

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE



Prevent and protect

What you need to know and do



World Health
Organization

www.who.int/about/ethics

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) represents a fundamental failure of protection. It brings harm to those we are mandated to protect and it jeopardizes the reputation of our organization. WHO is committed to protecting vulnerable populations in the countries we serve from SEA at the hands of WHO staff and collaborators¹.

WHAT IS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (SEA)?

Sexual exploitation: Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

SEA also includes sexual relations with a child, in any context, defined as a human being below the age of 18 years.

SEA involves behaviour of WHO staff and collaborators towards third parties, referred to as beneficiary populations.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEA AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

- SEA occurs when a position of power is used for sexual purposes against a beneficiary or vulnerable member of the community.
- Sexual harassment occurs when differences in power between staff members, are abused (verbally, through touch, use of inappropriate images, etc). For further information: contact Human Resources.

CORE PRINCIPLES

WHO staff and collaborators must work and behave in a manner that respects and fosters the rights of the people they serve. To that end:

- 1. Sexual exploitation and abuse constitute acts of serious misconduct** and are therefore grounds for disciplinary action including summary dismissal, and criminal proceedings.
- 2. Exchange of money, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex, including sexual favours** or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour **is prohibited.**
- 3. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited,** regardless of the local age of consent or majority. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- 4.** WHO staff have a duty to report any instance where they may suspect or detect signs of SEA.
- 5. WHO will protect people who report SEA** in accordance with the Whistleblowing and Protection Against Retaliation policy.
- 6. WHO staff shall create and maintain an environment that prevents SEA** and promote the implementation of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

ACTS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE INCLUDE:

- Sexual assault.
- Demanding sex in any context or making sex a condition for assistance.
- Forcing sex or someone to have sex with anyone.
- Forcing a person to engage in prostitution or pornography.
- Unwanted touching of a sexual nature.
- Refusing to use safe sex practices.

NB This is not an exhaustive list. Other types of sexually exploitive or sexually abusive behaviour may be grounds for administrative action, disciplinary measures, and criminal proceedings.



SUPPORT

Protection from retaliation:

WHO will protect those who report SEA.

For survivors:

If you are supporting a victim of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse – you can make a confidential report. Medical and psychosocial support is available for all those affected by sexual exploitation and abuse.

The societal forces that tend to marginalise persons with disabilities exacerbate the likelihood and the impact of SEA. People with disabilities can be more vulnerable to SEA and often face increased barriers when it comes to reporting or getting the support they need. Staff are encouraged to be particularly alert to suspected cases of SEA within vulnerable populations.

For staff:

For ongoing support you can contact the Ethics team in the Office of Compliance, Risk and Ethics at any time at ethicsoffice@who.int or for psychosocial support contact a staff counsellor shws@who.int

WHO IS COMMITTED TO:

- Supporting its staff to speak out, to ensuring prompt and effective response to SEA reports, and to protecting staff who come forward.



SAY SOMETHING SILENCE IS NO EXCUSE

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU BECOME AWARE OF POSSIBLE SEA?

Anyone having concerns or suspicions about a possible case of SEA by a WHO, United Nations or NGO staff member, regardless of their position, has a duty to report to:

The Ethics team in the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics ethicsoffice@who.int
Integrity Hotline (confidential and/or anonymous)
<http://wrs.expolink.co.uk/integrity>

For more information
www.who.int/about/ethics/integrity-hotline/en/

- You do not need proof before reporting but all reports must be made in good faith.
 - Do not investigate.
 - Always maintain strict confidentiality.
 - Respect the dignity, wishes and rights of those affected by SEA.
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WHAT TO REPORT:

Who committed the alleged wrongdoing? Do you know if anyone else was involved? (Provide full names, titles and organization, if possible).

- **What has happened?**
Describe in detail what you know or suspect of a SEA incident.
 - **Who was involved?**
Were there any witnesses?
 - **When and where did the incident take place?**
Providing dates and time, if at all possible.
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THE ETHICS TEAM IN THE OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE, RISK & ETHICS

ethicsoffice@who.int

1 Collaborators are defined as individuals who work for WHO as non-staff members including consultants, holders of Agreements for Performance of Work (APW), Technical Services Agreement (TSA) holders, Special Service Agreements (SSA) or letters of agreement, Temporary Advisers, Interns, and Volunteers, as well as third party entities such as vendors, contractors or technical partners who have a contractual relationship with WHO.