

Service Continuity Guidelines for the Gender-Based Violence Sector

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SHOCKPROOFING COMMUNITIES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

Building intersectional gender justice in post-
pandemic Canada

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CANADIAN
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

Service Continuity Guidelines for the Gender-Based Violence Sector

Acknowledgements

It is well known that incidents of gender-based violence increase during and after disasters. The vulnerable state of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sector means that service providers are unduly exposed as their ongoing efforts to respond to the increased demand for urgent, crucial, and at times, lifesaving service delivery, continues to increase without the proper funding and support. Hundreds of organizations throughout the country work tirelessly to address the impacts of GBV, and it is taking a toll. Through recognizing and addressing specific constraints and opportunities, the GBV Sector-Service Continuity Guidelines (guidelines) are created to walk organizations through key considerations and processes to mitigate against loss, reduce vulnerability, and ensure equity of outcomes, so service providers may continue their important work. This is challenging given the current landscape of the sector, yet organizations continue to make do. The project relied on the support and collaboration of several partners, and we would like to acknowledge and thank those involved.

To the **Canadian Women's Foundation** (the Foundation), who recognized the importance of integrating service continuity into the GBV sector and sponsored the project to develop meaningful, relevant, and applicable guidelines. Thank you for addressing this gap between disaster and emergency management and GBV.

To the **Sector Advisory Committee**, who provided guidance, support, and informed the development of the guidelines. Thank you for your valuable discussions, feedback, and suggestions in creating a final product.

Finally, thank you to all the **sector survey participants** who gave their time and input by participating in the national survey. The voices of 215 individuals provided a detailed snapshot into the sector, highlighting challenges, strengths, and opportunities. Your expertise helped ensure the guidelines are context specific and shaped relevant strategies and approaches.

It is our hope the guidelines facilitate insightful conversations and foster an approach for organizations to begin building their own service continuity plans to better reflect their reality on the ground.

With gratitude,

Alex, Carmin, and Magda



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We gratefully acknowledge the labour and contributions of all involved in the creation of this document.

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GUIDELINE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines aim to support organizations in identifying and documenting the steps they will take to continue providing essential services in the context of a community-level disaster. These sector-specific guidelines are the first of their kind in Canada and were developed collaboratively, including the inputs and perspectives of numerous GBV service providers throughout the country.

This document provides an overview of the methods used in the research and development phase of the project, context around service continuity planning for the sector, and the service continuity guidelines themselves. The four guideline sections provide a fulsome overview of GBV service continuity planning, including appendices to support implementation. This document can be used in several ways; however, each section can be reviewed as a stand-alone item.



These guidelines:

- Are a general step-by-step planning resource for organizations
- Provide a pathway to identifying organizational vulnerabilities and service continuity strategies.
- Can be leveraged by organizations to support requests for capacity building and funding for service continuity planning
- Act as a template for consultants to support with service continuity planning
- Integrate Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) as part of service continuity planning

GUIDELINE OVERVIEW

In many cases, organizations that respond to GBV already have some emergency plans (e.g., evacuation and violence response plans) to handle “acute” emergencies (i.e., situations that create an imminent threat of harm). The types of disasters or emergencies arising today are often complex and extended, owing to climate change-related events, the interconnectedness of supply chains, reliance on technology, and resource constraints across the sector. However, disasters are not stand-alone events. These hazards (ex. flooding, wildfire, storm, etc.) interact within the context of social, political, cultural, and economic spaces and within a given location. Each disaster is therefore different based on this social construction, and will be experienced differently by people, not only between social identity groups but also within these groups. Response and recovery from these interruptions are equally long and often complicated. With disasters and emergencies on the rise, it is increasingly likely that the GBV sector will experience extended disruptions to service provider operations.

Guideline Purpose & Objectives

Organizations that provide GBV services can use these guidelines to prepare for, and safely and effectively respond to situations that disrupt their normal operating conditions. The guidelines:

- Identify the steps required to produce a service continuity plan.
- Integrate GBA Plus considerations into service continuity planning.
- Empower GBV sector organizations to start service continuity planning.

Guideline Limitations

We recognize the diversity of operations and practices within the women's and gender justice sector, and that each service provider operates under unique challenges and conditions. Though we have tried to make the guidelines as widely applicable as possible, they do not address all situations and exceptions.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that service continuity planning does not seek to create transformative change and does not directly address the larger, systemic issues facing the sector (e.g., decades of chronic underfunding and undervaluing, as described in the Foundation's first [Resetting Normal](#) report). However, the valuable information gathered during this guideline development process has been captured by the project team and shared with the Foundation to further supplement and support ongoing advocacy and lobbying for sustainable funding for the sector.

TARGET AUDIENCE

These guidelines have been produced to primarily support the work of organizations that provide services to address and prevent GBV. The organization type, size, and budget should not be limiting factors in their application of the guidelines. However, service continuity planning is a process that requires time and management. Ideally the service continuity project would be assigned to an individual (or team) to oversee and manage the process for their organization. In essence, they become the point of contact as the organization undertakes the development and implementation of the plan.

The target audience for these guidelines includes, but is not limited to:

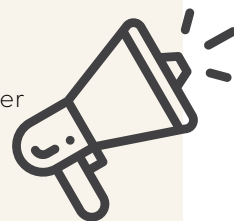


Service Providers

which provide direct services to GBV service users, such as counselling, medical care, and legal support services.

Advocacy Organizations

Which promote rights, gender equality, and may work to address a range of issues related to GBV.



Community-based Organizations

rooted in local communities, which may work on various issues related to GBV, including prevention, education, and support services.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Which address a variety of related issues. Including prevention, advocacy, and support services around GBV.



GBA PLUS PERSPECTIVE

GBA Plus stands for “gender-based analysis plus” and is an analytical process used to assess systemic inequality. GBA Plus goes beyond sex and gender and considers how the perspectives of people with different social identity factors (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, immigration status) intersect with various power dynamics that influence our experiences (see Figure 1). Ultimately, its

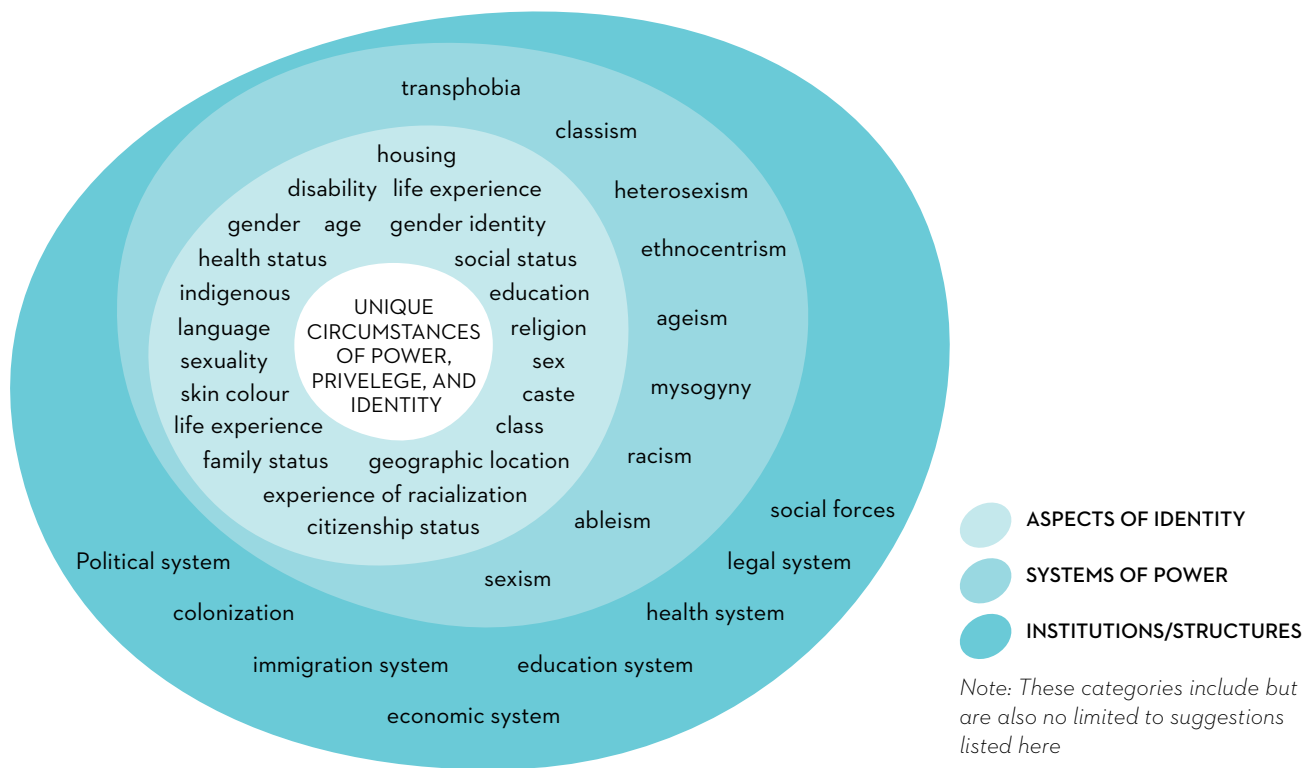
purpose is to support the development of inclusive and applicable policies, programs, and initiatives.

Applying GBA Plus to policies, programs, and initiatives can address disproportionate impacts or disparities and create more equitable outcomes.

GBA Plus is integrated throughout this project:

- As part of the foundation for research and data collection to develop these guidelines.
- As part of the approach taken to inform and guide organizations in developing their Service Continuity Plans.

Figure 1 - Depiction of feminist intersectionality.¹



Note

Multiple forms of oppression intersect, creating unique and varied experiences of discrimination. These multiple forms of oppression are simultaneous and cannot be separated from their experiences of sex- and/or gender-based discrimination.

¹ Image is adapted from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (2021). *Feminist Intersectionality*. [Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women](https://www.criaw.ca/en/our-work/publications/feminist-intersectionality)



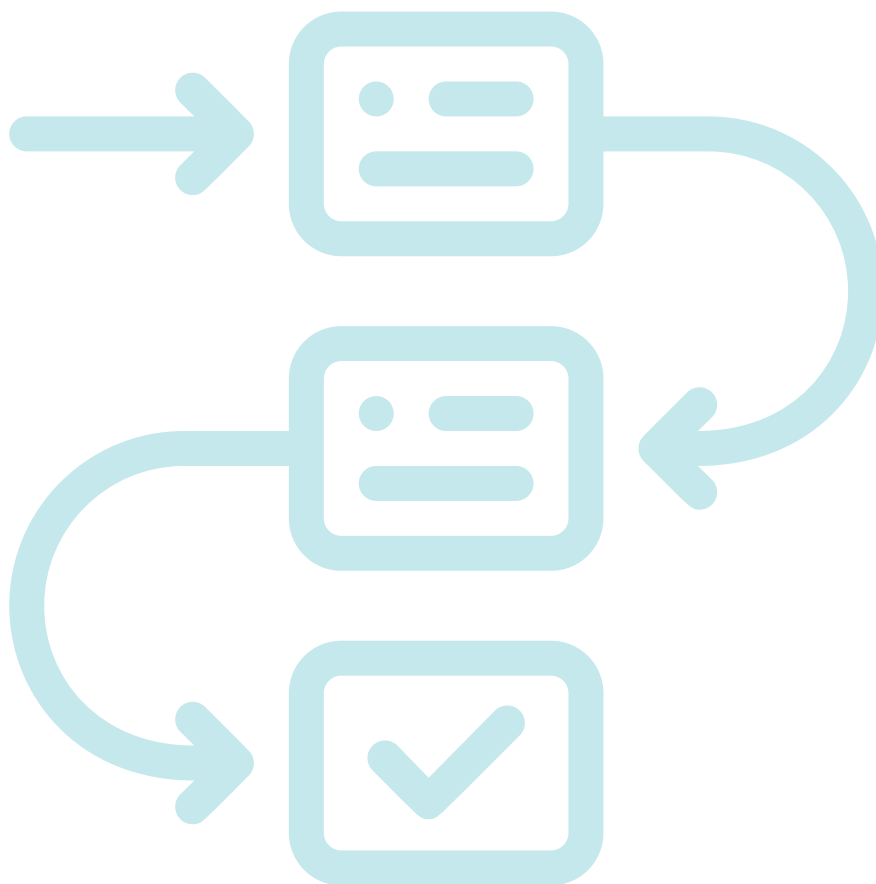
Note

GBV and service continuity planning language and concepts are constantly evolving. These guidelines attempt to incorporate the most current terminology, but it is recognized that language is constantly responding to new knowledge and awareness and that the terms and concepts used today may need to be updated in the future as our understanding of each sector improves.

Guideline References

These guidelines incorporate a GBA Plus approach and are informed by the following industry practices and references:

- ISO 22301: 2019 – Security & Resilience – Business Continuity Management Systems Requirements
- Disaster Recovery Institute Professional Practices
- GBA Plus process adapted from Women and Gender Equality Canada





SECTION 2:

ABOUT SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING

SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING

Service continuity planning is the process of creating a system of prevention and recovery from potential interruptions to an organization. Service continuity planning establishes protocols and procedures for maintaining or quickly resuming mission-critical functions during and after a disaster or emergency. Recognizing the time constraints that organizations already face, a measured approach to service continuity planning can be taken by segmenting the process into smaller incremental steps.

THE VALUE OF SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING

Today's organizational environment is highly volatile, characterized by a rapidly changing landscape of risks and challenges. Some of the factors that contribute to this volatility include:



In the GBV sector, service continuity planning provides the added value of:

- Proactively identifying situations where employee burnout might increase
- Addressing detrimental aspects of the “culture of commitment” (e.g., personnel working extended hours for free)
- Illuminating issues that need to be addressed proactively to mitigate/prevent service interruptions
- Providing insight into organizational vulnerabilities and options to address these
- Providing a robust framework for justifying increases to core funding

Volatile conditions organizations face



Environment and Social Risk

Climate change, disasters, and pandemics reveal the social inequalities and power dynamics embedded in communities and social systems that can have significant impacts on organizations responding to GBV. Additionally, social issues such as social instability and civil unrest can give rise to organizational interruptions.



Technological Advancements

The rapid pace of technological change has led to new organizational opportunities and challenges. Organizations must constantly adapt to new technologies while managing the risks associated with cyber threats and data breaches.



Economic Uncertainty

The global economy is subject to fluctuations and uncertainty, which can significantly impact organizations. In the case of the GBV sector, economic downturns and recessions can not only create internal financial strain but can also exacerbate and increase GBV in the community.

Service continuity planning plays a critical role in addressing these volatile external conditions. Using service continuity planning, organizations can minimize the impact of disruptions and ensure that critical functions can continue to operate even in a disaster or emergency. This can help organizations maintain trust, minimize losses, and remain available to their service users (i.e., individuals seeking GBV support services).

Service continuity planning is also an investment in organizational stability. This can translate not only to an improved ability to deliver critical services, but also to protect their workforce and volunteers who conduct this important work, which ultimately impacts service users.

SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING LIMITATIONS

Service continuity planning is a process that organizations can use to prepare for and respond to unexpected disruptive events. However, service continuity planning is limited in what it can achieve for an organization:

- Service continuity planning focuses on the continuity of essential services and **will not** address all organizational risks.
- Depending on an organization's size and complexity of operations, the service continuity planning process can be time-consuming and require the involvement of dedicated personnel to guide the implementation process.
- A viable service continuity program requires maintenance. An organization's external operating environment and pressures will change over time, and the techniques and methods by which an organization plans to respond to these changes

must be equally dynamic. Service continuity planning is not a one-and-done process.

- Service continuity planning only works when all members of an organization are aware of plans and processes and know what role they play in mitigation, response, and recovery efforts.

Despite these limitations, **service continuity planning is still an essential tool for organizations to minimize the impact of disruptions and ensure the continuity of critical operations.** It is one of the surest ways organizations can protect their operations, service users, and reputation in challenging operational conditions.



Consider adding your service continuity planning as an ongoing component of your organization's strategic plan.

GBV SECTOR SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING RISKS

As of 2023, it can be said that the GBV service sector is already in a state of chronic crisis; underfunding and under-resourcing over decades have significantly impacted organizations' ability to carry out their day-to-day functions in normal operating conditions. This already puts the sector in a position of vulnerability from which it must begin its service continuity planning. The project team identified several critical barriers to service continuity planning implementation within the sector by engaging with the SAC and leveraging the sector survey. These included:

- 1. Limited understanding of GBV as a broader social issue:** GBV is not seen as a larger community issue and certainly not one tied into disaster and emergency management. This lack of understanding often translates to the exclusion of GBV issues in the broader community disaster and emergency planning context, specifically in government planning (see Slick et al., 2023).
- 2. Lack of funding:** Due to chronic sector underfunding, GBV organizations generally do not have sufficient funding to conduct comprehensive service continuity planning.

- 3. Limited resources:** GBV organizations may have limited resources, such as staff, expertise, and technology, which can impede effective planning and implementation of service continuity plans. Additionally, personnel often volunteer their time to complete critical work (as part of a pervasive sector "culture of commitment") in response to chronically underfunded sector conditions.
- 4. Lack of coordination:** GBV organizations may not have strong relationships or coordination with service providers outside of the sector, which can limit their ability to find support outside of their sector in times of disaster.
- 5. Burn-out:** Staff members working in GBV organizations may be exposed to trauma and may experience burnout, vicarious trauma, or other adverse effects due to the nature and volume of their work. This is often compounded by their own trauma or lived experience. For this reason, service continuity planning must account for the lived experiences of the staff who are maintaining service provision in an emergency.

These risks pose real challenges to organizations that seek to conduct service continuity plans within the sector. Though these guidelines cannot address the overall crisis conditions, feedback from both the SAC and survey are being used to identify opportunities for continued work within the sector to minimize these risks and their impact on members.



SECTION 3:

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SECTOR SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE COMPONENTS

These guidelines include a narrative and activities to clarify the technical elements involved in service continuity planning. The narrative is highlighted in a gold box and shows the real-time application of service continuity planning within a small organization. The activities are highlighted in a green box and provide opportunities for readers to practice the technical elements of service continuity planning.

The Start of Hardeep's Journey

Hardeep has always been passionate about working with children. After many years of working for someone else, saving her money, and securing loans, Hardeep was able to take the leap into starting her own business: Building Blocks Preschool.

We will follow Hardeep's journey as she grows her business and protects her efforts by integrating a service continuity plan for Building Blocks (BB).

Service Continuity Planning Process

Service continuity planning involves creating a plan to ensure that an organization can continue to run in the event of a disaster or disruption to normal operations. This includes:



SERVICE IMPACT ANALYSIS

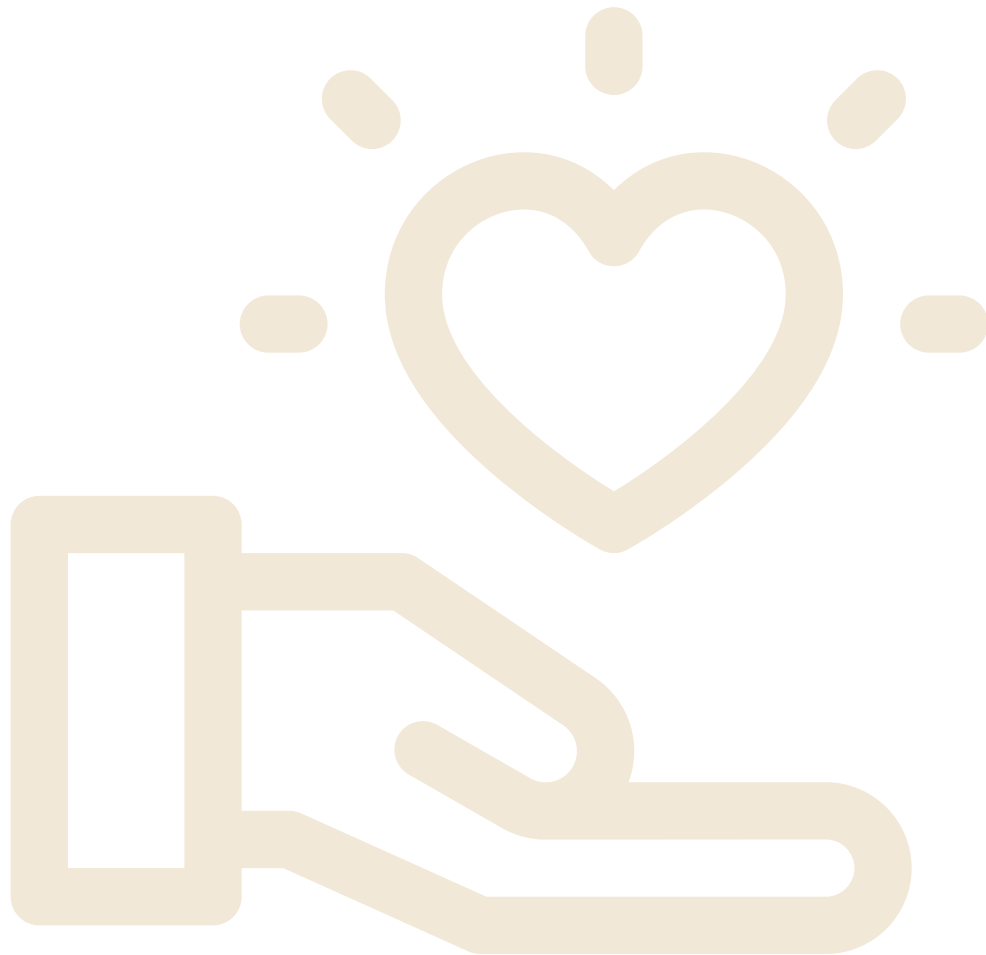
Service continuity planning involves collecting, collating, and organizing potentially large amounts of organizational data. To support this effort, a **Service Impact Analysis** template can be used, which leverages standard Business Continuity Management principles and processes, specifically the Business Impact Analysis (see a sample template in Appendix B).

Using the Service Impact Analysis template, organizations can organize their service continuity planning information more efficiently, allowing them to improve insights into organizational vulnerabilities.



Note

Use the sample Service Impact Analysis template in Appendix B as you work through these guidelines to get a sense of how your service continuity planning information can be collected and organized.



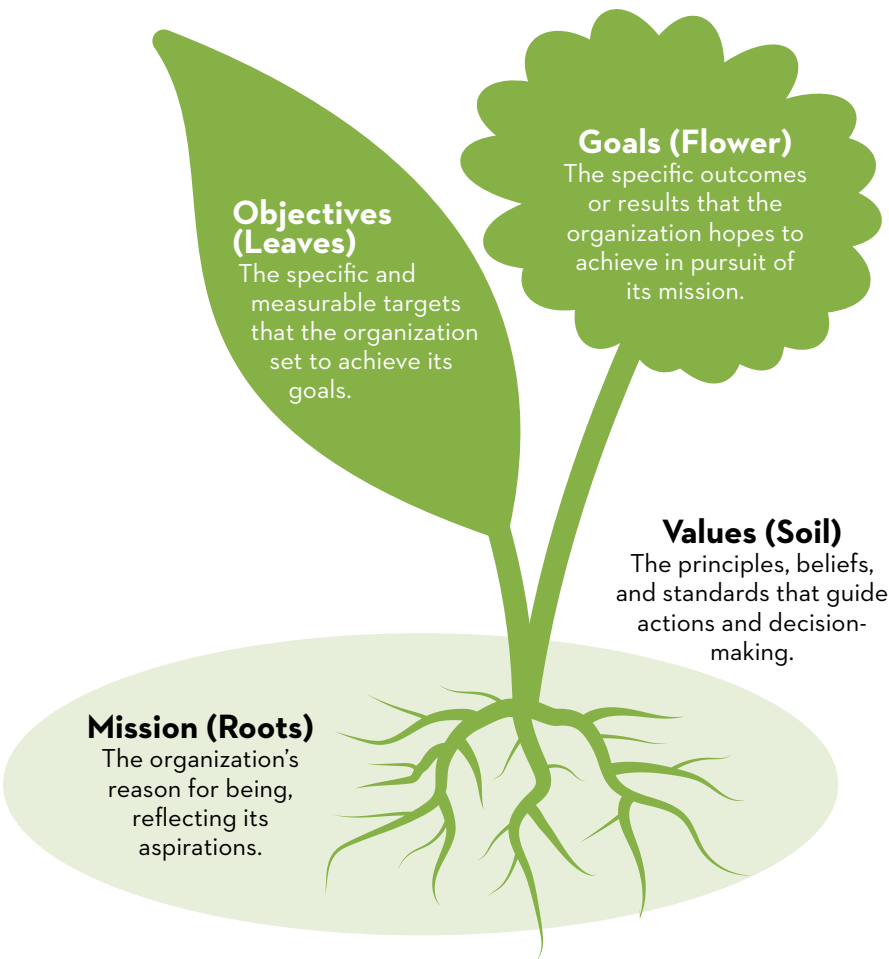
Organizational Mission, Values, Vision, and Objectives

Defining organizational mission, goals, objectives, and values is critical in planning and running a successful organization. This process aims to provide clear direction and purpose for the organization and to help guide the relationship between decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic planning (see Figure 2). In doing so, organizations create a shared understanding of the organization's purpose and direction and ensure everyone is working towards the same goals. This helps to align efforts and resources, foster teamwork, and increase the

chances of success. Further it defines *how* the work is conducted and what beliefs and expectations underpin it.

This step is especially important in service continuity planning. In times of disaster or in an emergency, it is especially important that organizations are working towards a common goal and allocating resources effectively. Disaster response is characterized by a sudden increase in issues requiring attention and intervention, and it is easy to get lost in tasks without a clear prioritization method. Tying activities back to the organizational mission and objectives allows us to do this more effectively.

Figure 2 - Depiction of the Mission, Values, Goals, and Objectives relationship.



Building Blocks' Mission, Values, Goals, and Objectives

One of the first steps in Hardeep's business planning journey was clarifying the kind of business she wanted to run and the space she wanted to create. She knew she wanted to (mission):

- Provide a safe and nurturing environment where kids can learn, connect, and grow to their full potential.
- Empower kids with skills that lead to happy, healthy, and positive living.

She would do this by (goals):

- Creating a positive and welcoming environment for children.
- Providing the highest standard of health, safety, and cleanliness at the center.
- Providing high-quality care and education for children
- Recruiting and retaining dedicated and passionate early childhood education professionals

To achieve this, Hardeep knew she would have to (objectives):

- Balance a daily schedule of playtime, lessons, and learning and exploration opportunities for the kids

- Provide healthy and nutritious meals for the kids, remaining conscious of dietary needs
- Create a positive and inclusive environment for children of all backgrounds and abilities
- Develop and implement a curriculum that supports kids' development
- Create and maintain a positive, respectful, and growth-oriented environment for BB personnel

Hardeep wanted to pay special attention to maintaining a harmonious and positive environment. To establish and maintain this type of environment, she expected everyone in the space to (values):

- Be respectful – treat all members of BB with dignity, kindness, and patience
- Be safe – take care of the health and well-being of everyone at the BB
- Encourage learning – see out opportunities to allow kids to grow each day
- Celebrate diversity – welcome and embrace the uniqueness of everyone at BB
- Demonstrate compassion – approach everyone at BB with empathy and understanding



Activity 1

Use template on the next page to document or discover your organization's mission, values, goals, and objectives. This will support you further along in the service continuity planning process.

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION, VALUES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET

MISSION		
Step	Activity	Answer
1. Understand your organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do? What service do you provide? Who do you serve? 	
2. Clarify answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What ideas, words, or phrases come to mind as you explore your organization's purpose? 	
3. Distill answers and draft mission statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture the most important elements of the answers above and craft your mission statement. 	

VALUES		
Step	Activity	Answer
4. Set intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you conduct your work? How will you address inequities? What values will your behaviour and actions reflect? Who do you include/exclude? What assumptions do you make and why? 	

GOALS		
Step	Activity	Answer
5. Define expected outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you hope, expect, or anticipate your work will impact your sector? How do you hope, expect, or anticipate your work will impact program service users? 	

OBJECTIVES		
Step	Activity	Answer
6. Define pathway towards realizing goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What specific markers will say to you that you are achieving your goals? What indicators will you track to ensure that you are staying the course? How would your service users define success? How would you client group (target market/ service users) define success? 	

Building Blocks Grows

- Over the next five years, Hardeep achieved her goals and attracted a consistent and committed group of repeat and new registrants. Her business was thriving. Building Blocks now had a staff of seven educators and forty kids, and the size of her facility had quadrupled.
- Hardeep was very proud of what she and her team had accomplished in such a short time. Still, she felt a slight sense of unease: a fellow daycare owner's facility experienced a burst pipe that destroyed much of the interior of their space and disrupted their operations for nearly a month as repairs had to take place. This got Hardeep thinking about how she would have responded in such a situation. What would her plan be?
- Hardeep began to research how to best prepare for the diverse types of interruption risks BB faced. Ultimately, she discovered service continuity planning and, using some basic guidelines and tools she found online, decided to give the process a go.

Critical Functions

A critical function is an activity essential to the operation of an organization. Critical functions are the activities necessary for the organization to achieve its goals and objectives and to meet the needs of its service users, workforce, partners, and stakeholders. Interruptions to critical functions can severely jeopardize an organization's ability to remain viable.

Critical functions can be derived from organizational objectives. Once an organization clarifies its big-picture reason for being, it becomes easier to identify the functions that do or do not support that picture. Some examples of critical functions for GBV sector service providers may include:



Service Delivery – the direct provision of services (e.g., crisis intervention, counselling, legal support, safe housing, etc.)



Advocacy and awareness raising – working with communities and stakeholders to raise awareness about GBV and advocate for change



Facilities management – coordinating and managing all activities associated with the upkeep of a building or site



Finance – securing and managing funding



Governance – directing or controlling an organization through policies, procedures, and structures to ensure the organization is realizing its mission, goals, and objectives



Human Resource Management – recruiting, managing, supporting, training, and developing workforce



Information & Communication Technology – providing, maintaining, and managing hardware, software, networks, and other technologies



Partnership Management & Collaboration – working with partners to coordinate services



Organization Communication – managing and exchanging information between participants, stakeholders, partners, and workforce



Research & Data Collection – collecting and analyzing data to improve understanding the type and scale of GBV



Security – protecting or safeguarding assets, infrastructure, personnel, and participants

Building Blocks Critical Functions

The first step in the service continuity planning journey process was identifying the critical functions that enabled Hardeep to run Building Blocks. Running a small business is complex and involves:

- Attracting and retaining customers (e.g., marketing and advertising)
- Managing BB's budget and paying associated business tax (i.e., finance management)
- Securing and maintaining permits to run BB (i.e., regulatory compliance)
- Recruiting and managing BB's staff (i.e., human resource management)
- Securing and maintaining BB's facilities (i.e., facilities and security management)

- Acquiring and managing BB's materials, equipment, and supplies (i.e., supply chain and logistics management)
- Providing exceptional, safe, structured, and inclusive childcare and early education services (i.e., operations)

By examining each part of BB, Hardeep was able to compile this list of critical functions to gain a holistic picture of the functions that enable BB to operate. She was able to drill down further into these to gain more insight into each function. For example, under securing and maintaining BB facilities, Hardeep discovered activities like facility upkeep, sanitation management, security management, facility access management, among others.



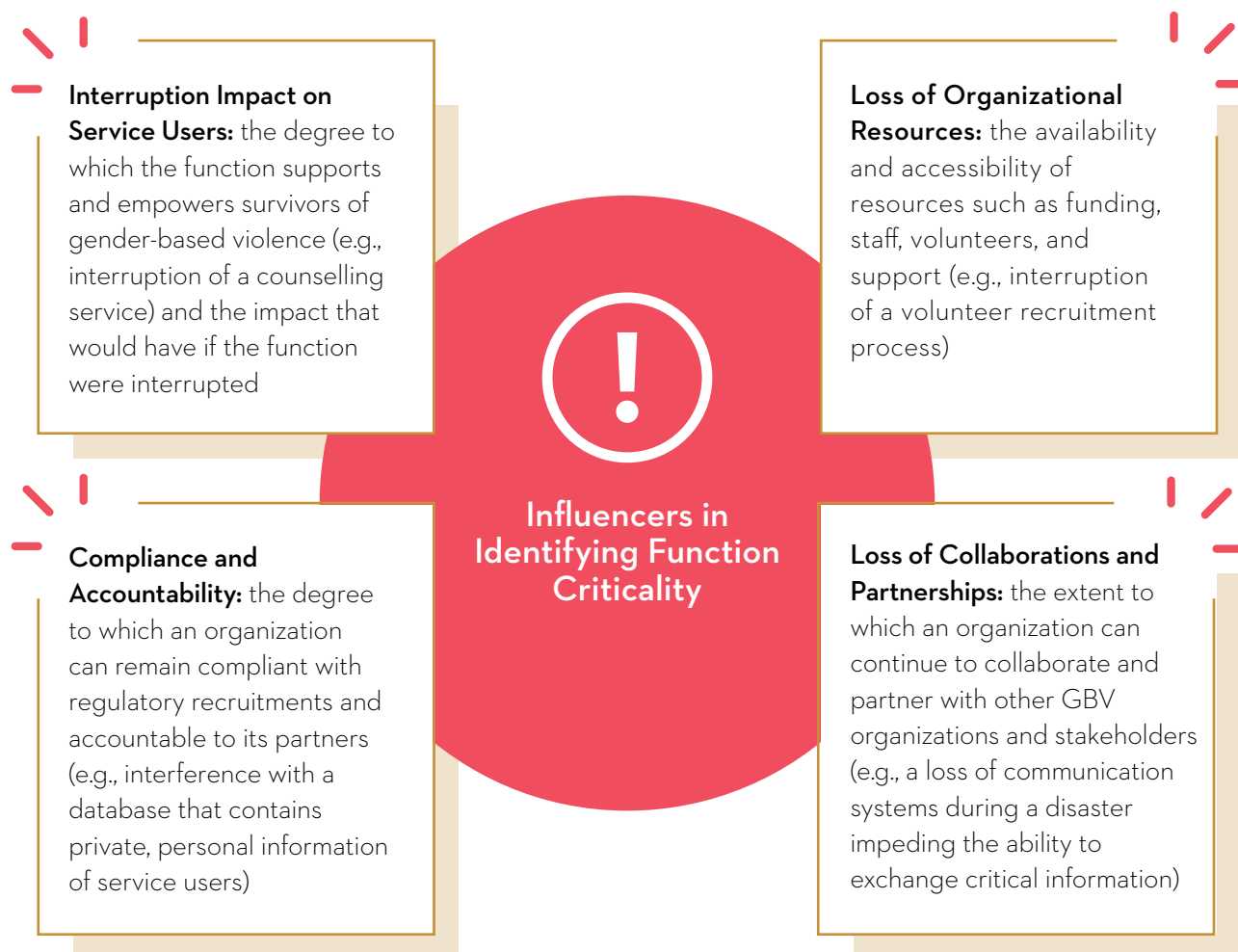
Activity 2

Use the Service Impact Analysis template found in Appendix B to list out all the functions that enable you to run your organization. Think broadly across all groups and departments when compiling your list and leverage the list of examples in this section in your discovery process.

Determining a Function's Criticality

Understanding that the GBV sector is already under-resourced and underfunded, service providers must be very selective with their work and projects. This is especially true in times of crisis when workloads and demands can significantly increase. For this reason, organizations must prioritize their critical functions to identify those most important to their operations that cannot remain interrupted without severely impacting the organization or its service users.

How critical a function is will differ across organizations, just as the mission, values, goals, and objectives do. In the context of the gender-based violence sector, the criticality of a function can be influenced by several factors, including:



Defining Criticality

Organizations must define a consistent and clear set of parameters against which function criticality can be evaluated. Otherwise, there is a risk of functions being mischaracterized as (non)critical because individuals evaluating criticality are not working with a common understanding. The use of pre-determined evaluation criteria should ultimately lead to a ranked list of functions (from low criticality to high criticality), as seen in the example below.

Building Blocks Critical Function Evaluation

Hardeep’s list of critical functions was long. She knew she would not have the time or resources to protect every BB function and would have to strengthen BB incrementally over time. However, she did want to get a head start on protecting BB’s most critical functions. But, defining “critical” was difficult. Hardeep reflected on BB’s goals to help her define what was most critical at BB:

- Creating a positive and welcoming environment for children.
- Providing the highest standard of health, safety, and cleanliness at the center.
- Providing high-quality care and education for children
- Recruiting and retaining dedicated and passionate early childhood education professionals

Using these goals, Hardeep developed a 3-point scale (1 being the lowest 3 being the highest) to evaluate criticality. She set the low, medium, and high parameters based on her historical knowledge of BB and understanding of her staff, clients, and children’s tolerance to disruption across all four goals. For example, she knew that parents would understand a minor injury that could be solved on-site with basic first aid but that an injury requiring medical intervention would be met with many questions and investigation by parents and potentially regulators as well, which would be much less tolerable for BB’s operations and reputation.

Hardeep examined each of her goals, developed similar tolerability scales vs. intolerability scales, and captured them in a table. This table provided a consistent parameter against which she could evaluate function criticality. It looked something like this:

	Positive Environment	Health & Safety	Education	Human Resources
High	Function interruption significantly disrupts (>1 hour) the BB environment.	Function interruption may cause injury or illness (medical intervention required)	Function interruption significantly disrupts (>1 hour) of educational programming	Function interruption affects +3 staff member
Medium	Function interruption moderately (~1 hour) disrupts the BB environment.	Function interruption may cause injury or illness (parent notification required)	Function interruption moderately (~1 hour) of educational programming	Function interruption affects >3 staff member
Low	Function interruption minimally disrupts (<1 hour) the BB environment.	Function interruption may cause minor injury or illness (solvable with basic first aid)	Function interruption minimally disrupts (<1 hour) of educational programming	Function interruption affects 1 staff member



Activity 3

Pause here to consider what factors you would consider when ranking the importance of your critical functions? What would make something a low vs high impact? Use your Mission, Values, Goals, and Objectives to guide this process and use the sample Service Impact Rating Matrix on the next page.

Sample Service Impact Rating Matrix

This matrix provides an example of the types of parameters organizations may establish to rank the importance of a critical function. All information within must be customized to suit the needs of the organization. Organizations should integrate GBA Plus impacts into their evaluation criteria (additional information in Appendix D).

As you work through this matrix, consider the following points:

- Why did you select a function for inclusion? What have you excluded as a result? What might the impacts of this exclusion yield?
- What assumptions are you making about the critical functions? What assumptions are you making about the identified impacts?
- What informed your decision on ranking the importance of a critical function? What informed your decision on the identified impacts? What process did you follow in selecting your impact criteria and what assumptions did you make along the way? How might you have excluded crucial perspectives while making these assumptions? Who did you consult?
- Who will be most impacted? How, and why?
- Are there potential consequences or risks (intended or unintentional) to be aware of?
- Will interrelationships or dependencies between critical functions reduce or increase impacts, and for whom?

	IMPACT TYPE				
	Service Users Interruption Impacts	Human Resources Impacts	Funding Impacts	Partnership Impacts	Compliance & Accountability Impacts
Criticality Rating	Interruption to function that supports GBV program service users	Interruption to function that involves workforce or volunteers	Interruption to function that involves funding	Interruption that impedes the ability to collaborate with partners	Interruption that jeopardizes ability for the organization to comply with regulations and accountability measures
Critical	Service users' exposure to GBV because of function interruption	Impact to +25% of workforce	Loss of funding > \$10000	Impacts to +5 partners	Potential for prosecution, fines, or litigation
High	Service users lose access to a service for more than 1 week	Impact to 10-25% of workforce	Loss of funding \$5000 - \$10000	Impacts to 3-5 partners	Potential for regulatory non-compliance
Medium	Service users lose access to a service for less than 1 week	Impact to 5-10% of workforce	Loss of funding \$1000 - \$5000	Impacts to 1-3 partners	Potential for minor regulatory non-compliance
Low	Service users lose access to a service for less than 1 day	Impact to < 5% of workforce	Loss of funding < \$1000	Impacts to one partner	Low-level legal issue may arise

Critical Resources

Once critical functions have been identified and prioritized, the specific resources needed to execute the responsibilities of those functions need to be identified. Critical resources are an organization's key assets involved in carrying out its critical functions. These resources can be tangible (such as equipment and facilities) or intangible (such as knowledge, skills, and reputation).

Some examples of critical resources for GBV sector service providers may include:



Financial Resources

Sources of funding that support operations and new initiatives.



Human Resources

Personnel involved in carrying out work and delivering services:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Interns and students
- Board members

Human resources also bring with them intangible organizational assets like knowledge, skills, expertise, workplace culture, and social capital.



Physical Resources

All tangible items that support day-to-day operations

- Buildings
- Equipment
- Technology



Information And Data

All information used to support decision-making, risk management, and organizational management:

- Information systems
- Databases
- Knowledge management systems
- Critical records



Organizational Trust

The reputation the organization has developed within the sector that lends credibility to its activities

Building Blocks Critical Resources

Hardeep's list of ordered critical functions was long. With her limited resources, time, and budget, she decided to tackle her most "big ticket" items to reduce operational vulnerability.

One of her top critical functions was providing and managing the space where preschool activities occurred. She needed a backup if she lost BB's operating site access. To better understand this critical function, Hardeep examined what resources supported this function:

- **Physical Resources**

- The facility itself, which is the right size for a group of BB's size, safely designed to accommodate young children, and remains accessible to BB diverse clientele (some of whom may have accessibility needs or limited transport options to arrive at BB daily)

- Security systems, which maintain the integrity of the site
- Climate management systems, which maintain a healthy and consistent temperature and air exchange in the building to reduce illness among the BB population

- **Human Resources**

- Maintenance personnel, who would be responsible for the upkeep of the facility if parts of it fall into disrepair
- Sanitation personnel who regularly clean the space to maintain a safe and healthy environment

In examining the elements that comprise running BB's facility, Hardeep clarified what resources are required to maintain the facility and what resources would be required to provide a "backup" (i.e., continuity strategy).



Activity 4

Select a single critical function that your organization carries out and use the Service Impact Analysis template in Appendix B to consider what resources are involved (e.g., workforce, IT systems, equipment, materials, sites) in carrying out the function.

SERVICE CONTINUITY STRATEGIES

The core of service continuity planning involves identifying continuity strategies for the most important and vulnerable functions within an organization. Service continuity strategies are processes and procedures organizations implement to prevent or mitigate the impacts of an intolerable critical function interruption. The critical function and resource identification process sheds light not only

on what is most important to your organization but also on what is most vulnerable (i.e., a critical function whose interruption can have severe organizational impacts relies on limited or precarious resources).

To simplify, think of continuity strategies as "back-ups" or how you will continue to execute the function should a disaster or emergency impede your ability to do so.

Service Continuity Considerations

Identifying and implementing service continuity strategies can take time and resources, which many GBV sector organizations cannot spare. It is no easy task to relinquish resources to support new initiatives, so it is helpful to think of continuity strategy development as “a pinch of prevention to avoid a pound of cure.” The upfront investment made to identify an adequate backup will likely lead to a more organized, cost-effective, and less resource-intensive response in the face of an interruption.

Some organizations may freeze at the idea of implementing expensive, large-scale organizational changes to support the continuity of critical services. In fact, organizations should recognize the power of small changes. By introducing small but precise strategies, organizations can protect the most critical and vulnerable parts of their operations without overwhelming themselves or their resources. Further, simpler continuity strategies can also be more manageable than large, complex strategies that may require more time, resources, and planning.

When deciding on what types of strategies your organization will implement, consider the following:



Critical Function Needs

- What specific critical functions do I need to restore to sustain operations?
- How quickly do I need to restore them?
- What are the potential impacts of the strategy, and why?
- Who is the “user group” of this strategy?



Functionality

- To what degree of functionality do I need to restore them to meet my organizational objectives?



Cost

Service continuity strategies need to be cost effective and consider all costs including financial and human. Conducting a cost-benefit analysis can help you identify if a particular strategy is appropriate for that scenario. Understanding that most organizations in the GBV sector experience financial stress and funding constraints, the costs of any strategies chosen need to be carefully considered and the benefits of the cost need to outweigh the expense. Consider the following:

- What do we stand to gain/lose by implementing the strategy?
- Does the cost of mitigating the risk exceed the cost of sustaining its prospective losses?
- Does the cost of managing/implementing the strategy exceed loss sustainment costs?
- Does the benefit of implementing the strategy outweigh the costs?
- What is the human cost (i.e. impacts to staff and/or the identified user group or participants)?
- What is informing this decision; who did I consult with?



Service level provided

- To what degree will my strategy enable me to provide a given service?
- How effectively can this strategy sustain the activity it is meant to support?
- How long can I sustain my function using this alternate strategy?



Time to switch over

- In a service interruption, how quickly will my alternate strategy be activated?
- Is the activation time for my strategy in line with the maximum timeframe that the service can remain interrupted?
- Does my switchover time align with the needs of our service users?



Reliability

- Am I certain that my strategy can be executed as expected in times of service interruption?
- Will the strategy be able to withstand the pressure of sustained usage throughout a prolonged interruption?
- Will this strategy create unintended consequences? What and for whom?



Manageability

- How easy is it to establish this strategy?
- How easy is it to implement this strategy?
- Can this strategy be maintained over time (i.e., is it worth the initial investment to establish/ implement it)?
- How easily can I execute this strategy during an emergency/disaster?



Population impact

- Who implements the strategy?
- Who maintains the strategy?
- Who uses the strategy once it is implemented?
- Does the strategy create any additional barriers to access or resources?
- Who was consulted on the strategy?
- Will this strategy create additional gaps or reinforce inequities/privilege?

Building Blocks Constraints

The more Hardeep dug into the critical function of providing a space to accommodate daycare services, the more complicated it became. As a small business owner, she needed more capital to spare to secure a second or alternate facility. But, knowing that a sudden emergency could cause her to lose access to the facility quickly, she knew that

whatever continuity strategy she implemented would have to be implemented quickly (i.e., a quick “time to switch over”). The strategy would also have to consider the needs of BB kids and families: it would have to be safe, secure, accessible, and be a space within which the kids could continue participating in their educational program.



Activity 5

Using the critical function you selected previously, examine what your limitations or considerations should be with selecting a continuity strategy. What will support or impede the strategy from being implemented? Consider how GBA Plus is integrated into your strategy selection (see Appendix F for guidance).

Service Continuity Options

Organizations have various options for recovering (or sometimes not recovering) a critical function. Broadly, these options include:

Reduction - reducing organizational activities to only the most critical functions to minimize resource strain and continue to deliver on organizational mission.

Redundancy - creating redundant systems or processes to ensure critical functions can continue even if one system or process fails (e.g., backup generators, redundant IT systems, or duplicate staffing arrangements).

Replication - replicating critical functions across multiple locations so that if one site is disrupted, the other site can take over (e.g., splitting functions across different facilities/partners to ensure that personnel can carry out the function if the primary site fails).

Resource sharing - sharing resources, such as staffing or equipment, between different groups or organizations to ensure that critical functions can be maintained.

Alternate sites - having alternate sites or locations that can be used to continue critical business functions in the event of a disruption (not a site that you typically work out of).

Workarounds - developing workarounds or alternative processes to maintain critical business functions following a disruption (e.g., manual processes, temporary staffing arrangements, etc.).

For more specific ideas on continuity strategies that can be leveraged within the GBV sector, see Appendix C.

Not all strategy options will apply to all organizations; geography, partner availability, and access to resources and networks limit what can be realistically achieved. For example, the survey respondents indicated that building partnerships was the sector's leading continuity strategy (29.9% of respondents said they leveraged partnerships to maintain service continuity in a disaster). Conversely, a lack of available partners was also the third highest response in identifying constraints that impede service continuity in a disaster. With this in mind, we acknowledge that building partnerships is not always an option or a practical strategy for all organizations, particularly rural organizations or sole service providers. However, organizations can select and combine various strategies to protect as many critical services as possible within their operating constraints.



Activity 6

Examine the service continuity options provided in this section as well as those in Appendix C. Could any of these be used as a backup for the critical function you have been examining as part of this exercise?

SERVICE CONTINUITY PLAN

A Service Continuity Plan (plan) is the document that collates all your service continuity response and recovery procedures. Once you have defined your critical functions and resources and the strategies you will use in the case of their interruption, you will document the processes by which you activate these within your plan. The plan will detail who does what, when, and how in the case of an interruption. Information that such a plan should include:

1. **Roles and responsibilities:** identify which personnel takes action and has authority to make organizational decisions in times of disaster.
2. **Contact information:** include contact information for key personnel, such as emergency response teams, senior management, and employees responsible for critical business functions.

3. **Continuity strategy activation procedures:** include detailed instructions on how and when to implement a continuity strategy (e.g., when to activate an alternate site, who to contact in the case of activation, and how to communicate instructions about moving to an alternate site).
4. **Communication instructions:** include details on how the organization will communicate with key stakeholders and partners during and after a disruption.

It is important for organizations to regularly update their plan, ideally annually and particularly when substantial changes have been made to the organization, so that it remains relevant and effective in the face of their changing environment. Once it is in place, however, organizations can leverage their plan for training and exercises to prepare the organization for how to respond in the case of disaster.

Building Blocks Service Continuity Strategy

Having considered all her limitations, Hardeep landed on the idea of resource sharing. BB was not the only preschool in the area, and each preschool in the area was exposed to similar facility interruption risk. Hardeep made a few calls to her counterparts in the area to discuss creating a shared support network through which members of the network could create space for kids displaced from a daycare whose facility had become interrupted.

Following further conversations with the network, Hardeep was able to define a strategy for BB whereby she could secure places for kids among the preschool network. Together, the network established a resource-sharing agreement that brought peace of mind to those organizations that wanted to participate.

Building Blocks Service Continuity Plan

“Activating” the resource-sharing agreement involves several people and steps. In the case of a facility interruption, Hardeep would have to:

- Notify her network partners of her need for support when she became aware of an extended interruption.
- Notify BB families of the operational changes, the reason for them, and how they would get access to alternate preschool services, should they wish to do so.
- Notify BB personnel of the interruption and what their subsequent work instructions would be.
- Should families choose to opt-out, identify a pathway for service reimbursement.

To ensure that she was response-ready, Hardeep documented all of these in a Service Continuity

Plan so that the instructions would be ready to use if needed.

Knowing that she has a plan should she ever lose access to BB’s facility put Hardeep at ease. She maintains and updates her plan to contain current and actionable information and shared it with her staff to clarify everyone’s roles and responsibilities in a facility loss scenario.

Slowly but surely, Hardeep gained confidence in her ability to carry out this process and even found ways of running her operations more safely and efficiently when examining her critical functions and resources. It is not perfect and requires regular upkeep, but the plan brings a sense of comfort and reliability to BB’s families, who know that Hardeep cares deeply about running a secure and healthy place for their kids to grow.

SERVICE CONTINUITY PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

The service continuity planning process can be overwhelming initially, particularly for organizations that are new to the process. However, organizations can take small steps to protect their operations and prepare for disruptions.

1. Clarify your organizational mission and objectives, which informs all other aspects of service continuity planning.
2. Leverage your mission and objectives to identify their critical functions. This will highlight which areas of your organization requiring the most attention and resources in the event of a disruption. Using organizational goals and values can also help define what is critical and non-critical for the organization, as these elements provide a framework for decision-making and help to ensure that response efforts are aligned with the organizational “big picture.”

While the service continuity planning process can be complex and multifaceted, these small steps can provide a foundation for protecting operations and service users.

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In following along with the activities presented in the guideline, users should now have:

1. **Activity 1** - a clearly outlined set of organizational mission, values, goals, and objectives
2. **Activity 2** - a list of their critical organizational functions
3. **Activity 3** - a list or matrix of factors that enable critical function ranking
4. **Activity 4** - a deep-dive into a critical function, outlining its critical resources
5. **Activity 5** - an understanding of organizational needs a limitations to guide continuity strategy selection
6. **Activity 6** - a potential continuity strategy for the predefined critical function



SECTION 4:

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Glossary

Gender-based Violence

An umbrella term that includes a variety of violent acts that are gendered in nature such as domestic or intimate partner violence, human trafficking, acts of sexual violence such as rape and sexual assault, among others. It is rooted in gender-inequality, harmful gender norms, and gendered power dynamics.

Memorandum of Understanding

An agreement between two or more parties that outlines their intention to work together towards a common goal or objective. It is non-binding and outlines the terms and expectations of the parties involved, including their roles and responsibilities, timelines, and any resources or support required.

Service Continuity

The ability of an organization to continue to provide its essential services.

Service Continuity Plan

A plan that prioritizes essential services, employs mitigation measures, and coordinates and implements the continuity of service strategies when a service disruption occurs.

Service Disruption

Any event, anticipated or not, which causes an unplanned, negative deviation from the expected delivery of essential services according to the organization's objectives.

Resources

All people, assets, information, technology, premises, and supplies that an organization needs available to operate and meet its objectives.

Risk

Something that exposes your organization to a potential disruption of its essential services and is evaluated by the likelihood of it occurring and the impact it may have if it occurs.

Appendix B: Sample Service Impact Analysis

- 1. Column 1** Assign a number to each row.
- 2. Column 2** Identify your critical function (see page 24.)
- 3. Column 3** Identify the function's level of criticality (Critical, High, Medium, or Low) as depicted in the Service Impact Rating Matrix on page 28.
- 4. Column 4** Identify the critical function's required recovery time (i.e., how quickly it must be recovered so as not to cause cascading negative impacts across the organizations)
- 5. Column 5-8** Identify the resources you use in carrying out the critical function (see page 29.)
- 6. Column 9-10** Identify the location where the critical function is carried out
- 7. Column 11-12** Identify if/what continuity strategies are in place for the function (see page 30 for more information and Appendix C on pg. 40 for strategy examples)

1. No.	2. Function	3. Criticality	4. Recovery Time	RESOURCES				LOCATION		CONTINUITY STRATEGY	
				5. Workforce	6. IT Systems	7. Equipment	8. Materials	9. Primary Site	10. Back- Up Site	11. Type	12. Strategy Details
1	Family shelter services	Critical	<24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x counsellor • 1x site administrator • 1x facility maintenance manager • 1x security guard • 1x custodian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter registrant database • Facility security system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture • Electronics • Security system • Building access system • Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedding • Toiletries • Sanitation products • Cleaning products • Etc. 	123 ABC Street	N/A	Resource sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer 50% of service users to site X • Transfer 50% of service users to site Y

Appendix C: GBV Sector Service Continuity Strategy Options

The strategies presented are examples and are not meant to be a 'one size fits all' approach. The strategies an organization selects are based on their circumstances, context, and current operating needs as identified in the service continuity plan. It is recognized that certain strategies may be limited in terms of sustainability or require the addition of resources not readily available. It is also recognized that organizations may already be implementing several strategies; these are offered for your consideration and as an opportunity to share practices from across the country.

REDUCTION STRATEGIES			
Reducing organizational activities to only the most critical functions to minimize resource strain and continue to deliver on the organizational mission.			
Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Pause non-urgent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspend operations that are not time sensitive. Limit activities to those that fit the budget. Redeploy staff to urgent area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspended operations may have to be restored by a certain point. Consider whether staff who are being redeployed have the skills, experience, and knowledge to carry out assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made (about redeploying staff and suspending certain operations)? How is this decision being informed (who is determining the urgency of work and who was consulted)? What is the impact on service users who experience this pause? What other gaps will this create? Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how?
Modify services and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify (i.e., reduce) the number of service users you can provide service to. Modify (i.e., reduce) the number of services you will provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how changes will be communicated to service users. Solicit input from service users on service interruption to ensure that understanding of essential services is shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made (about reducing the number of service users)? How is this decision being informed (who/ what is determining the access of service users)? What is the impact on service users who experience this reduction? What other gaps will this create? Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how?

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Reduce reliance on critical, physical resources (e.g., facilities, equipment, material)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close offices and work from home. • Automate repetitive and administrative tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff has a proper set up for working from home and any risks that can be involved, ex. Ergonomic work settings etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assumptions are being made (regarding this particular strategy)? • How is this decision being informed? Who did you consult with? • What is the impact on service users? What is the impact on staff? • Will this create other gaps? • Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how?
Reduce operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify (i.e., reduce) the number of service users you can provide service to. • Modify (i.e., reduce) the number of services you will provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of volunteer management regulations and legislation in your geographic area and sector. • Ensure staff has a proper set up for working from home and any risks that can be involved, ex. Ergonomic work settings etc. 	
Streamline specialized work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify critical personnel who fulfill specialized, licensed, or technical duties and minimize their involvement in generic or administrative work to maximize their availability for specialist tasks. • Recruit and leverage volunteers, interns, or students to conduct generic work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of volunteer management regulations and legislation in your geographic area and sector. • Ensure that you train new workforce members and volunteers on health and safety practices to minimize risk of harm when these individuals are carrying out new work for the first time. 	
Prioritize services and/or service users with less urgent cases/needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure schedules. • Stagger the length of time between services/service users Shorten the length of the appointment time or session. • Form waitlists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek input from service users on which services to keep/reduce. 	
Group work/tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use or implement group sessions or collective services (e.g., group counselling) where appropriate. • Streamline tasks that can be effectively completed using the same resources or personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek input from service users on which services to group/keep separate to maintain the integrity of the service. 	
Reduce the amount of resources or services provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorten appointment lengths. • Reduce or limit the amounts of items being distributed to individual service users (e.g., clothing, food). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek input from service users on which services and goods are most essential so as not to create additional needs/ gaps. 	

REPLICATION

Replicating critical functions in different locations so that if one site is disrupted, the other site can take over.

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Share facilities and operating sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop agreements (memorandums of understanding) with partners to be able to access facilities/program spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other sites can expose an organization to additional risks, including security and financial risks, accessibility issues, quality of care, and other risks and hazards. A risk analysis must be completed to assess the risks and ensure that alternate sites are selected appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made (about this particular strategy)? What do you know/don't know? What agreements already exist? How is this decision being informed? Who did you consult with? Are these alternate spaces accessible? Are these alternate spaces culturally safe or culturally appropriate? Will this create other gaps? Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how?
Share technology licenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group purchase access to systems and applications that can streamline administrative and cumbersome work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyber security risk. 	
Share specialized resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of specialists to cover licensed or technical work across multiple organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations can reduce their costs by eliminating the need to employ full-time specialists for each organization. Specialists can be used to ensure that all the organizations are up to date with their licensed or technical work. Can lead to a decrease in quality, as the specialists may not be as familiar with the specific needs of each organization. 	
Bulk purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group material/supply purchases for stockpiling and readiness (potential for doing this with other sector partners to maximize savings). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost savings via bulk purchases. Distribution and storage challenges of items. Limited availability of stock to make bulk purchase (e.g., personal protective equipment shortages). 	

RESOURCE-SHARING

Sharing resources, such as staffing or equipment, between different groups or organizations to ensure that critical functions can be maintained.

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Transfer or refer services to another organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop agreements (memorandums of understanding) with partners to be able to access facilities/program spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other sites can expose an organization to additional risks, including security and financial risks, accessibility issues, quality of care, and other risks and hazards. A risk analysis must be completed to assess the risks and ensure that alternate sites are selected appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there other organizations available to assist? Are these organizations able to provide a space that is inclusive, and welcoming to service users who have experienced trauma/multiple and intersecting oppressions? What are the assumptions being made about capacity at other organizations? How does the referral impact service users and in what ways?
Develop reciprocal agreements or memorandums of understanding with other organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share functions like payroll, maintenance, admin expertise, and volunteer management. Share essential supplies, equipment, and other resources. Identify local organizations or business that might have critical resources that would be useful during an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of organizational culture clashes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do other organizations work within or understand the constraints and barriers service users might face? Who might be excluded through the use of such agreements and how? Who benefits from this? What are the assumptions being made about sharing functions, supplies, and resources? How does this impact staff? How does this impact service users?
Outsource certain functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT services Other experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to experienced professionals, who can provide expertise that the organization may not have in-house. Offer cost savings as you do not need to hire permanent IT staff, or purchase and maintain the necessary hardware and software. Help the organization remain compliant with industry regulations and provide faster response times to IT issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the assumptions being made around specific functions? Who did you consult with?

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Partner with businesses or corporations in the community to fill gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner law firms for legal support, taxis/shuttle services for transportation etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to experts and services that are not in-house. Costs savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could service users face (further) marginalization by accessing 'outside' agencies or businesses? Do they provide trauma informed services? Do their values align with your organization? Are they culturally appropriate? What would be required to support service users?
Utilize pro-bono services if available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counsellors Lawyers Other experts who volunteer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Is this creating negative impacts for others? Is this reinforcing the burden of emotional labour? Who has access/who does not?
Implement targeted HR measures to better recognize and support the wellbeing of staff/volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay staff premiums. Host staff/volunteer appreciation events. Integrate or practice workplace mental health and well-being to mitigate against burnout and turnover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase employee engagement. Increase staff morale. Attract and retain staff/volunteers; a reduction in staff turnover leads to cost savings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? What are the impacts of this strategy? Are they inclusive? How are needs being identified?
Bank overtime hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff taking on multiple jobs and additional hours to offer core services to continue to keep the doors open. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of staff burnout. Increased risk of staff turnover. Not a sustainable approach over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the impacts of this strategy? Is this creating negative impacts for others? Does this strategy reinforce inequalities? Is this reinforcing the burden of emotional labour? Who has access/who does not?

ALTERNATE SITES			
Having alternate sites or locations that can be used to continue critical business functions in the event of a disruption.			
Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Transfer to surviving site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving critical functions to a secondary site that belongs to the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate sites can expose an organization to additional risks, including security and financial risks, accessibility issues, quality of care, and other risks and hazards. A risk analysis must be completed to assess the risks and ensure that alternate sites are selected appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? What agreements already exist? How is this decision being informed? Who did you consult with? Are these alternate spaces accessible (transportation, physical structure, etc.)? Are they culturally safe and appropriate? Will this create other gaps? Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how? How will this be communicated to service users and partner agencies?
Transfer to new site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving critical functions to a secondary site that does not belong to the organization (e.g., Using shared office space or using hotels when shelters are over capacity. Agreements can be made with businesses to provide your organization use of their space as a tax-deductible donation). 		
Transfer to partner site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving critical functions to a secondary site that belongs to a sector partner. 		

WORKAROUND STRATEGIES

Developing workarounds or alternative processes to maintain critical business functions following a disruption.

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Remote work (work-from-home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying functions that can be carried out remotely and supporting personnel to carry out their work off site or from home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This strategy can be combined with other strategies and reduce the requirements for an alternate site. This strategy is also only applicable when organizations have the capacity for remote connectivity and staff have the resources needed to work from home (phone, internet, computer/laptop, etc.). Ensure staff has a proper set up for working from home and any risks that can be involved, ex. Ergonomic work settings, etc. Ensure work from home and return to office policies are in place. Ensure staff have not been impacted by the disaster and are able to participate in remote work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Who did you consult with? Who has access and who is excluded from this strategy? What are the impacts on staff and service users? Will this create other gaps? Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how?
Modify the way services are delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer virtual, phone, or digital services rather than in-person services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service users may not feel comfortable accessing services in different ways. There is a risk of service users not getting the support they need if they can't access services as per usual. Impact on those who don't have access to technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made about service users and virtual/remote service delivery? How does this address your target audience (service users)? Who did you consult with? Who does not have access to services digitally? Who is being left out if this is implemented? Are there cultural factors or safety concerns that will prevent individuals from accessing services in this way?

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Develop manual workarounds for online processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have backup physical files for service users. Have manual/printed protocols/processes for staff to follow in an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Version control is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Will this create other gaps or barriers in accessing resources? What are the impacts?
Seek alternate funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify funders. Identify new fundraising efforts. Use reserve funds if available. Apply for emergency funding. Fundraising to cover extra costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure funding is in-line with mission, values, goals, and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Is there capacity to take on this strategy? How is this decision being informed? What is the current climate in which you are operating? Will this create other gaps? Will this create additional barriers; for whom and how?
Refer out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer out to other agencies or partners who have the capacity to take on virtual services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of losing service users, which could lead to loss of funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Who did you consult with? What assumptions are being made? How is the diversity of perspectives, skills, and lived experience being utilized (or not)? What is the impact on staff and/or service users? Will this create gaps elsewhere?
Utilize volunteers or practicum students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have volunteers support with service delivery, programs, or administrative functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial investment upfront is needed to train, supervise, and support volunteers; yet the long-term benefit is cost savings 	
Recruit and hire new staff to fill gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify need for additional staff, clarify roles and employment agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity is needed to train, supervise, and support new staff. 	
Request budget top-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request budget top-ups or emergency funding from donors to support increase in demand for services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit of an increase in funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? What is the impact on staff and/or service users? Which services/programs will be prioritized? Will this create gaps elsewhere?

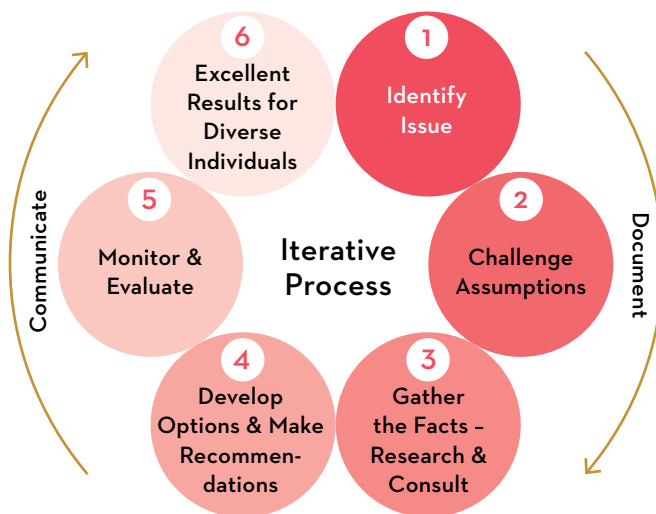
Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Cross train staff/volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure more than one staff in your organization knows how to do critical operations and cross train staff in critical roles. • Succession planning for critical functions. • Train less qualified staff/volunteers (in terms of formal education or qualifications) in other roles to meet the expected increase in demand. • Train available personnel to take on roles/activities as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training can be time consuming and costly, especially if specialized training is required. • Using this strategy can lead to a reduction in the quality of work if staff/volunteers are not adequately trained. • Ensure your organization is prepared and has the resources to train staff/volunteers properly. • This strategy can improve efficiency and help to ensure there are no gaps in critical functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assumptions are being made? • What is the impact on staff and/or service users? • Will this create gaps elsewhere?
Redistribution of work so the workload is more equitable among staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify each employee's existing workload and determine which tasks can be redistributed among staff members. • Re-evaluate current job roles and responsibilities and make adjustments where possible to ensure that workloads are more balanced. • When possible, encourage staff to collaborate and work together on certain things to help lighten the load. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help to reduce stress and prevent burnout among staff. • Ensures workloads are fair and balanced and that no one is overburdened or neglected. • Make sure the redistribution is done in a way that maintains the effectiveness and quality of the work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assumptions are being made? • What is the impact on staff and/or service users? • Will this create gaps elsewhere?
Reduce fees to make services more accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce sliding fee scale options for quicker access to services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial impact to the organization. 	

Strategy	Details	Risks & Opportunities	GBA Plus Considerations
Form community-based ad hoc collaboration groups to discuss trends and strategize on how to address needs/gaps being faced in the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with other organizations in the sector to learn from each other and strategize together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This requires a time commitment and capacity from organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Who has access to this and who is excluded?
Invest in backup equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase a generator for power outages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure any resources like generators are maintained and tested. Ensure that you have all the supplementary materials and equipment required to run back-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where are you sourcing your equipment from? Who is benefitting from this procurement process? How will the installation of the equipment affect accessibility to your site?
Reduce fees to make services more accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce sliding fee scale options for quicker access to services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial impact to the organization. 	
Defer scheduled leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, cancel, temporarily suspend, and defer leave to maximize staff availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can allow organizations to respond quickly and efficiently in a crisis. Can lead to an increase in stress and burnout among staff. Can lower staff morale and leave staff feeling taken advantage of and undervalued. Ensure staff are given adequate rest and time to recharge between shifts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assumptions are being made? Who is most likely to be impacted? What is the impact on staff and/or service users? Will this create gaps elsewhere? Does this impact the quality of services provided?

Appendix D: GBA Plus Process and Guiding Questions

GBA Plus has an identified process as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Graphic depicting the GBA Plus process.⁴



Remember, GBA Plus is meant to be integrated at all phases of a project, program, policy or initiative, rather than tacked on at the end. It also requires working in partnership or collaboration with others to encourage diversity of perspectives. The questions asked under each step of the process are not exhaustive and provide a foundation for the type of consideration or analysis required to create a more meaningful, equitable, and relevant approach to your project, program, policy or initiative. The

following has been adapted from WAGE, and the BC Government Gender Equity Factsheet.

Identify issue or purpose: Clarify the purpose of your project, program, policy, initiative and/or what issue you are trying to address.

Questions to ask:

- What is the purpose or intention of this project, program, policy or initiative?
- What issue am I trying to address?
- What is the context (socio-economic, political, cultural, environmental) that I am working in? How will this impact or influence this work?
- Who is my target audience/who is the user group?

Challenge assumptions: Consider which assumptions can affect the development or outcome of a project, program, policy or initiative.

Questions to ask:

- Am I making assumptions as to who my audience/clients are?
- Am I assuming what is best for my audience?
- What social factors, norms, or stereotypes are informing my assumptions?
- What currently exists to support this work?
- Are generalizations being made that could lead to various identity groups to fall through the cracks of the initiative? How is this detrimental?

Gather the facts: Consult, conduct, and analyze research. The data you use should be gender-disaggregated and should include other intersecting identity factors, such as ethnicity, age, or disability.

⁴ Figure is adapted from Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Questions to ask:

- Did I consult those who will be directly affected by this decision in regards to the project, program, policy or initiative??
- What informed my decision of who to consult?
- Were consultations made with those who had been identified as at risk of being left behind?
- Was voice given to those who are often mis- or underrepresented?
- What other gaps exist around this issue?
- Is my data disaggregated by various intersections such as sex, gender, age, ethnicity, Indigeneity?
- What is the data showing me?
- Does the analysis and presentation of data reflect social factors, norms, and roles?

Develop options and make recommendations: After analysing the data, develop recommendations to ensure equity of outcomes for this decision.

Questions to ask:

- Which options proposed best respond to the specific issues identified? (How does this best serve the target group?)
- Which strategies can best address differential impacts or unintended barriers?
- What gaps need to be further explored?
- Are equity measures being used? Are those measures taking intersectional factors into consideration?

Monitor and Evaluate: The design of your evaluation framework and approach to monitoring can help address inequality and build capacity. Highlight data gaps and address unintended outcomes for diverse groups and incorporate them into strategy renewals or management responses.

Questions to ask:

- Do I have an identified process of monitoring and evaluating the impacts of this initiative?
- Does my evaluation identify groups who are positively or negatively affected by the project,

program, policy or initiative?

- How do I ensure the feedback and lessons learned are captured to inform the next iteration of this project, program, policy or initiative?

Communicate: Identify your target audiences, and tailor your messaging appropriately.

Questions to consider:

- Am I using inclusive examples, languages and symbols in my communication materials?
- Have I considered alternate methods of communication for people with communication disabilities?
- Have I reviewed the messaging to ensure I am not perpetuating stereotypes?
- Am I using a diversity of images and language that challenge harmful stereotypes?
- How am I sharing the results and who has access to this?

Document: Document your analysis and findings throughout the cycle of the project, program, policy or initiative to demonstrate the decisions were evidence-based and grounded in good practice.

Questions to ask:

- How have I captured the GBA Plus process throughout the project, program, policy or initiative?
- What further information can be used to support future projects, programs, policies, initiatives, or proposals? This can be included as part of the “next steps” or “future recommendations” section of a project report.

Appendix E: Guideline Development Contributors

1. Project Sponsor

The Canadian Women's Foundation is Canada's public foundation for gender equality. As the national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada, the Foundation works to achieve systemic change through funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing. Through its engagement, research, and advocacy work, the Foundation recognized a need to support GBV sector organizations working in challenging environments and facing diverse and frequent interruptions to their life-saving work, supporting survivors and advocating for systemic change. Consequently, the Foundation has sponsored the production of these guidelines as a critical step in addressing sector needs.

2. Project Team

The guideline project team was selected and assigned by the Foundation to produce these guidelines. The team managed all aspects of the project, including sector engagement and communication, to produce relevant sector service continuity guidelines. The team comprised disaster, emergency, business continuity, and GBA+ experts who collaborated with the Foundation, the Sector Advisory Committee, and sector survey participants to produce these guidelines. The project team includes:

- Alex Valoroso
 - Gender Equity and Social Inclusion in Disaster Specialist (GenderPro; Rapid Gender Analysis)
 - Master of Arts in Disaster & Emergency Management (Royal Roads University)
- Carmin O'Neal
 - Gender and Disaster and Emergency Management Specialist (GenderPro)
 - Master of Arts in Disaster & Emergency Management (Royal Roads University)

- Associate Business Continuity Professional® (Disaster Recovery Institute)
- Magda Sulzycki
 - Certified Emergency Manager® (International Association of Emergency Managers)
 - Associate Business Continuity Professional® (Disaster Recovery Institute)
 - Master of Disaster & Emergency Management (York University)

3. Sector Advisory Committee

The project team relied heavily upon its Sector Advisory Committee (SAC) throughout the guideline development process. This team of sector experts brought diverse perspectives, critical advice, and recommendations on issues specific to the sector that have helped the team develop more applicable and relevant guidelines. SAC members supported the inclusion and consideration of broader perspectives and experiences that were crucial throughout the project. We want to thank the following individuals/organizations for their participation in the SAC:

- Aja Mason, Executive Director, Yukon Status of Women Council
- Chandrabarna Saha, Knowledge Exchange Coordinator, Women's Shelters Canada
- Jessica Brandon, Director of Programs, Act Alberta
- Karen Martin, Accessibility Consultant to the GBV and Emergency Management sectors
- Kate Price, Executive Director, Act Alberta
- Lynda Kosowan, MSW, RSW, Executive Director, Scarborough Women's Centre
- Robyn Hoogendam, Research Coordinator, Women's Shelters Canada
- Samantha Sibley, MA, Anishnaabe Kwewag Gamig, Inc. Regional Women's Shelter

4. Sector Survey Respondents

Supported by the Foundation, the project team conducted a survey of the GBV sector to gather information about existing service continuity activities and practices. The intent of the survey was to:

- Obtain feedback on issues and conditions that impede service continuity planning in the GBV sector.
- Identify opportunities that could be used within the sector to improve service continuity planning.
- Obtain insight into how these guidelines might be customized to suit the needs of the sector.

The survey was available in both French and English and remained open for eight days to participants. The following respondents participated:

- 215 respondents
 - 193 English-language respondents
 - 22 French-language respondents
- Respondents from all provinces and territories in Canada, including local, regional, national, and international organizations.

This list identifies organizations that participated in the Sector Survey and opted to be identified in the guidelines.

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
#Canada#GBV	Alberta
Across Languages	Ontario
ACT Alberta	Alberta
Acte d'Amour	Quebec
African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region	Ontario
All Nations Hope Network	Saskatchewan
Anishnaabe Kwewag Gamig, Inc. Regional Women's Shelter	Ontario
ANSWERS (Advocacy Normalizing Sex Work through Education and Resources Society)	Alberta
Auberge Francophone d'Accueil et des Services aux Immigrants	Ontario
Austin	International
Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)	Ontario
Bengali Information and Employment Services (BIES)	Ontario
BGC Foothills	Alberta
Brant Community Healthcare System - Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Care Team	Ontario
Builders Square	Newfoundland & Labrador
Caroline Neighbourhood Place Society	Alberta
Carrefour des Femmes du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario	Ontario
Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society	British Columbia
Changing Ways	Alberta
Chimo Community Services	British Columbia
Community Family Services of Ontario	Ontario
Community Justice Initiatives	Ontario
Comox Valley Family Services Association	British Columbia
Compass Community Services	Ontario
COPA National	Ontario
Covenant House Vancouver	British Columbia
Cowichan Valley Youth Services Society	British Columbia
Daughters of Eve Foundation	British Columbia
Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre	Ontario
Dixon Transition Society	British Columbia
Durham Rape Crisis Centre	Ontario
El-Rapha Women Ministries in Ottawa	Ontario
Emmanuel Parish Celestial Church of Christ	Ontario
Envision Counselling and Support Centre	Saskatchewan
Family Enrichment and Counselling Service Fredericton Inc.	New Brunswick
Family Service Toronto	Ontario
Flagstaff's Informed Response Sharing Team	Alberta
Fondation Esther Pour La Paix Et La Promotion Sociale	International
For You Telecare Family Service (FUTFS)	Ontario

GAFFO	Ontario
Gethsemane International Assembly	Alberta
Girls Incorporated of Durham	Ontario
Harmony House	Ontario
Healthy Muslim Families	Manitoba
Helping Out People Exploited (HOPE Outreach)	British Columbia
Hope Resource Centre Association	Alberta
Hope Restored Canada	Saskatchewan
Huron Transition Homes	Ontario
Immigrant Women's Information Network	Ontario
International Center for Family Welfare (ICFW)	Ontario
KCWA Family and Social Services	Ontario
Kingdom Acts Foundation	British Columbia
L'Accueil pour Elle	Quebec
Land O'Lakes Community Services	Ontario
Leave Out Violence Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia
Les Essentielles	Yukon
Liberty Lane Inc.	New Brunswick
Love Your Neighbour Club	International
Maison Baldwin House	Ontario
Maison d'aide et d'hébergement L'Émergence	Quebec
Maison de la famille de la Vallée du Richelieu	Quebec
Maison d'hébergement Pour Elles Des Deux Vallées	Quebec
Maison La Source	Quebec
Marjorie House	Ontario
Marlene Street Community Resource Centre	Manitoba
Minwaashin Lodge: Indigenous Women's Support Centre	Ontario
Mountain Rose Women's Shelter Association	Alberta
Mouvement contre le viol et l'inceste	Quebec
Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative	Alberta
Neighbors Mission for Kids/Youth Enrichment Program Inc.	Manitoba
North End Women's Centre (NEWC)	Manitoba
North Hastings Community Integration Association	Ontario
Oasis centre des femmes	Ontario
ONG Club Environmental De Guinee	International
Pacific Centre Family Services Association	British Columbia
Pacific Community Resources Society	British Columbia
Prince George New Hope Society	British Columbia
Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan
Reach Community Health Clinic	British Columbia
Réseau-Femmes Colombie-Britannique	British Columbia
Rexdale Women 's Centre	Ontario

Roots Community services	Ontario
RQCALACS	Quebec
S.E.A.S. (Support Enhance Access Service) Centre	Ontario
S.T.A.N.D. Against Sexual Assault	Alberta
Saffron Centre Ltd.	Alberta
Sagesse Domestic Violence Prevention Society	Alberta
Scarborough Women's Centre	Ontario
SCERDO	Alberta
Single Mothers' Alliance	British Columbia
Skills for Change	Ontario
Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours	Saskatchewan
Stop Abuse in Families (SAiF) Society	Alberta
Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre	Manitoba
Synergy Youth and Community Development Society	Alberta
Terrace Women's Resource Centre Society	British Columbia
The 482 Collective	Ontario
The Emily Murphy Centre	Ontario
The Power to Be International	Ontario
The Prince George Sexual Assault Centre	British Columbia
The Today Family Violence Help Centre	Alberta
Thornhill Gender-based Violence Services	Ontario
Thrive Counselling Services Halton Inc.	Ontario
Tongruixiang	British Columbia
Trans Girls Can (TGC) ASBL RDC	International
Trans Village	International
Transformation Centre	British Columbia
Vancouver Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees	British Columbia
Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees (VICCIR)	British Columbia
Victim Services of Nipissing District	Ontario
Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre	British Columbia
Volunteer Center for Gender Equality.	Ontario
We Care Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador Inc.	Newfoundland & Labrador
Willow Place	Manitoba
Women's Centre of York Region	Ontario
Women's House Serving Bruce and Grey	Ontario
Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC)	Ontario
Youville Centre	Ontario
YWCA de Québec	Quebec
YWCA Moncton	New Brunswick
Zadchlo International Foundation	International



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