

# **VIOLENCE** against **WOMEN** with **DISABILITIES**

seeing and recognizing the signs



- **PHYSICAL**
- **SEXUAL**
- **STRUCTURAL**
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL**
- **ECONOMIC**
- **OBSTRETIC**
- **CULTURAL**

**PROGRAM: Descubre a nosa realidade! (Discover our reality!)**

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VIOLENCIA CONTRA AS MULLERES CON  
DISCAPACIDADE

Ver e recoñecer os sinais

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### THIS EDITION

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES.

Seeing and recognizing the signs.

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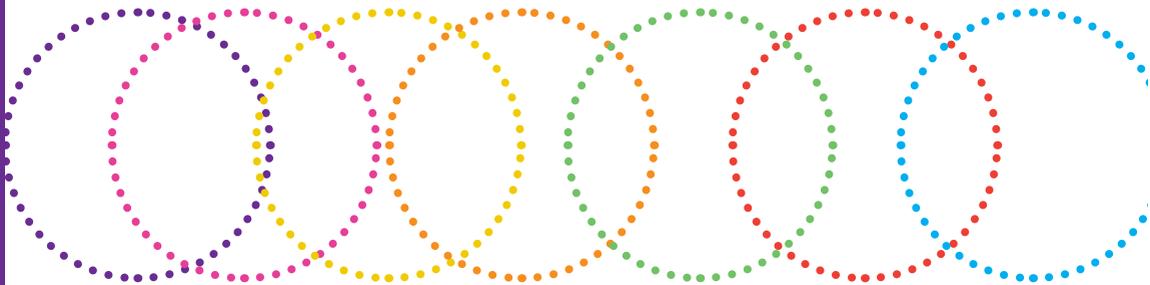
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# **VIOLENCE** against **WOMEN** with **DISABILITIES**

seeing and recognizing the signs



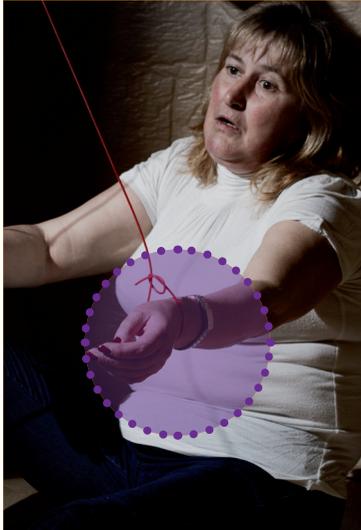
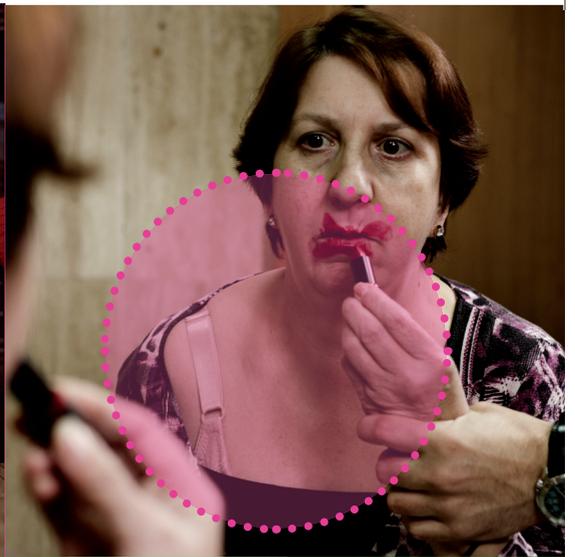
*For all of them.  
Our recognition to women  
That become visible  
To discover citric realities.*



**H**ow many times during a conversation does someone see something and the other person does not see it? Or vice versa? **Impotence, loneliness, insecurity, apathy or fear** are examples of feelings in their mostly simplified form of the total emotions that thousands of people feel when they live in an incredible **situation for the imagination of the listener**. So incredible that it surpasses what each person expects to happen. This leads to a decrease in the social network of accurate support for decision making that is fundamental to life and to diminish the possibility of empowerment. Therefore, one of the solutions to this social conflict of invisibility and disbelief of specific forms of violence against women with disabilities is to accompany anyone who wants to learn to look. And when we say to look, it refers to intentionally fixing the view on something or someone.

**That is the true tool of social change: to gather the strength, courage, sorority and implication enough to want to perceive something through the intelligence** in each of the photographs and words of this booklet and **make them reach the thousands of pores of the skin, to the rhythm of our motor box and to the flow of air entering and leaving the lungs**. Thus, we will find ourselves in the physiological obligation to rebalance a total state of homeostasis in our body and in the world in which we feel, live and act.

With this, it is necessary to enrich our imagination to obtain a diversification of the possible social realities. In this way, the success of generating the lighting of thousands of lamps in the limbic systems of each one of the people who are immersed in all or in one of the created pages will be achieved. You just have to generate enough energy to turn them on.



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# presentation

**T**he International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (New York, December 2006) had important implications for people with disabilities. It recognizes the concurrence of additional reasons for possible discrimination in the case of women with disabilities and notes that “women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk of violence, injuries or abuse, abandon or neglect, maltreatment or exploitation”.

In addition to the difficulties for development and full participation affecting all persons with disabilities, gender is a variable that delves deeper into this inequality and involves multiple and multisectoral discrimination for women with disabilities who are more vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty.

Although it is true that in recent years our society is becoming aware of the serious problem and the democratic deficit that gender violence implies, it is also true that when we speak of women with any type of disability we also necessarily speak of a double or triple marginalization; they confront more inequalities in the enjoyment of their rights as people, in their access and permanence in employment, in education, in social protection, in the right to affective relations, in maternity, or in the very image that society and the media reflect of them.

In this area of gender violence, there is a perception that a big number of cases occur among women with disabilities, who are never known or denounced, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, there are numerous obstacles to the potential denunciation by of women with disabilities. Vulnerability is multiplied for these women, with less access to information and resources.

It is therefore responsibility of administrations and public authorities to remove obstacles that impede the full development of women's rights, with an integrated approach to gender in the planning and design of all actions that are implemented, including measures targeted at women with disabilities, promoting their social participation and introducing, from a gender perspective, measures to support these women.

Theirs is a longer road than the rest of women to achieve equality of opportunities and the guarantee of their rights. We hope this booklet helps to accompany them and make that path easier.

Susana López Abella  
*Secretaria Xeral de Igualdade da Xunta de Galicia*  
(General Secretary of Equality)



*“We must be  
a tool for the process of  
**empowerment**  
of women  
with disabilities”*

Mónica Álvarez San Primitivo  
*Presidenta de Acadar (Chairwoman of Acadar)*

**W**e live in a diverse and global society in which the person has to exercise the feeling of citizenship. We need to change our values, unlearn what we have internalized, the result of stereotypes and

prejudices of a culture and tradition that do not adapt to the present reality. Our society needs to detach itself from traditional values, changing reality through new concepts such as: SORORITY, EQUALITY, FREEDOM and RESPECT. We have a responsibility to pay off the debt with the most vulnerable and damaged groups, so we must make a commitment to break with any inequality by showing new social models in which we are all valued.

**The idea of this didactic booklet appears in response to the need to have material that allows us to know, detect, and address the vulnerability confronted by women with disabilities.**

An unknown reality, ignored, that exposes us different forms of violence. Knowing gives us tools to tackle inequalities, breaking with any form of violence and allows us to educate in the appropriate values where we are all protagonists.

We invite you as professionals to reflect on how different forms of violence impede women with disabilities, prevent their participation and inclusion in society. **We must be a tool for the EMPOWERMENT process of women with disabilities**, a process that must begin in us and that must be extended to the rest of society. Only from the firm commitment of each and everyone can we talk about EQUALITY. Let us be the engine of change to achieve those values.

## consciousness

FIRST PHASE OF THE PROCESS  
WHERE WE ACCOMPANY WOMEN  
WITH DISABILITIES TO BECOME  
AWARE OF THEIR NEEDS

The ACADAR works from the belief that women with disabilities can be **masters** of their decision making. We start, therefore, from the idea that it will not be the professional group that provides handout solutions. The effort must start from the person who wants and needs to change a current situation.

*“path,  
decision making,  
self-determination”*





# recognizing

## training

PART OF THE PROCESS IN WHICH WE ACCOMPANY WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE ACQUISITION OF TOOLS FOR THEIR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Everyone has the tools to reach one or more personal goals. The key is to get to visualize them consciously to be able to use and take advantage of them. Even so many times this is not what happens and professional work is to guide women in the training of those skills they need.

*“the path,  
the tools,  
the effort”*





## empowerment

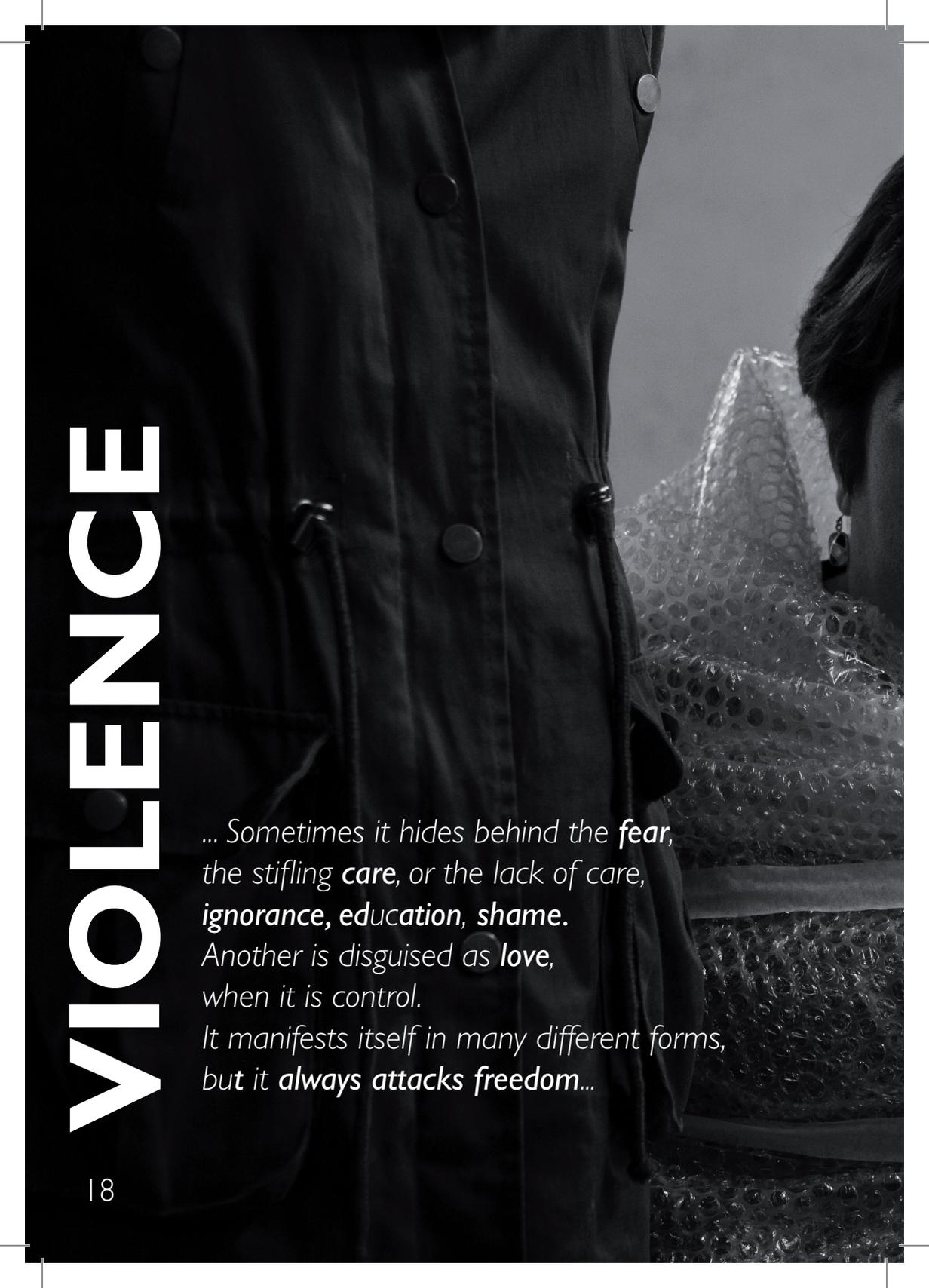
END OF THE PROCESS IN WHICH  
WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES FREELY  
TAKE THEIR DECISIONS

In this phase the woman with disability is truly aware of her abilities and what she needs to achieve her life goals. Now she enjoys the use of all those tools that are allows you to design and living your life project according to what she wants. Socially these women are models that will serve others.

*“abilities,  
personal growth,  
successes”*







# VIOLENCE

... Sometimes it hides behind the **fear**,  
the stifling **care**, or the lack of care,  
**ignorance, education, shame**.  
Another is disguised as **love**,  
when it is control.  
It manifests itself in many different forms,  
but it **always attacks freedom**...

A black and white photograph of a woman wrapped in bubble wrap. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. A person's arm and torso are visible behind her, suggesting she is being restrained or protected. The text "Can you see her?" is overlaid in large white font.

# Can you see her?

What is it?  
Where is it?  
How do I recognize it?  
What do I do?

# VIOLENCE

Active  
Passive



**What is it?** Article I of the Declaration about the Elimination of Violence against Women defines, for the first time in 1993, **violence against women** as “any violent act based on belonging to the female sex that has or can Result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, as well as threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life and violence towards women. Women constitute a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which led to the domination of women and to discrimination against them by men and impeded the full advancement of women; and that violence against women is one of the fundamental social mechanisms by which women are forced into subordination to men.”

**Where is it?** It is in the ideology of a Patriarchal Social System. In 1986 Gerda Lerner defined it as “the manifestation and institutionalization of the masculine dominion over the women and children of the family and the extension of that dominion over the women in the society in general”. Men have to have, exercise and enjoy greater social, political, economic and sexual power than women. The Patriarchate is structured in as a set of agents who socialize us in this ideology: families, work spaces, educational centers, media, religions, leisure and free time, public and private institutions... At the same time, these agents use different tools that differentiate us socially depending on whether we are women or men: the norms of coexistence, textbooks, film scripts, cultural programs, laws and decrees, colors of outfit, language, clothing, sexual relations...

**How do I recognize it?** We can recognize violence as long as we intend to critically and constructively visualize a Patriarchal System that establishes an unequal civil society. For that we have a vital tool such as “intersectional methodology”. It refers to the complex processes that derive from the interaction of social, economic, political, cultural and symbolic factors in each context (Crenshaw, 1989). It argues that inequalities (class, caste, race, color; ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, abilities ...) do not add up, but intersect differently in each personal situation and social group. In 2001, Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the concept of intersectionality in the World Conference against Racism in South Africa.

**What do I do?** What do you want? Do you want to get to see, interiorize and constructively criticize the inequitable social system that underlies violence against women? And if the answer is yes, what changes do you want and can you offer to change the situation.

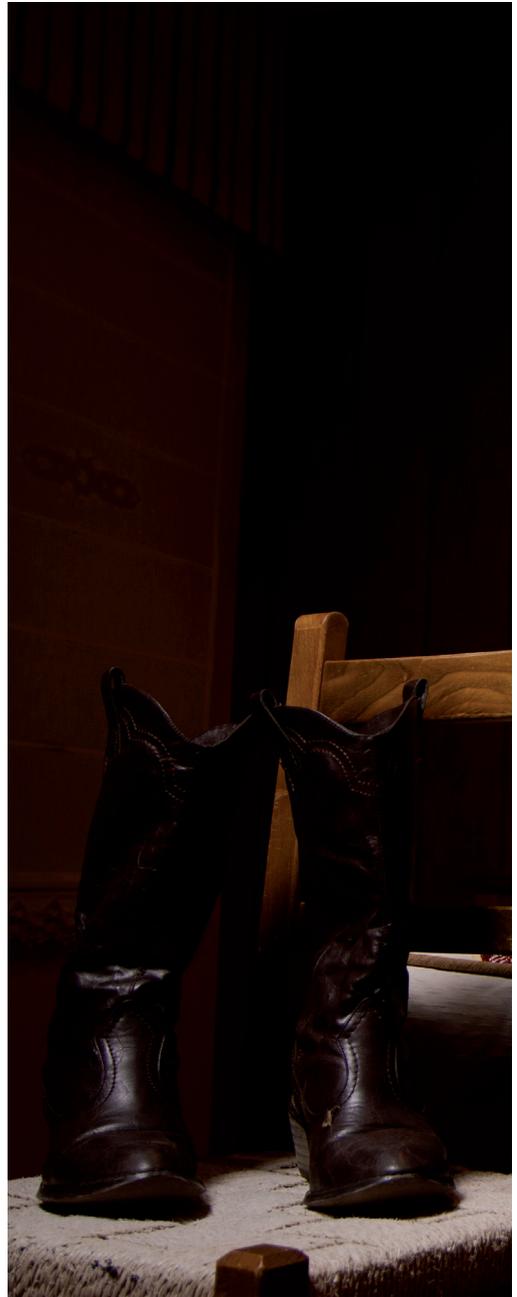
# Stop it

THE SIGNS WHICH YOU  
IMAGINE VISIBLES

From the tip of the hair to the toes, from the fingertip of one of the phalanges of the right hand to the corresponding fingertip of the left hand, passing through the heart and lungs.

Any internal or external organ will be the possible protagonist and recipient to carry imprinted the marks of a type of control. Imagine which ... This is the form of treatment that we are most familiar with, but it is not the most habitual or the most painful impression in women's lives.

*"I wish you could  
see what  
my body felt!"*





# VIOLLENCE

## ● PHYSICAL

### INDICATORS

- state of sedation or nervousness
  - motor dysfunction other than disability
  - marks on wrists and knees
    - bites
    - burns
    - malnutrition
  - inappropriate clothing with respect to the weather
    - frequent non-disability diseases
  - very stained or damaged clothes
    - scratches
    - unexplained disabilities
  - fractures of various kinds
    - injury to internal organs
      - tympanic perforations
    - dental problems
- ...

In its **active** form is an act of force against the body of the woman, with result or risk of producing physical injury or damage, exercised by another person.

In its **passive** form is the denial or deprivation of the basic aspects necessary for the proper maintenance of the organism in terms of health, hygiene and appearance. It can be exercised by caring or support figures, family members, partners or friends.



● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL



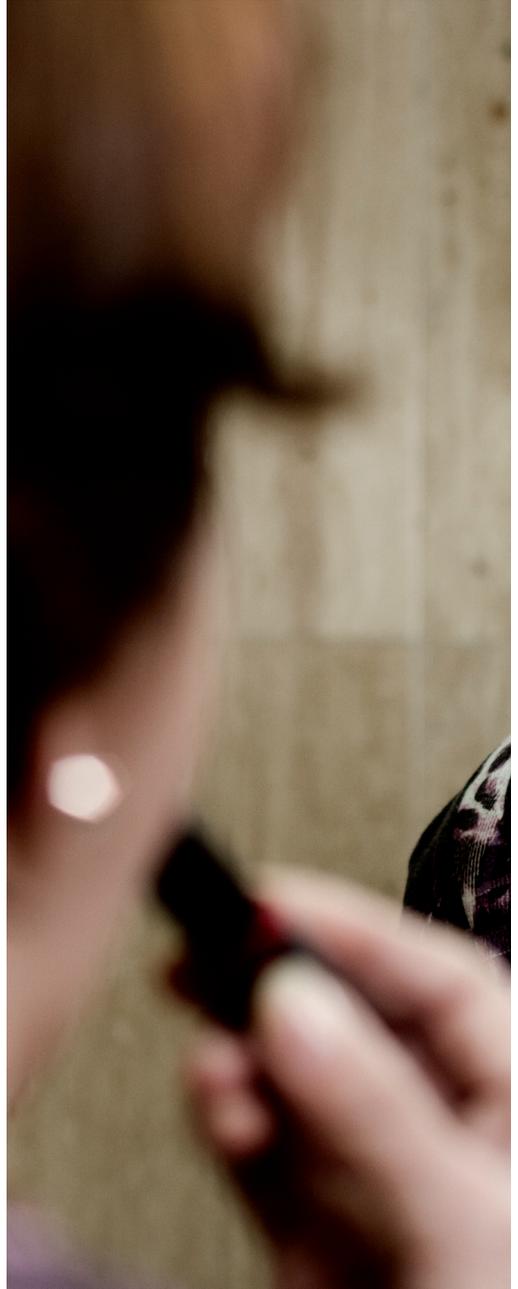
Bodily aggression  
Unjustified drug  
administration  
Restriction of mobility

# Govern yourself

COVERED TO ME AND ALWAYS  
NAKED FOR YOU

Try to find as many signs as there are elements here. This is the photograph that marks the excellence of the capacity to visualize the forms of violence against women. Through it we can extract the symbology of patriarchal power over them. No longer the control of the body, but control of identity. Look at it carefully, and feel without pause. After the cold and fear, anger and rage will surge to detect and change it.

*“There comes a time when you do not even feel yourself inside”*





# VIOLENCE

## ● SEXUAL

Intimidation or non-consensual invasion of a woman's body for sexual purposes. When there is no awareness of the intentionality of the action, we are talking about sexual abuse. It can be exercised by caregivers or support figures, relatives, partners, friends or professionals of reference.

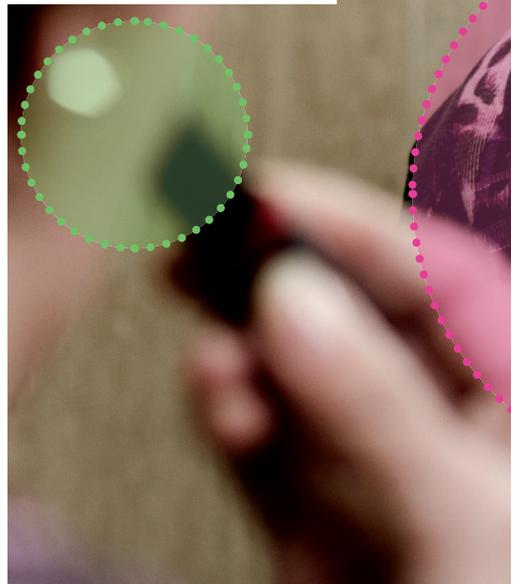
### INDICATORS

#### physical:

- vaginal tears / anal / perineal / vaginal wall
- erythema/ edema/ petechiae vaginal area
  - paralysis/ anal sphincter pain
- itching/ erosion/ anal area lacerations
- rupture/ perforation/ dilation of the hymen

...

● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL





Violation  
Harassment  
Sexual  
exploitation

# Abuse/ harassment/ sexual humiliation

## INDICATORS

### physical:

- unwanted pregnancy
- STI (sexually transmitted infections)
- visible signs or bruises on thighs/  
breasts/ buttocks
- head/ face injury/ around mouth/  
nose/ neck/ arms
- presence of sperm/ pubic hair  
aggressor

# emotional and behavioral:

- alterations of sleep/ eating/ menstruation/ gastrointestinal
- insecurity/ mistrust
- sudden changes in behavior; problems of inhibition and fear (being alone, men, a certain family member)/ isolation and rejection of social relations/ decrease of social activity, leisure and work/ aggressiveness, anger; hostility, conflict with the family and friends/ self-harm/ suicide attempts
- resistance to stripping, bathing/ problems or rejection of school or center/ fantasies or regressive behaviors (thumb sucking, bed wetting)/ secrecy/ social interaction difficulties and of interpreting social cues/ tendencies to interpret behavior as hostile other people/ obsessive thoughts regarding aggression/ nightmares/ attention, memory, concentration and concentration problems/ symptoms of anxiety and depression/ substance abuse.
- in sexual relations rejection of caresses, kissing and physical contact/ seductive behavior, especially in precocious girls/ behaviors or sexual knowledge inappropriate for their age/ interest exaggerated by sexual behavior adult people/ sexual aggression from minors to minors/ confusion about sexual orientation/ sexual mismatch/ dependency/ aggressiveness...

# Scale

LIVING IMPLIES TO SURVIVE

It implies the ability to adapt to the environment in which you are. How would you adapt to a space that is not designed with your abilities in mind? In a village, where your needs are neither visualized nor covered ... In a context like this, there is only progress, struggle and belief in the possibility of success. What do you think the protagonist of the photography does to get it and how does it affect you? Looking at her you do not even guess her name, but how do you think they call her?

*“All that I am getting will benefit the people who come after me”*





# VIOLENCE

## ● STRUCTURAL

### INDICATORS

- wage differentials between women and men
- inaccessible spaces
- difficulty accessing the health system
  - sexist mass media
- denial of the right and access to education
- lack of opportunities and access to resources
  - deprivation of the right to decide over their own body
- deprivation of access to positions of responsibility
- stereotyped work orientation
  - absence of transversality in statistical data
- making women invisible as a social value
- adaptation of bureaucratic procedures

Failure to cover basic needs (survival, welfare, identity or freedom) based on the unequal design of structures.

It is the responsibility of the public authorities to counterbalance it.



● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL



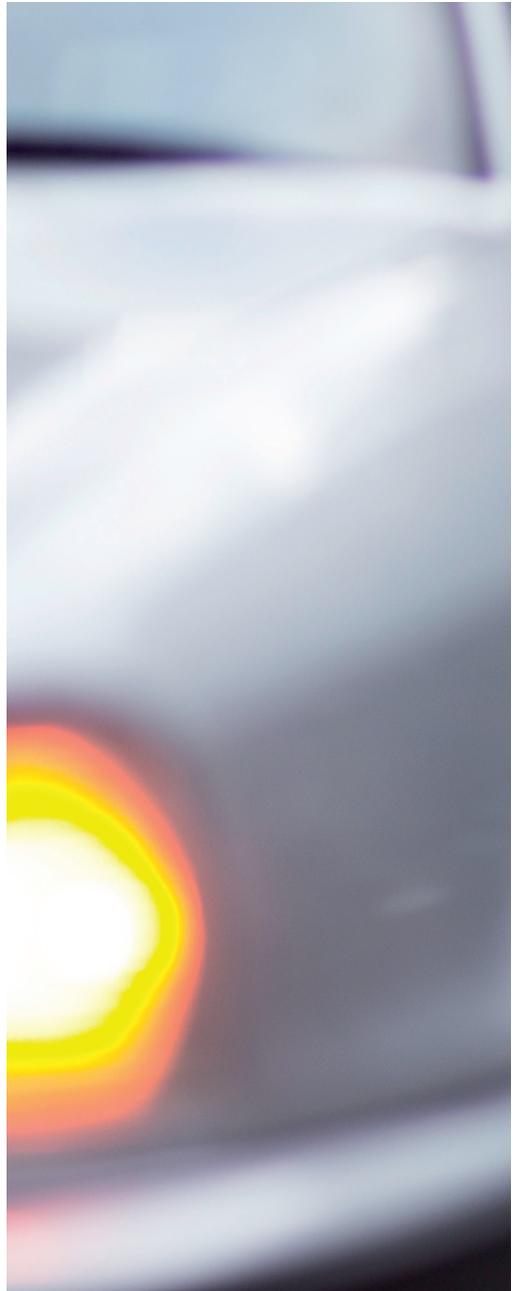
## Inaccessibles spaces

# Impermeable

AT A GLANCE,  
YOU WILL NOT SEE ANYTHING

On the skin of the protagonist there are no clues. Even so you can stop and put time looking into her eyes. Look at her eyebrows, the corners of your mouth or the wrinkles of every millimeter of her face. What do they denote? What or who is responsible for your mood?

*“It costs and you do not know how much, that the things that they tell you not affect”*





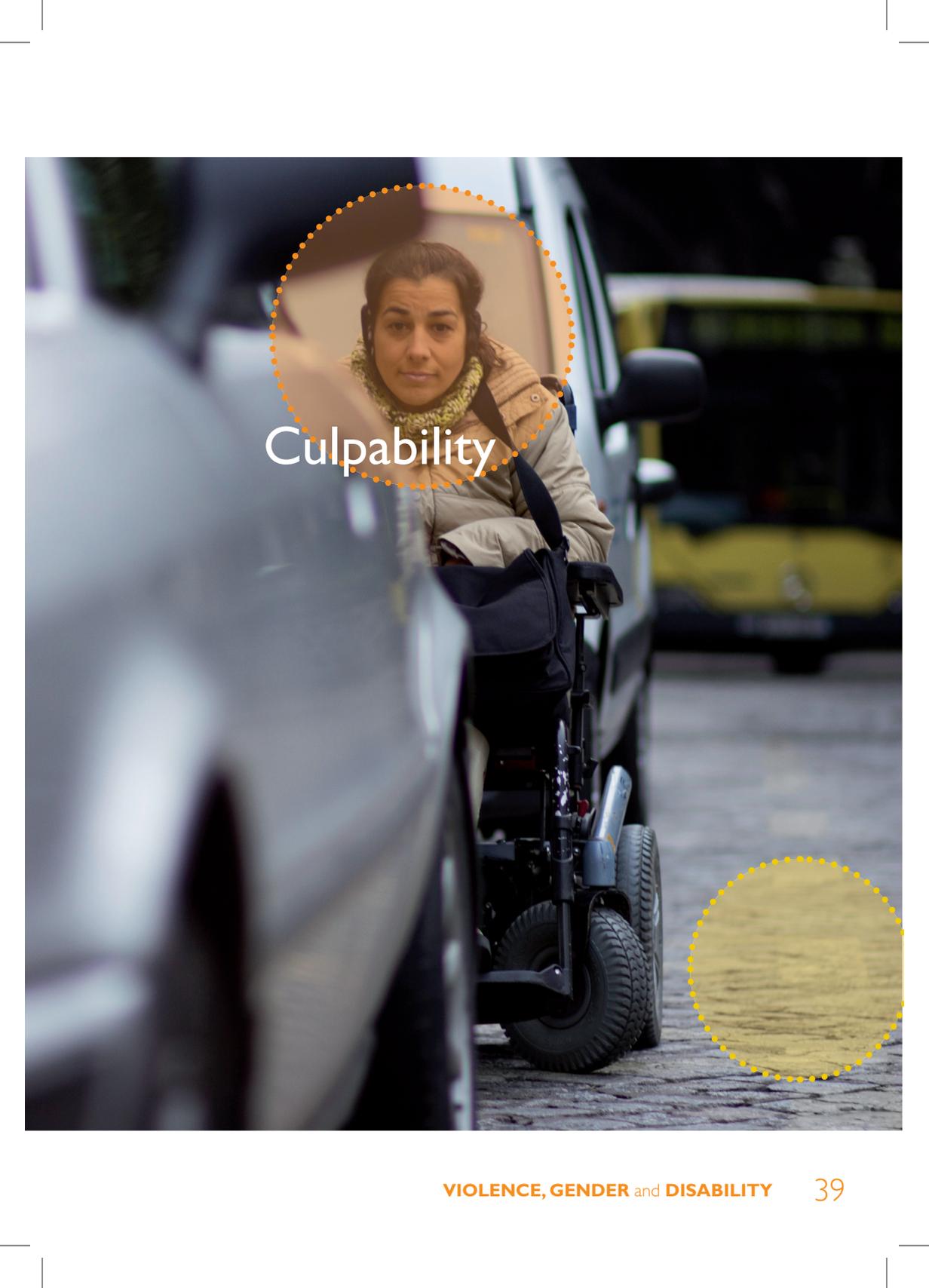
# VIOLLENCE

## ● PSYCHOLOGICAL

- control of the image/ expressions/ emotions/ goals/ family/ use of time/ self-worth/ channels of communication/ thoughts
- abandonment of care or support
  - denial of capabilities
- loss of custody of offspring/ threats
  - blame
  - indecision
- low self-esteem
- nervous attitude...

Any conduct, verbal or nonverbal, that is scorn or causes a woman to suffer. It can be exercised by caregivers or support figures, relatives, partners, friends or professionals.

● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL

A photograph of a woman in a wheelchair on a city street. She is wearing a light-colored jacket and a scarf. The word "Culpability" is overlaid in white text on a circular orange dotted background around her face. In the bottom right corner, a circular yellow dotted background highlights a patch of cobblestone pavement. The background shows a blurred car and a yellow vehicle.

Culpability

# Manipulate

WITHOUT POWER  
OVER WHAT IS YOURS,  
YOU WILL NEVER BE FREE

Look at the abilities of this woman.  
Guess what her level  
of education is.  
What do you think that her  
profession might be?  
Does she have economic power?  
Who handles her money?

*“At the age  
of 40, my life  
began again”*





# VIOLENCE

## ● ECONOMIC

### INDICATORS

- non-compliance with the pensions payment law
  - excessive justification of expenses
- abusive control of money
- denial of access to paid work
- lack of information on the couple's income
  - financial illiteracy
    - marital assets without informed consent

Act of deprivation of the economic power of women. By the public authorities and/ or people close to the family environment.



Excessive spending control

● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL

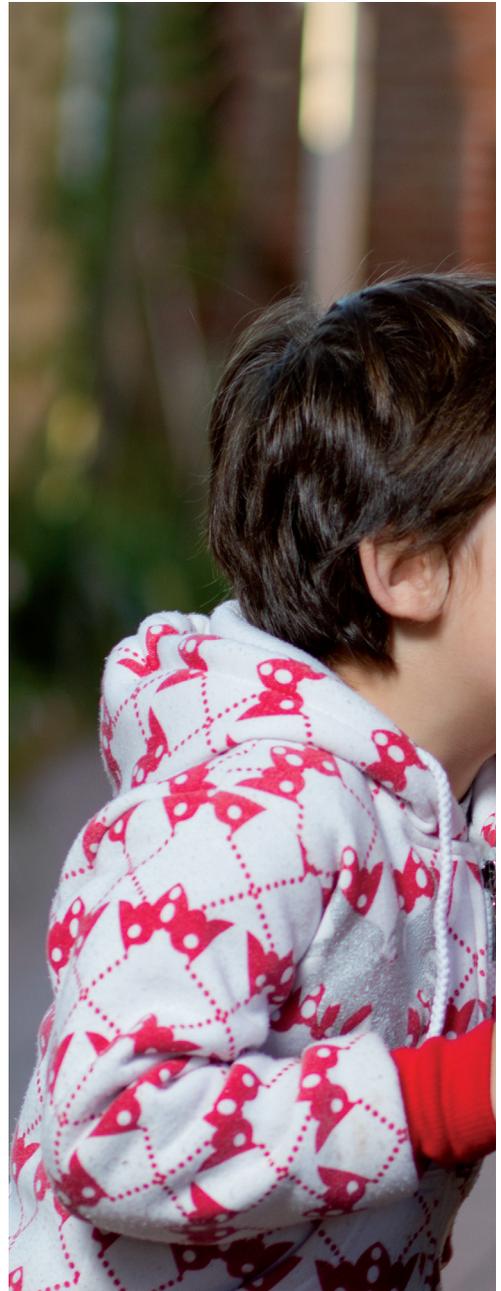


# Parentling

CAPABLE I,  
FOR YOU I WILL NEVER BE TAHT

What do you think is the link between the two persons that are seen in the photograph? Think well because the answer will determine the eyes with which you are able to look at the possibilities that you believe true in your little world. For a long time civil society enjoyed and enjoys socially and economically that women with disabilities are capable of caring for relatives, grandchildren, nieces, etc., but to raise kids of their own?

*“People came  
to ask how I  
had done to get  
pregnant ...”*





# VIOLLENCE

## ● OBSTRETIC

### INDICATORS

- dehumanized treatment
- instrumented births
  - medication abuse
  - unjustified medical interventions
- denial of health rights
  - lack of attention
  - lack of information about medical practices
- bad medical practices
- inaccessible language
  - lack of information
  - lack of skills in health workers
- absence of furniture/ accessible appliances
- forced sterilizations hysterectomies
- denial of sexuality
  - no access to contraceptive methods...

Any act that is exercised on the body of the woman during the prebirth, birth and postbirth care. Exercise by health professionals.



● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL



Forced  
Sterilization  
No access to  
contraceptive  
methods

# Enjoy

LOOK AT WHO IS THE  
MAIN CHARACTER IN THE  
PHOTOGRAPHY

What do you think is the kind of link that exists between the people in the foreground? This is the key to discovering the secrets of this situation. Look, what are they serving her at the table? Is it a meal adapted for her age? What would you say is the waiter's idea of disability?

And who taught him all those ideas? Many times we are not able to identify the drink from which we feed culturally, although it is fundamental to detect them to be able to understand them and then to change them, if necessary.

*“People did not  
imagine that he  
could be with  
me considering  
what I am”*





# VIOLENCE

## ● CULTURAL



Any aspect of culture  
(religion, race,  
ideology, language,  
sexual orientation ...)  
used to justify  
the use  
of violence.

## INDICATORS

Religious ideals // patriarchal ideals  
// LGBTBI phobias // unequal language //  
Invisibility and indifference of the person //  
denial of rights // lack of credibility  
// excessive social burden from tradition  
// established aesthetic standards  
// overprotection // social pity  
// concealment of the person  
// invasion of privacy ...

● PHYSICAL ● SEXUAL ● STRUCTURAL ● PSYCHOLOGICAL  
● ECONOMIC ● OBSTRETIC ● CULTURAL



Social pity  
Patriarchal  
Mindset

## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

**Highlighted:** twice as many women with disabilities experienced severe physical violence by their partner; compared to women without disabilities.

Data:

By a current or former partner:

Total:

- Women with disabilities: 16.8%
- Women without disabilities: 10.4%

Severe physical violence:

- Women with disabilities: 12%
- Women without disabilities: 6.4%

By other people:

Total:

- Women with disabilities: 15.4%
- Women without disabilities: 11.4%

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Highlighted:** more than 10% of women with disabilities experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives.

Data:

By a current or former partner:

- Women with disabilities: 14.7%
- Women without disabilities: 8.1%

By other people:

- Women with disabilities: 10.3%
- Women without disabilities: 7%

## PHYSICAL + SEXUAL VIOLENCE, inside and outside the couple

**Highlighted:** 35.1% of women with disabilities experienced sexual and/ or physical violence.

Data:

- Women with disabilities: 35.1%
- Women without disabilities: 23.7%

## PHYSICAL + SEXUAL VIOLENCE within the couple

**Highlighted:** more than 20% of women with disabilities are physically or sexually assaulted by their partners.

Data:

- Women with disabilities: 21.1%
- Women without disabilities: 12.6%

## ECONOMIC VIOLENCE, by a current or former partner:

**Highlighted:** case 20% of women with disabilities experienced the economic violence by hand of their partners.

Data:

- Women with disabilities: 18.5%
- Women without disabilities: 10.8%

## PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE, by a current or former partner:

**Highlighted:** about 30% of women with disabilities experienced psychological

violence, both emotional and control.

While non-disabled women experienced psychological violence more than emotional control, for women with disabilities both types are equally prevalent.

Data:

Of control:

- Women with disabilities: 30.6%
- Women without disabilities: 26.1%

Emotional (shouting, insults, humiliation):

- Women with disabilities: 31.5%
- Women without disabilities: 22.3%

### **PHYSICAL + SEXUAL + PSYCHOLOGICAL + ECONOMIC VIOLENCE,**

by a current or former partner:

**Highlighted:** the proportion of women with disabilities who experienced physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence by their partners is twice that of women without disabilities.

Data:

- Women with disabilities: 10.8%
- Women without disabilities: 5%

### **CULTURAL VIOLENCE**

**Highlighted:** women with disabilities who do not share household chores with other people in the household experienced violence in greater proportion than those who do share them.

Data:

Percentage of women who experienced gender-based violence (physical, sexual, economic or psychological):

- Women with disabilities who never or almost never share household chores: 45.8%
- Women with disabilities who always or almost always share household chores: 32.6%

**Recidivism:** women who suffered violence from their last partner and also from another previous partner:

**Highlighted:** almost half of the disabled women who were in a situation of partner violence return to the same situation in a later relationship.

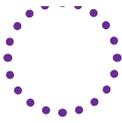
Data:

Violence in general:

- Women with disabilities: 46.3%
- Women without disabilities: 33.3%
- Women without disabilities: 33.3%

Only psychological violence:

- Women with disabilities: 47.1%
- Women without disabilities: 33.4%



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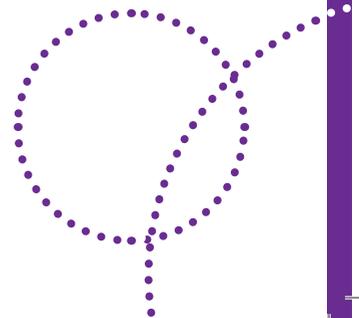
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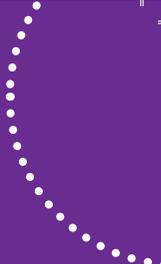
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## Means

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The reality of women and is marked by the androcentrism of the patriarchal society in which we live and in which we are socialized in a different way.

Therefore, this booklet and the tools provided in it are at all times based on feminist theory. We understand that FEMINISM is the struggle for EQUALITY, criticism of androcentrism and vindication of the rights of women as human beings; as Celia Amorós says: "Not looking for the masculine identity but the generic human." Although, historically the masculine appropriated the generic, thus making woman and their history and value in society invisible.

This booklet is born from need to make visible, reveal and discover the different realities of women based on: their experiences, feelings and our daily work with all of them and their different realities. For the latter, we consider two terms: feminism and intersectionality. These walk hand in hand, creating with it what many feminist movements denominate, intersectional feminism. We understand that different forms of oppression can not be represented by relevance, but must be interrelated. Therefore, in this book, gender and disability are addressed in a related way, generating a unique tool for working with women; without ignoring any of the forms of discrimination that affects women with disabilities.

We hope that this working tool will facilitate the path towards a professional conduct marked by intersectional feminism and in which, each and every one of the realities of women with disabilities are included.





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