



Changing
Socio-cultural Norms
that Promote
Gender-based Violence;
a guide for adolescent girls



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About Teenage Network

Teenage Network is a young woman led non-profit organization that bridges the gender-equality gap in the Nigeria education system by providing comprehensive sexuality education for adolescent girls, medical and psychosocial support for adolescent survivors of gender-based violence and alternative education for out-of-school and unskilled teenage mothers.

Through research, community mobilisation, media advocacy and in-school initiatives, Teenage Network has continued to contribute to the body of knowledge on gender-based violence prevention and intervention in Nigeria.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To create safe spaces in which young people regardless of their gender and social background can find their voice and develop to full potential.
- To utilize creative, active and participatory learning approaches to empower adolescents with life skills
- To provide access to relevant health information needed to help young people make informed life choices



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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is a social menace that has robbed millions of women and girls of their lives and opportunities to develop to full potential, and has deprived the society at large the great contributions its victims would have made.

Gender-based violence is one of the most prevalent human rights violation in the world . It undermines the physical health of victims by predisposing them to unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, unsafe abortion and sometimes death. It affects the social and mental well-being of its victims by taking away their dignity, predisposing them to depression, suicidal attempts and substance abuse.

Gender-based violence has continued to thrive in the Nigerian society because some forms of gender-based violence are considered as culture. Social norms has continued to preach tolerance to violence while also promoting the culture of silence.

Teenage Network in partnership with Action Aid Nigeria is working to promote girls' rights in two rural communities in the Federal Capital Territories; Pigba-Sama and Kuruduma by changing socio-cultural norms that promote gender-based violence. The project is working with relevant stakeholders within the community; Council of Elders, Women group, Men group, Media and adolescent girls to achieve its objectives.

This manual was designed to serve a guide for the Girls' Academy, to build the capacity of adolescent girls in advocating for change in social-cultural norms that promotes violence against women and girls.

Signed
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Executive Director, Teenage Network.

UNDERSTANDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1



UNDERSTANDING Gender-based VIOLENCE

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the term gender-based violence
- Identify the forms of gender-based violence
- Know the warning signs of an impending abuse
- Understand the effect of gender-based violence on victims
- Understand the importance of reporting an abuse

Class Activity: The goal of the activity is to enable participants get to know each other and to see how gender-based violence affects everyone in the class.

- Instruct participants that the point of this game is to show how much we do and do not have in common. The goal of the activity is to show how related participants are and how gender-based violence affects all.
- Explain that you will ask a statement like “Step into the circle if...” and if it applies to them, they step into the circle.
- Tell them that they do not have to step into the circle if they do not want to let people know their answer to your statement, but that you will never ask something that does not also apply to you as well so they will never be alone.
- Tailor questions around issues you want to discuss like, “Step into the circle if you have/ know someone who has experienced gender-based violence.” Then step out. Try a new statement like “Step into the circle if you are proud to be Native.”

Introduction

The United Nations defines gender-based violence as “any act 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”. Gender-based violence is often perpetrated towards individuals on the basis of their gender. Women and girls are the most vulnerable gender, while adolescent girls and girls living with disabilities are the most vulnerable sub-group.

Gender-based violence poses a threat to life, including physical, social and emotional well-being of the victims. Over the decades, gender-based violence has emanated from cultural belief, religious practices and social norms that portray girls as second class citizens. There have been several efforts by government, non-governmental organizations, international development partners and other key stakeholders to end harmful practices such as the passage of laws that criminalizes violence against girls.

Some of the important laws enacted by government to protect girls from sexual abuse include the Child Rights Act, 2013 and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP ACT), 2015. However, despite the passage of these laws, girls in Nigeria have continued to experience gender-based violence with 1 in 3 girls experiencing violence before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2014). The National Demographic and Health Survey (2018) also showed that 34.4% of girls between the ages of 15-19 years have experienced physical or sexual violence. One of the reasons girls have continued to be exposed to gender based violence is because they are not knowledgeable about their sexual and reproductive health rights. This will be elaborated in the next session of this manual. It is therefore important for girls to understand gender-based violence, its forms, warning signs and how to report it.

Forms of Gender-Based Violence

There are three basic types of gender-based violence perpetrated against girls. These include the following:

1. **Physical Violence:** This involves the use of physical force with malicious intention on an individual which could result in trauma. It could include pushing, slapping, biting, choking, strangling, use of weapon, throwing things, pinning against the wall, physical restraints among others.
2. **Psychological Violence:** This is a deliberate attempt to hurt the emotions, scare, humiliate the victim. It is often difficult to identify psychological abuse because the abusers often justify their words. Psychological abuse involves name calling, belittling, threatening, intimidating, gaslighting e.t.c
3. **Sexual Violence:** This is an unwanted sexual activity, with perpetrator using force, making threats or taking an advantage of the victim's vulnerability such as drunkenness, mental disability or ignorance. Any sexual act without consent of the two parties involved is an abuse. Persons under the age of 18 or those under the influence of alcohol and/or unstable mental condition CANNOT give consent. The following are different types of sexual violence:
 - a. Rape: This is a non-consensual penetration of one's genital with a sex organ, bodily organ or object of another. This includes anal and oral sex.
 - b. Sexual Harassment: Is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which includes unwanted touch. It can happen to anyone regardless of gender, sexuality, race or any other factor. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal, or non-verbal.
 - c. Child Defilement/Molestation: This is the penetration of a child/minor's genitalia by an adult or an older adolescent. Victims of defilement are less than 18 years and cannot give consent under the Nigeria constitution. Perpetrators of child defilement are usually people known and respected by the victims e.g Teachers, Neighbours, Religious Leaders, Bosses (For House Helps) e.t.c
 - d. Incest: This is a sexual activity between people related by blood. For example, fathers rape daughters, brothers taking advantage of their sisters, mothers taking sexual advantage of their sons or sisters taking advantage of their brothers. These are punishable under the Nigeria law.
 - e. Child Pornography and Prostitution: This is the act of forcing, encouraging and sharing recorded sexual activities of a child or using or patronising a prostitute under the age of 18.
4. **Economic Violence:** is the act of depriving an individual of financial freedom. This includes; controlling the earnings of the victim, forbidding them from employment, depriving them of basic amenities. For example; some husbands do not allow their wives to own bank accounts, force their wives to remit their salaries to them, deprive their wives from working.
5. **Socio-cultural Violence:** These are harmful cultural practices and socio-norms done to individual on the basis of their gender that pose risk to their health and well-being. This includes: Female Genital Mutilation, child betrothal, child marriage, harmful widow practices (like forceful barbing of hair, forcing widows to ingest substances), excluding girls from inheritance.

Effect of Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence threatens the life and well-being of the victims. It affects the physical, social and mental health of the survivors.

The Physical effect of gender-based violence include: Injury to the genitals, Acquiring sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted/teenage pregnancy, traumatic fistula, unsafe abortion and sometimes death.

The Social effect of gender-based violence on survivors include: stigmatization, social isolation

The Mental Health effect of gender-based violence include depression, anxiety, substance abuse, depression, suicide, sleep disturbance and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Warning Signs of an Abuse

Most times, an abuse doesn't just happen. Ninety percent of perpetrators are people known and respected by the victim. There are warning signs that can help girls identify a potential abuser and report to significant other or to law enforcement agencies. This will save girls from becoming victims.

The following are early warning signs of abuse;

1. Perpetrators try to lure young girls to become intimate with them before taking advantage of them. They buy them gifts such as sanitary pads, underwear and sometimes phones. Do not be comfortable with unsolicited gifts.
2. Perpetrators invite girls to secret or dark places to enable them perpetrate their intentions without being noticed
3. Perpetrators pretend to hate or not to notice the girls exist but show them love secretly. This is to cover-up their trails, so no one notices their intention while they take advantage of girls.
4. Perpetrators encourage girls to keep secrets, buy gifts for them, invite them to places and encourage them never to tell anyone about them.
5. Perpetrators touch girls in inappropriate places, claiming they were just playing with them.
6. Perpetrators use endearing words such as; My Wife, My Love, My Sweetheart for their potential victims.
7. Perpetrators are everywhere including social media platforms. The following can help you identify an abuser online;
 - Parody account/new account
 - The account doesn't have a real name or profile picture
 - No evidences of normal interaction with other people
 - The account user always seem to have something in common with you, request that you be their friends and use endearing words for you.
 - The account sends you pornographies and tries calling at odd times.
 - The abuser would request explicit contents from you; naked pictures and videos.
 - Invites you to meet up in unknown or low traffic locations.
 - They ask you to delete chat contents to prevent your parents or other adults from noticing them.

What to Do When You Spot an Abuser or Experience an Abuse

As smart girls, the moment you notice any of these signs, do the following:

1. Avoid being in secluded places with the perpetrator/potential perpetrator
2. Run to safety
3. Report to a trusted adult or relevant authorities e.g Police, Teachers, Civil Society organizations such as Teenage Network.

When to Report an Abuse

The best time to report an abuse or a potential abuse is immediately. There are two major places to report to if an abuse has occurred. These are the Police Station and a Hospital. It is important to report to the nearest hospital /police station immediately, without bathing or changing your cloth. This is to enable appropriate authorities gather enough evidence for justice.

An individual can contact sexually transmitted diseases during an abuse, it is important to report to a nearest hospital not later than 48hours after the incidence. Medications that prevent the sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy are effective under 48hours, hence for safety purpose, please report to the nearest hospital.

Why You Should Report an Abuse

1. **Access to Medical Care:** Girls who speak up about an abuse are able to access health care that prevent them from acquiring sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, Syphilis, HPV and from becoming pregnant. Speak-up and get help.

2. **To access psychosocial support:** An abuse has psychological effect on victims. Girls who report cases of abuse are more likely to access psychological support and other forms of support needed to ensure that they are healthy.
3. **Prevention of Future Occurrence:** Abusers often do not stop at the first incidence, if you do not speak up, they will keep abusing you.
4. **Protecting Other Girls:** Paedophiles are serial offenders. You are probably not the first victim and if you do not speak up, they will move on to other girls who could be your sister or your friend. By speaking up, you will be protecting other girls from abuse. The FCT and some other states now have sexual offenders register where perpetrators are named are shamed, so other girls can be beware of them. Help the government to get rid of these perpetrators and to end gender-based violence in Nigeria.

How Perpetrators Keep Victims Silent

In order to keep victims silent perpetrators often devise the following means;

1. They tell their victims no one will believe them
2. They threaten to kill their victims
3. They make the victims believe it is their fault.

IDENTIFYING SOCIAL NORMS THAT PROMOTE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

2



IDENTIFYING SOCIO-CULTURAL NORMS THAT PROMOTE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will:

- Be able to identify cultural beliefs and norms that promotes violence against girls
- Be empowered to advocate against such beliefs and norms.

Class Activities: The goal of this activities is to explain how survivors feel about telling their stories and why we must never judge them. How is this exercise related to the topic?

- Give everyone a piece of scrap paper and a pen.
- Ask them to think of a secret, something that they would not tell many people or any one at all about. It can be a secret thought, or can something they may have done. Assure them that they will not be asked to write the secret down or tell the secret to anyone. Give them 30 seconds to think of a secret. If people find it difficult, tell them to think of something that most people in the room do not know about them.
- Ask the group to think about what it would take from someone before they would be able to tell them about your secret.
- Now write one word, group of words, or a phrase that tells what they would need. Remind them that other people will read this, so they should not write down the secret.
- After they are finished writing, have youth stand in a circle, clear of chairs and food.
- Tell everyone to ball up their paper and on the count of 3 everyone throw that paper at each other, and just keep throwing until you tell them to stop (like a snowball fight).
- When you say stop, everyone finds a “snowball” and returns to their spot. Go around the group and ask them to read their papers. Write their answers up on a flipchart or board. Record everything, even those answers that imply there is no way the secret could be shared.
- To save time, when a common word like “trust” or “non-judgmental” gets read, you can ask, “how many other people have that one their sheet?” and put as many check marks beside it.
- List should include (NOTE: in all flip chart debriefs bolded responses must be on the list and discussed): Trust Confidentiality Good listener Understanding Caring

Introduction

Gender-based violence has continued to thrive in our society because there are cultural beliefs and social norms that protect the perpetrator and encourage violence against girls. Gender-inequality is the root cause of gender-based violence. The belief that girls are subordinates to boys and that women do not have a say in the community and in their family has in a way devalued the female gender and repressed their rights. This session identifies harmful cultural beliefs and norms and corrects them.

CULTURAL BELIEFS THAT PROMOTES VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups. Culture is an integral part of an individual. It nourishes the pride, resilience, gives sense of belonging and connection to the community. The following Cultural practices pose great threat to girls' lives;

- **Child Betrothal:** promising or making an informal agreement that a child under the age of 18 will be married off to an individual without his/her consent. It usually arranged before birth or after the birth of the child in exchange for a favour received by the family. Girls deserve to live their lives on their own terms and to fulfil their dreams and not as reward of favours
- **Child Marriage:** formal and non-formal union of a girl or a boy before the age of 18. This is dangerous to health of the victims and deprives them of access to quality education and satisfying future.
- **Female Genital Mutilation:** This is the partial or total removal of the external genitalia. This

does not have any health benefit to the girl child and are usually done to prevent girls from being promiscuous. Studies have shown that female genital mutilation does not prevent girls from being promiscuous but rather predispose them to health challenges such as; bleeding, shock, HIV, difficulty/complications in child bearing, increased risk of newborn deaths e.t.c. Female Genital Mutilation is an abuse of girls' right and must be stopped.

- **Breast Ironing:** this is pounding and massaging of an adolescent girls' breast with hot and hard objects to prevent them from being noticed and harassed by men. This is totally unfair to girls; they shouldn't be the one to suffer for men's actions. Rather, attention should be on the abusers, perhaps castrating them to prevent them from abusing young girls.

Culture is passed from one generation to another. The question is; should a harmful tradition be sustained? The answer is “no”, if culture gives a sense of belonging to all, then it should be fair to all and bring no harm to all.

SOCIAL NORMS THAT PROMOTES VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

Social norms are unwritten, informal rules of behaviours or conduct considered acceptable by a group of people or a society. They are regarded as collective representations of acceptable group conduct as well as individual perceptions of particular group conduct. Harmful social norms that sustain Violence against women and girls include protecting family honor over women's safety, judging women based on sexual purity while men are exonerated and men's authority to discipline their wives and children. These norms have informed continued to make excuses for violence against women and girls in the community while the perpetrators are empowered to do more. For example:

- **Victim-Blaming:** The society has overtime accused girls who are victims of gender-based violence has been responsible for their predicament. They justify the abusers and blame the victims for being sexually abused by saying;
 1. They were raped because they wear skimpy/body revealing clothes: This is not true because girls who cover their entire body, wearing hijab are also being raped, babies of few months old are being raped and grand- mothers of 80years and above are also been raped. The only reason a girls is being raped is because there is a rapist within the community that has not been tamed. Hence, we must stop blaming abuse on the victim's dressing.
 2. They were raped because they went to the Man's House: Abusers have a way of deceiving girls into secret and silent places, it is never the desire of any girl to be raped. And location shouldn't be an excuse for an abuse, we have heard of cases of rape in worship centers, victims' residence e.t.c. The location of the crime doesn't in anyway change who the perpetrator is.
 3. They were raped because they play with boys too much: Nothing justifies an abuse, a girl under 18 years cannot give consent and sex without consent is an abuse. Playing or not playing with boys have nothing to do with this.
 4. They were raped because they are rude and aggressive to Men, so they raped them to discipline them: Everyone, including has the right to freedom of association, if girls doesn't want to be friend with a boy/man, she shouldn't be forced and rape isn't a disciplinary measure, it's a crime.
 5. Why didn't they fight back/shout: Responses such as this have been empowering abusers to do more in our society. How can a girl fight back when she is being overpowered by a man that is 5times her weight or how can she shout when her mouth has been covered with pillow and with a loud music in the room. This should never our response to cases of abuse, fighting back or not, shouting or not, doesn't not reduce the gravity of an abuse.
 6. Why didn't she report immediately: Abuses affect the psychology of the victims. It is not planned; hence they need time to process it and to heal. Sometimes, they have to run to

safety first before considering telling their stories. We must never discredit a story; fault a victim/survivor because they didn't report immediately.

- Victim-Shaming: The society has been contributing to the rate of violence by tagging survivors of gender-based violence rather the perpetrators. This also includes tagging divorced women as irresponsible. Describing a girl with a violence she suffered, stigmatizes her, prevent other girls from speaking up, exonerates and reinforces the abusers.
- Forcing Adolescent Survivors to marry their abusers: In many situations where adolescent girls get pregnant, they are forced to marry the person who impregnated them. Depriving them of the opportunity to complete their education and develop to full potential. The National health demographic survey (2018) revealed that 51.2% of married girls between the ages of 15-19years experience high level of spousal control; marrying girls off to their abusers places them at higher risk.

Gender-based violence is NOT normal, it is a crime. We must stop making excuses for the abusers and stop leaving them to KARMA. If we do not ensure abusers are punished, they will abuse more girls. It is your neighbour today, it could be you tomorrow. Be ZERO tolerance to violence, raise your voice, support your sisters and the community will free and safe for us all.

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

3



UNDERSTANDING YOUR SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will learn the following:

- Have a good understanding of their sexual and reproductive health Rights
- Identify the key provisions under the Nigerian laws that protect their rights

Class Activity: Word Bird

The aim of this activity is to assess girls' understanding about their right. Participants will be divided into groups; each group will fill in the right word to fill the gaps in the scenarios below.

Angelina felt a little bit uncomfortable in class today because she has menstrual _____.

She was nervous about taking excuse from her class teacher, Mr Jones but each time Angelina comes close to him, Mr Jones seizes the opportunity to touch her _____, so she decided to endure the pain till the end of his lecture.

Angelina would have loved to go home after the class but her Uncle who lives with her family always make her watch _____ whenever they are alone together. So she decided to go see her boyfriend, Tunde instead. Tunde believed for Angelina to have come to his house, she needed something. He tried touching Angelina but she cautioned him. Tunde noticed no one is around and _____ Angelina.

Angelina is sad and afraid to tell anyone about the incidence because her father would force her to _____ Abubakar whom she has been betrothed to.

Introduction

In Nigeria today, the most vulnerable group of people to sexual and gender-based violence are adolescent girls. This is because they are less knowledgeable about their sexual and reproductive health rights and usually dependent on their abusers. According to UNICEF (2014), 1 in 3 girls experience sexual and gender-based violence before the age of 18 and 90% of their perpetrators are people known to the victims. Hence, the need for every girl to have adequate knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health rights as provided under the Nigerian law.

What is Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights

Sexual and Reproductive health is the complete state of physical, mental and social well-being on issues relating to the reproductive system while sexual and reproductive health right means an individual has the right to make choices on issues related to their sexual and reproductive health. For a sexual relationship to occur, the two parties must have an agreement and give their consent. In Nigeria, young people under the age of 18 are unable to give consent; hence any form of sexual relationship or marriage with them is a crime punishable under the Nigerian laws.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Nigeria

Nigeria is part of international treaties on the protection of girls' rights because sexual and reproductive health rights are human rights. It protects the right to health, life, privacy, education, freedom from torture and discrimination. These rights are guaranteed by the Child Right Act, 2013 and the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act, 2015.

Some key provisions under the Child Rights Act, 2013.

1. Right to dignity of the child: Every child is entitled to be respected for the dignity of his/her person, and accordingly, no child shall be- (a) subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse, neglect or maltreatment, including sexual abuse;
2. A female child who becomes pregnant, before completing her education shall be given the opportunity, after delivery, to continue with her education, on the basis of her individual ability.

3. Prohibition of child marriage: No person under the age of 18 years is capable of contracting a valid marriage, and accordingly a marriage so contracted is null and void and of no effect whatsoever.
4. Prohibition of child betrothal: (1) No parent, guardian or any other person shall betroth a child to any person. (2) A betrothal in contravention of subsection (1) of this section is null and void.

Penalty: Punishment for child marriage and betrothal A person- (a) who marries a child; or (b) to whom a child is betrothed; or (c) who promotes the marriage of a child; or (d) who betroths a child, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N500,000; or imprisonment for a term of five years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

5. A child shall not be used:

- (a) for the purpose of begging for alms, guiding beggars, prostitution, domestic or sexual labour or for any unlawful or immoral purpose
- (b) procured or offered for prostitution or for the production of pornography or for any pornographic performance

Penalty: A person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of ten years.

6. Unlawful sexual intercourse with a child:

- a. No person shall have sexual intercourse with a child.

Penalty: A person who contravenes the provision of Subsection (6) of this section commits an offence of rape and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life. (3) Where a person is charged with an offence under this section, it is immaterial that- (a) the offender believed the person to be of or above the age of eighteen years; or (b) the sexual intercourse was with the consent of the child. (c) A person who sexually abuses or sexually exploits a child in any manner not already mentioned under this Part of this Act commits an offence.

Some key provisions under the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP), 2015.

The VAPP Act prohibits all forms of violence against persons in private and public life and provides maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punishment of offenders. The law states that;

1. A person commits an offence of rape if;

- a. He or she intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with any other part of his or her body or anything else
- b. the other person does not consent to the penetration
- c. the consent is obtained by force or means of threat or intimidation

PENALTY:

- Where the offender is under the age of 14 years of age, the offender is liable to maximum of 14 years imprisonment.
- In other cases, minimum of 12 years with no option of fine.
- For gang raping, minimum of 20 years without an option of fine.
- Sexual offenders register will be constantly updated.
- The victim will be compensated as the court deems fit.

Other provisions of the VAPP ACT (2015) and their penalties are in the table below:

S/N	Offence	Penalty/Sentence
1.	Inflicting Physical Injury/ Attempt	3-5years imprisonment
2.	Coersion	3years Imprisonment
3.	Willfully placing a person in fear of physical injury	1-2years Imprisonment or Fine of N100,00-N200,000
4.	Offensive Conduct	1-2years Imprisonment or Fine of N300,000-N500,000
5.	Female Circumcision	2-4years Imprisonment or Fine of N100-N200,000
6.	Frustrating Investigation	3years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N500,000
7.	Wilfully Making False Statement	1year Imprisonment Or Fine Of N200,000
8.	Forceful Ejection From Home	1-2years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N200,000-N300,000
9.	Depriving A Person Of His Or Her Liberty	1-3years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N100,000-N500,000
10.	Damage To Property With Intent To Cause Distress	1-3years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N200,000-N300,000
11	Forced Financial Dependence Or Economic Abuse	1-2years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N100,000-N500,000
12	Forced Isolation Or Separation From Family And Friends	3-6 Months Imprisonment Or Fine Of N100,000
13	Emotional, Verbal And Psychological Abuse	6months-1year Imprisonment Or Fine Of N100,000- N200,000
14.	Harmful Widowhood Practices	1-2 Years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N100,000-N500,000
15	Abandonment Of Spouse, Children And Other Dependants Without Sustenance	1-3 Years Imprisonment Or Fine Of N100,000- N500,000
16	Stalking	1-2 Years Imprisonment Or N200,000-N500,000

THE GIRLS' RIGHTS ADVOCATE

4



THE GIRLS' RIGHT ADVOCATE

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will learn the following:

- The meaning of Advocacy
- How to develop advocacy skills.

Class Activity:

- Begin the class accessing what girls understand by the word “Activism”.
- Participants should share their favourite experiences with Activist or the moment someone stood up for their rights.
- Show them images of famous girls' rights activists
- Ask participants about their fears about activism.

Introduction

There is no better time for girls to stand in solidarity with one another. Understanding your right as a girl, passing down this knowledge to other girls and speaking up against harmful cultural practices and social norms in the face of oppression is what guarantees our collective freedom from violence. It is therefore, important for girls to become advocates themselves.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of publicly supporting or recommending a particular cause or policy on behalf of a group of people. Advocacy is usually targeted at addressing inequalities and disparities. Girls have suffered inequality for decades and advocacy is needed to promote and to protect girls' rights. Organizations like Teenage Network, United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, Plan International, Action Aid, Youth Hub Africa, Education as a Vaccine are advocating for girls' right in Nigeria and now is the time for girls to add their voices to this advocacy.

How to develop your advocacy skill

For a successful advocacy to take place, there is a need to organize. The following are ways to develop your advocacy skills;

- Study to understand your rights as a girl
- Create awareness about it by educating more girls' within your neighbourhood about their rights
- Mobilize girls and get their supports to campaign about the issues that affect them or how their rights have been violated in the society
- Meet with community leaders to demand that girls' rights are protected.
- Partner/Support/Volunteer with organizations that are working to protect girls' rights within your neighbourhood to build a strong force.
- Don't stop using your voice, art works, social media to advocate for your rights and those of other girls around you. Rise up and be the agent of change in your community, the one who says NO to all forms of violence, the Sister's keeper and the whistle blower. The following are the helplines to report cases of violence to in the FCT; **Teenage Network:** 07049371795, **NAPTIP:**08030000203

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