

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY



2026 SAACHS CONFERENCE

Responses to GBV

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Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global public health concern with far-reaching health and economic consequences (World Health Organisation, 2021).

GBV refers to a plethora of multi-layered complex phenomena or, better still, experiences requiring complex responses.

The rise in sexual offence cases within our universities is indicative of the cultural codes existing in society.

Using the 2016/17 South African Police Service statistics, 80% of the reported sexual offences were rape, together with Statistics South Africa's estimate that 68,5% of the victims of the sexual offences were women.

For this reason, some, like Interpol, have labelled South Africa as the “rape capital of the world” (Stats SA, 2018).

Collaborators



Transformation Office (TO)

Reporting, investigation, disciplinary support

Governance and statutory mandate

Hosts: Social Workers, Lawyers, Investigator



Student Health Services (SHS)

Medical and health-related care

Ambulance service

Liaison between medical centres, TCC, ECDoH

Hosts: Nurses and RCs



Emthonjeni Student Wellness (ESW)

Psycho-social support

Hosts: Psychologists, RCs, and Social Worker (dotted line to SHS), Peer Helpers

Advocacy and training are offered across sites

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Ethical Consideration

Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) ethical guidelines dictate that we promise and guarantee our clients' rights to confidentiality and privacy.

Ministerial Task Team on GBV in Higher Education.

Practice aligned with Higher Health Protocols.

Our role is to provide psychological and medical support, and to respect the client's right to autonomy in choosing whether to report the incident through formal channels or not.

Counsellors do, however, educate their clients as to their rights to pursue justice and are promulgated to report GBV incidents.

Clients are informed about their internal and external reporting options.

Internal data sharing

The data extracted from reporting systems

The data is anonymous

It is impossible for the researchers to re-identify any client based on the aggregate reports.

There is limited risk to clients

Types of incidents reported

Gender-based
harassment

Sexual harassment

Revenge porn

Bullying/gaslighting

Sexual offences

Intimate partner
violence

Drugging

Parties involved

Student-on-student

Third-party-on-student

Student-on-third-party

Student-on-staff

Staff-on-student

Third-party-on-staff

Third-party-on-third-party on university premises

Nelson Mandela University GBV Intervention Efforts

Multi-modal Approach



The Safe Haven

Conclusions

Many more students are seeking support for GBV incidents.

GBV presents itself as a traumatic experience and is a serious violation that is rarely reported.

Data analytics across all support interventions cannot be underestimated; they assist with proper case management and inform the university's policies, practices, and protocols.

By collaborating, we have gained a holistic picture of support provision, which has created the opportunity for cross-functional reinforcement, resource sharing and optimisation, = sustainability.

Practitioners need to function in multiple roles as advisors to policy, therapists, lobbyists, and activists advising about both the restorative and punitive processes of the institution.

Much reflection is needed to produce a rigorous, intentional response in providing support within the GBV context in higher education.

Q&A

thank you

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ngiyabonga
dziękuję
merc
baie dankie
धन्यवाद molte grazie
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