

# Main challenges

of developing gender-responsive services for women with disabilities facing gender-based violence



# 1

## Accessibility

Many support services are not adequately accessible for women with disabilities. Physical accessibility, like ramps, may be lacking, making it difficult for women with mobility impairments to access shelters, counselling centres, or legal aid services. There may also be communication barriers due to a lack of sign language interpreters, accessible content, or communication tools for women with intellectual and sensorial disabilities.

## Lack of training and expertise

Professionals in the disability care and support sector, law enforcement agencies, healthcare sector, social and education services, and judicial sectors often lack sufficient training and expertise in addressing the unique needs and experiences of women with disabilities who have faced gender-based violence. They may lack awareness of disability-related issues, including the intersection of disability and gender, and the specific barriers and challenges faced by these women. This can result in inadequate support and services that fail to meet their specific needs.

# 2

# 3

## Limited coordination and collaboration

Collaboration among different service providers and professionals in other sectors, such as legal support services, healthcare providers, and victim support organisations, is often limited, leading to fragmented and ineffective responses, leaving women with disabilities without comprehensive support.

More challenges





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## 4 Stereotypes and stigma

Women with disabilities facing gender-based violence may encounter additional barriers due to stereotypes, stigma, and discrimination. Misconceptions and prejudices about disability and gender can undermine their credibility as victims, leading to disbelief, victim-blaming, or dismissal of their experiences. This can result in a lack of appropriate support and may deter women with disabilities from seeking help.

## Limited resources and funding

Support services for gender-based violence prevention and response often face resource constraints. Insufficient funding can limit the availability and accessibility of services, including helplines, counselling, shelters, legal aid, and rehabilitation support. This lack of resources hampers the ability to provide comprehensive and tailored support to women with disabilities. In some countries, Women with disabilities often also face difficulties in finding support that isn't institutionalised.

# 5

## 6 Barriers in the legal and justice system

Women with disabilities may encounter some specific barriers within the legal and justice system. These can include inaccessible courtrooms, lack of disability-related accommodations, limited understanding of disability rights, and challenges in obtaining accessible information or communication support. Such barriers can impede their access to justice, exacerbating their vulnerability to further violence.

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