

Integrating Faith Sensitivity into Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Work: 10 Frontline Practices

JUNE 2025



Building faith sensitivity requires preparation, reflection, and an intersectional lens. Service providers, team leaders, and practitioners can strengthen their capacity by identifying opportunities to support survivors from faith, religious, or spiritual backgrounds — including within local faith communities. The 10 practices below offer concrete, adaptable ways to incorporate faith sensitivity into everyday GBV work, grounded in survivor-centered and trauma-informed approaches.

1 Acknowledge that faith matters

Faith can shape survivor experiences, decisions, and healing. Avoid assumptions — ask what it means to them.

2 Reflect on your own biases

Be mindful of how your beliefs may shape how you view or respond to a survivor's faith.

3 Respect privacy and readiness

Create space for faith conversations without pressuring disclosure. Privacy matters.

4 Practice faith literacy

Build awareness of diverse traditions, especially those common in your community or service area.

5 Tailor services to faith needs

If appropriate, provide access to prayer items, religious texts, or referrals to trusted spiritual care.

6 Refer to safe, survivor-approved supports

When possible, offer choices for referrals to inclusive faith leaders, faith-based orgs, or spiritual practitioners.

7 Train staff and volunteers

Build team-wide capacity on faith sensitivity and cultural competency.

8 Engage faith communities

Collaborate with trusted faith leaders and groups to co-create messages and strengthen outreach.

9 Include faith in shelter supports

Provide space and accommodations for spiritual practice when survivors want them.

10 Monitor and evaluate inclusivity

Review programs and materials for barriers to inclusion based on religion, spirituality, or creed.

Based on and adapted from the Learning Network Brief [“Integrating Faith Sensitivity into Gender-Based Violence \(GBV\) Work”](#), guest authored by Dr. Sandra Pertek.



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