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## EU Project “RESPONSE – Multi-Agency Response for Reporting on Gender-Based Violence in Maternal Health Services” (2017-2018)

Research shows that women survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) use healthcare services more than women who are not victims. As well, healthcare providers are professionals whom women survivors of GBV would most trust with their disclosure of abuse.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, routine peri/antenatal care visits offer a crucial opportunity for identification, safety planning, referral and reporting of gender-based violence in pregnant women who are at high risk during this vulnerable period. Unfortunately, these skills are severely lacking in the training of student clinicians who provide maternal health services.

RESPONSE, a two-year project co-funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Programme, helps to address this gap. The RESPONSE project will be implemented in the following five EU countries: Austria, Germany, France, Romania and Spain, with the support of the UK for evaluation. The coordination of the project is conducted by Babes-Bolyai University (UBB) Department of Public Health in Romania, with the support of gender violence researchers and policy experts at the University of Bristol, UK.

The main objective of RESPONSE is to provide capacity building in the five European countries in order to increase disclosure in patients and referral to specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence in women’s health services, using a rights-based, gender-sensitive and survivor-centred approach informed by robust research evidence.

A RESPONSE Training Manual will be developed to train maternal health staff and will be publicly available on the project website in September 2017 in five different languages: English, French, German, Spanish and Romanian. The RESPONSE Training Manual will be used in each partner country to train three women’s health providers side-by-side with three social workers in the health settings. Trainers will in turn provide capacity-building seminars within their respective women’s health service settings to 30 professionals in order to improve identification, safety planning and referral/reporting for approximately 1,000 women in each country (a total of 5,000 women).

After 12 months from the capacity building seminars, RESPONSE aims for the maternal health teams in each participating countries to have 25% higher rates of GBV disclosure, safety planning and referrals. The RESPONSE project partners will also conduct awareness-raising activities with multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary maternity-based Victim Protection Groups in maternal health settings to improve the health sector response for pregnant survivors of GBV. It also aims to integrate a module for undergraduate curricula in medical/nursing/midwifery schools to target health professional students before they become practicing clinicians.

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RESPONSE Project Website: [www.gbv-response.eu](http://www.gbv-response.eu)

<sup>1</sup> WHO. Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines. Geneva, WHO; 2013.

