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# Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the context of aid work

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# Objectives

- To gain a better understanding of what is sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and the risks of SEA in the context of aid work

- To understand Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, including core principles, zero-tolerance policy and the scope of its application to humanitarian actors

- To understand roles and responsibilities of humanitarian actors (anyone providing aid) in preventing and responding to SEA

# Understanding Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

- **Sexual exploitation** means any **actual** or **attempted** abuse of a position of **vulnerability**, **differential power**, or **trust** for **sexual purposes**, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

- **Sexual abuse** means the **actual** or **threatened** physical intrusion of a sexual nature which can occur, by **force** under **coercive conditions**, or under **unequal conditions.**

# Examples of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

- Offering money, gifts, or a job in exchange for sex
- Pressuring or demanding beneficiaries to provide sexual favors against their will, with the threat of denying project assistance
- Withholding due services or blackmailing for sex
- Hiring sex workers
- Threats of sexual exploitation

# Examples of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

- Unwanted kissing, touching, grabbing, or rubbing of beneficiaries' intimate body parts
- Threats of an unwanted sexual act
- Rape or attempted rape
- Any sexual activity with a child

# Risk of SEA in the context of the current refugee response

- large number of refugees are women and children
- large number of actors and volunteers responding with no/limited training
- Increased vulnerability of families by the economic impact of the crisis
- Increased dependence on humanitarian aid of vulnerable communities
- Unaccompanied and separated children; lesser/no monitoring of centers and facilities where separated children are placed
- Others…?

# Example of SEA risk in CP programming

| Activity | Risks | Examples of ways to mitigate risk |
|---|---|---|
| **Psychosocial support (PSS) activity** | • Enclosed spaces where there is a relationship of trust which can be exploited<br>• Children or adults who are vulnerable and can be at risk of further exploitation or abuse<br>• Possibility that PSS staff does not respond appropriately to a survivor disclosing SEA | • Gender balance in staff composition<br>• Adequately vetting staff<br>• Mandatory training for new staff on code of conduct and reporting mechanisms, including on national legislation on mandatory reporting<br>• Sensitive, confidential reporting mechanisms for program participants to raise concerns of SEA |

# Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)** refers to the responsibilities, measures and standards to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse committed by humanitarian actors (e.g. United Nations, NGO, Government implementing partners) against beneficiaries of assistance and other members of affected populations.

  https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/news-31

- These responsibilities include e.g., setting up confidential reporting mechanisms and taking prompt, safe and ethical action when incidents occur.

- **Addressing PSEA is the responsibility of all actors.**

# CODE OF CONDUCT & 6 CORE PRINCIPLES RELATING TO SEA

**1**

SEA by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment.

**NO SECOND CHANCE**

**2**

Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally.

**NO SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITH CHILDREN**

**3**

Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, is prohibited. This includes hiring prostitutes.

**DON'T HIRE ANYONE FOR SEX**

**4**

Any sexual relationship with beneficiaries that involves improper use of position is prohibited.

**NO SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH BENEFICIARIES**

**5**

Humanitarian workers are obligated to report any concern of SEA by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms

**ALWAYS REPORT SEA**

**6**

Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents SEA

**DISCOURAGE SEA AROUND YOU**

*Adapted from the IASC 6 Core Principles relating to SEA, September 2019*

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# Taking Action Against SEA: Priority Areas

**REPORTING**

- **Outcome 1:** Safe and accessible reporting for every affected child and adult in humanitarian contexts.

**SURVIVOR SUPPORT**

- **Outcome 2:** Quality and accessible SEA survivor assistance.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

- **Outcome 3:** Every child survivor has their case investigated in a prompt, safe and respectful way.

**UNICEF:** UNICEF PSEA Results Monitoring Framework; **IASC:** Plan for Accelerating PSEA in Humanitarian Response at Country-level, and Framework

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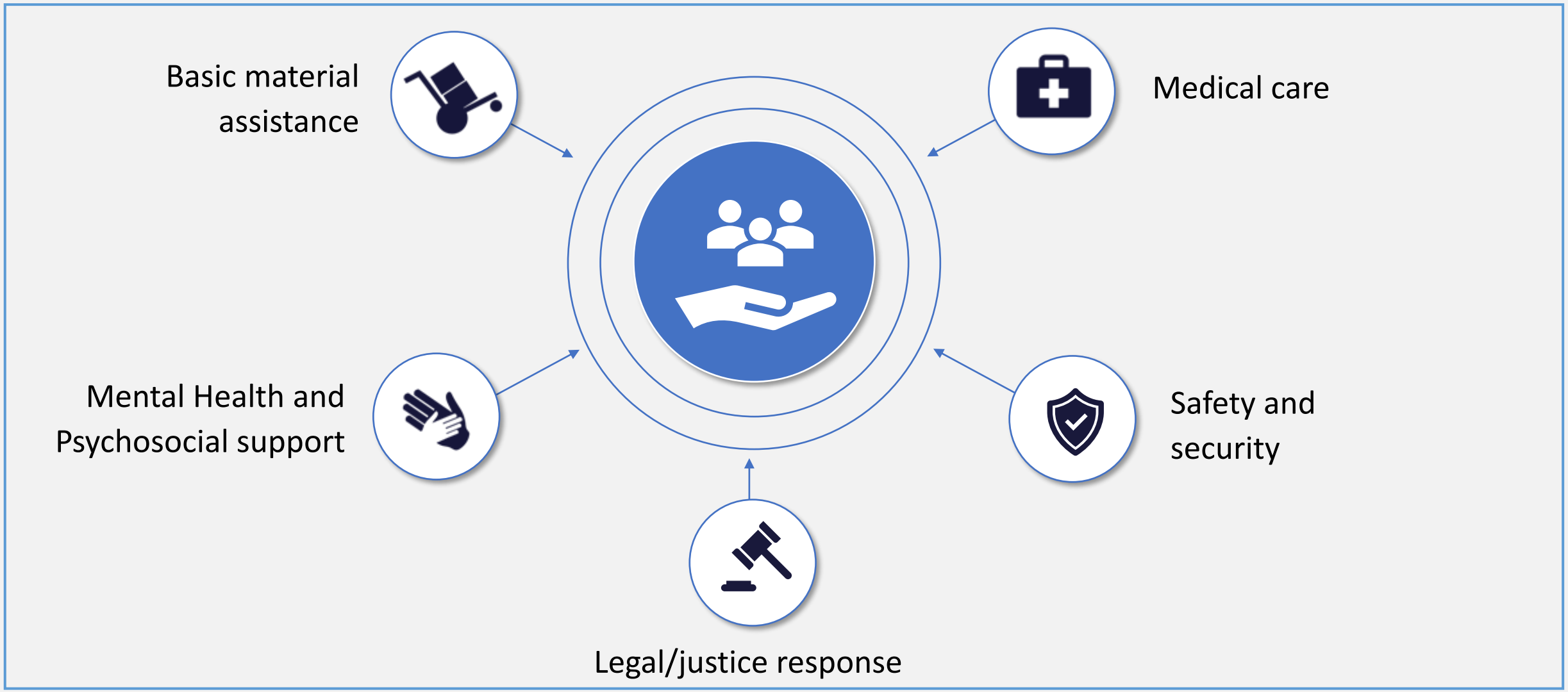
# Survivor / Victim Assistance



# Prevention and Risk mitigation

- Training (staff, suppliers, partners)
- Awareness raising for communities on PSEA key messages
- Risk mitigation in programming
- Community participation, identification of barriers to access services
- Recruitment screening/ Vetting staff and volunteers

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# Resources

- **Poland PSEA Network:** weekly meeting Fridays at 2 pm
- **Key messages posters and cards** – in Polish, Ukrainian, English
- **IASC PSEA website**: global resources and materials from different countries

https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/

- **GBV SWG:** GBV guidance and resources GBV Sub-Sector Portal - Poland

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# Thank you!

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