



Why Inclusive Hiring Practices?

In emergencies, GBV program managers often set up new programs or rapidly expand existing programs to address a significant change in needs. The rapid set up and need for services can result in hiring practices that rely on and reinforce existing power structures, access to opportunities, and cultural bias.

Yet, we know that women and girls face greater risks of GBV in emergencies and that these risks increase even more for those women and girls living with disabilities, older women, and adolescent girls (IASC, 2019), reinforcing the need for a team that reflects the diversity of the community and understands their needs.

Inclusive hiring practices promote effective programs

To ensure inclusive hiring practices, intentional consideration and adjustments to the hiring process must occur. These practices result in a diverse team of individuals with a variety of knowledge, experiences, and access to different people within the larger community. A diverse GBV team can result in:

- Increased ability to provide safe, culturally competent services to the widest range of women and girls (Martin, 2014).
- A depth of understanding, rooted in staff's lived experiences, of the dynamics of GBV in the context, concerns of women and girls, and community beliefs and practices (Martin, 2014).
- The ability to compare perspectives, create innovative programming approaches, and search for creative solutions to challenges (Gender-based Violence AoR, 2019).

Preparing to hire

Balance the urgent need for services with, when possible, setting up a hiring process that reflects the goals of the GBV program. Prioritize what you can within the demands of the setting.

Inclusive Hiring in GBV Programs – The Basics

- Candidates need to demonstrate that they can **understand, apply, and actualize GBV Core Competencies**, including a survivor-centered approach.
- In interviews, ask questions that **assess attitudes, biases, and behaviors** in addition to technical knowledge.
- Hiring for attitudes and behaviors is at least as important as for technical knowledge and experience. **The attitudes and beliefs that a candidate demonstrates in the interview process will impact how they treat a survivor, respond to them, and guide their actions in the community.**
- Plan to **address knowledge gaps through training, mentoring, and observational learning** to promote inclusive hiring practices that prioritize attitudinal competencies. This will help ensure programming that centers survivor's needs, wishes, and priorities.

Know what you are looking for in new staff

Above all, GBV staff should:

- be passionate and dedicated to the advancement of women and girls,
- understand the root causes of GBV,
- be able to apply a survivor-centered approach through appropriate attitudes that result in treating survivors with dignity and respect,
- center women and girls in programming decisions,
- be committed to building a collaborative and trusting team dynamic,
- want a shared sense of program ownership.

Even if candidates may not be able to express in the exact language of GBV guiding documents and resources, hiring managers should be designing an interview process that centers these qualities.

Cultivate a diverse pool of candidates

To cultivate a diverse pool of candidates, GBV program managers need to understand the context, cultural and community norms and power dynamics. When possible:

Increase understanding - Use the GBV rapid assessment and any available power analysis to understand marginalization, oppression, and barriers some candidates may face in applying.

Reflect on biases - how do your own biases and the biases of others on the hiring team reinforce the power dynamics and systems of oppression faced by diverse candidates?

Examine required qualifications - they may exclude diverse candidates.

- Where possible, do not require professional degrees.
- Ensure previous experience requirements are in line with the position and the previous exposure and opportunity to similar positions.

Eliminate jargon - revise the job description to ensure plain, easily understood language.

Be transparent - state in advertisements that positions are open to all.

- Request applications from groups who may be less likely to apply.
- State in advertisements that adaptation and accommodations to the interview process can be made for applicants with disabilities.

Diversify advertising - the ways you advertise may not reach diverse candidates (Humanitarian Advisory Group, 2021)(Age and Disability Consortium, 2018) so:

- Use radio and community discussion groups in addition to standard postings or advertisements.
- Ensure outreach to community includes women's, youth and older person's organizations, organizations or societies for people with disabilities, or those with other marginalized identities.

Designing inclusive hiring processes to support gender transformative programs

A gender transformative program seeks to create new gender roles and relations through challenging existing inequities, norms, and roles that are harmful (CARE, 2019).

Addressing barriers for a diverse team

In every culture, specific groups of people experience oppression and lack of access to power. Ensuring our hiring practices support opportunities for these groups is paramount. Consider barriers to applying and interviewing for example (not exhaustive):

Women and older adolescent girls – household responsibilities and childcare which may prevent them from interviewing during 'traditional' work hours.

Older persons – may need transportation help, are more likely to only speak, read, or write languages that are not the official language of the country or English.

Persons with disabilities – consider both physical and attitudinal barriers. Infrastructure into the interviewing location may be an issue but so may the attitudes and beliefs those in the hiring process have about persons with disabilities.

Persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics – consider safety concerns in traveling to and from interview spaces as well as safety within your organization – state non-discrimination policies in adverts.

Use an intersectional lens – Always do your best to consider and address barriers for candidates who hold multiple of these and other marginalized identities in the context.

Design around the GBV Guiding Principles

The ability to uphold a survivor-centered approach, along with the ability to understand and uphold the GBV Guiding Principles come with time and experience. In emergencies, the candidates may have no prior experience. Therefore, design interview questions that:

- Assess a candidate's personal beliefs about different types of GBV.
- Assess a candidate's ability to empathize with survivors, even in scenarios where they have acted outside of cultural norms.
- Assess a candidate's attitudes toward survivors' choices, even when they do not agree with them.
- Assess a candidate's understanding of a 'do-no-harm' approach.

Know which skills you can train

Hiring processes can and should assess across three main areas: GBV Core Competencies, Professional/educational Competencies, and Behavioral Competencies. Within these categories, some skills will be easier to train than others. During a hiring process, a GBV program manager should consider the following:

GBV Core Competencies:

- What questions can be asked to assess if a candidate knows the basic concepts of a survivor-centered approach?
- What questions can be asked to assess if a candidate's attitudes and beliefs are in line with a survivor-centered approach?

Professional and Educational Competencies:

- What questions can be asked to assess a candidate's understanding of the root causes of GBV?
- What questions can be asked to gauge a participant's understanding of the norms, drivers, and contextual factors impacting GBV in the community?
- What questions can be asked to gauge a candidate's understanding of safety and ethical concerns and concepts?

Behavioral Competencies

- What questions can be asked to assess a candidate's ability to empathize with a survivor?
- What questions can be asked to assess interpersonal skills?
- What questions can be asked to assess a candidate's ability to cope with pressure?
- Can you create scenarios to assess judgement and decision-making skills?
- How can your hiring rubric measure or account for demonstrated qualities like persistence, dedication, passion, and tenacity?

Use multiple methods to assess candidates

Because diverse candidates will have different strengths and may have had different opportunities and barriers to education and previous job experience, multiple methods should be used to assess candidates. Consider using a combination of:

- Diverse interview panels with at least one member of the community on the panel, ideally a woman or adolescent girl with additional marginalized identities.
- Case vignette questions that require open ended answers.

- Comparison questions that offer two or more options for a way forward.
- On interview rubrics, leave space to note those qualities and skills that may be harder to define set questions to assess – these could include things like:
 - active listening skills.
 - collaborative ways of working.
 - conflict resolution principles.
 - determination, tenacity, creativity, passion, persistence etc.

Modify the interview process for each position

Different questions and categories of questions may be weighted differently depending on the roles and responsibilities of the position.

- Consider the roles and responsibilities of each position and the need for existing technical knowledge in the position.
- Consider exposure to GBV core concepts and ideas in the community as a whole.
- For entry level positions, weight attitude and behaviour questions stronger than technical knowledge questions.
- For positions that involve supervising others, consider weighting professional competency questions specifically around team dynamics and guidance to other staff higher than other professional competency questions about other managerial aspects (i.e., budgets).
- If the position requires some prior experience, weight specific questions on understanding and applying survivor-centered principles higher.
- Always weight attitude and belief questions high.

Plan for 'Reasonable Accommodations'

Be prepared to adjust interviews and provide assistance to ensure interviews are accessible for all candidates. Some measures could include:

- Processes for asking candidates what support is needed to complete the interview.
- Providing interpretation in multiple local languages during interviews.
- Ensuring childcare availability at interviews.
- Creating options for flexible interview times and locations.
- Providing easy-to-read forms if you have written components.

Interviewing response and prevention staff

Specific questions can be asked of candidates interviewing for positions within Response and Prevention teams. Capacity assessment tools in agencies may have questions that can be easily modified for interviews. Additional resources and considerations are provided below.

Response Staff

Consider:

- Does this position need to understand a multi-sectoral response to meet survivor's needs immediately or can this be part of training after hiring? Weight technical questions and attitude/behavior questions accordingly.
- Does this position require expertise in case management approaches? Will this position be cascading that knowledge to other staff? Weight questions on case management accordingly.
- Tool 16, Tool 21, Tool 22, and Tool 23¹ of IRC and IMC's [Women and Girls Safe Spaces Toolkit](#) have questions that can be modified and used in interviews for a variety of Response positions.
- Use the [IASC Gender-based Violence Case Management Guidelines](#) survivor-centered attitude scale and the survivor centered case management knowledge assessment to create case management specific questions.

Prevention Staff

- Does this position need to understand GBV approaches to prevention work immediately or can this be part of training after hiring? Weight technical questions and attitude/behavior questions accordingly.
- Is this position responsible for community outreach and engagement? Ensure questions around communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution are included.
- View and modify questions from prevention staff capacity strengthening tools. IRC's [Empower Tool 3](#) and [Empower Tool 5](#) provide questions that can be modified for interviews.

Match candidates to positions

Be willing to match candidates to positions. Candidates may apply for a position but through the interview process, demonstrate that they are better suited for another position. Hiring managers should consider this and match candidates to positions, even though they may have applied for different

positions.

Balance experience and capacity strengthening.

Match inexperienced candidates with positions where they demonstrate passion, dedication, local or traditional knowledge and balance their entry into humanitarian GBV programming with capacity strengthening and competency development on the job (Bioforce, 2020).

Completing the process

Inclusive hiring practices may be a priority for your agency, or they may be used and applied on an ad hoc basis from manager to manager. Therefore, be prepared to address specific hurdles to complete the process of hiring diverse candidates.

Address Systemic Barriers

- Make sure that you have well documented hiring rubrics for each candidate from each panel member.
- Have a summary sheet for selected candidates with specific justifications already identified for candidates without the usual experience, education, or training.
- Remember that others in the agency may hold biases against specific identities your candidates hold. Be prepared to push back against this.
- Negotiate with HR and your supervisors for flexible work hours, providing additional supports through the agency, and commensurate pay rates for diverse candidates.

Follow up with candidates

- Ensure you can follow up with all candidates, including those who may not have access to a phone.
- Post results of interviews in multiple places in the community. Use both print and radio if possible.

Design and plan for mentorship and on-going learning

On-going learning should be part of every GBV program, regardless of the experience and education of the staff. Plan for competency building before progressing to more complex skills (Martin, 2014) after hiring. Mentoring, shadowing, observation, group and individual supervision sessions are all forms of capacity strengthening which can be deployed in addition to trainings.

¹ Tools are embedded within the pdf file structure. See document outline and expand content to view tools.

Inclusive Hiring



Address Barriers



Know what qualities GBV staff need



Engage diverse community members



Promote supportive interview processes



Create opportunities

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The GBV AoR Helpdesk

You can contact the GBV AoR Helpdesk by emailing us at: enquiries@gbviehelpdesk.org.uk

The Helpdesk is available 09.00 to 17.30 GMT Mon – Fri.
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