

Session title: Sexual violence and disability: the Inclusion of children with disabilities in Child protection to learn about keeping themselves and others safe

The ONG Handicap International proposed its participation in this Conference in order to share our experience and challenges on the participation of children with disabilities in Child protection to learn about keeping themselves and other safe.

The goal of this session is to

- _ sensitize you on the particular vulnerability of children with disabilities to violence
- _ and provide you with skills/tools to learn CWD about keeping themselves safe and make them participate in child protection activities.

A previous research conducted by HI together with Save The Children in 4 African countries, based both on literature review and fact finding missions, showed that:

- _ CWD are almost 4 times more affected by physical violence than abled body children.
- _ CWD are almost 3 times more affected by sexual violence than abled body children.
- _ According to you, among children with disability who are the more at risk? Who are the most vulnerable among vulnerable?

Based on these observations:

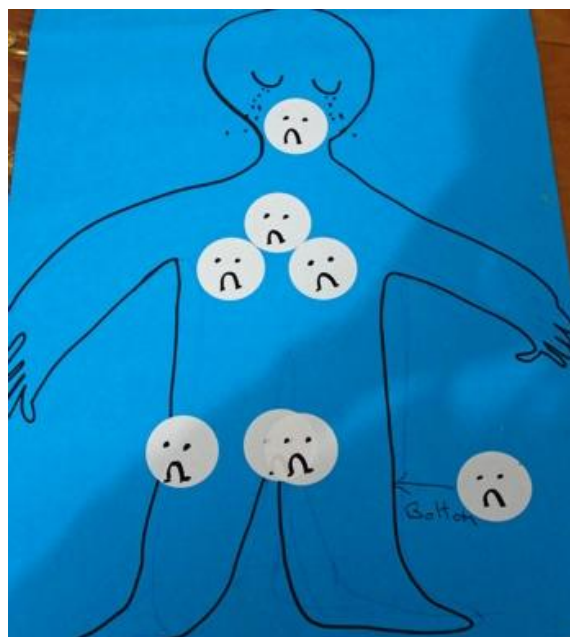
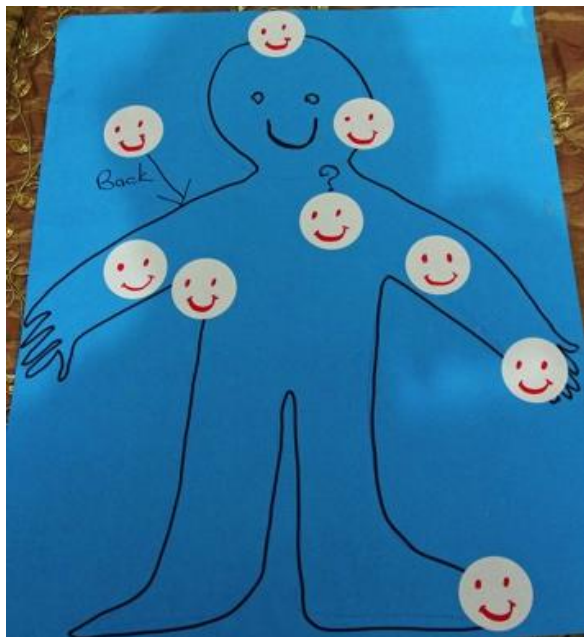
In 2012, Handicap International has started implementing the “Ubuntu Care project” in Rwanda, Burundi and Kenya, (Ubuntu is from Bantu language and is connected to the notion of humanity generosity...) to tackle the issue of sexual violence against children, with a focus on children with disabilities.

While implementing its activities, HI staff and its operational partner on the field have direct contact with children, extremely vulnerable as we see, and must DO NOT HARM. We try to keep children safe by implementing safeguarding measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children’s welfare are minimized.

To achieve this goal, HI also makes Child participation in Child protection a priority.

At the end, the most important when working with CWD, either in safeguarding or programming; IS THE METHODOLOGY in order to overcome challenges which can impede the participation of CWD. Besides, for certain types of disabilities, I am thinking of children with intellectual impairment, how can expect for them to report abuse if they are not even aware of what abuse is.

Exercise with the audience that we do with children in our project « **Your body is yours** ».



What are the elements you will have to consider if you want to involve in your group activity?

_ children with intellectual impairment

_ children with physical disability

_ children with hearing impairment

_ children with a visual impairment

Conclusion: (30 minutes)



REMEMBER !

In conclusion of this exercise, insist again to participants on the following points to consider when organizing activities that involve children with disabilities:

1. Instructions when working with children with intellectual/mental impairment:

- Take your time
- Express yourself with simple sentences
- Ask questions using affirmative form
- Avoid using sentences with double negatives
- Ask a question once and wait for an answer from the child
- Rephrase your question by making it more simple if necessary
- Use images and drawings to communicate
- A child with intellectual impairment is often agitated and disturbs the group/family because he is bored and has no occupation

- These children often lose confidence

2. Instructions when working with children with motor or physical disability:

- They have in principle all their intellectual abilities.
- They can be slow in their everyday activities and their movement.
- They may get tired more quickly than others.
- The location where the activity takes place must be accessible: no steps/stairs, doorways must be at level with large openings.
- They may need a third person to move, do not hesitate to ask if your help can be useful.
- If the child is in a wheel chair, make an effort to lower yourself in order to listen, to speak to him/her or to show/hand him/her objects.

3. Instructions when working with children with hearing impairment:

- They have in principle all their intellectual and physical abilities.
- The child can be isolated because he/she do not have access to auditory information: sounds, noises, speaking
- The child may not hear a sound indicating a hazard/danger (alarms, car, etc.)
- This child is in contact with the world through eyesight.
- The child might have difficulties understanding a verbal message
- Speak clearly directly in front of the hearing impaired child, without raising your voice and in a well-lit environment
- Give simple instructions during the activity
- Use visual/written materials (images, pictures, drawings) which facilitate communication and expression.
- Gestures and the way the facilitator expresses him/herself contribute also to the child's understanding.
- Be attentive to anger or outbursts of these children, they could indicate that the child's misunderstanding/ frustration

4. Instructions when working with children with a visual impairment:

- They have in principle all their intellectual and physical abilities.
- They need more time to get accustomed to a new environment
- Announce your presence, identify yourself
- Let the child know when you are changing positions in the room or leaving the room
- Put objects directly into the child's hands
- Let the child know that there is an object nearby and that they might tip it over or that they might collide with an obstacle in their way.
- Ask for the child consent before doing something for him/her or instead of him/her
- Don't hesitate to ask if the child needs help and how exactly you can be of help (behind you, next to you, holding your elbow or shoulder, etc.)

5. Instructions when working with children with mental illness:

- Mental illness does not imply intellectual impairment
- Once the psychological crisis has passed, the child can return to normal functioning
- During a time of crisis, it is important to help the child to stay out of danger and assure that he/she gets competent help from a doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist

6. Disabling illness:

- These illnesses leave consequences that reduce autonomy at work or in the person's mobility

- These children have similar difficulties as those faced by persons with a physical or motor disability.



IMPORTANT !

- It can be useful before organizing activities for children with disabilities, to spend time with these children, either meeting them in an institution or medical environment through activities, either meeting directly with families of children with disabilities to see how the family/community organize themselves and assist these children. Think of introducing yourself to children (not only to adults) as well as explaining the reason of your visit.
- This visit can also be an opportunity for participants to understand better what disability means by putting themselves in the shoes of a child with disability and talking to professionals. Participants will be able to experiment the feeling of dependence by using a wheelchair, crutches, and walker.
- This visit can also be an opportunity for participants to be aware of the track that the family and the child with disabilities have to follow: rehabilitation, institution, hospital... It takes time and energy for the family/mother, which limits her possibility to take responsibilities for a job or at home

Accessible and inclusive Child participation activities to all children and open culture in the organization where children can express themselves effectively contributes to a safer environment for children