

# Nelson Mandela university GBV intervention: A conceptual Framework

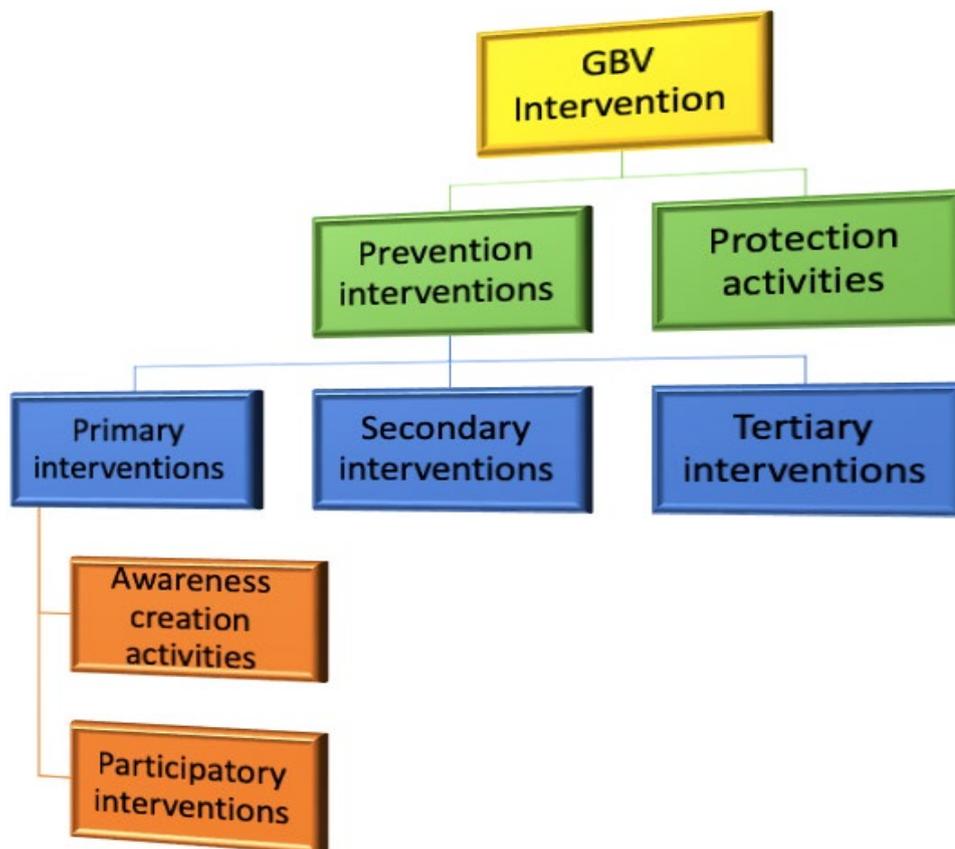
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## Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global public health concern with far reaching health and economic consequences (World Health Organisation, 2021). Thus, there are currently concerted global efforts aimed at preventing its occurrence (SDG 5.2). These efforts (interventions) are split into prevention efforts and protection efforts. Prevention interventions are aimed at addressing the causes of GBV, through creating awareness and challenging drivers that maintain occurrence of violence, such as gendered norms; and assisting survivors, and perpetrators, of GBV. Protection efforts, such as self-defense classes and some apps, are aimed at helping people in emergency cases, where they are facing a current threat. The intervention levels undertaken at Nelson Mandela University are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Illustration of levels of GBV interventions undertaken at Nelson Mandela University*



GBV intervention approaches are also defined in terms of the target groups. The *universal strategies*, refer to interventions that target an entire population, regardless of the extent of vulnerability. *Selective strategies* on the other hand target population with a heightened risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of GBV, while *indicated strategies* are intended for those who are already victims or perpetrators (Lee, Guy, Perry, Sniffen, & Mixson, 2007). The Nelson Mandela University adopts all three forms of strategies, to effectively roll out prevention, amid limited resources as illustrated in asterisks in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Nelson Mandela University GBV Intervention efforts.*

GBV Intervention				
Prevention interventions				Protection interventions
Primary prevention		Secondary	Tertiary	
Creating awareness	Participatory intervention			
Activations* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GBV talks on Wednesdays</li> <li>• GBV talks on Madibaz radio</li> <li>• GBV training in Student residences</li> </ul>	Singamadoda men's intervention**	Male and Female support groups***	Multiple forms of rehabilitation for offenders***	Self—defense classes* Memeza yellow whistle*
Distribution of pamphlets on GBV awareness*		First Responder training**		
Amanda fictional character – creating awareness on GBV*		Sexual harassment policy training for staff and students**		
Community outreach to create awareness on GBV*				

\* Universal strategies

\*\* Selective strategies

\*\*\* Indicated strategies

## **1. Prevention interventions**

The prevention of GBV is enshrined in Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG 5.2). Prevention aims to mitigate (through enhancing protective factors) or arrest (through reducing risk factors) human dysfunction (Coie et al., 1993; Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002). Gender-based violence prevention approaches are conducted on three different levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

### **a) Primary prevention interventions**

*Primary prevention* focuses on addressing the root causes of GBV perpetration and/or experience (Loots, Dartnall, & Jewkes, 2011), e.g. social norms that legitimise the occurrence of GBV. This includes creating awareness on issues pertaining to GBV, such as community outreach. In Nelson Mandela University, the following activities aimed at creating awareness are conducted.

#### ***Awareness activities***

##### *i. GBV talks on Wednesdays*

These Wednesday conversations address issues relating to GBV. The Transformation Office invites experts to share their knowledge on the issues pertaining to GBV and start conversations relating to these issues at the University. These sessions are held virtually, and the topics include GBVF conversations by men, GBV in workplace, women resistance to violence in the Bible and beyond, and drivers of GBV in the communities and at the University. All University community members, and general public who can join online, are welcome to attend.

##### *ii. GBV talks on Madibaz radio*

These are weekly sessions on Madibaz radio on GBV. These sessions aim to create awareness on issues of GBV such as the issue of consent, awareness on services offered at the

Transformation Office and the wider Nelson Mandela University, GBV protective and support measures at the University, what the process entails once a complaint is lodged and unpacking the Nelson Mandela University sexual harassment and offences policy.

*iii. GBV training in student residences*

The Transformation Office holds monthly GBV training sessions in the University residences (on campus and off campus residences). These awareness sessions cover topics on GBV, including intimate partner violence, issues of consent, healthy vs unhealthy relationships, protective and supportive measures, the different types of sexual harassment and myths on GBV.

*iv. Amanda fictional character – creating awareness on GBV*

The Amanda Memeza storyline on Facebook is an initiative aimed at prompting discourse around GBV, whilst stimulating awareness and knowledge about the complaints and support mechanisms amongst our staff and students, with the intention of reducing GBV incidents within the University. The initiative includes airing video footage captured on Nelson Mandela campuses, that captures key elements of Amanda's story in familiar environments across our campuses, including venues where medical and psychosocial support can be accessed. In addition, staff and students can watch footage demonstrating Nelson Mandela University complaints processes.

The Amanda Memeza storyline is used to create awareness on GBV taking place across campuses and communities, and to break the culture of silence associated with these types of violations happening in individual's private spaces. The storyline intentionally includes contemporary and current issues to enable students to engage on social issues underpinned by

the following graduate attributes: socially conscious responsible global citizen and progressive agency.

The story of this fictional character, Amanda, is also intended to normalise help seeking, build confidence and trust in the complaints mechanisms and empower those who have experience GBV to share their experiences which may assist others with coping mechanisms – especially when facing various challenges (family, relationships, mental health, academic, economic, etc.).

v. *Other GBV awareness initiatives on campus*

Furthermore, the Transformation Office creates awareness on GBV using different approaches, such as the digital screens (indoors in university buildings and outdoors at the university entrance points). Mannequins are also placed strategically at high thoroughfare locations across campuses to raise awareness through creating visual impact. Industrial plays (such as ‘Unmasking Our Silent Cry’ and ‘Memeza - The Movie’) were written, directed, and recorded to artistically convey awareness about GBV, challenging social and cultural attitudes and practices that perpetuate gender roles and inequality. Specific video clips were produced to illustrate the different types of sexual harassment occurring in locations at the University campuses and popular social locations in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. The sessions in which GBV survivors shared their experiences (Thetha Ndimemela series), were captured, and are used as a resource to provide authentic feedback of the impact such violations have on the survivors. Further, in a peer helper led initiative, peer helpers go to all campuses, distributing pamphlets and holding discussions on GBV. Peer helpers are volunteers who, after 30 hours of volunteer work, receive the Memeza Ambassador Award which also reflects on their co-curricular transcription. The award is an incentive to students to volunteer their time to participate in the anti-GBV Memeza campaign.

vi. *Community outreach to create awareness on GBV*

The Transformation Office collaborates with external stakeholders to create awareness on GBV in the community. This is done through sharing of resources, such as the self-defence videos, pamphlets and access to other capabilities such as graphic designing, videographer, reprographics, to assist under-resourced NGOs to advocate against GBV in the communities they serve. The Transformation Office also supports student-led initiatives within the community by providing resources (whistles, t-shirts, posters, or relevant material needed).

***Participatory interventions***

Over the years, GBV primary prevention interventions have evolved from information provision, such as creating awareness (Lee et al., 2007), to ones rooted in theoretically derived approaches, such as gender transformative violence prevention interventions (Ellsberg et al., 2015; Kerr-Wilson et al., 2020). Thus, the Nelson Mandela University introduced the *Singamadoda Redefining Positive Masculinity Initiative*, to complement the other forms of primary prevention activities being conducted.

The *Singamadoda Redefining Positive Masculinity Initiative (SRPMI)* GBV participatory prevention intervention for male students provides a safe social space, that enables transformative communication amongst young male students at Nelson Mandela University. They conduct open-circle facilitated dialogues where perspectives are shared, ideas exchanged and challenged in relation to their socialised ways of thinking about masculinity and gender equality. This intervention comprises of 8 sessions which are conducted in-person, but over the past two years, owing to COVID-19, the sessions have been held online, over 4 sessions.

This intervention is being extended to include SRPMI reading groups where scholarship of diverse authors will be discussed as part of the participant's reflexive journey of their own masculine identities and gender equality in contemporary society.

## **b) Secondary prevention interventions**

*Secondary prevention* focuses on strategies that assist survivors immediately after the experiencing the violence (Loots et al., 2011). These strategies include strengthening services and emergency response and supporting survivors after the incident. At Nelson Mandela University, examples of these strategies are discussed below.

### *i. Sexual harassment offences policy training for staff and students*

The Transformation Office offers students and staff monthly trainings, virtually and in-person, to inform the Nelson Mandela University community on the institutional sexual harassment and Offences policy. Specifically, a link to where the policy can be accessed is highlighted in the student diary, which is distributed upon registration. Newly appointed staff are provided with an introductory presentation on the Equality-related policies of the University policy as part of the staff induction/onboarding sessions. The general staff population are also provided with relevant information via the middle management forum, road shows to faculties and MANCO portfolio management sessions and via invitations to specific departments.

Relevant training is provided for departments interfacing with students such as student health services, Emthonjeni Student Wellness, residence managers (off and on campus), Madibaz sports, among others. Training on the policy provisions is also provided to student leaders as part of their leadership development process. These sessions are conducted to educate the Nelson Mandela University community on their rights within the institution, as provided by the University policy; and to share information on resources available in the institution, to protect them in the event of experiencing any form of GBV. This includes information on the legal disciplinary processes, available support mechanisms, including peer support, support groups and counselling support.

*ii. First Responder training*

An online first responder course is offered by the Nelson Mandela University to both staff and students. The training is designed to equip the typical Nelson Mandela University first responders with skills to draw from, when supporting persons who have experienced GBV-related trauma, which include crisis management, avoiding re-traumatising survivors and providing appropriate emotional support to survivors. The course has been opened to all staff and students to equip them with the basic competencies to provide support to individuals who have experienced a traumatic incident. All participants are provided with a certificate upon successfully completing the course. This course is also offered to the larger community, including the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro police force.

*iii. Male and Female support groups*

Support groups are offered to all Nelson Mandela University students who have experienced or been affected by GBV. Support groups are specifically provided for female and male students respectively, as well as for students identifying as LGBTQIA+. These sessions are hosted virtually on a weekly basis by a trained registered counsellor facilitating discussions. These confidential and safe spaces offer students opportunities to share their experiences, enable them to establish a supportive social network where they can receive compassionate support, and to empower them to develop self-awareness, self-help, and coping capabilities, in pursuit of their personal healing.

*iv. Advanced psychological support via Alumni-in-Action@Mandela initiative*

GBV survivors receive one-on-one counselling sessions with the GBV Counsellor located in the Transformation Office. In complex trauma cases, these students will be able to access advanced psychological support. The University has entered into a partnership with the Alumni-in-Action initiative who will be funding the provision of this support to survivors of

GBV violations. The funds provided by A-i-A will fund 8 sessions per beneficiary with professionally registered psychologists and/or clinical social workers who have been recruited and on-boarded to provide this service. The partners will enter into a co-funding agreement to ensure the sustainability of this support initiative.

v. *Student's shelters*

The Nelson Mandela university has procured a property that is being developed into a safe haven for students who need a shelter subsequent to experiencing trauma, particularly GBV. Provision has been made for a medical examination room, a counselling room, a general communal kitchen and sitting room area, and single bedrooms with associated ablution amenities. The property also provides rooms, in a separate external section, to accommodate family members who come from out of town. The provision of the accommodation for family members will enable members to provide moral and compassionate support to relatives staying at the safe haven. The property is surrounded with secure boundary walls which also encloses private patio spaces where students can spend quiet reflection time.

**c) Tertiary prevention interventions**

*Tertiary prevention interventions* are geared towards reducing the harm already caused (Loots et al., 2011), and includes services such as victim rehabilitation (e.g. batterer interventions for men) and programmes that address vicarious trauma. Nelson Mandela University has made efforts to implement a few forms of rehabilitation for offenders. Specifically, students who are found guilty of perpetuating GBV, and suspended from the university, are invited to assist in GBV awareness activities as a form of rehabilitation. Male students are also invited to participate in the *Singamadoda Redefining Positive Masculinity Initiative*.

## **2. Protection activities**

While prevention is key, and a lot of work has been dedicated towards finding preventive measures, we still do not know what works to prevent GBV. Thus, protective measures remain important. At the Nelson Mandela University, a self-defence initiative is being implemented. This self-defence initiative is provided through in-person training sessions where all students are invited to basic self-defence classes – to learn how to protect themselves in cases of threat. These basic self-defence techniques are reinforced through the provision of online videos which staff and students can readily access and use to practice their self-defence techniques. In addition to the above, the martial arts codes associated with our university's sports division, have entered into a collaboration with our office, to provide weekly self-defence lessons to both staff and students.

The University has also implemented a whistle initiative, as part of the Memeza awareness campaign. Through this initiative, students are provided with yellow whistles which are attached to key rings. These whistles can therefore be carried with the students as part of their keys (car, rooms, homes) and are easily accessible when faced with a threatening situation. The whistles are not only symbolic – they symbolise campaigning against GBV – but are also practical for students to utilise to blow and draw attention in case of an emergency. A card is provided with the yellow whistle to explain when to use the whistle and to help when they hear a whistle being blown.

A safety tips booklet was developed as part of the Memeza awareness campaign to provide guidance to staff and students on how best to protect themselves from GBV attempts, in emergency situations. Emergency numbers are provided to access assistance afterhours and specific mobile applications are suggested to enable family to know where the individual is and to send messages to family or close contacts in case of any emergency.

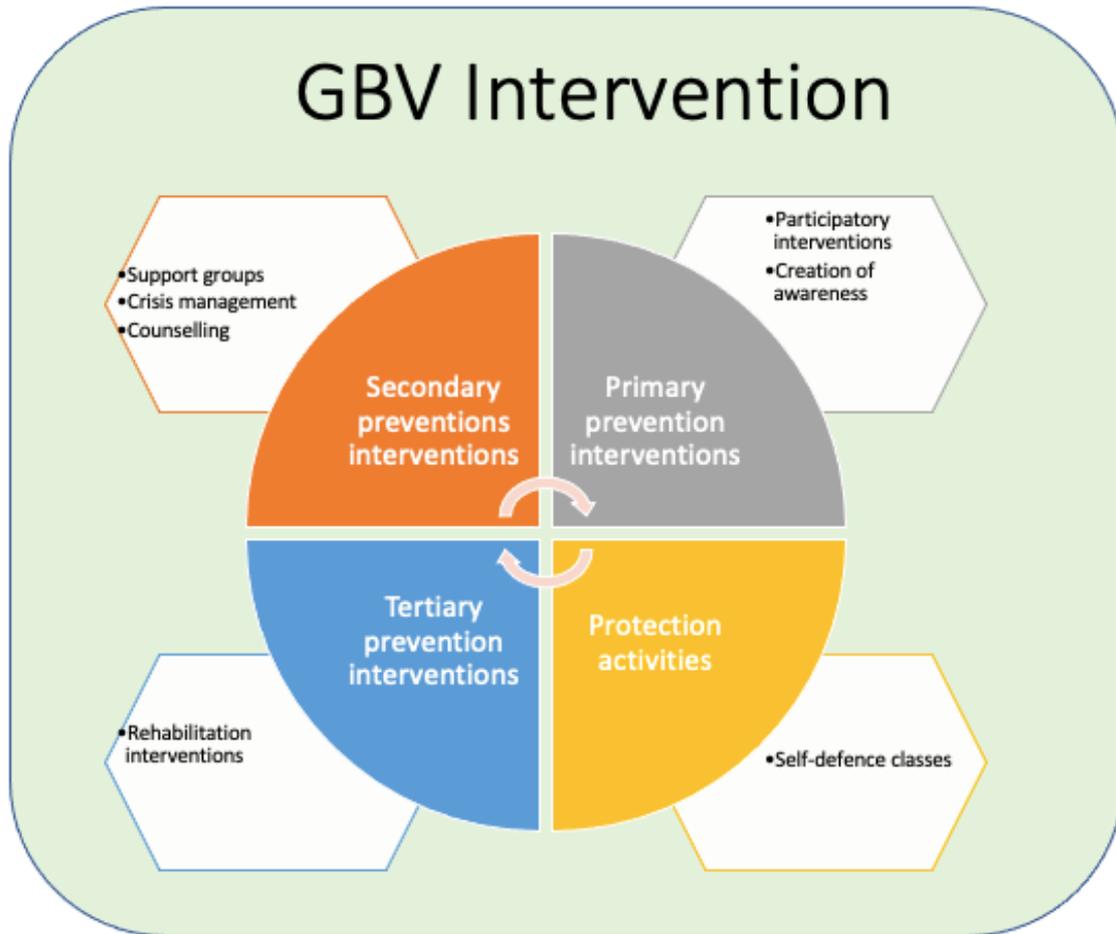
Intimate partner violence, domestic violence and any other form of interpersonal conflict can escalate very quickly into life-threatening situations. To mitigate against the escalation of such conflict situations, we have developed a series of video clips to demonstrate simple de-escalation techniques. These video clips provide staff and students with de-escalation tactics they can utilise when finding themselves in a threatening situation, to diffuse a tense and threatening situation; and empower the students with options to create distance and ultimately get away from the threat.

### **Nelson Mandela University GBV prevention conceptual framework**

The different interventions presented in this document are implemented concurrently, throughout the year, across all Nelson Mandela campuses and residences. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2 illustrates the categories of GBV intervention work being implemented at Nelson Mandela University.

### **Figure 2**

*Nelson Mandela University GBV prevention conceptual framework*



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