

# Breaking the Cycle: Integrating Mental Health, Gender Equality, and Survivor-Led Approaches to End Multigenerational Violence in Ukraine

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# CONTEXT: WHY THIS MATTERS NOW



## KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Ukraine faces the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe today.
- War has re-activated historical trauma rooted in repression, conflict, and silence.
- Multigenerational violence persists when trauma is untreated and normalized.
- Breaking the cycle requires systemic, community-based and survivor-centered responses.



ACCORDING TO UN WOMEN, AN ESTIMATED 2.5 MILLION PEOPLE IN UKRAINE — MOSTLY WOMEN AND GIRLS — ARE EXPERIENCING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE OR ARE AT HEIGHTENED RISK AND REQUIRE SUPPORT

# HOW MULTIGENERATIONAL VIOLENCE MANIFESTS IN UKRAINE

- Increased domestic violence linked to unaddressed trauma and PTSD.
- Secondary trauma among women, children, caregivers, and communities.
- Adolescents modeling violent patterns they witness.
- Social normalization of violence as a “survival strategy.”



These numbers are only the visible part of a much larger reality:

## GBV

UN Women reports that gender-based violence in Ukraine has increased by 36% since 2022.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 2024, the Ministry of Social Policy recorded 180,265 reports of domestic violence

## CRSV

As of 02 October 2025, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine reported 381 CRSV cases

However, the true number is likely much higher, and the number of cases occurring in occupied territories remains unknown/unverified.



# HEALTHRIGHT / UFPH APPROACH

A comprehensive, survivor-centered model across Ukraine:

## **BARNAHUS UKRAINE**

- child-friendly, trauma-informed response to violence

## **C4C – CARING FOR CARERS**

- preventing burnout & vicarious trauma

## **SAFEWOMENHUB**

- national digital platform for women experiencing violence

## **MHPSS INTEGRATION**

- WHO-based mental health training for health & social sectors

## **PSEA NETWORK CO-CHAIR**

- building a culture of “Do No Harm” in humanitarian aid

## **SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE**

- long-term psychological, medical, legal aid

# WHAT WE SEE CHANGING

- Women and girls regain control over their lives in frontline communities.
- Shift from “everything is fine” to “this was violence, and I deserve protection.”
- Children receive support **without** retraumatizing interviews.
- A new generation of social workers grounded in dignity, ethics, and empathy.
- Communities recognize trauma as a social issue, not an individual weakness.



# MARINA'S STORY: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Marina endured years of domestic violence from her first husband, and her children were forced to witness the abuse. In her second marriage, she faced economic violence: her husband, a military, strictly controlled all the family's finances and later went missing in action.

After surviving bombings and occupation in Bakhmut, Marina evacuated to Kyiv with her three traumatized children, where she also learned she was pregnant again.

At our Halfway House, she finally found safety and comprehensive support. Marina received individual psychological counselling, legal assistance, financial literacy training, and ongoing guidance from social workers. Her children received psychological and developmental support and gradually began to recover from their trauma.

This holistic assistance helped Marina break the cycle of violence. She regained her independence, welcomed a healthy baby, and now lives in stable housing — even managing to purchase a small home of her own.



# KEY MESSAGES



**WAR IS NOT ONLY FOUGHT ON BATTLEFIELDS — IT IS FOUGHT IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.**

**INVESTING IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN ACCELERATES NATIONAL RECOVERY**

**MULTIGENERATIONAL VIOLENCE DOES NOT END ON ITS OWN — IT REQUIRES INTENTIONAL, SUSTAINED HEALING.**

**SURVIVOR-LED, TRAUMA-INFORMED, AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACHES BREAK THE CYCLE**

# VISUALIZATION



- HealthRight Halfway Houses
- Barnahus Centers
- Mobile Psychosocial Support Teams
- Women and girls safe spaces «Protect Her»
- Resilience Centers
- Integrated response and care units (RCU) Brave&Safe
- Multidisciplinary Mobile Teams
- SafeWomenHub Online Platform  
SupportME Online Platform



# THANK YOU!

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