

- based violence (SGBV)
- Corruption
- Fraud
- Extortion
- Any other breach of our staff Code of Conduct

13) Reporting concerns related to PSEA

Why it is so important

It can be very difficult for individuals to report SEA concerns and we know that it can take years for an individual to come forward with an allegation of sexual exploitation or abuse, such as rape or sexual harassment. This is why trust is paramount as well ensuring that enough time is allowed for survivors to heal and recover.

As it is currently the case that many community members will not make a report, it is important to give volunteers and staff training and access to a safe reporting mechanism. This will help provide the confidence needed to ensure that if they see, hear or feel a concern about sexual exploitation or abuse, they can report it on behalf of community members or colleagues who may feel unable to do so.

Partner National Societies may be able to provide technical guidance and support for mainstreaming PSEA into a new or existing complaints mechanism.

Actions

Recognize: It can be very hard to identify SEA and all too often there are multiple elements of power abuse which can make an individual feel too afraid to speak out. For example, the perpetrator holds a senior position or has the ability to use their power over the people they should be protecting. This is why staff and volunteers who recognize and report concerns can have a positive impact and make a real difference. It may be that they can notice things that potential victims or survivors cannot or will not speak out about for themselves.

¹⁹ Refer to the **'20 core elements of an accessible, comprehensive safeguarding report-handling mechanism'** for further guidance.

²⁰ See Section 8, for more information on raising awareness about SEA.

It is not enough to raise awareness of the existence of a complaints mechanism; it is vital to build trust with individuals who are vulnerable to SEA.

Recognize the signs of SEA...

"He is a powerful man with many friends and a good reputation for his work with children. But I heard rumors that he requests that young girls from the camp are brought to him at his residence."

"I didn't know for sure if anything bad was happening to these girls but I felt that something was not right. I saw that they were nervous and withdrawn around him."

"I felt sick about what might be happening to these children but did not know what to do."

"I felt uncomfortable in the company of this man. He says really inappropriate things to women at work but he is just one of those guys who is from another generation."

Respond: If someone confides in you, it is a sign of trust. If you feel there is something wrong, it is important to build trust through supportive relationships with those who are vulnerable to SEA, in order to encourage reporting of any concerns. This can be achieved simply by developing a rapport as well as listening. It's also important to understand the risks and requirements of individuals and to acknowledge diversity, for example, recognizing the particular needs of children.²¹

Report: All humanitarian personnel are obligated to report SEA, even if the concern is a rumor or a suspicion is raised by an anonymous source. Failure to report a concern about SEA of a child could lead to sanctions and possibly prosecution.

If you do witness, experience, hear of, or are told of anyone engaging in SEA, you need to make a report as soon as you feel it is safe to do so. It is crucial that to preserve evidence and, most importantly, protect your well being as well as the victim's, that you **DO NOT confront the subject of a complaint. Only report it.**

While any SEA incident or concern must be reported, for the protection of victims/survivors, we must seek the consent of adults before sharing any personal details or information which could reveal their identity within the report. If someone confides in you but says they do not want it to go further, (for example they do not wish it to be reported formally), it is still important that the concern is reported. This can be done anonymously and without the need to share any information that could reveal the identity of the victim/survivor, or witness. **It is however important to note that all concerns involving a child (including any person under 18 years old) must be reported in full to enable risk assessment and appropriate referrals for their protection and recovery.**

Do:

- Find a safe place to talk and reassure them they have done the right thing by speaking out.
- Listen to and acknowledge what is being said, repeating your understanding.
- Ask for their consent and what they would like to happen next.

Don't:

- Promise to keep it a secret or make any promises you cannot keep.
- Be dismissive, defensive or blame others.
- Ask probing questions, push for more information or investigate the incident any further.

21 For further information on how to respond, please see the [IASC Gender-based Violence Pocket Guide](#).

IFRC MANUAL ON PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE
Operationalizing practical actions to guide leadership, headquarters and field teams

How to report a SEA concern?

Your local reporting system, such as a Human Resources department, PSEA or protection focal point, your supervisor or senior member of staff.

IFRC independent and confidential reporting line, set up by IFRC for use by all Red Cross Red Crescent people.

Call Safecall on +44 207 6965952

Email ifrc@safecall.co.uk or report.concerns@ifrc.org

Report online through **www.safecall.co.uk/file-a-report**.

You do not have to leave your name when you report your concern.