

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white surgical face mask. She is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. She is wearing a grey V-neck t-shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

INCREASED NUMBER OF GBV SURVIVORS SEEKING HELP DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

(c) unsplash.com

Upon introduction of travel restrictive measures as part of COVID-19 response on 15 March, six mobile teams of psychosocial support to ATO/JFO veterans and their families supported by UNFPA adjusted their operation. Standing ready to make urgent visits within their service area in Mykolaiv and Kyiv regions, mobile teams' staff started providing consultations via phone, Skype and messengers. Offering their support to everyone in need nationwide, psychologists have been weekly addressing a seven-fold volume of GBV cases compared to the pre-quarantine period. The increase is largely due to shift in modality – if prior to quarantine, MTs were giving around 100 in-person consultations per week, they provide assistance in around 700 cases weekly remotely. However, there is also a notable rise in the number of survivors seeking assistance. **Second month of quarantine has seen a 2.5-fold increase of GBV cases addressed by MTs compared to the first month since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in Ukraine.**

Specialists of UNFPA-supported daycare centres observe a similar trend. In the first month of quarantine, **5 daycare centres provided assistance to 49% more clients** compared to the pre-quarantine month. In the second month after the introduction of restrictive measures, **specialists of daycare centres observed a further 36% increase** in the number of GBV survivors seeking help, compared to first month of the quarantine, or 67% growth compared to the month prior the COVID-19 outbreak.

Operators of the national hotline for GBV survivors (managed by La Strada with UNFPA support) also register a notable increase in the number of requests for assistance. Overall, a month after the introduction of quarantine saw a **23% growth in the number of calls** compared to the pre-quarantine month. **Second month of quarantine has registered further 41% increase**, compared with the first month of restrictive measures, or 72% rise compared to the pre-quarantine month.

As demand for assistance during COVID-19 lock-down is growing, UNFPA-supported specialised service providers have been swiftly adjusting service provision modalities to ensure that all survivors receive much-needed help.



TWO CRISIS ROOMS FOR GBV SURVIVORS OPENED IN KYIV

On 26 May, two crisis rooms for GBV survivors were opened in Kyiv by Kyiv City State Administration with the support of UNFPA and funding of the British Embassy Kyiv. The rooms are equipped with everything for a safe and comfortable stay of four adults and two children at the same time from 3 to 10 days. This time is often crucial to gather necessary documents and make initial arrangements to start violence-free life. Should survivors need more time in safe space, they may be offered a placement in a shelter or other specialised services for GBV survivors.

"In October last year, Kyiv signed an agreement with UNFPA Ukraine to support women, children and men who have suffered from gender-based violence. It is very good that this topic has become open and people have started talking about it," says Maryna Honda, Deputy Head of the Kyiv City State Administration.

The crisis rooms will employ four social workers who will be there daily, according to the approved schedules. This will help accommodate survivors at any time of the day.

Of all modalities of safe space solutions for GBV survivors, crisis rooms offer most flexibility in terms of admission and highest protection from COVID-19 spread (with least people being in contact, hence, risking infection). Crisis rooms will be a life-saving option for women and girls seeking refuge from abusers during and after quarantine measures.

STRENGTHENING PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSISTANCE TO GBV SURVIVORS ONLINE

"Work during quarantine has become a challenge for service providers – it called for new platforms for clients, adaptations of techniques, new rules for psychological assistance. It's important to share our newly found approaches, so that a wide range of specialists will be able to adopt our experience," says Tetiana Franchuk, mobile team psychologist.

On 18 May, UNFPA, jointly with implementing partner Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health, held a webinar "Principles and rules of providing

psychosocial support online". Psychologists of mobile teams and national hotline for GBV survivors have shared their experience of launching remote modalities of psychosocial counselling and addressing a surge of GBV cases online during COVID-19 quarantine.

Viewed over 3k times, the recorded webinar offers practical guidance and tools for thousands of social workers and psychologists to effectively assist GBV survivors and people in need via online solutions.

ENHANCING COORDINATION OF GBV RESPONSE IN HUMANITARIAN SETTING

On 22 May 2020, UNFPA held an online joint national/subnational GBV Sub-Clusters meeting devoted to remote and outreach GBV activities in humanitarian and COVID-19 context. GBV Sub-Cluster continues to serve as a key coordination body in the humanitarian setting in Ukraine. It enables local and international GBV actors to receive the most comprehensive and updated information on GBV situation and response in Ukraine.

More than 30 representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk region state institutions, UN agencies, NGOs and international organisations shared

their updates and core concerns regarding GBV matters and were equipped with key documents that GBV Sub-Cluster translated into Ukrainian for further adaptation and implementation by partners. The documents offer recommendations on humanitarian programming and contingency planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, case management during COVID-19 and guidance for GBV Coordination Groups.

Strengthened coordination of efforts will help ensure that all people in need have access to quality assistance, crucial under compounded challenges posed by COVID-19 and the conflict.

UNFPA UKRAINE PARTNER, L'ORÉAL GROUP, DONATED ANTISEPTIC PRODUCTS TO SERVICES FOR GBV SURVIVORS



L'Oréal Group donated sanitizers (750 pc.) and hand balms (750 pc.) to UNFPA-supported shelters in Kherson, Kharkiv, Rubizhne, Krasnopavlivka, Slovyansk, Odesa, Vinnytsia, Mariupol, Kryvyi Rih and Berdyansk. Almost 500 sanitizers were delivered to medical service delivery points in Belovodsk, Kramatorsk, Kryvyi Rih, Mariupol, Popasna, Pokrovsk, Rubizhne, Starobilsk, Kherson. Working collaboratively with partners, UNFPA helps mitigate additional risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to GBV survivors and ensure uninterrupted GBV service provision.

"(NO) TRIVIA IN RELATIONSHIPS" ONLINE TALK

"When we meet a new person who is a potential partner, it is quite difficult to recognise an abuser. Because the initial markers, the details that can be seen at the beginning of the relationship, are not unambiguous," explains the project psychologist.

Within the "(No) trivia in relationships" project, an online lecture was held jointly with the educational project "Stem is Fem" on 22 May. The webinar was dedicated to recognising initial signs of toxic and abusive relationships.

Such talks aim to educate young people to spot alarming signals in relationships – such as excessive control, contempt for previous partners, inadequate reactions to small things. This knowledge is essential for protecting private boundaries and ensuring personal security.

Broadcast via Facebook and Zoom, the webinar received over 1k views in a week after streaming.

"(No) trivia in relationships" talks are focused on the topic of healthy and toxic relationships – how to distinguish partner-abusers, what to do in such situations and where to seek help.