

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED
INFECTIONS (STIs) PREVENTION &
CARE

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DEFINITION

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections caused by bacteria, viruses & parasites transmitted through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal & oral sex. Some STIs are transmitted through skin-to-skin sexual contact or through non-sexual means e.g. from mother to child during pregnancy & childbirth.
- There are more than 30 known bacteria, viruses & parasites that cause STIs.

RATIONALE - 1/2

- **STIs among adolescents are an important problem:** In Although there is a lack of data on the incidence or prevalence of STIs in adolescents at the global level, where age-disaggregated surveillance systems exist, a substantial proportion of STI incidence occurs in adolescents.
- **Adolescent girls have greater biological susceptibility than adult women to some STIs due to the immaturity of the cervical mucosa & increased cervical ectopy:** Adolescent girls have a greater biological susceptibility. They are also at greater susceptibility because social norms prevent them from being well prepared to have safe sex & to refuse unsafe (or unwanted) sex. Adolescent boys on the other hand susceptible because they are under pressure to have multiple partners because of stereotypical masculinity norms. Among both boys & girls, specific groups are more susceptible because of their sexual practices.

RATIONALE - 2/2

- **STIs among adolescents have major health consequences:** STIs can have immediate effects such as discomfort and pain. They can also have serious consequences beyond the immediate ones.
- **Prevention & management services for STIs have been shown to be effective:** Proven approaches to prevent STIs, to accurately diagnose them and to cure some STIs and effectively treat others are available.
- **Design & implementation of prevention strategies & access to & provision of good-quality services need attention:** Effective STI prevention & management services are an urgent need for adolescents including scale-up of STI case management and provision of HPV vaccination.



HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

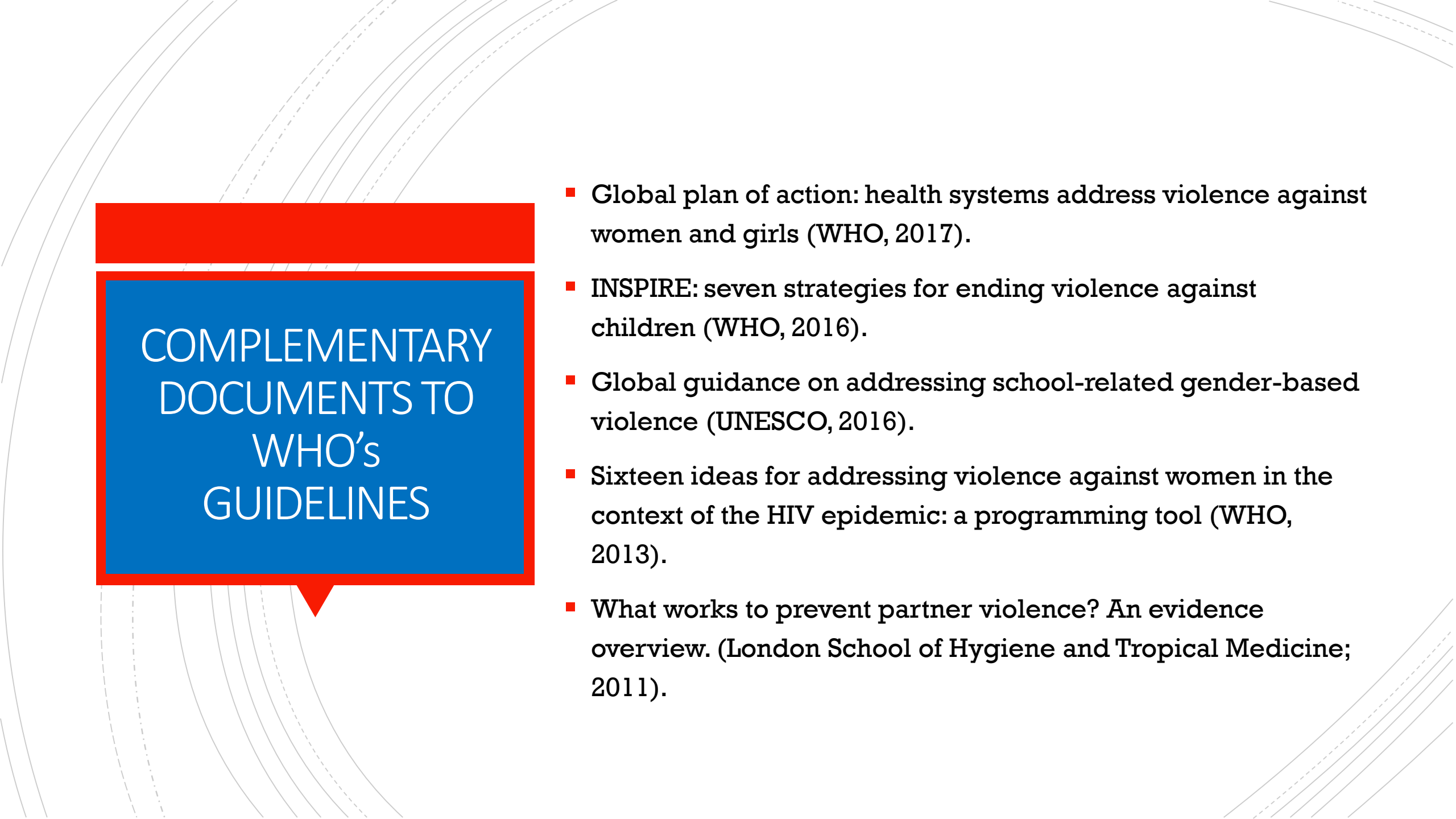
- States have obligations to ensure care & treatment of STIs to adolescents, as part of a package of SRH services.
- States are obliged to ensure that STI services are accessible to adolescents, & are free, confidential & nondiscriminatory.
- States are also obliged to remove barriers such as third-party consent requirements.

KEY CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER

- **Adolescents lack knowledge & understanding about STIs & STI prevention & management services:** Adolescents should be informed about STIs when they interact with the health system & through educational outreach. Also HPV vaccination strategies offer opportunity for educational outreach.
- **STI prevention & management services often do not reach adolescents. If they do, they are often not adolescent friendly:** STI prevention strategies need to be tailored to reach & meet the needs of adolescents. Further, efforts are needed to ensure that adolescents know where and how to seek care for STIs, if & when needed. Finally, STI management services must be adolescent friendly.

WHO GUIDELINES

- ***WHO guidelines for the treatment of *Treponema pallidum* (syphilis) (2016).***
- ***WHO guideline on syphilis screening and treatment for pregnant women (2017).***
- ***WHO guidelines for the treatment of genital herpes simplex virus (2016).***
- ***WHO guidelines for the treatment of *Chlamydia trachomatis* (2016).***
- ***WHO guidelines for the treatment of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (2016).***
- ***Guidelines on hepatitis B and C testing (2016).***
- ***Guidelines for the prevention, care and treatment of persons with chronic hepatitis B infection (2015).***
- ***Guidelines for the screening, care and treatment of persons with chronic hepatitis C infection: updated version (2016).***
- ***Consolidated guidelines on HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations: updated version (2016).***
- ***Prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men and transgender people: recommendations for a public health approach (2011).***
- ***Prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections for sex workers in low- and-middle- income countries: recommendations for a public health approach (2012).***
- ***Consolidated guideline on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV (2017).***
- ***Comprehensive cervical cancer control: a guideline to essential practice, 2nd edition (2014).***
- ***Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused (2017).***
- ***Brief sexuality-related communication: recommendations for a public health approach (2015).***



COMPLEMENTARY
DOCUMENTS TO
WHO's
GUIDELINES

- **Global health sector strategy on sexually transmitted infections 2016-2021 (WHO, 2016).**
- **World Health Organization. Human papillomavirus vaccines: WHO position paper, May 2017- recommendations. Vaccine. 2017; 35(43):5753-5755.**
- **Guide to introducing HPV vaccine into national immunization programmes. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016 (142).**
- **Scaling-up HPV vaccine introduction. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016 (143).**
- **Sexually transmitted diseases: treatment guidelines, 2015. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2015 (144).**
- **HPV vaccine lessons learnt project overview. Seattle, WA: PATH; 2015 (145).**

***Clinic
confidentiality
policy***

I'm very scared! I don't want everyone to know about this problem

It's OK. We will not tell anyone

But I advise you to talk to someone you can trust