



Gender Based Violence against adults: Frequently Asked Questions

Q 1: I'm not sure if what I'm going through is abuse. What is the definition?

A: Abuse happens when someone deliberately hurts or causes harm to another person. It can take many different forms and can affect both adults and children, including

- physical abuse
- psychological abuse
- rape
- sexual assault
- sexual violation
- sexual intimidation
- verbal abuse
- elder abuse
- financial abuse
- spiritual abuse
- emotional abuse

Due to the high levels of violence in our country, there are laws to protect victims of abuse and those laws such as the [Domestic Violence Amendment Act of 2021](#) expand the definition of abuse to persons in a domestic relationship to the above and

- intimidation
- harassment
- damage to property
- controlling and coercive behaviour
- intentional exposure of a child to violence
- related person abuse

Q 2: If I've only been abused one time, can I report this?

A: Yes, you can speak to our social workers who will assist you. You can also report the abuse at the nearest police station.

Q 3: Where can I get help if I am being abused?

A: If you or someone you know want help you can contact:

- [Western Cape Directory of Service for Victims of Crime and Violence](#)
- Police: 10111
- Department of Social Development Toll-Free Line: 0800 220 250
- Childline: 116
- [Triangle Project](#)
- The Human Trafficking Resource Line: 0800 222 777

- SASSA 0800 60 10 11
- Western Cape Education Department Safe Schools : 0800 45 46 47
- You may also contact your nearest court for a protection order, clinic, [Thuthuzela Care centres](#) or hospital.

Q 4: Must I report the abuser to the police first, in order to get help or be assisted with help in a shelter or by a social worker?

A: No, you do not have to report the abuser to the police first before you get assistance. You will be assisted regardless of whether you report the abuser to the police. If you choose to report the abuser to the police the social worker will assist you.

Q 5: What do I do if the person who is abusing me is my relative and/ guardian?

A: You have a choice to report the abuse to the police and also obtain a protection order against your relative/guardian at the magistrate court. You could choose to only get a protection order without laying a charge. You can contact a social worker who will assess the case and activate the appropriate intervention or kind of help that you need.

Q6: What is a protection order?

A: In terms of the Domestic Violence Act as amended, a protection order is an order granted by the magistrate at the court which will inform the abuser (legal term is respondent) not to abuse you (legal term is complainant) in various ways. If the abuser disregards any part of the protection order, he/she may be arrested. Once a protection order is granted by the court, it is enforceable throughout the country.

Q7: What is the difference between an interim protection order and the final protection order?

A: When you apply for the protection order, the magistrate can grant you an interim protection order. This is aimed to protect you until you and the abuser return to court. When the court grants you a final protection order, then the order is valid forever, unless you set it aside.

Q8: How do I apply for a protection order?

A: You can apply for a protection order at your nearest magistrate court or you can follow the steps outlined on this [MOSAIC graphic](#).

Q 9: Is there a safe place I can go to after I have reported the abuse, if it is not safe for me to return home?

A: Yes, the social worker will assess your case and will find a suitable place for you to be relocated to.

Q 10: Will my abuser know where I am relocated to?

A: No, the addresses are not published to protect the residents. The abuser will not be informed of your location.

Q 11: I am a member of the LGBTQIA+ community can I also gain access to GBV services?

A: Yes, you can. Services offered by the WCG are for all persons irrespective of gender identity, race, sexual orientation or socio-economic situation. You can contact your nearest Department of Social Development office or call 0800 220 250 for help.

Q 12: Can I alert a social worker of abuse on someone else's behalf to?

A: Yes, you can. You can report the abuse using the contact details in question 3.

Q 13: Are there any costs involved in reporting abuse?

A: No there are no costs involved in reporting abuse. Many shelters funded by DSD for victims of gender-based violence offer free services.

Q 14: Will I be supported after I have reported the abuse?

A: Yes, you will. The social worker assigned to your case will support you by providing you with the necessary information that you need, to help you to heal.

Q 15: If I get help, will I need to face my abuser during the process?

A: In some cases, you may have to face the abuser again especially if you have laid a charge and the case goes to court. It is important to note that a social worker will assist and support you through the process.

Q 16: Can I only report abuse if it's still happening?

A: No, you can report the abuse after it has happened as well.

Q 17: Is there a time limit on how long after the abuse took place, that I can report it to the police and/ or to a social worker?

A: There is no time limit for reporting rape or any other sexual offence.