreach</li> <li>12. Assistance towards economic independence, recovery and autonomy</li> </ol>

### Coordination and governance of coordination

National level: Essential actions	Local level: Essential actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Law and policy making</li> <li>2. Appropriation and allocation of resources</li> <li>3. Standard setting for establishment of local level coordinated responses</li> <li>4. Inclusive approaches to coordinated responses</li> <li>5. Facilitate capacity development of policy makers and other decision-makers on coordinated responses to VAWG</li> <li>6. Monitoring and evaluation of coordination at national and local levels</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of formal structures for local coordination and governance of coordination</li> <li>2. Implementation of coordination and governance of coordination</li> </ol>

Foundational elements	Comprehensive legislation and legal framework	Governance oversight and accountability	Resource and financing
	Training and workforce development	Gender sensitive policies and practices	Monitoring and evaluation

## 2.2 UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE FRAMEWORK SPECIFIC TO ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Essential social services are also underpinned by important foundational elements that have specific application to social services this includes:

- Referral
- Risk assessment and management
- Appropriately trained staff and workforce development
- System coordination and accountability

Guidelines are provided for these foundational elements in Section 3.2.

## CHAPTER 3:

# GUIDELINES FOR ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES

## 3.1 GUIDELINES FOR ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES

### ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 1. CRISIS INFORMATION

Access to timely, clear accurate crisis information for any woman or girl who has, or is, experiencing physical, sexual or other forms of violence, wherever she is, at whatever time day or night, is vital in supporting her to access services to assist her safety.

Crisis information includes information about the rights of women and girls, the range and nature of services available, and is provided in a non-blaming, nonjudgmental manner. Information must be made available in a way that enables women and girls to consider the range and choices available to them, and to make their own choices. Crisis information must be available for women and children experiencing violence, and for family and friends, work colleagues, police and health services who may have a role in assisting women and girls to safely access services, where they choose to do so.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
1.1 Information content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure crisis information is clear, concise and accurate</li><li>• Ensure crisis information identifies and refers to the range of existing services available for women and children</li></ul>
1.2 Information provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure crisis information is widely available and accessible to all women and children</li><li>• Ensure information is offered in different forms ensuring that it is also suitable for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Women and children suffering multiple forms of discrimination</li><li>• Women and children with disabilities</li><li>• Children</li></ul></li><li>• Ensure widespread distribution of culturally sensitive information through various and relevant media, in a variety of locations and settings throughout the region/ country</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 2. CRISIS COUNSELLING

Crisis counselling is essential in assisting women and girls to achieve immediate safety, make sense of their experience, reaffirm their rights and alleviate feelings of guilt and shame.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
2.1 Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide with crisis counselling free of charge</li><li>• Ensure women and girls are listened to, and believed</li><li>• Ensure women and girls are offered a range of options including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediate access to safe and secure accommodation</li><li>• Immediate access to emergency and safe medical services such as hospitals<sup>7</sup></li><li>• The ability to re-contact the service, even if she chooses not to take up any of the options offered</li></ul></li><li>• Ensure women and girls are supported to make informed choices</li></ul>
2.2 Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure crisis counselling is appropriate to the various forms of violence experienced by the woman/girl</li></ul>
2.3 Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide crisis counselling through a range of methods including in person, via telephone, mobile phone, email</li><li>• Ensure crisis counselling is provided in various locations and diverse settings</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 3. HELP LINES

Help lines provide an essential link to information, counseling and support services for women and girls experiencing violence. Help lines operate separate to, but alongside, law enforcement and other emergency help lines.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
3.1 Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide telephone help lines free of charge or toll-free</li><li>• Provide help lines preferably 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or at a minimum, for four hours per day including weekends and holidays</li><li>• Ensure that staff answering help lines have appropriate knowledge, skills and are adequately trained</li><li>• Ensure the help line has protocols connecting it with other social services, and health and justice services to respond to individual circumstances of women and girls</li><li>• Ensure the help line has access to resources where necessary to ensure the safety of women and girls including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To support the emergency transport of women and girls to safe accommodation regardless of location</li><li>• Provision of immediate basic personal and health care items including food and clothing, either directly or through local services</li><li>• Links to immediate and appropriate police and justice responses, when requested or when necessary</li></ul></li></ul>
3.2 Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure information about the service and hours of operation are clearly and accurately communicated in appropriate channels</li><li>• Ensure the telephone service is accessible via mobile phones</li></ul>

7 See: *Responding to intimate partner and sexual violence against women, World Health Organization Policy and Clinical Guidelines* ([http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85240/1/9789241548595\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85240/1/9789241548595_eng.pdf?ua=1)) and the supporting clinical instructions for practitioners developed as part of this Joint Programme, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/136101/1/WHO\\_RHR\\_14.26\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/136101/1/WHO_RHR_14.26_eng.pdf?ua=1)

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 4. SAFE ACCOMMODATION

Many women and girls need to leave their existing living arrangements immediately in order to be safe. Timely access to safe houses, refuges, women's shelters, or other safe spaces can provide an immediate secure and safe accommodation option. Beyond this immediate safe accommodation women and girls may need support toward securing accommodation in the medium to longer term.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
<b>4.1 Safe houses, refuges, women's shelters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide safe and secure emergency accommodation until the immediate threat is removed</li><li>• Ensure security measures are in place including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confidential location (where possible)</li><li>• Security personnel</li><li>• Security systems</li></ul></li><li>• Ensure there is an access protocol for people entering and exiting safe accommodation</li><li>• Provide basic accommodation needs free of charge</li><li>• Ensure there is a protocol for unaccompanied children, including for longer-term alternative care where necessary and appropriate, that is aligned to existing national legislation and international standards</li><li>• Ensure that accommodation is accessible for women and girls with disabilities</li></ul>
<b>4.2 Responsiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide spaces within the accommodation that ensure privacy and confidentiality for women and girls</li><li>• Ensure accommodation addresses the needs of children and is child friendly</li><li>• Provide an assessment of immediate needs</li><li>• Develop an individualized support plan for the woman/ children, in consultation with them</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 5. MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL AID

In the immediate crisis period it should be assumed that women and girls have little or no access to material resources. Material and financial aid includes support and resources to enable access to crisis information and counselling, safe accommodation and food.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
<b>5.1 Availability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide support to access immediate basic individual needs of each woman and girl including access to emergency transport, food, safe accommodation free of charge</li><li>• Ensure aid provides for the needs of individual children</li><li>• Provide in-kind and other non-monetary aid such as basic personal and health care items</li><li>• Facilitate access to social protection such as cash transfers where these are available can be accessed at short notice</li></ul>
<b>5.2 Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure a range of means for women and girls to safely access material and financial aid</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 6. CREATION, RECOVERY, REPLACEMENT OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

Identity documents include those required by women and girls to ensure they can travel, maintain or seek employment, access available government benefits and social services, and access bank accounts etc. As many women and girls experiencing violence need to flee without these documents in order to remain safe they may require support to create, recover or replace identity documents.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
<b>6.1 Availability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist women and girls to establish or re-establish their identity in accordance with the local legal specifications or international protocols, where necessary</li><li>• Liaise with appropriate foreign affairs/ consular services, where necessary</li><li>• Provide assistance to create, recover or replace identity documents free of charge</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 7. LEGAL AND RIGHTS INFORMATION, ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION INCLUDING IN PLURAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

Many women and girls are likely to have limited knowledge in relation to their rights and range of options available to them. Accurate and timely information about such matters as divorce/marriage laws, child custody, guardianship, migration status and assistance to navigate justice and policing responses are important in protecting the safety of women and girls.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
<b>7.1 Availability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information about their rights to women and girls</li> <li>• Provide clear and accurate information about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available security measures that can prevent further harm by the alleged perpetrator</li> <li>• Procedures and timelines involved in national or traditional justice solutions</li> <li>• Available support where formal legal proceedings or remedies are initiated.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure information and advice includes referral to essential services as agreed by, and with the consent of the woman/girl</li> <li>• Provide legal and rights information, representation and advice free of charge</li> <li>• Provide legal advocacy and representation on behalf of women and girls, where instructed to do so by them</li> <li>• Document all legal advice in order to assist women and girls with any future action she might take</li> </ul>
<b>7.2 Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely information, advice and representation about options to support women and girl's immediate safety such as an order for the offender to stay away from her</li> <li>• Provide information in a written form (and in a language that the woman/girl can understand), orally, and/or in a form with which the woman is familiar</li> <li>• Provide information and advice in accordance with the availability of the woman/girl, that is, at a time and location that is suitable to the woman/girl</li> </ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 8. PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING

Specialist counselling can greatly improve the health outlook for women and girls which can consequently improve their access to education and employment.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
<b>8.1 Individual and group counselling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide individualized and group counselling, where appropriate, by professionals with specialist training in working with women and girls experiencing violence</li> <li>• Ensure women and girls have access to up to a minimum number of support/counselling sessions</li> <li>• Consider providing peer group support</li> <li>• Ensure counselling is informed by the experience of violence</li> <li>• Ensure counselling is human rights-based and culturally sensitive</li> </ul>
<b>8.2 Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support/counselling free of charge</li> <li>• Provide transport options to support women to attend sessions</li> <li>• Provide counselling at a time suitable for the woman/girl</li> </ul>



## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 9. WOMEN-CENTRED SUPPORT

Navigating the range of services, options and decision available can be daunting for women and girls experiencing intimate partner and non- partner sexual violence. Skilled assistance from trained staff can assist women and girls to access the most appropriate services, and to make informed choices that have the best opportunity to ensure her safety, empower her, and uphold her rights.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
9.1 Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure women and child-centred support is available for women and girls throughout their journey through the system</li><li>• Ensure staff are trained to work on behalf of, and to represent the interests of, women and girls</li><li>• Ensure staff respect the expressed wishes and decisions of women and girls</li><li>• Ensure any representation on behalf of women and girls is carried out with their explicit and informed consent</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 10. CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOR ANY CHILD AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

The effect of experiencing violence directly or indirectly can have a devastating impact on children. Children have the right to access services that are age appropriate, child sensitive and child-friendly.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
10.1 Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide child-centred rights-based counselling and psycho-social support</li><li>• Ensure each child has an individualized care plan</li><li>• Provide services for children free of charge</li><li>• Facilitate access to emergency and long-term alternative care, if required, with or without a parent/caregiver, as appropriate, in line with the Guidelines of the Alternative Care of Children</li><li>• Facilitate access to representation for children, where required, for example a (legal) guardian if the child is unaccompanied</li><li>• Ensure timely referrals and facilitated access to necessary services, for example to child protection to address issues regarding guardianship, health care and education</li></ul>
10.2 Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide services that are age appropriate, child sensitive, child friendly and in line with international standards</li><li>• Ensure staff receive training on child-sensitive and child-friendly procedures</li></ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 11. COMMUNITY INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Civil society organizations, women's groups, faith and community leaders often play a key role in mobilizing community efforts to raise awareness about the prevalence of violence against women and girls and the community's role in responding to and preventing violence.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
11.1 Community information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure community information includes information about the rights of women and girls and the range of services available to support them</li> <li>• At a minimum community information should include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where to go for help</li> <li>• What services are available and how to access them</li> <li>• What to expect, including roles, responsibilities, confidentiality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure community information is developed and disseminated in a range of formats, a variety of locations and in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner. For example information should:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be available in local language/s</li> <li>• Include pictorial representation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
11.2 Community education and mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure community education is regular and accurate</li> <li>• Ensure community education includes information about the rights of women and girls</li> <li>• Target specific groups such as community/religious leaders and elders, to support service provision</li> <li>• Provide appropriate training for men who advocate for women's human rights to act as role models and as support systems</li> <li>• Work with families to ensure support and access to services for women and girls</li> <li>• Work with local associations, media, schools, community sport clubs to tailor community education messages and dissemination strategies</li> <li>• Develop clear protocols to support the safety of women where they may be contacted by the media to tell their story</li> </ul>
11.3 Community outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services should identify hard to reach and vulnerable groups and understand their specific needs</li> <li>• Tailor community information and education to the specific needs of hard to reach, vulnerable and marginalized groups</li> <li>• Deliver community information and education in ways appropriate for hard to reach, vulnerable and marginalized groups</li> </ul>

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE: 12. ASSISTANCE TOWARDS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE, RECOVERY AND AUTONOMY

Experiencing violence is known to have long term consequences for the health and well-being of women and girls and to significantly impact on their ability to fully participate in society. Women and girls may require longer term assistance to support their recovery and to lead productive lives.

CORE ELEMENTS	GUIDELINES
12.1 Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sustained support for holistic recovery for a minimum of six months</li> <li>• Facilitate access to income assistance and social protection where required</li> <li>• Facilitate access to vocational training</li> <li>• Provide access to income generating opportunities such as seed funding for business start-up</li> </ul>
12.2 Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the safe reintegration of women and girls/children back into the community, where appropriate, according to her express wishes and needs</li> </ul>

### 3.2

## GUIDELINES FOR FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS SPECIFIC TO ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES

REFERRAL	
Description	Standards
<p>Referral pathways assist women and girls to receive timely and appropriate support services.</p> <p>Referral processes must incorporate standards for informed consent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services have protocols and agreements about the referral process with relevant social, health and justice services, including clear responsibilities of each service</li> <li>• Procedures between services for information sharing and referral are consistent, known by agency staff, and communicated clearly to women and girls</li> <li>• Services have mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of referrals processes</li> <li>• Services refer to child specific services as required and appropriate</li> </ul>

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT	
Description	Standards
<p>Women and girls face many risks to their immediate and ongoing safety. These risks will be specific to the individual circumstances of each women and girl.</p> <p>Risk assessment and management can reduce the level of risk. Best practice risk assessment and management includes consistent and coordinated approaches within and between social, health and justices service systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services use risk assessment and management tools specifically developed for responding to intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence</li> <li>• Services regularly and consistently assess the individual risks for each woman and girl</li> <li>• Services use a range of risk management options, solutions and safety measures to support the safety of women and girls</li> <li>• Women and girls receive a strengths-based, individualized plan that includes strategies for risk management</li> <li>• Services work with other agencies including health and justice services to coordinate risk assessment and management approaches.</li> </ul>

APPROPRIATELY TRAINED STAFF AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	
Description	Standards
<p>Paid and volunteer staff require specialist skills and knowledge to respond appropriately to women and girls experiencing violence.</p> <p>Staff require opportunities to build their skills and expertise and to ensure their knowledge and skills remain up to date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid staff and volunteers demonstrate an understanding of the prevalence, nature and causes of violence against women and girls</li> <li>• Paid staff and volunteers demonstrate an understanding of, and experience in, 'best practice' responses to women and girls experiencing violence</li> <li>• Paid staff and volunteers demonstrate an understanding of appropriate and child sensitive responses to children experiencing violence</li> <li>• Paid staff and volunteers receive induction and ongoing training and professional development</li> <li>• Paid staff and volunteers receive regular support and supervision</li> <li>• Training programs include modules on self-care for staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Services provide a safe, supportive and respectful work environment</li> </ul>

## SYSTEM COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Description	Standards
<p>An integrated, multisectoral or systems approach to service delivery brings together a range of services and organizations who have a common set of goals to provide more coordinated responses to violence against women and child protection.</p> <p>Social services must work with and alongside health and justice services to deliver quality responses for women and girls. Social services have a responsibility to, and are accountable to this broader service system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Services operate in a collaborative and supportive manner with and alongside other social services, health, police and justice services</li><li>• Services develop and regularly review protocols, memorandums of understanding, and agreements that clearly document the roles and responsibilities of each agency</li><li>• Services seek the engagement of other social services, and health and justice agencies in workforce development and training, and monitoring and evaluation activities</li><li>• Services document and advocate for women and girls rights and systemic improvements and accountability</li></ul>

## CHAPTER 4.

# TOOLS AND REOURCES

*Away From Violence: Guidelines for Setting Up and Running A Women's Refuge*, 2004, WAVE Co-ordination Office, Austrian Women's Shelter Network, Vienna

Centre for Excellence for looked after children in Scotland, *Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children* 2012, [http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Moving\\_Forward\\_Implementing\\_the\\_Guidelines\\_English.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Moving_Forward_Implementing_the_Guidelines_English.pdf)

*Centre for Enquiry Into Health and Allied Themes (2012): Ethical Guidelines for Counselling Women Facing Domestic Violence. India.*

*Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa (2008): 'Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence' in Minimum Standards for Service Delivery in Victim Empowerment.*

Establishing Gender-based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for multisectoral and inter-organisational prevention and response to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings

<http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2012/10/Establishing-Gender-based-Standard-Operating-Procedures-SOPs-for-Multi-sectoral-and-Inter-organisational-Prevention-and-Response-to-Gender-based-Violence-in-Humanitarian-Settings-ENGLISH.doc>

*Local Government Association, Women's Aid et al. (UK): 'Standards and Services' in Vision for Services for Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Violence. (Pp. 13)*

UN Women, Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/>

