

FACT SHEET

MENTAL HEALTH AND VAC

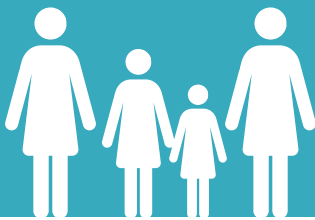
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WHAT IS VAC?

Violence against children (VAC) and GBV often share common causes or “risk factors”, happen in the same homes, can have similarly disastrous effects and consequences, and intersect at adolescence when young women are most vulnerable.

VAC is an “umbrella term” that includes various forms of violence including physical, sexual, emotional and psychological violence.

HOW TRAUMA IS FELT AND CARRIED IN OUR BODIES



Experience traumatic event - bodies carry the memory of that event - brain is also imprinted with this experience - in a moment of fear, brain tells body to “fight, flight or freeze”- This is the body’s trauma response system.

CONSEQUENCES OF VAC?

The consequences of VAC are many and affect the physical and mental health of the survivors in both the short and the long term. They may experience **severe physical injuries, unwanted pregnancies and exposure to HIV** or other sexually transmitted infections. They might develop **mental health issues that may lead to self-harm, isolation, depression and suicidal attempts**. **Trauma and stigma** caused by GBV can prevent someone from seeking job **opportunities** or attending school.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT VAC

- **Challenging gender stereotypes** and roles in your homes and communities
- **Rejecting any kind of violence** against women and children
- **Rejecting abuse** and reporting abusers
- **Teaching children** values of gender equality
- **Protecting children from exposure** to violence and harmful content on the internet and social media

DID YOU KNOW?



Nearly 720 million school-age children have no legal protection from corporal punishment at school



The Childline hotline recorded an increase of 30% in calls in 2020

40%!

In 2016, 40% of young people have experienced some form of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect at some point in their lives