



## RESPONSE AND SUPPORT STRATEGY

Practical application of the INSPIRE framework for effective prevention of violence against children

### SUMMARY

Children who are at risk of, or have suffered violence, require support to acknowledge the violence, identify perpetrators and be linked to social services like health, legal, trauma management, and safety to prevent additional harm. This reader explores how formal and non-formal systems can be set up and sustained to ensure a comprehensive response and support strategy as prescribed under the INSPIRE framework handbook.

**Keywords:** INSPIRE, gender-sensitive services, child friendly services, secondary victimization

### An overview of the INSPIRE response and support strategy

Response and support strategies for prevention of violence against children should focus on two key areas: providing timely, child-friendly and gender sensitive care and services including justice and preventing or reducing the mental, emotional and physical effects of violence and risky behaviour to deter secondary victimization or reoccurrence of violence.

An effective response and support strategy must therefore be supported by a strong child protection system which includes health and legal services.

### Evidence-based goals for the response and support strategy

Based on the existing knowledge base from child rights actors around the world, four goals for the response and support strategy have emerged:

- Existence of a system to help children
- Identification of children vulnerable to violence and those that have experienced it
- Immediate and long-term assistance to survivors of violence including counseling, therapy and foster care where necessary
- Protection of children in conflict with the law

When services are child friendly and gender-sensitive, they can prevent secondary victimization which occurs when there is none, inadequate, or judgmental response when violence occurs which further traumatizes the child.

Common responses that cause secondary victimization include continually requesting the child to describe in detail the occurrence, abusing the child for being neglectful, showing skepticism or indifference, and violating the child's right to privacy and confidentiality by exposing the information shared.

### Box 1: Understanding child friendly and gender-sensitive services

Sometimes referred to as child and adolescent centred services, child friendly services are specifically designed to address the unique challenges and circumstances of children. These services focus on the rights of children including:

- Privacy and confidentiality
- Dignity and compassion
- Being heard in a non-judgmental manner
- Timely access to services
- Procedures conducted in a child-friendly environment

Gender-sensitive services on the other hand recognize that girls and boys have specific needs and therefore urges for gender equality in response, norms and attitudes when violence has occurred.

## Evidence-based approaches for response and support

Table 1: INSPIRE approaches integrated into a comprehensive response and support framework

	ALL SECTORS	SOCIAL SERVICES	HEALTH AND CLINICAL CARE	JUSTICE
<b>Have a system for helping children</b> Well-functioning and coordinated systems and workforce	Workforce strengthening and training Referral networks, coordination and accountability Co-location of services	Establish or strengthen mechanisms for child protection	Integrate violence response into policies, services and budget	Establish or strengthen child-friendly justice processes
<b>Find out who needs help</b> Mechanisms for disclosure, case-finding, and reporting	Raise awareness Protect confidentiality Child-friendly reporting mechanisms	Identification/Clinical inquiry with interventions	Identification/Clinical inquiry with interventions	Clear protocols for follow-up Specialist police units
<b>Help children immediately and in the longer term</b> Essential services, protections, and access to justice	Provide first-line support, minimize harm and prevent secondary victimization	Support and coordination of services/case management Alternative care, including Foster care with social services Counseling and therapeutic approaches	Assessment, first-line support and clinical care, including mental health care Specialized clinical care for sexual abuse Counseling and therapeutic approaches	Protective mechanisms Investigate and prosecute perpetrators Child-friendly justice processes Quality, free legal aid Guardian ad Litem
<b>Protect children in conflict with the law</b>	Recognize the rights of and risks faced by children in conflict with the law	Work with justice sector to support children Treatment programmes for children in the juvenile justice system	Prevention and treatment services for at-risk or detained children	Specialized juvenile justice systems Diversion and non-custodial sentencing

### Box 2: Success factors for response and support efforts

- Child-friendly and gender-sensitive
- Ethical and follow human rights standards
- Clear protocols and standards for enforcement of laws including providing adequate resources for case management
- Data is shared across social service sectors with care taken to protect confidentiality
- Service providers are sensitized and trained both for skilling to handle child-related cases but also for attitude change based on pre-existing social norms and their own life experiences
- Community response is integrated into and harmonized with formal response systems for example, a child helpline is only as good as the available network of quality support services

Source: INSPIRE Handbook, page 206

## In practice: Strong response and support strategies

### **Zimbabwe: Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral Management of Child Sexual Abuse**

In 1997, Zimbabwe amended its Criminal Procedure and Violence Act, giving rise to more targeted and relevant support for survivors of sexual violence and abuse where they could access specialized health, justice and welfare services. Multiple stakeholders from government, public services and the civil sector developed the 'Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral Management of Child Sexual Abuse' which provides specific guidelines on sector roles and responsibilities with oversight from the National Victim Friendly System Committee and subcommittees in the districts.

The protocol addresses issues that include:

- A minimum package of services for survivors
- Priority response actions –health care, psychosocial support, legal aid
- Response guidelines to service providers –first contact, informed consent, and case management
- Sample forms and checklists, terms of reference
- Defining roles and responsibilities for public sector and community services

### **Equipping child rights actors: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Child Maltreatment Identification website**

The NICE website is a free resource base for social service professionals in the United Kingdom to access the latest information on child maltreatment. It is particularly useful for health professionals who are not child protection specialists to find guidelines for detection of maltreatment, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. Assessment tools are also provided along with e-learning resources for working with up-to-date evidence. Practitioners can also compare their experiences with the NICE provided recommendations.

### **Recommendations: what works**

- Workforce strengthening and training
- Establish referral networks and coordination
- Co-location of services to improve coordination and specialization
- Establish or strengthen mechanisms for child protection
- Integrate violence response into policies, services and budgets
- Support mechanisms for child-friendly justice
- Assessment, documentation, clinical and psychosocial care
- Clear protocols for follow-up
- Specialist police units
- Provide first-line support and prevent re-victimization
- Alternative care
- Counseling and therapeutic interventions
- Child-friendly legal proceedings

## Further reading

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Essential services package for women and girls subject to violence. New York: UN Women; 2015 (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-servicespackage-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence>)

Child protection resource pack: how to plan, monitor and evaluate child protection programmes. New York: UNICEF; 2015 (<https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/CPR-WEB.pdf>)

Case management toolkit: a user's guide for strengthening case management services in child welfare. USAID; 2014; <http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/case-managementtoolkit-users-guide-strengthening-case-management-services-child-welfare>

NICE Guideline [NG76]: Child abuse and neglect. London: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; 2017; <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng76>

Global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children. Geneva; World Health Organization: 2016 (<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/global-plan-of-action/en/>, accessed 25 April 2018).

Strengthening health systems to respond to women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a manual for health managers. Geneva; World Health Organization: 2017 (<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/vaw-health-systems-manual/en/>, accessed 25 April 2018).

Application of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children: A Guide for Practitioners. Buenos Aires: Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar (RELAF) and UNICEF, 2011 (<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/4990.pdf>, accessed 5 June 2018).

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Developed and written by IIDC Technical Advisor, Joyce Tonda, reviewed by IIDC Head of Programmes, Samalie Lutaaya  
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