WHAT IS THIS TOOL AND WHO IS IT FOR?

This tool helps anyone who is in touch with communities to identify sensitive feedback and take the necessary next steps to ensure the feedback will be handled safely and appropriately. This guide only covers the necessary steps to ensure sensitive feedback is identified and referred to the right focal points. It does not cover the steps of investigating feedback or taking decisions on how to address the feedback. This tool should be used together with the module “[How to Handle Sensitive Feedback](https://docs.google.com/document/d/148giieE3Kr773nWHf68z-chZHQiYqwf_/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true)” of the [Feedback Kit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/148giieE3Kr773nWHf68z-chZHQiYqwf_/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true).

# IDENTIFY AND LISTEN

* **Sensitive feedback is any information shared by community members that can put them, or other people linked to it, at risk and needs to be handled with care. For more more information see** [**here**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/148giieE3Kr773nWHf68z-chZHQiYqwf_/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109473232721131860036&rtpof=true&sd=true)**.**
* Sensitive feedback is not always shared as a formal complaint. We need to be prepared to hear about sensitive concerns in any conversation we have with community members or colleagues.
* When we come across sensitive issues our main priority is the safety and security of the person sharing the feedback with us. Our advice or indications must not put the person and their family in further danger.
* Check if the person feels comfortable talking to you, or would prefer to speak somewhere else, or talk to another person.
* Practice active listening skills and let the person sharing the feedback guide the conversation, help them feel calm and show empathy. Don’t ask for details but focus on their needs and concerns.
* Do not ask probing questions as this may do harm. This is the responsibility of the trained focal point.
* Provide basic psychological first aid by using healing statements, such as:
  + *“I am glad that you told me, this is not your fault.”*
  + *“I am very sorry this happened to you. Help is available for you.”*
  + *“I am very sorry you are going through this.”*
  + *“You are not alone.”*

# ASK FOR CONSENT TO RECORD THE INFORMATION

* If the insight is not already shared in public, the information is only documented if the person gives informed consent, which means understanding of and agreement to:
  + the intended purpose of the data collection and processing,
  + with whom their data may be shared,
  + any risks associated with collection, processing or sharing of their personal data,
  + alternatives in the case that they do not wish to, or cannot, share their personal data.
* In a situation where consent cannot be requested (eg. the person shared something via WhatsApp and is currently not online), we need to weigh it against the protection mandate of the organization. There might be situations where the information needs to be shared with the focal point to avoid additional harm being done.
* Respect the choices of the feedback provider at all times.
* Following statements can be used:
  + *“Please share whatever you want to share. There is no pressure to say anything you don’t feel comfortable with.”*
  + *“I won’t share any information without your permission.”*
  + *“I will try to support you as much as I can but I am not a counselor and there are very limited options for services where we are.”*

**NOTE ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE :**

When someone seems to wish to report attempted or actual sexual exploitation and abuse, we need to inform them that as a humanitarian organization representative, we are obligated to report the incident (with or without the person’s consent). We do not have to share personally identifying information, but we must report it. This needs to be clarified immediately and before anything is recorded. This is different to the situation where the alleged perpetrator is not associated with a humanitarian organization, where no action is to be taken if the person sharing the concern does not wish to.

# ASK FOR CONSENT TO REFER THE PERSON FOR SERVICES

* Persons sharing sensitive feedback can be offered three types of services (if they exist in the area): legal, health and psychosocial support.
* It is important that for these cases the feedback provider determines what happens to their case.
* There are three options for next steps, which are based on the preferences of the feedback provider, as well as the availability of services:
  + You can provide the person with the relevant contact details for them to contact the available service provider themselves
  + You can offer to contact the service provider on their behalf
  + You do not take any action and just listen
* Following statements can be used:
  + *If there are services or referral pathways:*
  + *“Here are the details of the available services and the person’s name you can talk to.”*
  + *If there are no services or referral pathways:*
  + *“I am sorry but in this area there are no services available where I can refer you.”*
  + *“Is there anyone you can trust that you can go to for support?”*

# RECORD AND ACKNOWLEDGE

* If you received this feedback as part of regular activities (and not as part of a formal feedback mechanism) and if the feedback provider consented to you recording the information, use your organisation’s form for recording sensitive feedback. If you do not have a form available, record the following information on a paper (and only record personal information if the feedback provider consented to it)
  + Date when the feedback was received
  + Name of the feedback provider
  + Contact details
  + Age range
  + Sex
  + Date and time of incident
  + Location of the incident
  + Name of the victim of the incident
  + Short description of the concern
  + Information about the alleged offender (name, job, employer, sex, age)
  + Need for services for the affected person
* If the sensitive feedback was received through a formal feedback mechanism, the feedback can be recorded using the general feedback tools. If the system allows to highlight sensitive feedback and therefore limits access to the information, the feedback can be entered into the same system. In case access to the information cannot be limited, the feedback needs to be recorded separately. This can be done using a separate paper form and saving the information in a separate password-protected Excel file for example.
* Sensitive feedback can only be recorded in the feedback template logbook, if access to the logbook is restricted. The incident can be recorded in the general logbook for analysis and monitoring purposes, but all personal information of the feedback provider, as well as the content of the feedback content must not be included.
* Provide the feedback provider with information about the next steps in the first interaction to avoid requiring further contact at a later time/date in case this action may put them in further harm.
* Provide a confirmation of receipt including how much time it will take to hear back, and a focal point for follow-up.

# ESCALATE AND REFER

* The sensitive feedback needs to be shared with the focal points responsible for the issue as soon as possible, and within 24h latest. If the feedback was received outside of a formal feedback mechanism, it can be shared with the focal point directly, shared with the line manager, leadership, integrity line or the IFRC Office of Internal Audit and Investigations.
* In a formal feedback mechanism, any feedback highlighted as sensitive will be reviewed by the feedback manager and then referred to the internal or external focal points.
* Any protection concern or misconduct violation received about another agency should be reported to their own internal reporting mechanism. If the matter involves SEA of another agency and that agency does not seem to have an established reporting system, report the allegation of SEA to a relevant PSEA network reporting system.
* For referring a case, the form can be placed in a closed envelope addressed to the person you are submitting it to or attached to an email sent to the dedicated focal point or organisation only.
* If you are scanning the feedback form, make sure to destroy the original paper form directly after successfully sending it to ensure the complainant’s confidentiality.

# REFLECT AFTER ENDING THE CONVERSATION

* Reflect on the conversation and take care of yourself.
* Accept the limitations of the situation and that you did the best you could.
* Recognise the potential of secondary trauma.
* Reach out to your support systems (Supervisor, colleagues, friends) while maintaining confidentiality (do not share any identifiable information).