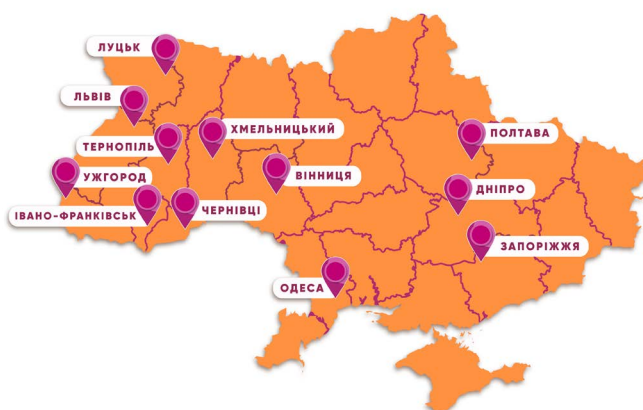


April 2022

24 PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT MOBILE TEAMS DEPLOYED TO ADDRESS GBV



In April, 24 mobile teams of psychosocial support (PSS MTs) to survivors of domestic and gender-based violence started working in 12 cities across Ukraine. Supported by CERF, the governments of the UK and Canada, UNFPA mobile teams operate in Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lutsk, Lviv, Khmelnytskyi, Poltava, Odesa, Ternopil, Vinnytsia, Uzhhorod, and Zaporizhzhia. In each city, two mobile teams serve the needs of local residents and IDPs.

Each PSS MT consists of a social worker and a psychologist who provide emergency and planned social and psychological assistance to both GBV survivors and those at risk. Team specialists provide psychological support to survivors at their place of residence or any place of survivor's convenience (in crisis circumstances – within 24 hours) and refer them to relevant services.

The mobile teams also conduct awareness-raising activities to educate people to identify GBV and respond to it. At such community outreach events, PSS MTs disseminate information materials on GBV and specialised services and leave their contact cards, so anyone in need can reach out to them in full confidentiality following the initial visit.

Mobile teams specialists are trained to provide quality survivor-oriented counselling in personal meetings and via phone. PSS MTs bring psychological support to GBV survivors and people at risk where and when they need it.

STRENGTHENING POLICE RESPONSE TO GBV

UNFPA continued to support the National Police of Ukraine in the development of an effective response to GBV and quality service provision to GBV survivors. Under the EMBRACE project with UK Government support, equipment was delivered for newly created police mobile groups and sectors to respond to domestic and gender-based violence in communities, despite the disruption of logistical supply networks caused by the war.

Forty-four specialised mobile groups, which join the efforts of 168 police officers, were equipped with first aid kits, body cameras, car dashboards, thermal printers, laptops and tablets. Essential for documenting evidence and performing risk assessment in each DV/GBV case, the hardware enables due operation of the specialised police forces.



PROTECTING DIGNITY OF WOMEN



In April, UNFPA continued to provide dignity kits and female essentials packs to women and girls who were escaping hostilities in Ukraine. For many women and girls who left their homes with nothing but crucial belongings, thoughtfully packed UNFPA kits with items for menstrual hygiene, underwear and essential care were beyond handy. The kits helped meet their menstrual hygiene needs with dignity and due care. Moreover, each pack contains information about available support services in cases of GBV to mitigate risks of GBV for vulnerable women and girls.

In April, 2,000 women and girls received female essentials kits in Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih and Zaporizhzhia. With the numbers of IDPs still on the rise, UNFPA will continue disbursement of similar kits and packs in other cities with high numbers of IDPs, including from areas of active hostilities.

GBV HOTLINE: TRENDS OF SERVICE PROVISION

A critical disrupting event, war seems to bring a black-and-white effect to all social interactions. This nationwide security emergency may serve as a sobering factor to unite people and consider their needs with empathy and sensitivity or come as a catalyst for deterioration of bonds.

To explore the emerging impact of the war on relationships, UNFPA analysed the trends of the GBV hotline service provision in the first two months since the start of large-scale hostilities.

In January-February, the operation of the La Strada 116 123 national hotline received over 1,920 calls monthly, with 1,146 and 1,050 cases of violence registered respectively.

March was characterised by a considerable drop in the number of calls since the hotline could provide only text and online counselling for a couple of weeks. After UNFPA supported the activation of the virtual telecommunications system by the hotline on 11 March, the hotline received 997 calls that month. In April, the operators responded to 1,585 calls. Hotline specialists registered 314 and 635 cases of violence respectively. That recorded a notable drop in reported cases of

GBV, however, does not allow the assumption that the number of GBV cases went down.

Notably, in January and February, the share of cases of violence outside the family was around 3-4%. This is consistent with the data for 2020 and 2021. In March and April 2022, the share of such cases went up to 6 and 8% respectively. It may be related to the fact that many families are divided now as women and children constitute the majority of IDPs. Outside their immediate support groups and communities, women and girls become more dependent on external support. This puts them in a position of vulnerability that might be exploited. Thus, assistance to IDP women and girls is crucial for the mitigation and prevention of GBV.

Analysis of the hotline data shows that clients were more inclined to seek psychological counselling in March-April (22% of calls) than in January-February (14% of calls). As Ukrainians experience growing stress and anxiety related to the war hostilities and uncertainty, psychological assistance services are essential for mental health of population overall and prevention of GBV in particular.