

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS TO TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



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SECTION 1: WHERE TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

This section provides a brief overview of some of the existing platform at school where adults and learners can reflect on issues of Violence against Children in Schools (VACiS) and surrounding community.

Child Rights Club: Boys and Girls from Primary 4-7 sign up to be members of School Child Rights Club that meets weekly under the leadership of a club patron who is a teacher. Club sessions follow a curricular of 13 topics throughout the school year. The topics cover different aspects of child protection and are designed to build the agency of children to protect themselves by being aware of their rights and responsibilities and becoming self-confident and assertive.

Child Right Club Cascade: This relates to the process where child rights club activities are integrated into other programs at school. For example, class teachers are encouraged to use the CRC club manuals to introduce discussions in the class room around child rights through activities children enjoy. Schools are also encouraged to set up a series of activities with a child protection theme in the area of; sports, music and craft making. These activities target non-CRC members, particularly older boys and girls and fall under a program popularly known as CRC-reloaded.

Single Gender Guidance and Counselling Sessions: These are sessions held 2-3 times during the term at school. The sessions bring together boys or girls in single gender groups to discuss sensitive topics related to teenage sexuality and the challenges pre-adolescent or adolescent children may be experiencing at school, in the community or at home. Single gender sessions are for children in primary 4-7 and are led by Senior Woman or Senior Man teachers who are the designated staff in charge of student well-being. Under the Bantwana program the single gender session for girls is supplemented with an activity called Girl talk: where girls are brought together in smaller groups to learn how to make sanitary pads and discuss issues they may not be willing to bring up in larger groups.

Lunch and Learn Sessions: This program refers to a series of structured reflection sessions for teachers on topics related to VACiS. The topics are taken from a lunch and learn reflection guide and are led by a teacher from the staff who will have prepared the session from the guide. The sessions are held once a month during school term (3 times a term) during the lunch hour hence the term “lunch and learn”. Teachers from the school take turns to lead a session.

Using the VACiS reference guide: The following reference guide was requested by teachers in the schools who wanted a single, easy to use document they could draw to help them discuss the most common issues related to VACiS. Very often a VACiS related incident in school creates an incident for further reflection by both children and adults and teacher who want to lead the process have lacked material which provides both the appropriate language and step by step process of how to engage both adults and children on sensitive and often painful issues in a way that helps them both process and respond.

SECTION 2: HOW TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

There are many ways to lead discussions about topics related to violence against children. The “What? So What? Now What?” method (described on the next page) helps everyone to define the issue, then to say how it affects them, and then to decide what actions to take to stop violence from happening again. Discussion leaders (patrons, matrons, heads of school, teachers, guest speakers, peer learners) can use this method to facilitate discussions about any of the topics in this guide. Each discussion topic in this guide contains an example of how this method could be carried out in a discussion group.

Please remember that these discussions can be difficult for some people. They may be the victims of violence, or they may have committed or observed violent acts. The discussion leader should take care to respect people’s right to remain silent if they don’t want to speak. The discussion leader should emphasise that these discussions are about how to respect and maintain people’s dignity, so no calling victims or perpetrators by name or identifying them in some other way. An important ground rule is that sensitive information is kept confidential – no discussion of personal information outside this discussion, as tempting as it may be!



Step by Step: What? So What? Now What?

What?¹

What happened? Describe the experience.

Potential prompts:

- What did you see?
- What was your role?
- What made you think it was an act of violence against a child?

So What?

Describe why the experience was significant.

Potential prompts:

- How did the incident make you feel? What did you do (if anything?)
- How did it affect the victim?
- How did it affect the person who carried out the act ('perpetrator')?
- What conclusions can you draw from the experience?
- What did you learn from this experience?

Now What?

Describe next steps.

Potential prompts:

- How can we use what we have learned from this experience?
- What can we do to minimise this type of violence against children?
- What information can we share with our peers or the community?
- Where do you go from here? What is the next step in taking action against violence against children in our school?

Example

Topic: Bullying

What?

- *Have you ever seen bullying happening in your school?*
- *Without mentioning names or identifying the people involved, describe (talk about) what happened? Why do you think it was bullying?*

So What?

- *How did the bullying make you feel? What did you do?*
- *What effect did it have on the child being bullied?*
- *On the person who was doing the bullying?*
- *What do we think about bullying in our school?*

Now What?

- *What do we do to stop bullying from happening in our school?*
 - *What actions do we need to take to ensure that we stop bullying in our school?*
-

¹ Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., Jasper, M. (2001) Critical reflection in nursing and the helping professions: a user's guide. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Excerpted from the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, University of Connecticut](#); accessed on 1 December 2019.

SECTION 3: TECHNIQUES FOR STARTING DISCUSSIONS

Discussions about violence against children in the school can be difficult to start. Discussion leaders may decide that they need a way to start the discussion, especially if learners or teachers cannot come up with their own examples. Here are a few techniques that can help start the discussion:

***Note:** If the discussion leader starts the discussion by using one of these techniques, she or he should make sure to follow the “What?, So What?, Now What?” methodology to focus the conversation what happened, how it affected them and what can be done about the situation.*

Current events: There may be events that happen at school and need to be discussed. If they are used as examples, please ensure that any personal information is kept confidential, and that no one shares any information about the people involved.

Newspaper articles can provide a source of conversation about violence against children. They are good as scenarios to discuss. The discussion leader should be careful to keep the discussion from moving to the ‘that could never happen at our school’ because then people do not have to take responsibility for what is happening at your school. When using newspaper articles, make sure to ask, ‘Could that happen in our school?’

Scenarios/Vignettes: Providing a scenario allows people to respond to it, using the “What?, So What? Now What?” method. Scenarios should be short stories based on real incidents and can be taken from a person’s experience, a newspaper, magazine, the internet.

Role plays are short skits, or dramas, that illustrate a point and/or demonstrate a solution. They are usually not rehearsed in advance, but the ‘actors’ should be prepared by the discussion leader so that they know the important points to bring out. Following the role play, the leader should ‘process’ it so that key messages are clear to everyone.

Games can be used to stimulate discussion about a variety of topics. Icebreakers or energizers are quick activities that involve everyone. They wake people up, they focus people’s attention, and they create a positive energy in the room. Discussion leaders should choose quick games that relate to the topic at hand.

Music, Dance, and Drama (MDD): After learners have completed a topic, they can create plays, songs or poems that incorporate the issues that they have discussed in the sessions. These songs, plays, and dances can be performed for fellow learners, teachers, parents and other community members. The organisers should work with a patron or matron to ensure that they choose appropriate and accurate messages to perform.

Games and Sports: After learners have completed a child protection topic, they can identify messages they would like to share and organise games that incorporate these themes. Working with a teacher or patron/matron, learners can organise football or volleyball matches around specific themes, and utilize the half-time/breaks to discuss key issues, raise awareness,

and engage the audience. For example, learners could perform a role play during half-time. At the end of the match, they could discuss the role play with the audience, leading a discussion and emphasising key themes.

Newsletters: If the school has a newsletter, learners can identify key messages and lessons they have learned through activities and write about them for the rest of the student body.

Debates: Use the topics included in this guide to organize debating competitions. They can be organised by learners or by teachers; they should be guided by a facilitator to ensure that accurate messages are conveyed. For example, a lively debate could be held about the need for gender equality, with the boys taking the “It’s important” position, and the girls taking the “It’s not important” position. This would give them a chance to see the issue from a different perspective.

Storytelling: When children find it difficult to talk about painful issues, listening to a story about someone in a similar position can be very comforting. It can give children the sense of being understood, and it can help them recognize that they are not alone. A story can also serve as a useful tool for problem solving around their own situations. When using storytelling as a counselling tool, it is helpful to follow these steps:

- Use a familiar story or folk tale to convey a message to the audience
- Avoid using real names or events

Drawing: Learners’ drawings can help provide insights into them that children might not be able to express in words. Once they are finished with their drawings, they can use them to explain what they drew. The patron or matron should ask open-ended questions to encourage children to talk about what they have drawn. For example, ‘Who are the people in the drawing?’, ‘How does this person feel?’, ‘How do the people in the drawing feel about what is happening?’

SECTION 4: VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN DISCUSSION TOPICS

For Your School's Consideration: Teachers' Code of Conduct

Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports revised the Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct² in 2012. Part III of the Code states that the teacher will not sexually molest, harass or have sexual relationship with learners and will protect learners from conditions that interfere with learning or are harmful to the learners' health and safety.

Here are some things to consider:³

- Is the Teacher's Professional Code of Conduct familiar to teachers in your school?
- Is the Code ever discussed as a guide to professional practice and relationships with students?
- Is there a forum in the school to discuss these issues? If not, can one be created?

Does your school have a clear statement of the importance of nurturing ethical relationships with students?

- Does your school have clear commitments from all its adult members that they will work to create compassionate, enabling and healthy relationships with children based on an appreciation of children's rights?
- If not, what steps can you take to create one?

Does your school have a clear set of Standards to guide the school's value system? If not, what steps would you take to create one?

These Standards should:

- Provide a basic set of values that a school aims to live by
- Provide guidelines for positive discipline
- Demonstrate respect for the dignity of each member of the school community
- Provide guidelines for rules and behaviours at the school

Does your school have and enforce a disciplinary policy? If not, should you consider creating one so that all disciplinary cases can be handled objectively and fairly?

- A disciplinary policy describes the specific actions the school will take when an offence is committed
- This policy should be guided by the standards agreed upon as a school and comply with the laws and policies of Uganda

Community involvement

Your school is embedded in a larger community and is accountable to the community it serves. Members of the community, particularly parents, must be brought on board so that the values children encounter at school are also nurtured at home.

- Is there a forum in the school to discuss these issues?
- If we create such a forum, who would attend?
- What would we discuss?

²Legal Notices Supplement 8, published by order of the Government, The Uganda Gazette, Volume 47, August 24, 2012.

³Adapted from Doorways III: Teacher Training on School-Related Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response, USAID, 2009

Child protection guiding principles

WHAT?

Child protection means keeping children safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. It means that children's rights are upheld and children are protected from abuse.

The legal definition of 'child' is a person below the age of 18 years. Biologically, people between birth and puberty are considered to be children.

SO WHAT?

Child protection is based on respect for the child and his/her rights

- Any steps taken to protect the child from harm must be taken with an understanding of the child's unique situation

Any steps, or interventions, that are taken by adults on behalf of the child should be based on the following principles:

- Best interests of the child. The child's well being must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them.
- Do no harm. Every effort must be made to minimize possible risks or harm that may result from the intervention.
- Non-discrimination: No child should be discriminated against because of race, age, sex, religion, tribe or for any other reason. All children are entitled to protection from harm.
- Information about the child's situation is kept confidential. Only people who are authorised to have information about the child's situation should hear or read about it.
- Child participation: Children should participate in decisions that affect them, as much as possible. Including them in decision-making shows respect, and it helps you understand the strengths the child brings to the situation.
- Building on the child's strengths: If any steps need to be taken to protect a child, the child's strengths and wishes should be taken into consideration by the adults acting on the child's behalf. This will help ensure that any protective steps are appropriate for the child, and that she can maintain the actions taken on her behalf.

Topic:

Protecting children from violence

What?

- *Have you ever seen or heard of a child that needed to be protected from some type of violence?*
- *Ask for a description of the situation. Be sure to not mention names – maintain confidentiality.*

So What?

- *How did that make you feel?*
- *What did you decide about the need to protect children from violence?*

Now What?

- *What is the teachers'/students'/parents' role in stopping violence against children?*
 - *What actions do we need to take to ensure that we stop violence against children in our school?*
-



Child participation in decision-making



Do No Harm

NOW WHAT?

For ideas on actions that can be taken by the school to ensure that child protection principles are followed, see Section 5: Now What?

Violence against children in schools and communities

WHAT?

Violence is any act (or threat of an act) that involves physical or psychological force. Violent acts are intended to hurt, damage, or kill.

Violence against children in schools and communities includes all acts of violence against children of school age (generally from the ages of 3 – 18) and can happen in the school setting, and on the way to or from the school.

SO WHAT?

- Violence against children is a violation of their rights⁴
- Violence has long lasting effects on a child. It can affect how children act, how they feel about themselves, and how they treat others.
- Teachers, fellow pupils and parents should take care not to make fun of any child, and to treat everyone with respect and care. Without further investigation, it is very difficult to know what is happening in a child's life, and why she or he may be acting 'badly'.
- Children have the right to report any violence against them to a trusted person, such as a parent, patron/matron, older peer, head teacher, or other trusted adult
- Adults have the responsibility to make sure that no violence happens against any child.

NOW WHAT?

For more information on children's rights, please see resources in Section 6.

Topic: Child rights

What?

- *What rights do children have? [Name a few basic rights.]*
- *Why do we say that violence against children is a violation of their rights?*

So What?

- *Should children have rights? Why or why not?*
- *Given that many legal documents say that children have rights, what does that mean to us?*

Now What?

- *What is the teacher's/students'/parents* role in making sure that children's rights are not violated?*
 - *What actions do we need to take to ensure that ensure children's rights are protected?*
-

⁴For more information on children's rights, please see...

Physical and psychological violence

WHAT:

Physical violence includes punching, holding, kicking, hitting, (with a stick, fist, cane, or whip), shoving, and/or extremely hard physical labour. This includes the threat of physical violence.

Psychological (or emotional) violence affects a person's mind and spirit. It includes making threats, forcing a child to witness acts of violence, teasing, intimidation, insulting, bullying, humiliation or rejection.

Severe neglect can be considered a form of physical and/or psychological violence. This includes the failure to support a child's basic needs (food, shelter, clothing); failure to help a child get an education or medical care or abandoning the child.

SO WHAT?

- The Ugandan Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct states that learners should be protected from situations that harm their health and safety.
- Physical and psychological violence can cause long-term and short-term harm. Bruises and broken bones may heal properly, but physical and psychological scars can persist for the remainder of the child's life. (See Figure 1).
- Caning is a form of corporal punishment, or physical violence. It can make the child feel shamed, slow their education development, lower their school marks, and cause aggressive behaviours on the child's part.⁵
- Teachers should use alternative ways to positively discipline learners in the classroom and in the schoolyard.

NOW WHAT?

For ideas on 'positive discipline,' or ways to discipline children without using corporal or verbal punishment, see Section 5: Now What?

Topic: Caning

What?

- *What are some examples of physical violence? Psychological violence?*
- *Is caning a form of violence? Why/why not?*

So What?

- *If you have ever caned (or been caned) how did that make you feel?*
- *How do you think it makes the person doing the caning feel?*

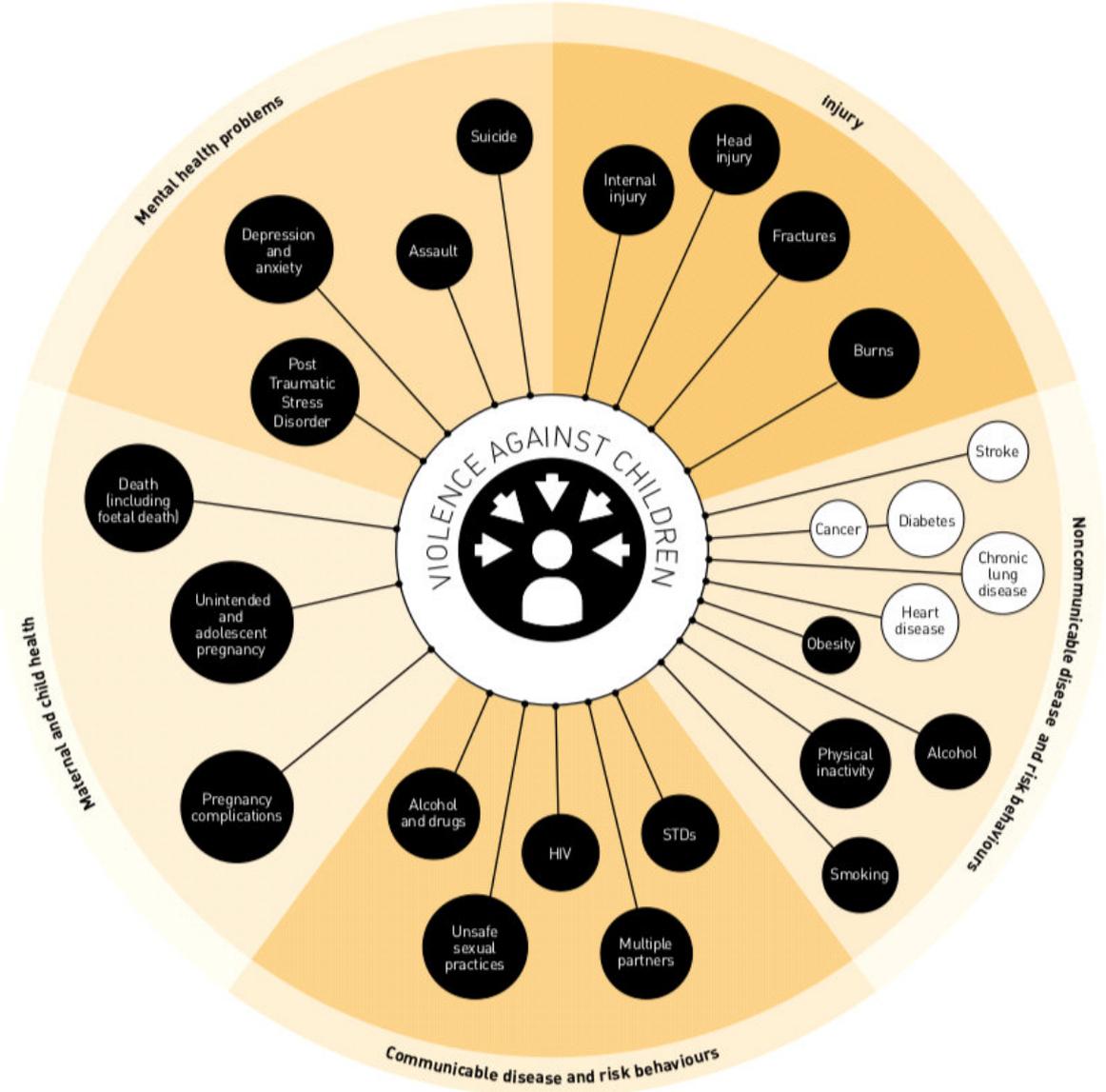
Now What?

- *The teachers' Code of Conduct says that children should be protected from physical harm. Should children be caned?*
 - *What can we do to reduce or eliminate caning in our school/homes?*
-

⁵Prohibiting all corporal punishment of children, (2017), page 9. Accessed on 3 December 2019 at [Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children](#) website

Figure 1. Potential health consequences of violence against children⁶

The following diagram shows the ways in which violence against children affects them, both physically and psychologically (mentally). The discussion leader can use it as background information or may choose to use it during the discussion. For example, s/he can ask participants to answer, ‘What injuries can be caused by violence?’ ‘What mental health problems can be caused by violence?’



⁶Extracted from INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children, World Health Organization (2016), page 11. Accessed on 3 December 2019 at [INSPIRE](https://www.inspire.who.int/) website.

Sexual violence

WHAT?

Sexual violence (or 'sexual abuse') is any sexual act committed by an adult with a child under 18. Sexual violence includes rape (defilement), indecent touching ('fondling'), exposure, using sexually obvious ('vulgar') language, making sexual remarks, sex trafficking, adults writing love letters to children, persuading children with gifts or favours in exchange for having sex. This includes exploitation of children on the internet ('online exploitation') and child to child sex.

SO WHAT?

- Ugandan laws say that adults are responsible for sexual violence against children under 18. Even if an adolescent girl agrees to a relationship with an adult man, that adult man is responsible for the behaviour under the law.
- Sexual abuse by an adult to a child is NEVER a child's fault. An adult is expected to know better. Abuse is the responsibility of the person that is misusing his or her authority.
- Children may not report sexual abuse because they feel ashamed, they are afraid of what the abuser will do, or they feel that someone will make fun of them or judge them. Girls may not report sexual abuse because they are afraid that they will have to marry the person that abused them.
- There are warning signs for sexual abuse in a child. For example, changes in normal behaviour, pregnancy, bruises, a child not taking care of her/himself (hygiene, clothes, appearance), isolating him/herself, seeming absent minded or forgetful, lacking concentration, performing poorly in class, shyness, reacting very emotionally, not talking.

NOW WHAT?

- For information on how to report cases of sexual violence, please see Section 5: Now What?
- For further information on how to respond to sexual violence, please see Section 5: Now What?

Topic: Sexual favours

What?

- *Have you ever seen or heard of cases where children are required to perform sexual favours in return for good marks, or other 'rewards'?*
- *If so, describe the situation without mentioning names.*

So What?

- *What effect does forcing a child to perform sexual favours have on the child? On the 'perpetrator'?**
- *Why is it important to make sure this does not happen to children?*

Now What?

- *What can we do to ensure that requiring sexual acts in return for favours does not happen in our school?*
- *What can we do to stop it?*

*'Perpetrator' is the person who is responsible for the act of violence.



Every child has the right to be protected from sexual exploitation and abuse and from prostitution and pornography.⁷

⁷Living Democracy (2017) Exploring Children's Rights: Illustrated Children's Rights Cards. Accessed on 4 December 2019 at [Living Democracy](#) website.

Blaming victims of violence

WHAT?

Victims of sexual violence (especially girls) are often blamed for the violence that is carried out against them.⁸ The traditional belief, 'Respectable girls do not experience sex before marriage,' means that girls are blamed for their own sexual abuse, even though there are situations where respectable girls are forced into having sex. They are overpowered by bigger, stronger, more powerful men or boys and are rendered helpless.

'Girls who have unmet needs are expected to look for a man to take care of them' is another widely believed saying that contributes to girls being blamed for their own abuse. If parents fail (or are unable) to meet the girls' basic needs, girls are vulnerable to men who can provide them with their unmet needs in return for sexual favors.

SO WHAT?

- The girl will usually remain silent after sexual abuse because she thinks her community and society will blame her and consider her 'wasted'. She thus becomes vulnerable to being exploited again, because the perpetrator knows that she will not report him.
- Even when defiled, girls are blamed for the sexual activity, and for any pregnancy that results from the sexual abuse.
- Girls fear opening up to their caregivers about their sex life because they will be labelled prostitutes. This can even happen when the girl's parents encourage the girl to engage in sex in exchange for favours to 'benefit' the family.
- The effects of blaming are deep and long-lasting. The girl may be embarrassed, ashamed, afraid to seek medical attention or counseling. She can be cast aside by her community and find it difficult or impossible to continue her education or make a living for herself (and her baby, if she became pregnant.)

Topic: Blaming the victim

What?

- *Have you ever seen or heard of cases where girls are blamed for the abuse that they suffer?*
- *What causes that? What beliefs or norms contribute to that attitude?*

So What?

- *What effect does blaming the victim have on the victim? What are some of the short-term effects? What are the more long-lasting effects?*
- *What do you think? Is this fair, or just, or does it contribute to the well-being of the victim or community?*

Now What?

- *What can we do examine our own feelings about victims of violence, especially sexual violence?*
 - *What does our school need to do to try to stop blaming victims?*
-

⁸Western Uganda Bantwana Program Phase IV Social Norms Change Framework (2019). Pages 2 – 3.

NOW WHAT?

- Consider the 'Social ecology model' found in the 'Why does violence happen to children?' topic. With teachers and learners, study the diagram and try to figure out what could happen in your school to stop blaming victims of violence, especially sexual violence.
- Ask yourselves, 'What can we do to ensure that a girl does not need to sell sex for favours, or is not in a situation where sexual abuse is possible?'
- For ideas on actions that teachers and learners can take to reduce blaming the victims of violence, see Section 5: Now What?

Bullying

WHAT?

Bullying is unwanted aggressive behaviour by another child or group of children involving repeated physical or psychological harm. It often takes place in schools and other settings where children gather, or on the internet ('cyber bullying.')

SO WHAT?

- Technically, bullying does not include fighting between siblings or children involved in romantic relationships.
- Bullying can have very serious consequences to children's wellbeing. The harm caused by bullying can affect children throughout their whole lives.
- Effects of bullying can include low self-confidence, sadness, hopelessness. Children who are the victims of bullying can lose their will to set goals or to try to achieve their goals. They can drop from school and can lose their trust in adults and other children.
- Children can bully other children; adults can bully children.
- Children may not want to say anything when they see bullying because they are afraid of being bullied themselves. Or, they may think bullying is acceptable, or they may want to 'go along' with others.

NOW WHAT?

- Consider how teachers' behaviour toward learners could be considered 'bullying' and how that can affect learners. What guidance should the school provide to teachers about bullying?
- Consider how bullying happens among learners. What precautions can the school, including learners, take to reduce bullying? What guidance can the school provide to reduce bullying amongst learners?

Topic: Bullying

What?

- *Have you ever seen bullying happening in your school?*
- *Without mentioning names or identifying the people involved, describe (talk about) what happened? Why do you think it was bullying?*

So What?

- *How did the bullying make you feel? What did you do?*
- *What effect did it have on the child being bullied?*
- *On the person who was doing the bullying?*
- *What do we think about bullying in our school?*

Now What?

- *What do we do to stop bullying from happening in our school?*
- *What actions do we need to take to ensure that we stop bullying in our school?*



Bullying can have harmful effects on a child

Trauma

WHAT?

Trauma is a deeply distressing event or disturbing experience. Violent acts against children can result in the child being traumatised, terrorised, becoming fearful, and/or feeling helpless.

SO WHAT?

- Children can be traumatised by physical, psychological and sexual violence, or by being severely neglected. They can also be traumatised by observing violence that happens at home. This could include seeing a parent being beaten by another parent, usually the father beating the mother.
- The impact of traumatic events is more severe when those events happen often.
- Traumatic experiences can affect children in ways that directly impact their schoolwork and daily life. For example, it can lead to loss of concentration ('daydreaming'), keeping silent, isolating themselves, feeling ashamed and guilty. If they have been traumatised themselves, they may repeat the cycle by traumatising others.
- Traumatic experiences can affect the child for a lifetime. Children who have been traumatised may be unable to have healthy relationships as an adult. She or he may feel like they are 'cheap' or 'dirty' or 'not worthy' of having a healthy relationship with another adult.

NOW WHAT?

For ideas on responding to children who have been traumatised, see Section 5: Now What?

Topic: Trauma

What?

- *Have you ever been traumatised by some act of violence?*
- *If so, what were the effects of the act of violence? How were you traumatised?*

So What?

- *How did the traumatic experience make you feel? What did you do?*
- *What do you think about children? Can they be traumatised?*
- *How does that affect them?*

Now What?

- *What do we do to reduce traumatised children from being further traumatised by our own actions?*
- *What actions do we need to take to ensure that we do not traumatise [fellow] learners?*



Children can be traumatised by physical, psychological and or sexual violence.

Why does violence happen to children?

WHAT?

Violence against children is especially frequent in communities and families where poverty is common, where rapid changes in society are taking place, where families are separated or have weak support systems. Big differences in status between men and women ('gender inequality') also contribute to violence against women and girls.

Power usually plays a role in violent acts. When one person has more power than another, the more powerful person can abuse his or her power to force another person to do something against their will. They may use violence to try to influence the weaker person, or to cause physical harm to that person. Misuse of power often leads to violent acts.

SO WHAT?

- Adults have more power and authority than children; men generally have more power than women; boys generally have more power than girls.
- People with money or an important position in society hold more power than those who do not have as much money or status. People who are physically bigger than others can use their size to threaten smaller people.
- People with authority and power can misuse it and become violent, especially when they think no one will report them or hold them accountable for their actions.
- Even though adults have authority over children, when adults abuse their power and become violent toward a child, the child has the right to report the abuse. S/he does not have to accept it.

NOW WHAT?

- Think about practical procedures that can help reduce violence against children in your school. Are there places in the schoolyard that are unsafe for girls? Do adults in the school behave in ways that allow (or encourage) physical, psychological or sexual violence against boys and girls?
- What can the school do about that?

Topic: Violence against girls

What?

- *What causes violence against children?*
- *Do you think that violence is more common against girls or against boys? Why do you say this?*
- *Why would violence against girls be more common than violence against boys?*

So What?

- *What is the effect of violence against girls? What impact does it have on their physical well-being and development? On their psychological well-being and development?*
- *What impact does violence against girls have on their education?*

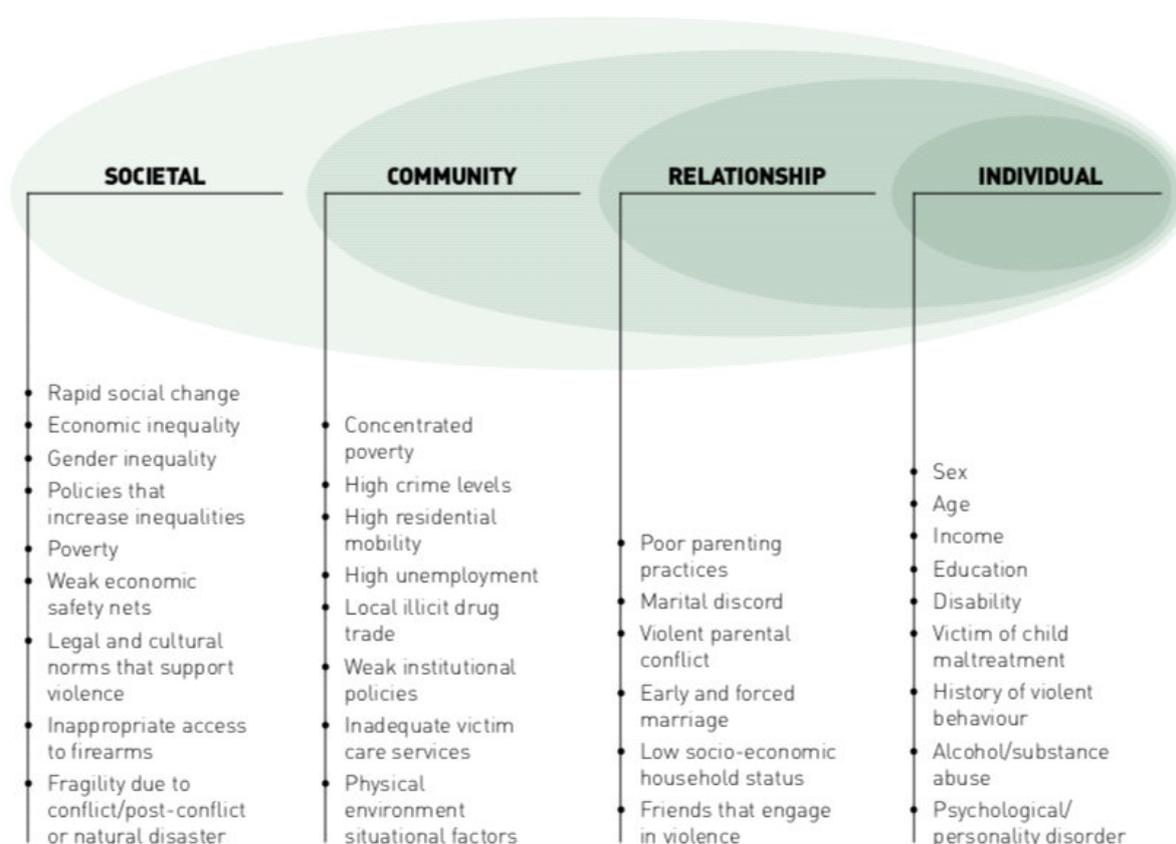
Now What?

- *What can we do to reduce the possibility of violence against girls in our school? What actions do we need to take?*

‘Social ecological model’; A way to understand and prevent violence against children⁹

The following diagram shows how children can be more (or less) vulnerable to violence based on their ‘individual’ characteristics, the relationships within their family, the characteristics of the community in which they are raised, and the ‘big picture’ characteristics of the society (culture) in which they live.

The discussion leader may use this for background information or may choose to lead a discussion about the relationships among the child and her relations with family, community and society and the role that plays in making the child more or less vulnerable to violence.



⁹Extracted from INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children, World Health Organization (2016), page 17. Accessed on 3 December 2019 at [INSPIRE](https://www.inspire.org/) website.

Gender

WHAT?

The term 'gender' describes the differences in the way that our cultures expect men and boys and women and girls to behave. This includes the way we dress, the work that we do, the way we speak, and our status in society. These differences are created by our cultures and not by nature. We can (and do) change our gender roles.¹⁰

SO WHAT?

- Boys and girls, men and women have gender roles and responsibilities created in our families, our societies and our cultures.
- Gender roles describe what men and boys and women and girls are supposed to do based on culture and what society expects of them. For example, in some cultures, a man is expected to earn money for the family and a woman is expected to cook and take care of the children. These roles can and do change over time. Many women now work outside the home to earn money for the family (teachers!). A slower change may be one where it is acceptable for men to cook and take care of children.
- Traditional gender expectations mean that girls are valued less than boys, or women are valued less than men. This means that girls have less power or authority in relationships with boys or men, and that they are vulnerable to abuse, violence or other violations of their rights.

NOW WHAT?

Consider developing a school policy that guides fair treatment for all members of the school community, including teachers and administrators, and all learners.

Topic: Are boys and girls treated the same in our school?

What?

- *Over time, have you seen society's attitudes about the roles of men and women change?*
- *How have they changed?*

So What?

- *How have those changes affected the relationship between men and women and boys and girls?*
- *What do you think about those changes?*
- *How have those changes affected the way boys and girls are treated in school?*

Now What?

- *What is our role in making sure that boys do not receive special treatment over girls in schools?*
- *Do we need to develop a school policy to make sure we treat everyone equally and fairly?*
- *What are our next steps?*

¹⁰For more information on concepts related to gender, please see [Gender Concepts and Definitions](#) published by JHPIEGO; accessed on 26 November 2019.

Involving men and boys in preventing violence against girls and women

WHAT?¹¹

Traditionally, preventing violence against women and girls has fallen to women. They have served as educators about the need to stop violence and they are the audience for messages about how to keep safe from all forms of violence. Over the years, women (and men) have begun to recognise that men and boys must be included in this effort. They are becoming strong advocates and educators on behalf of women, and they have been learning about how they can prevent abuse themselves.

An important part of this change is believing in gender equality. This means that men and women and girls and boys enjoy a balance of power, opportunities, and rewards in society. Where there is **gender equality**, boys and girls equally have the same possibility of realising their human rights and their full potential. They have the opportunity to contribute and benefit equally from educational, economic, political, social and cultural opportunities.

SO WHAT?

- Involving men and boys in preventing violence against girls and women is important because violence is often determined by:
 - Gender inequality between men and women, boys and girls.
 - Cultures that accept gender inequality as 'normal' or 'natural', or at least fail to condemn it often have more incidence of violence against women and girls
- This is a complicated and sometimes difficult subject. If approached in the wrong way, men and boys can resist efforts to be educated about their role in violence against women and girls. It requires maturity to be able to listen and take note of victims' stories about sexual violence and to interrogate one's attitude about gender, masculine norms and stereotypes.

Topic: Are boys and girls treated the same in our school?

What?

- *Over time, have you seen society's attitudes about the roles of men and women change?*
- *How have they changed?*

So What?

- *How have those changes affected the relationship between men and women and boys and girls?*
- *What do you think about those changes?*
- *How have those changes affected the way boys and girls are treated in school?*

Now What?

- *What is our role in making sure that boys do not receive special treatment over girls in schools?*
- *Do we need to develop a school policy to make sure we treat everyone equally and fairly?*
- *What are our next steps?*

¹¹Engaging men in sexual assault prevention (2013). [ACSSA Wrap No. 14](#), Australian Institute of Family Studies. Accessed on 4 December 2019.

- It is important for men and boys to be engaged in discussions because they can change their own behaviour, and they can help others change theirs. Men and boys are needed to join women in becoming both the communicators and the recipients of messages about prevention, and in taking action to commit to reducing abuse of women and girls.

NOW WHAT?

- What are the ways that men and boys already contribute to reducing violence against girls and women? How do they already serve as positive role models for boys and girls and men and women? How can that be implemented across the entire school?
- What are some practical ways that men and boys can become involved in the school's efforts to reduce violence against women and girls?
- What discussions can they join, or lead?

Early marriage and teen pregnancy

WHAT?

Early (or child) marriage is any marriage where one of the partners is below the age of 18. Girls are more likely to be married early than boys. Early marriage is illegal in Uganda.

Teen pregnancy is any pregnancy where the girl is below the age of 18.

SO WHAT?

- Both early marriage and teen pregnancy have many negative consequences, especially for girls.
- Young girls are not physically or psychologically ready to bear the financial or social responsibilities of being a wife or mother, and their bodies are not ready for childbirth and rearing children.
- Early marriage and teen pregnancy can have a very negative effect on a child's education. Young girls who are married, either with or without babies, are often required to leave school. This means that they are much less likely to have the education that they need to support themselves and their babies, creating a cycle of poverty and vulnerability.
- Traditional gender roles mean that girls do not have equal power with men and boys. This means that they have less decision-making power in their marriages or relationships. They will have less access to medical care, or to take steps to prevent exposure to HIV or pregnancy.
- Note: Family planning methods are becoming more accessible to young girls. When used properly, they are effective in preventing pregnancy. The only family planning method that will also help prevent exposure to HIV is the condom. Using the pill or IUD or other family planning method will help prevent pregnancy, but not HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

NOW WHAT?

- Examine your school's policy on early marriage and teen pregnancy. Does it include guidelines for girls and the boys (or teachers) who made them pregnant or forced them to marry? Is your policy fair to both girls and boys (or teachers)?
- If your school does not have such a policy, what can it do to set one in place?

Topic: Teen pregnancy

What?

What is teen pregnancy?

Have you ever seen examples of early marriage?

What do you think causes girls to engage in sex at an early age?

So What?

- *What are the effects of teen pregnancy? Think about the girl's and baby's physical health, her opportunities for contributing to society in the future.*
- *If a fellow student (or teacher) causes the pregnancy, how is the boy (or man) treated? Are the consequences for the boy (or man) as severe as they are for the girl? What do you think about that?*

Now What?

- *What can we, as teachers and learners, do to ensure that girls who fall pregnant are not shamed and blamed for their actions?*
- *What is the school policy on girl pupils who become pregnant? Boy pupils? Teachers who cause pupils to become pregnant?*
- *What should the policy be and what do we do to make that happen?*

Discipline vs. punishment

WHAT?

'Punishment' is a penalty imposed on a person for breaking a rule or showing improper conduct. It aims to control behaviour through negative means, including:

- Negative verbal reprimands and disapproval; using harsh words and tone with a child.
- Causing severe physical or emotional pain, as in corporal punishment.

'Discipline' is the practice of teaching or training a person to obey rules or code of behaviour, both long- and short-term.¹²

Under the Ugandan Professional Teachers' Code of Conduct, it is a punishable offence for teachers to administer corporal punishment.¹³ The Code is enforced on a school-by-school basis, so each school is responsible for how it complies with the guideline on corporal punishment.

SO WHAT?

- Corporal punishment is considered to be a form of physical violence and has the same negative effects that other forms of physical punishment have. In addition, corporal punishment can be embarrassing and traumatic for the child, leading to psychological harm.
- To reduce the possibility of harming a child by administering corporal punishment (e.g., by caning) teachers (and parents) can seek other ways to discipline children in the classroom and in the schoolyard.

NOW WHAT?

- Examine the traditional belief that 'parents (and teachers) who allow children to speak up are considered weak.' How does that affect the way your school disciplines learners? Now that you know more about the effects of punishing children, and not allowing them to participate in decisions about their welfare, what do you think about this belief? What might be done to change this in your school?
- For ideas on what teachers and parents can do to reduce corporal punishment in the school and home, see 'Positive Discipline' in see Section 5: Now What?

¹²UNESCO. Positive discipline in the inclusive, learning-friendly classroom: a guide for teachers and teacher educators (2006), Bangkok, Thailand. Pages 11 – 21.

¹³Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 51. Education Service Commission Regulations, 2012; p.13. Accessed on 2 December 2019 at <http://www.esc.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-education-service-commission-regulations-2012-1.pdf>

Punishment is meant to control a child's behaviour. Discipline is meant to develop a child's behaviour. If we think about how we teach a baby how to clap her hands, or a child to walk, we do it by showing through example ('modelling') the behaviour.

When the child succeeds, she develops confidence and a sense of control over her life, a critical component of self-esteem.

Modeling good behaviour is a more productive way to help children develop than harming them through punishment.

Topic: Moving from punishment to discipline

What?

- *What is punishment?*
- *What is the difference between punishment and discipline?*
- *Which do we use in our school?*

So What?

- *What are the effects of punishment (especially corporal punishment) on the child?*
- *What do you think? Is corporal punishment effective, over time?*
- *Why is it important to not cause physical or psychological harm to a child? How can that help him/her develop into an adult that is confident in her/his contributions to society?*

Now What?

- *What can we, as teachers and learners, do to move from corporal punishment to more positive forms of discipline?*
-

SECTION 5: NOW WHAT? HOW TO RESPOND TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Responding to violence against children in schools

Recognize the signs of abuse/violence

Look out for the possible signs and symptoms in children exposed to violence. Those signs include:

- Bruises, scratches, healing wounds
- Fear of going to school or associating with fellow children (avoiding social situations)
- Clothing (very dirty or destroyed)
- Absenteeism or poor performance
- Health-related complaints e.g., headache, pain, stomachache or other physical pains
- Being aggressive or angry
- Lack of concentration in class

Protect the victim

Always follow the principles of child protection

- Observe privacy and confidentiality on the matter
- Protect the child from further abuse or harm
- Protect the child and the family from threats
- Immediate removal of the child from the place of abuse

Don't blame the victim

- As individuals, everyone can take steps to stop blaming the victims of sexual violence. If such cases happen in the school, stop and ask yourself, "Did I immediately think, 'Oh, it was the girl's fault?'" If so, ask yourself why you felt that way. Think about situations in your own life when you were unfairly blamed for something. How did that make you feel? Remember that the trauma caused by the act of violence itself is only made worse by blaming and shaming.
- At the school level, create a policy that states that your school will not tolerate blaming victims of violence. Decide on what the disciplinary action should be if the policy is violated and enforce it fairly.
- At the community level, set up discussions with parents and other community members. Discuss the attitudes and norms that lead to blaming girls for abuse that may be beyond their control and the effect that blaming has on the victim. Ask them to think about their own responsibility for this attitude, and what they can do to change them.

Reporting violence

If a case of violence or abuse of a child comes to light and an intervention needs to take place, the school needs to consider whether the case is 'non-statutory' or 'statutory'.

Non-statutory cases: These are cases that do not require state intervention or legal action but can be handled by people in authority, for example at the school level, by Local Councils, senior/women, head teacher or at the community level by parasocial workers and also CDOs.

- In most cases, children in non-statutory cases require counseling and possibly mediation between the people involved in the case.

Examples of non-statutory cases of violence against children:

- Hygiene and cleanliness
- Bad touches
- Nicknaming
- Child who is not participating in class or other school-related activities
- Need for school fees
- Children currently out of school
- Child who needs school uniforms and books
- Child who has observed domestic violence which has caused psychological trauma

Statutory cases are cases that require legal action by the state, including the police and the judiciary, among others. If you have solid evidence that abuse is being committed against a child, that should be reported to the legal authorities (police), as that is a statutory case of violence against a minor and is punishable by law. Follow the child protection of 'do no harm' by being very certain that you do not endanger the child by your actions. If you are not sure what to do, consult a parasocial worker or other qualified authority.

Examples of statutory cases of violence against children include:

- Child marriage
- Sexual abuse including defilement of boys and girls
- Physical abuse causing grievous harm
- Abandonment and severe neglect
- Children living outside the family environment
- Emergency food need and severe malnutrition
- Emergency health care needs

Where to report?

Different reporting points include suggestion boxes, one-on-one discussion with the senior men/ women, patrons/matrons, through peer leaders, the head teachers and CCCWs (para social workers) attached to schools.

Key considerations for reporting violence against children:

Reporting points have to be easily accessible, be safe and confidential. They must allow a child to share his or her experiences freely and facilitate the process of following up the issues on time.

Restore Hope

Definition: Building confidence of an abuse victim to be able to cope up with the challenging situation he or she has experienced.

How to restore hope:

- Listen carefully with empathy.
- Ask about the learner's worries, concerns or needs and answer all their questions at the moment. Recognize the child's feelings and respond without judging them.

- Talk to the client in private.
- Help the child access psychosocial services.
- Keep close contact with the child survivor (victim) to detect behavioral changes which may indicate trauma from the act of violence.
- Provide psychosocial support such as guidance and counselling.
- Maintain confidentiality about the child’s situation. Do not share information with anyone not authorised to know about it.

Positive discipline

Positive discipline means using non violent and positive means to model correct behaviour for children.¹⁵ While punishment is a single act, positive discipline is a process that recognises and rewards appropriate behaviour. Steps toward positive discipline are:

Reflection: Think about kindness, and how acts of kindness affect you. Now think about meanness and how mean or cruel acts affect you. Which would you prefer? Which do you think a child would prefer?

1. **Describe the behaviour you want:** “Everyone quiet down now, please.”
2. **Provide clear reasons:** “We are going to start our maths lesson and everyone needs to listen closely, so we need quiet.” This means that quieting down quickly will show respect for others. It is a good example of treating others as you would like them to treat you.
3. **Acknowledgement is requested:** “Do you see why quieting down is so important?” Give the learners a chance to reflect on the desired behaviour. This helps them understand why it is important to continue the behaviour.
4. **Reinforce the correct behaviour:** Eye contact, a nod, a smile, an extra five minutes of play time at the end of the day, extra credit points, having a success mentioned in front of the class or school (social recognition is the greatest award). When rewards are used, they should always be immediate and small, yet gratifying.

This process is effective for individual children. For teachers working in large classes, it can also be effective for groups of children. The “trick” is to make the children feel the class as a whole is on a “winning team” and to praise each child’s efforts in being a good team member.

Remember: Catch students doing the right thing and reward them immediately. This is the core of positive discipline.

Monitor (or have a learner monitor) how many times you say “No!” or “Don’t!” versus “Please stop running in the class. You could hurt yourself or someone else.”

Rewards can be in form of:¹⁶

- Praising the child (recognition) in front of his/her peers and caregivers during open days (PTA, Cluster meetings), assembly (by reading out names), and staff meetings.

¹⁵UNESCO. Positive discipline in the inclusive, learning-friendly classroom: a guide for teachers and teacher educators (2006), Bangkok, Thailand. Pages 86-87. Accessed at [Save the Children’s Resource Center](#) on 4 Dec 2019.

¹⁶Excerpted from Western Uganda Bantwana Programme internal document (Dec. 2019)

- Putting on a name tag that specifies child has excelled in a behaviour or activity.
- Allocating different roles like taking minutes in Child Rights Clubs and Girl Talk Clubs.
- Asking the child to be a club leader or select her as class monitors in specific classes.
- Select the child to participate in activities like Day of African Child, Children’s Court and interschool competitions or take them on exchange visits.

For learners that misbehave

Despite best efforts, sometimes it is necessary to discipline a student. The idea is to help the child understand and learn from the ‘mistake’ and not repeat the same behaviour in the future. These behaviours can include fighting with a fellow child, abusing a fellow child or teacher, calling a child names, stealing, etc.¹⁷

Be sure of yourself; don’t make a miscall. As discussed above, true misbehaviour occurs when a student **chooses** to behave **inappropriately**. Before you take action, ask yourself the following questions:¹⁸

- Is the student doing something truly wrong? Is there a real problem here, or are you just tired and out of patience?
- Sometimes the learner doesn’t know that what he did was wrong. If he does not know, point out why his behaviour was wrong.
- If there is no real problem, release your stress away from the learner and the class.

If the learner knows she did something wrong, then she has misbehaved. Ask her why she behaved that way. Listen carefully and assess your next steps.

Make sure that the action taken focuses on the learner’s behaviour and not on the learner. An example: Instead of, “You are a bad person!” try “I understand that you were defending your friend. But hitting people is not right. What else could you do to defend your friend?”

Non-corporal, non-verbal punishment

Try to make sure that the discipline is a logical consequence of the misbehaviour. The child needs to understand exactly what he is being disciplined for, so that he may be less likely to repeat the misbehaviour in the future. For example, if a child has not brought his homework for the first time, drastic punishment may not be called for. If the child repeatedly does not bring his homework, a note sent to parents, or a home visit may be needed.

Control your emotions and help the child control hers. Anger and frustration can lead to violence or harsh words. Take a few seconds to calm down and allow the child to consider her actions. Try taking a few deep breaths and counting to ten before continuing. (If you let learners know what you’re doing “I’m angry right now, and I have to control my emotions” they can learn from your example.)

Depending upon the nature of the misbehaviour, some non-corporal disciplinary methods could be found on the list below. Make sure that you do not choose a penalty that publicly humiliates a student!

¹⁷Excerpted from Western Uganda Bantwana Programme internal document (Dec. 2019)

¹⁸UNESCO. Positive discipline in the inclusive, learning-friendly classroom: a guide for teachers and teacher educators (2006), Bangkok, Thailand. Page 93.

- Loss of break period or play time with others
- Detention after school to discuss misbehaviour, why it arose, and what should be done to correct it
- Clean up the mess created
- Student apology to those offended
- Change seating assignment
- Request student to repeat rule and to follow rule
- Notes home to parent(s) or home visits
- Removal to the Head's office, especially for more serious, disruptive behaviours, such as fighting, continuous interruption of lessons, stealing, bullying, possession of drugs or other restricted substances

SECTION 6: FURTHER RESOURCES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Highlight Bantwana's resource library

Use footnotes from this and other guides to complete the bibliography.

For statistics regarding violence against children in Uganda:

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda Violence against Children Survey (August 2018).

Access at:

<https://www.unicef.org/uganda/media/2156/file/Violence%20Against%20Children%20Survey%202018.pdf>

For information on positive discipline in the classroom:

UNESCO. Positive discipline in the inclusive, learning-friendly classroom: a guide for teachers and teacher educators (2006), Bangkok, Thailand.

Access at:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000149284>

For more details on the "What? So what? Now what? Methodology:

Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., Jasper, M. (2001) Critical reflection in nursing and the helping professions: a user's guide. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Access at: [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, University of Connecticut](#)

Vella, Jane, Learning to listen, learning to teach: The power of dialogue in educating adults (2002). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.: New York.