

VEILOMANI TRAINING 2025

Session 2

HEALTH WORKER ROLE IN GBV

10 April 2025



SPACE
PROJECT



ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
MELBOURNE



PACIFIC
WOMEN
LEAD



STRENGTHENING PACIFIC WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

Session Objectives

- Recognise why GBV is both a physical and mental health issue and the role of the health sector in responding to GBV;
- Describe the survivor-centred approach; and,
- Discuss what is required and why (from a mental health perspective) to be an effective communicator with survivors of violence



Short video about Health Response to GBV

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qc_GHITvTmI

Physical & Mental Health Impact of GBV

- 1996 WHO resolution: recognition of VAW as Public Health priority



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: HEALTH IMPACT

Women exposed to intimate partner violence are →

Mental Health

TWICE
as likely to experience depression

ALMOST TWICE
as likely to have alcohol use disorders

Sexual and Reproductive Health

16%
more likely to have a low birth-weight baby

1.5 TIMES
more likely to acquire HIV and 1.5 times more likely to contract syphilis infection, chlamydia or gonorrhoea

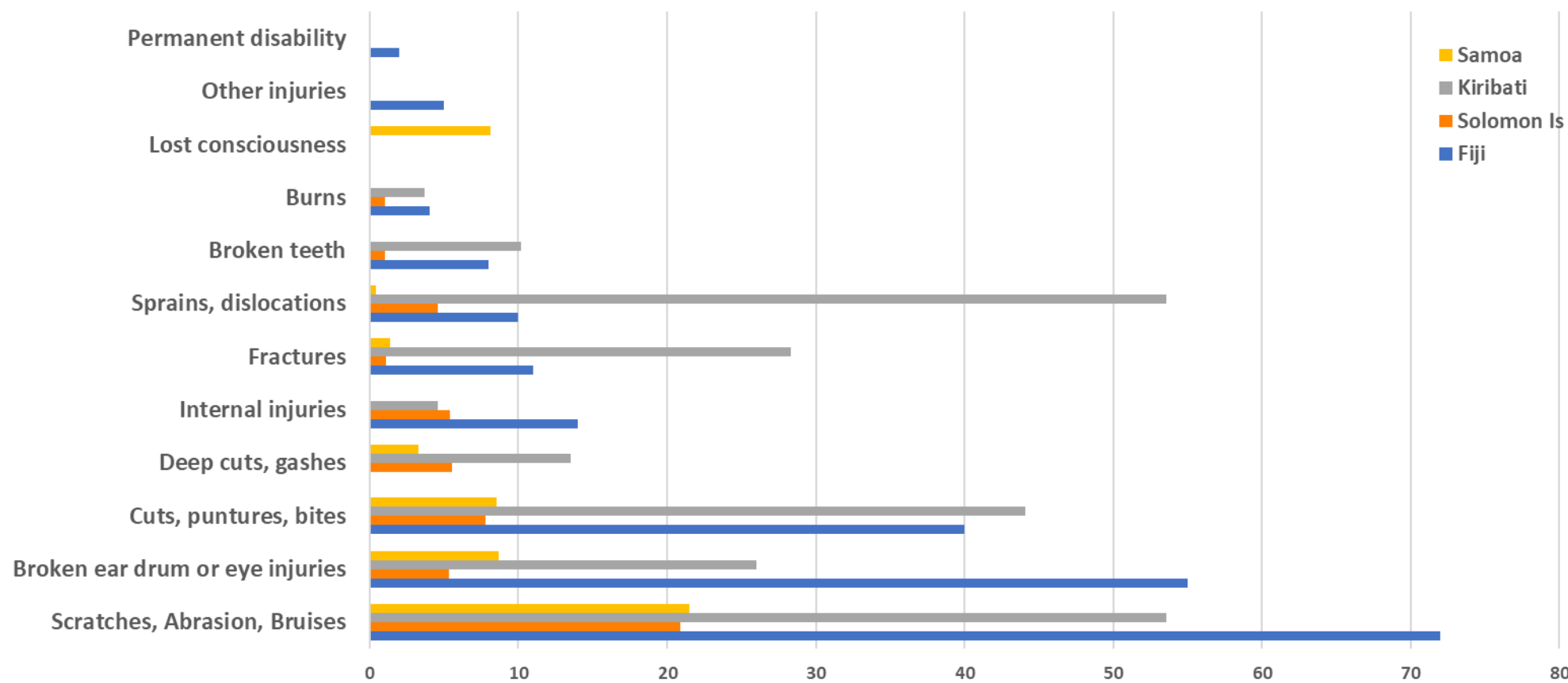
Death and Injury

42%
of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner have experienced injuries as a result

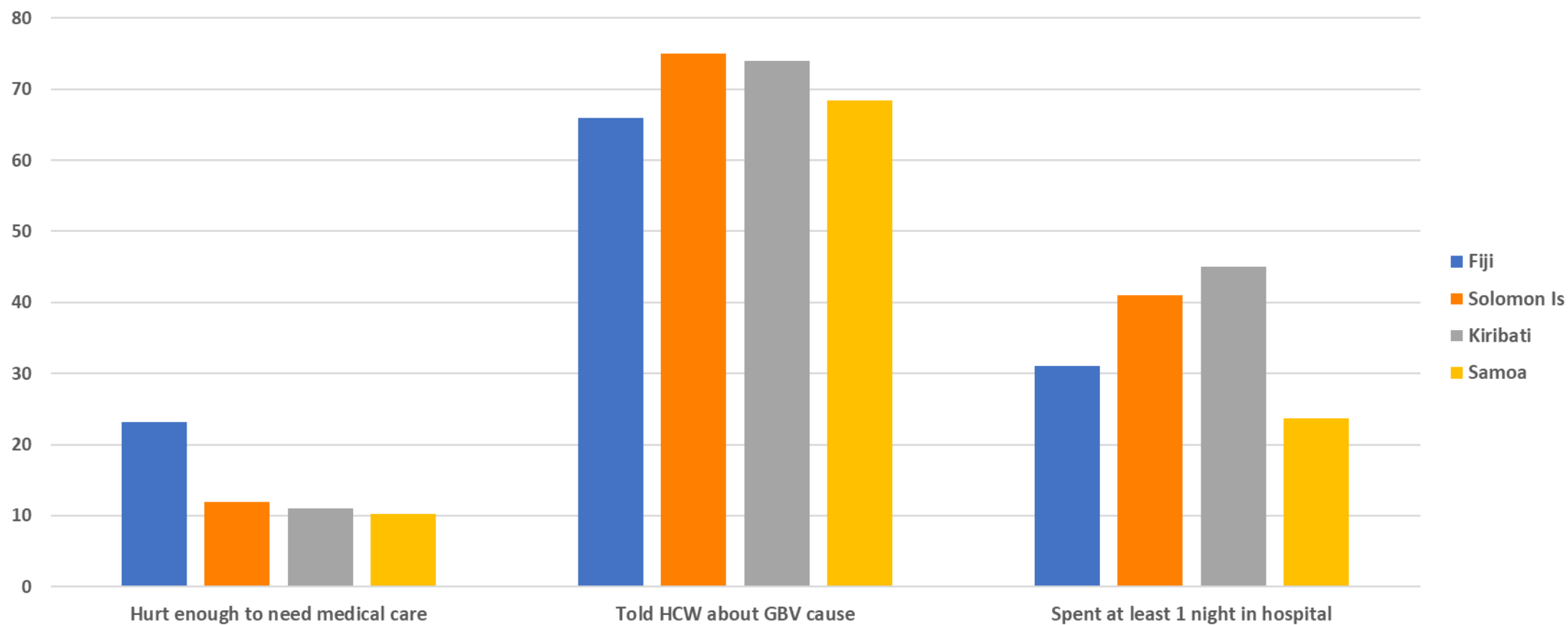
38%
of all murders of women globally were reported as being committed by their intimate partners

All statistics can be found in the report entitled Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, by the World Health Organization, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and the South African Medical Research Council, found here:
<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/en/index.html>

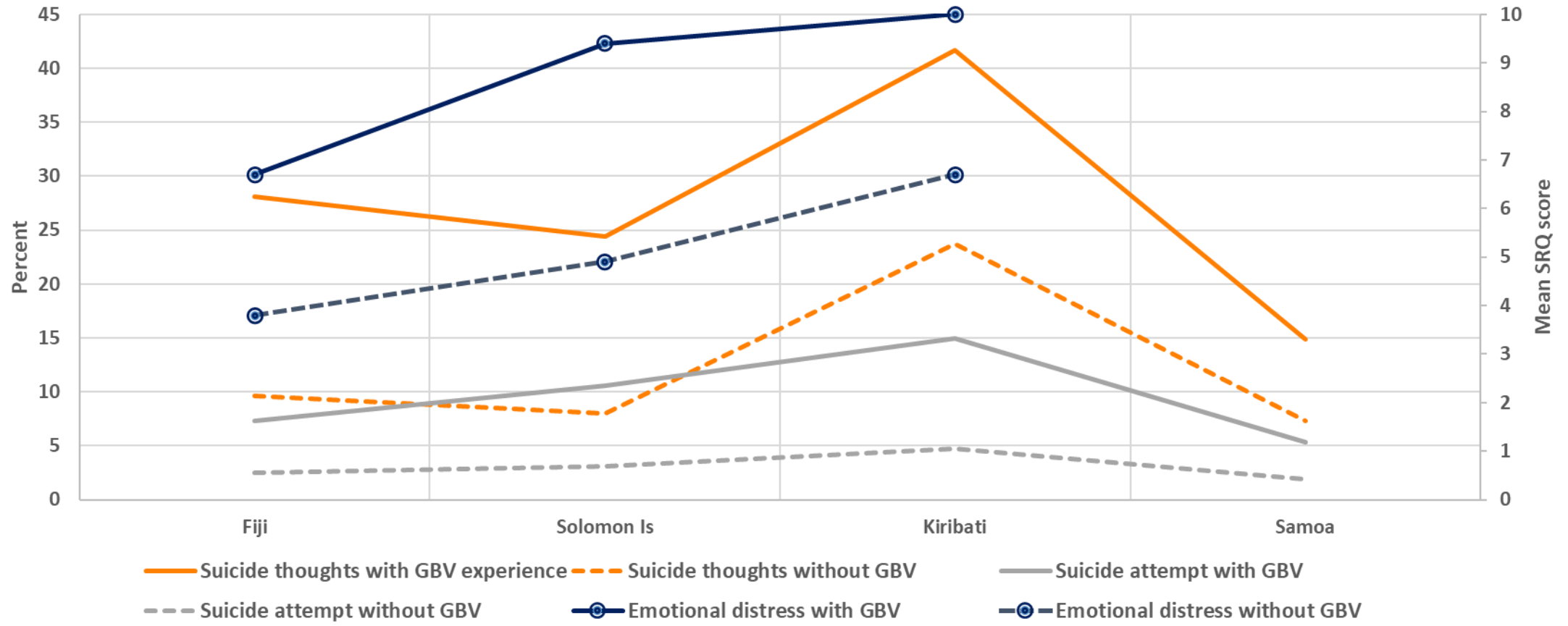
Physical Injuries of GBV in Pacific



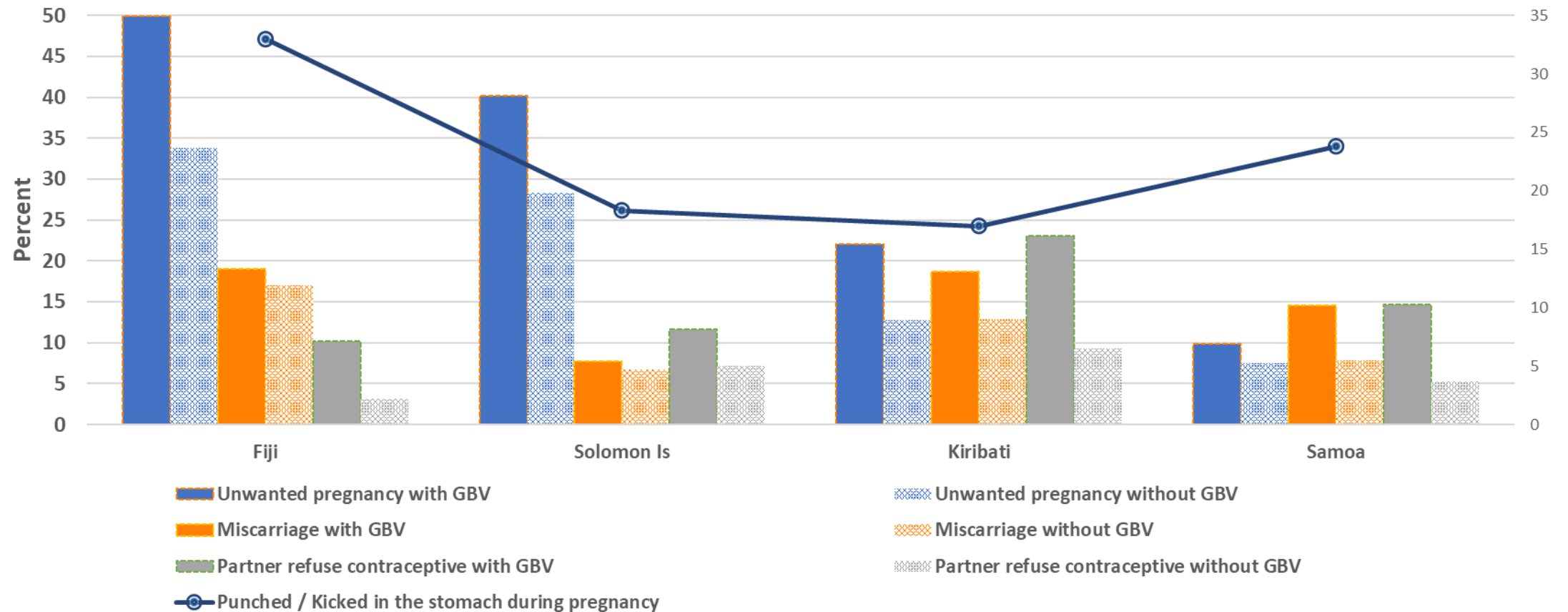
Health Seeking Behaviour for GBV in Pacific



Mental Health and GBV in Pacific



Reproductive Health and GBV in Pacific



Responding to GBV - Health Sector Role

- Provide critical, time sensitive interventions e.g., emergency contraception (within 120 hours) ; HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) (within 72); Presumptive STI treatment (WHO).
- Provide first-line support/psychological first aid for the survivor and referral to additional services;
- Providing a listening ear, inquiring about their needs, validating what the survivor is saying, enhancing her safety and support are the components of first-line support that any health care provider should know how to do;
- Facilitating access to supportive services in other sectors;
- Integrating health education and health promotion activities with clients and communities;
- Documenting the magnitude of the problem, its causes and consequences



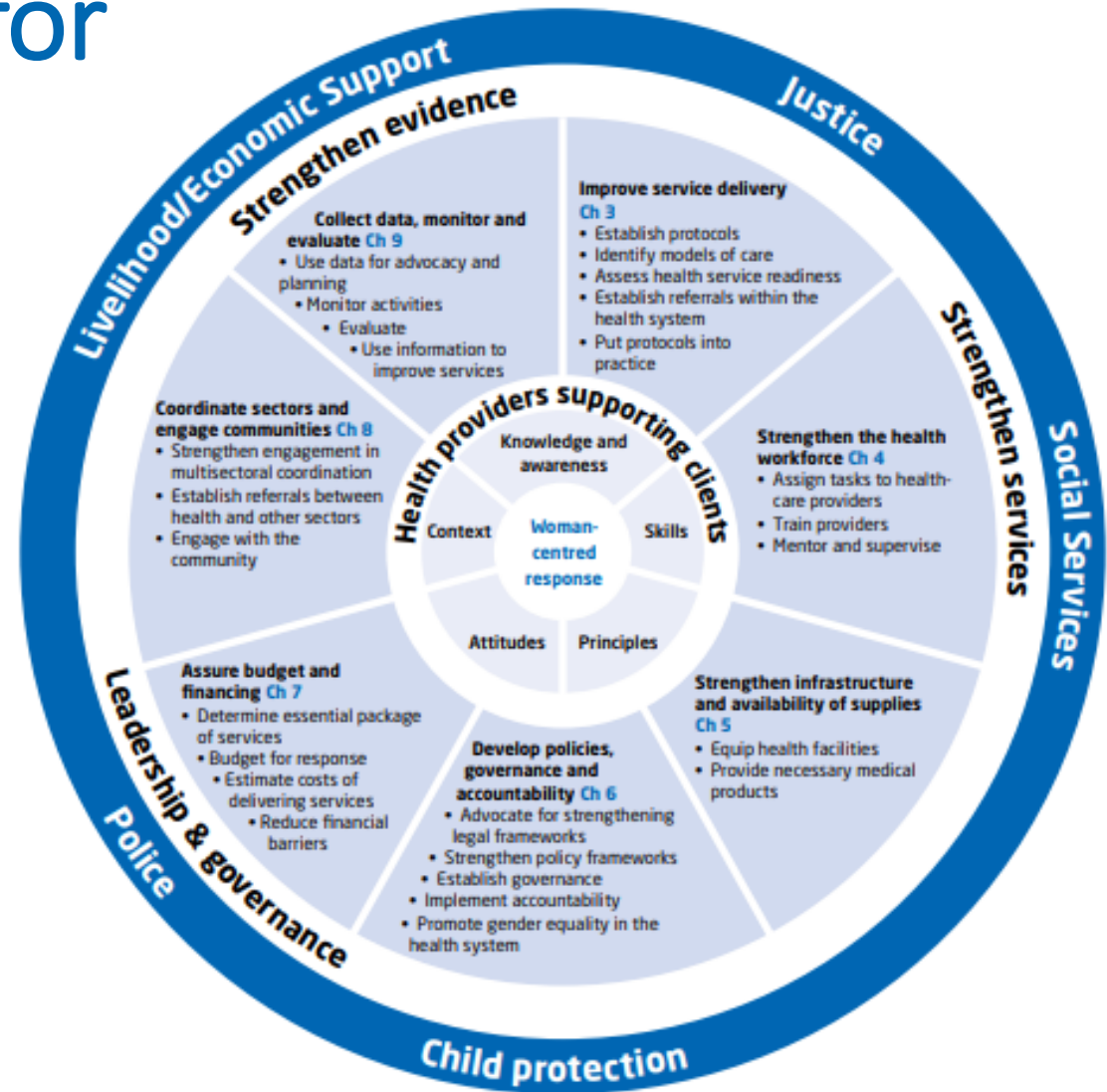
Survivor-centred Approach for GBV

- A survivor-centred approach to violence against women seeks to *empower the survivor by prioritizing her rights, needs and wishes* (UNWomen, 2013);
- Ensures survivors have access to appropriate, accessible and good quality services including health care; psychological and social support; security and legal services (UNFPA, 2012);
- Critical to have competent Health Care Workers (HCW) with appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills to prioritize the survivor's own experiences and input;
- HCWs can create a supportive environment in this approach, in which a survivor's rights are respected and in which she is treated with dignity and respect;
- A survivor-centered approach helps promote a survivor's recovery and reinforces her capacity to make decisions about possible interventions (UNICEF, 2010).

Survivor-centred Approach for GBV

WHO model : Health System's response to violence against women (WHO 2017)

- Health Services
- Health workforce
- Infrastructure / Commodities
- Governance / Accountability
- Budget / Financing
- Multisectoral coordination / Community engagement
- Health Information



Effective Communication with Survivors of GBV

- **Psychological First Aid (UNFPA, 2008).**

Is a humane, supportive response to survivors of GBV who are suffering and who may need support. PFA involves the following themes:

- Providing practical care and support, which does not intrude
- Assessing needs and concerns
- Helping people to address basic needs (for example, food and water, information)
- Listening to people, but not pressuring them to talk
- Comforting people and helping them to feel calm
- Helping people connect to information, services and social supports
- Protecting people from further harm

SPACE Project

- SPACE PROJECT – **S**trengthening **P**acific Women's Rights to Safety and **A**ccess to Health through Survivor-**C**entered and **E**vidence-Based Approaches

[Strengthening Pacific Women's Access to Health and Safety]

Evidence-based
knowledge of Health
System response to GBV

Increased skills &
competence of HCWs
and Community Leaders

Availability of GBV
knowledge products

Establishment of
Community of Practice

Key Points

- GBV is a Public Health issue because of its impact on **Physical, Mental, and Sexual Reproductive Health**
- HCWs have a key role as **first point of contact** to provide **critical and time sensitive care** and **first line support**, while also facilitating **access to other key services**, providing **community health education and awareness**, and **documenting the burden of GBV**
- A survivor-centred approach to GBV seeks to **empower the survivor** and ensuring a **Health System that prioritizes and is responsive** their rights, needs, and wishes
- Psychological First Aid Is a humane and supportive response to those experiencing GBV that ensures effective communication with them



THANK YOU

Questions and
Discussion



SPACE PROJECT | **STRENGTHENING PACIFIC WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY**



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WOMEN
LEAD**



**Pacific
Community**
Communauté
du Pacifique

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- UNFPA, 2008, Managing Gender-based Violence Programmes in Emergencies E-learning Companion Guide, Third Ave., New York;
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- UNICEF, 2010, Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for Health and Psychosocial Service Providers in Humanitarian Settings where information on working with teenagers can be found: <https://www.unicef.org/documents/caring-child-survivors-sexual-abuse>
- WHO, 2017, Strengthening health systems to respond to women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a manual for health managers. Geneva: World Health Organization;

