Gender-Based Violence Definitions

Gender based Violence refers to any harmful act perpetrated against a person’s will that results from abuse of power and is based on inequality between men and women. Women are disproportionately the victims of GBV, whereas the majority of perpetrators are men.

Gender Versus Sex
Sex: Refers to the biological and physical characteristics that define men and women. This includes reproductive systems (women have breasts and internal reproductive organs capable of gestating children, men have external reproductive organs, etc.).

Gender: Refers to the social differences between males and females that are learned. Though deeply rooted in every culture, social differences are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. “Gender” determines the roles, responsibilities, opportunities, privileges, expectations, and limitations for males and for females in any culture.

Power and Abuse of Power
POWER means that you have the capacity, the ability and the freedom to influence or control decisions affecting your life. Depending on how power is used, it can be either positive or negative.

TYPES OF POWER:
- POWER TO do something, inner strength and courage
- POWER WITH someone, the ability to support and encourage others
- POWER OVER someone, the ability to control or dominate others
- POWER OVER/ABUSE OF POWER is the use of influence, access to resources, and decision-making in a way that makes someone else’s life smaller, and does not pay attention to their needs, wishes or boundaries.

Men have more power in most societies simply by virtue of the unequal status and power afforded to them at birth. These differences are not based on skill or experience, but socialized power inequality, perpetuated by cultures and
norms. Women experience this inequality throughout their lives, and it is the foundation upon which violence develops and is perpetuated. Of course, not all men are the same, and not all women are the same. Even within those groups, there are significant differences of power and privilege - associated with status, physical ability, wealth, etc. However, even with those differences you’ll notice that men are in general much further ahead than women

Violence
Violence is any harmful act perpetrated against a person’s will that results from abuse of power.