



# FAST FACTS

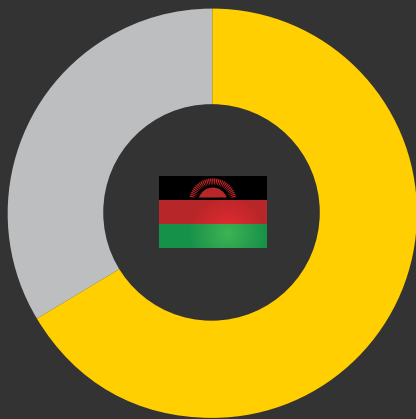
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG WOMEN IN MALAWI

FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL  
SURVEY 2013



# INTRODUCTION

Evidence from the Violence Against Children and Young Women in Malawi Survey (VACS) paints a sobering picture of childhood in Malawi, suggesting that violence has become a social norm in Malawian communities.



**2 OUT OF 3 MALAWIANS**  
experience violence in their childhoods

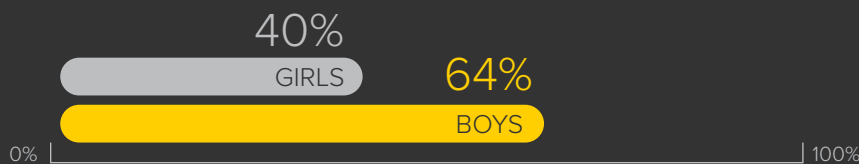


**1 IN 5 GIRLS WERE SEXUALLY ABUSED**  
BEFORE THE AGE OF 18



**1 in 7 BOYS WERE SEXUALLY ABUSED**  
BEFORE THE AGE OF 18

If a child experiences abuse once, he or she is likely to suffer repeated instances throughout childhood

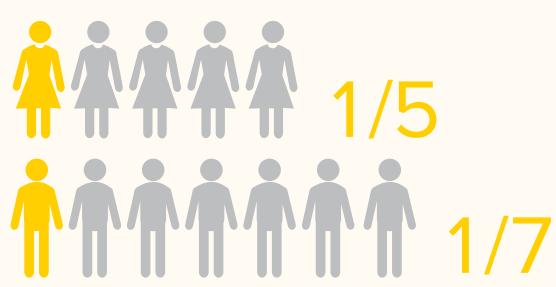


PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO **SUFFERED PHYSICAL ABUSE DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD**



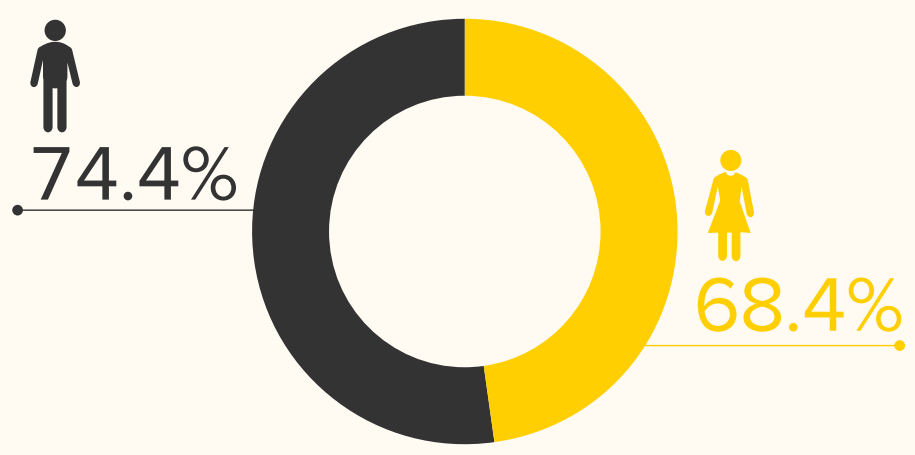
# 1 Sexual Abuse of Children

*Prevalence of childhood sexual violence (sexual abuse and exploitation):*

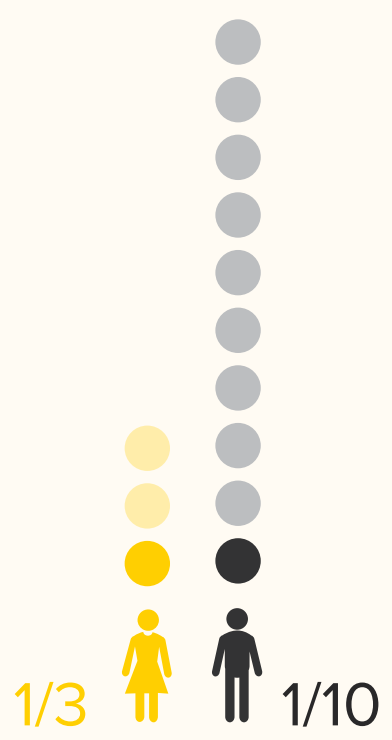


One out of five females and one out of seven males aged 18 to 24 years in Malawi experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse before turning 18 years of age.

The most common form of sexual abuse experienced by both females and males before the age of 18 was unwanted attempted sex, followed by unwanted sexual touching.



Among those who experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse prior to age 18 years, 68.4% of females and 74.4% of males had multiple incidents (i.e., two or more incidents) of sexual abuse.

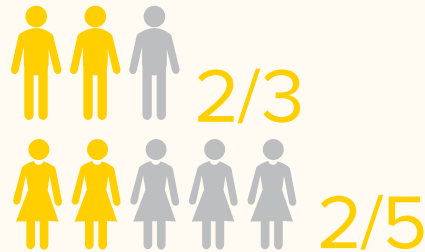


Of those who had their first sexual intercourse prior to age 18, one out of three females and one out of ten males experienced their first sexual intercourse as unwilling, meaning that they were forced or coerced to engage in sexual intercourse.



## Physical Violence against Children

### 1 Prevalence of childhood physical violence:

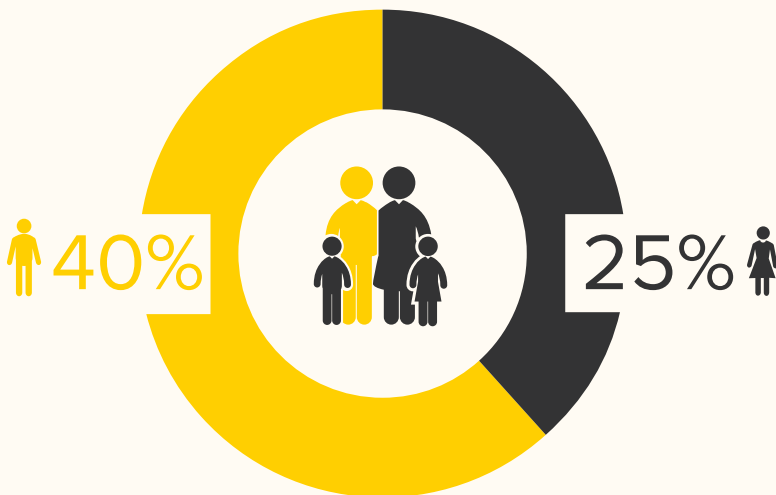


Two in five females and two in three males aged 18 to 24 years in Malawi experienced physical violence prior to the age of 18 years.



Almost half of Malawians reported witnessing violence in the home during childhood.

### 2 Perpetrators of childhood physical violence:



Of those children who experience violence, 25% of females and 40% of males reported physical violence perpetrated by an adult family member. One in five females and two in five males reported a peer as the perpetrator.





## Emotional Violence against Children

1

**Emotional violence experienced in childhood:** Approximately one in five females and one in three males in Malawi experienced emotional violence prior to turning 18 years of age, with four in five of both females and males experiencing more than one incident of emotional violence.



Experienced more than one incident of emotional violence

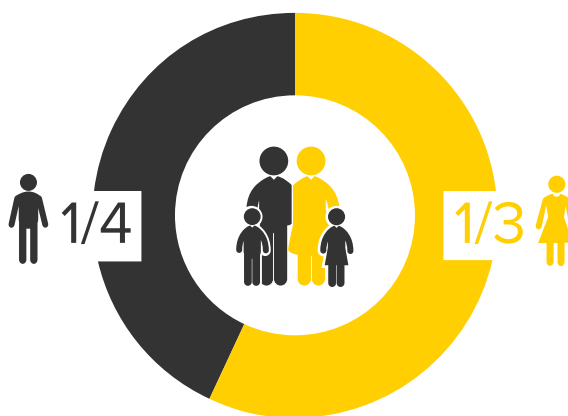
80%

Emotional violence refers to inappropriate verbal behaviour that is damaging to a child's mental health and development.

2

**Perpetrators of childhood emotional violence:**

Parents were the most frequent perpetrators of emotional violence in childhood, with one-third to one-quarter of females and males reporting their mother or stepmother as the most common perpetrator.



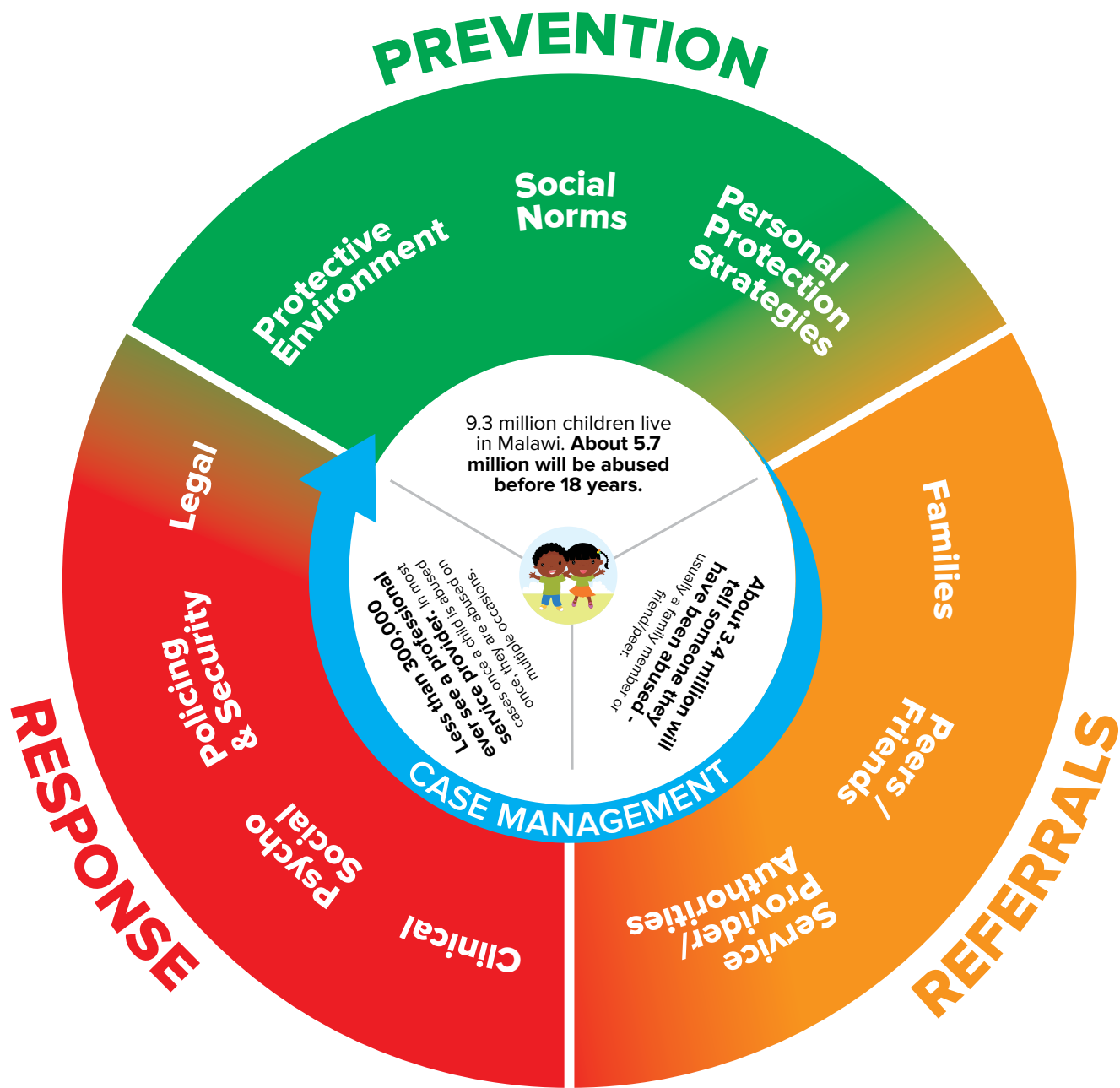
Males most frequently reported their first incident of emotional violence between ages 6 and 11 years.



One in three males reported their father or stepfather as the most common perpetrator.



# INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK



**A proactive and integrated approach is necessary to treat this epidemic of violence.** Simply strengthening treatment and aftercare is not enough; prevention and referral systems must be emphasized as well. For this reason, utilizing a structured intervention framework (pictured left), consistent with a public health approach that is oriented to first stopping violence before it ever occurs is vital. Prevention efforts provide the first line of defense against VAC.

Meanwhile an effective early response and referral mechanism limits the harmful effects when violence does occur. Finally, competent treatment and aftercare must also be readily available for victims of serious and persistent abuse to maximize the potential for effective rehabilitation and completion of a safe and nurturing childhood. This intervention framework provides a continuum of care that holistically addresses child, family and community needs.





# #ENDviolence

This document is published by the Government of the Republic of Malawi with assistance from UNICEF Malawi.