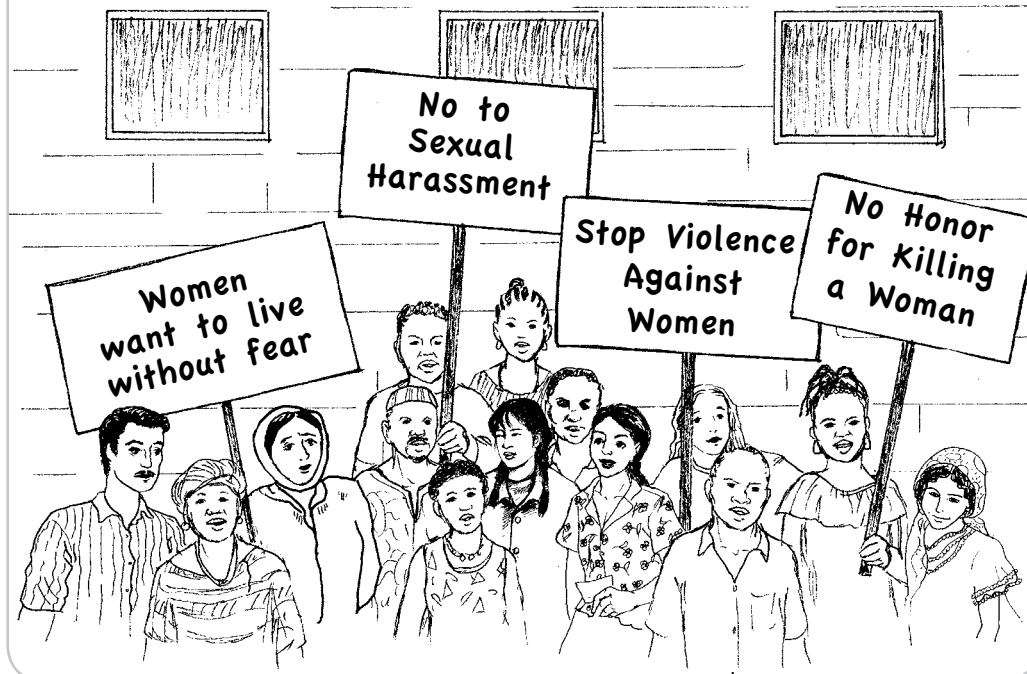


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Ending Gender-based Violence

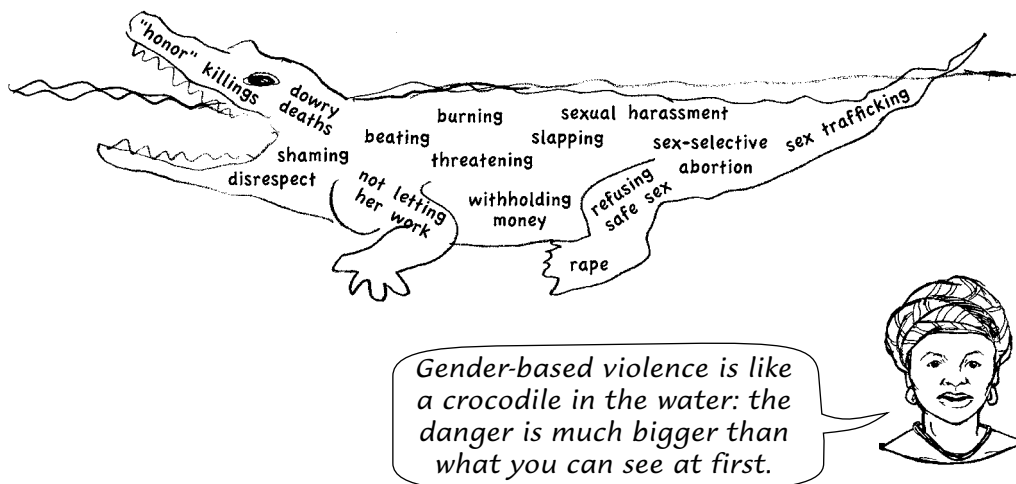


Suffering violence or fear of violence should not be a part of anyone's life. Sadly, however, gender-based violence is so common that it is often considered "normal." Most women fear rape or sexual violence even if they have never been personally assaulted or threatened. That fear is part of being a woman. And many men believe that using violence — or the threat of violence — is an acceptable way to handle the power that goes with expectations about masculinity. Those expectations are part of being a man, even if a man never uses violence.

Physical violence such as beating, or sexual violence such as rape, are what people usually think of when they think of gender-based violence. However, gender-based violence includes all the ways power or force is used to control women and girls, and to punish men who do not obey gender norms.

What is gender-based violence?

Any violence or threat of violence that is done to women and girls to enforce gender roles and the lower status of women is gender-based violence. Harm done to lesbians, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) people can also be gender-based violence because their lives challenge rigid ideas about masculinity and femininity. Gender-based violence is not just physical and sexual, but is also emotional and economic. When people verbally abuse women and LGBT people, limit their freedoms, deprive them of education and fair wages, or use gender-based power to control what they can and cannot do, that is also a form of violence.



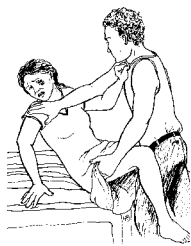
It often looks like gender-based violence is the act of a single person — the man who beats his wife or the boss who sexually harasses his employee. But usually the perpetrator is permitted or even encouraged to do this because others around him justify this violent behavior. Addressing gender-based violence means not just changing men's violent actions towards women and LGBT people, it also means changing laws, widely held attitudes, and customs that allow and even reward gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence harms health in many ways

At least 1 out of every 3 women has been beaten, forced to have sex, or physically abused in some other way, usually by a man she knows. The health effects of this type of physical violence include severe pain, permanent disabilities, and injuries such as broken bones, burns, black eyes, cuts, and bruises.



Many women suffer miscarriages from being beaten during pregnancy. Problems such as headaches, asthma, belly pain, and muscle pains may last for years after abuse.



Sexual abuse causes sexual health problems including unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, fear of having sex, pain during sex, and lack of desire. Sexual abuse in childhood can cause confused feelings about sex later in life, and fear of having a healthy sexual relationship.

Some forms of violence cause no outward signs of injury, but they still harm health in many ways. For example, laws and customs about marriage can be a form of violence if a woman is forced into a role where she has very few rights. Her low status in the marriage could affect her health if it deprives her of food and health care, or dictates when and how to have sex, or whether or not she will get pregnant. Her low status could indirectly affect her health if it deprives her of education, prevents her from working outside the home, or forces her to work for low wages. These conditions often force women to stay in violent situations that are harmful to their health.



Denying a woman money to support herself and her children, or denying them food, is a form of economic violence.



Insulting and blaming a woman for family problems is a form of emotional violence that causes long-term harm.

Emotional violence, such as a man insulting, humiliating, shaming a woman or forbidding her to leave the house, to see family, or to talk to friends, is also harmful. This abuse can make a woman feel she cannot act on her own behalf or leave an abusive or unhealthy situation. She may not seek health care and may suffer long-term emotional problems.

Abuse can lead to mental health problems, such as constant fear, depression, lack of motivation, low self-esteem, shame, self-blame, and problems eating and sleeping. To cope with violence or these resulting feelings, women act in harmful ways by avoiding other people, using drugs or alcohol, having many sex partners, injuring themselves, or committing suicide.

Femicide is the intentional killing of a woman. Femicide includes the murder of a woman by her partner or a former partner, usually in a relationship with a pattern of constant abuse. Another type of femicide is “honor killing” when a woman’s male relatives kill her because she is accused of disapproved sexual or social behavior, and sometimes because she has been raped. In India, thousands of women are murdered each year by their in-laws because of conflicts over dowries (payment by the woman’s family when she marries). And countless women are attacked, sexually abused, and murdered by men who are never identified, especially in places where many men are involved in drug trafficking and armed conflict.

In Mexico, human rights groups display empty shoes of women who have disappeared or whose bodies have been found brutally murdered. The authorities have done little to stop the violence.



Gender-based violence hurts everyone

Violence affects not only the person who has been abused, it harms everyone else too. Gender-based violence discourages respectful, healthy relationships in families, schools, public spaces, and even health centers. As long as people believe that men are more important than women — and that women deserve to be beaten, shamed, and deprived of rights or resources — everyone suffers in some way from the injustice.

Violence deprives children, families, and communities of healthy and fully functioning women who are able to participate and contribute. Women who are frightened or silenced cannot take an active role to improve the health and raise the status of women in the community.

Gender-based violence reinforces the harmful idea that masculinity means behaving violently. This encourages men to act in violent ways that can lead to more injuries and deaths.

Gender-based violence harms children

Children who are abused or who witness constant abuse often suffer strong feelings of helplessness, anger, sadness, shame, or guilt. These feelings may lead them to be aggressive and abusive toward others, copying the violence they have seen. Nightmares and other fears, bed wetting, and emotional problems are common, and may become long-term mental health problems. Some children become quiet and withdrawn because they fear saying or doing something that might provoke abuse, or because they are afraid to tell anyone what has happened to them.



Children in abusive families often grow and learn more slowly. They may have trouble paying attention in school and have more illnesses, such as stomach aches, headaches, and asthma. And too many children are injured and killed when violence is used against them.



Girls and boys learn gender roles from the adults around them. If men abuse women and then blame the women for the abuse, boys learn to do the same. If women blame themselves, girls learn to feel the same way. But violence against a woman is never her fault.

The role play activity on page 148 can help a group explore and discuss the ways that gender-based violence harms everyone — the victim, those who witness it, and the person who is the abuser.



I saw my father beating my mother from childhood, so I thought it was normal. When I learned about violence, and understood how much it harms everyone, I stopped beating my wife. I didn't know how to talk to my wife about it, and it took a long time for her to trust me.

Role plays to discuss gender-based violence

Participants in role playing act out real-life situations. This helps people discuss topics that they feel are private or personal, such as men's and women's roles and relationships in a family. The activities on pages 148, 152 to 153, and 160 in this chapter use role plays about gender-based violence to help people think about why violence happens and about different ways violence is harmful. Discussing the role plays can help a group look at attitudes, customs, and patterns in the ways men and women act with each other, think of ways to work together to stop gender-based violence, and also change ideas and customs that justify violence.

You can choose to do these activities separately or as a series. You may want to first discuss gender roles with the group (see Chapter 3: Gender and Health).

These activities can work well with a group of women and men together. Having men play the women's roles and women pretend to be men can help people think about inequality and gender in a new way.

Preparing to role play

Prepare situations in advance. Try to invent situations that are believable but not too violent or upsetting. Role-playing will be more realistic if you gather some props and clothes that people can use to show the roles they are playing. Examples for the situations below include shopping bags, a necktie, a man's hat, a sewing machine, candies, and jewelry.

Here are some sample situations:

Situation 1

Characters

abuser: husband

victim: wife

witnesses: children and wife's younger sister

A wife comes home late from a community meeting. Her husband has had a rough day and is already angry because there was no dinner ready when he got home. The wife's younger sister has been taking care of the children. They are all at the house waiting for the wife to arrive home. What do you think happens next?



Situation 2

Characters

abuser: sweatshop boss

victim: woman worker

witnesses: workers who collect their pay first and leave the scene

A young woman has been working for 1 week in a small garment factory. When she goes to collect her pay, the boss tells her to come back later. He makes her wait until everyone has left the factory and then tells her to come into his office alone. What do you think happens next?



Situation 3

Characters

abuser: adolescent boy

victim: adolescent girl

witnesses: other adolescent boys

An adolescent girl prefers to dress like a man rather than wearing the traditional skirts or dresses most young women wear. Walking home alone after school, she passes a group of young men and they begin to call out insults. One of them follows her. What do you think happens next?



Role-playing situations that include violence may be difficult or upsetting for some participants, especially if it touches on violence they have personally suffered or forms of violence that they have yet to consider, such as gay bashing or marital rape.

Activity

Role play: Gender-based violence affects everyone

- 1 Divide the participants into groups of about 5 people each. Give each group a short description of a situation, such as those on the previous pages, that might lead to violence. (You may want to give some guidance about not going too far in depicting violence in the drama.) Ask them to spend 15 to 20 minutes preparing a 5-minute drama that presents the situation and what they think will happen. Encourage everyone to play a part.
- 2 Ask each group to act out its situation.
- 3 After all the groups have presented, ask the groups to put aside their props and costumes. Then ask the participants to form 3 new groups based on their roles as "victims," "abusers," and "witnesses." Ask the participants in each of these groups to describe how they felt in their roles.
- 4 Ask each of the 3 groups to say how they think the violence affected the characters they played. What harm could it cause?

*As a "victim,"
I might stop
going to
meetings.*



*As a "witness," I
realized that when
children see adults
using violence, they
think it is the right
way to act.*



- 5 Ask participants how they felt watching the other groups' role plays. How were they affected?
- 6 To conclude, ask the group as a whole to talk about the different ways that gender-based violence harmed women in the role-plays. Summarize the group's ideas about how the violence in the role-plays also harms a woman's children, her family, others who witness it, and the community. You can then continue with a discussion about the causes of gender-based violence (use the activity on pages 152 to 153, or a discussion about how the characters' roles could change to prevent violence, using the activity on page 153).

Evaluate the role play

Activity

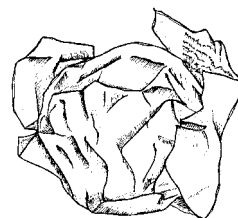
Pass the cabbage

When concluding group discussions and activities — especially on difficult subjects — it is good to ask everyone to talk about what they learned, how they feel about the issue, and how they are inspired to take action to work for change. In addition, it is important to give all participants the opportunity to evaluate and provide feedback. This activity is a fun way to involve everyone in this reflection and evaluation.

To prepare: Have sheets of notebook paper, masking tape and pens. Depending on the size of the group, write 1 or several sets of the 4 evaluation questions below on separate sheets of notebook paper.

1. Name one thing we did.
2. Name one thing you learned.
3. Say something you liked, and say something you disliked.
4. What will you do with what you have learned?

- 1 At the close of an activity or workshop, ask the group what questions they think are key to understanding the topics you have discussed. Write each question on a separate piece of notebook paper.
- 2 Create a “cabbage” by crumpling the last evaluation question sheet (number 4) in a tight ball and then adding layers of sheets around it. Alternate adding notebook sheets that include questions the group has suggested, an evaluation question, and some trick questions like “do a dance” or “sing a song” until you have created a real-sized cabbage. Make sure the evaluation questions are placed in reverse order, so as the cabbage is peeled they will be read in 1, 2, 3, 4 order.
- 3 Play music or clap your hands, and ask people to pass the cabbage. When the music stops, the person holding the cabbage peels off a leaf and answers the question. Repeat this until all the leaves have been peeled.



Note: You can write what people say on a large piece of paper that everyone can see, or just listen carefully to what everyone says. By thinking about what everyone says, you can learn a lot about what was most effective about a workshop and how to do it better the next time.

What causes gender-based violence?

To stop violence against women, we need to understand how harmful ideas about masculinity and femininity justify men's use of violence against women, children, and others with low status. The unequal status of men and women is the primary cause of gender-based violence. This inequality includes beliefs that women should be economically dependent on men, and that women and children are a man's possessions and under his control.

Women share stories, tears, and anger

At a health education meeting in Pune, India, the women were consoling Maya, who had given birth to a third daughter. She wept bitterly, showing her swollen back to the other women. Rubbing on a soothing lotion, Khadija said, "Don't cry. My husband beats me even though I have two sons."

After a moment of silence, Radha said, "I am beaten when I talk back. Men don't like that." Deepa asked in a confused voice, "Then why did Minu's husband throw her out of the house? She never answers back." Nobody had an answer to that.

Then Poonam the health worker said, "Men beat women to show that they have power over us, not because it's our fault. Joya's husband says he beats her because her skin is too dark. But remember how fair-skinned Roopa was? She was burned to death because her husband was a jealous man." The whole mood of the meeting changed after that. Amina, the eldest woman, said, "It makes me so angry. I can see that there are deeper reasons behind wife abuse."

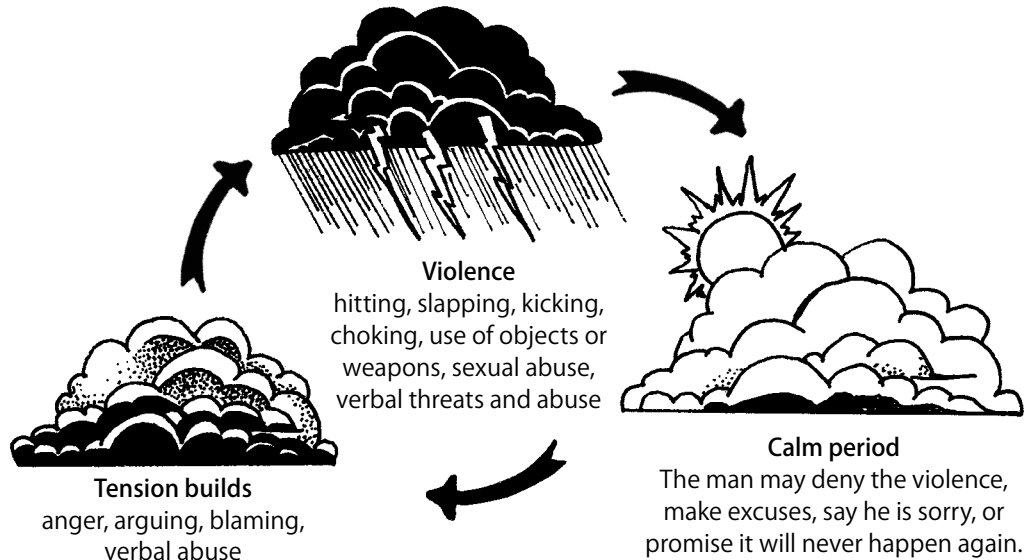


The difference between causes and "triggers" of violence

People sometimes explain why a man acted violently by saying he was drunk, jealous, or upset. These excuses may be part of the reason, but they are never the whole story. And they never justify abuse! Some people call these reasons "triggers," because they can "set off" a man in a certain situation. But they do not cause every man in similar situations to use violence. Male children are not born to be violent. They learn to be violent if they are treated with violence or taught that violence is a proper way to use masculine power.

The cycle of violence

When a relationship becomes violent, the first attack may seem like an isolated event. But when the violence continues, it usually follows this pattern:



Women in violent relationships usually learn to expect — and even plan for — each part of the cycle. With many couples, the calm period gets shorter and shorter as the woman loses her will to resist or fight back. The man's control over her becomes so complete that he no longer needs to make promises that things will get better.

Why do women stay?

Women can become trapped in the cycle of violence. Breaking themselves out of the cycle is one way to escape it, but for many abused women, leaving does not seem possible. Women who are abused:

- may have no safe place to go.
- may have no way to provide for themselves and their children outside of the abusive relationship.
- may be too scared to take advantage of any support that might exist for them and their children.
- may be brainwashed by their abuser to feel they don't deserve help.

One of the causes of gender-based violence, then, is the lack of opportunities for women. By working to develop alternatives to the situations above, your community can prevent women from becoming locked into abusive relationships and the cycle of violence.



Sometimes our heads are so full of fear and misery that we need nudging to look into the “whys” and try to understand.

Sharon Ishcomer-Fleming,
Choctaw Nation, US

Activity

Explore the causes of gender-based violence

- 1 After doing the activity on page 148, ask the actors to put aside their props and costumes and rejoin the group. Having the actors step out of their roles before the discussion helps avoid labeling a participant as a villain or victim. It is important not to confuse the person with the role he or she was playing.
- 2 Discuss each of the dramas. Ask questions that lead the whole group to tell what happened that provoked the man to use violence. As people name different causes for the violence, you may want to write them on a poster or a chalkboard.
- 3 Analyze the causes of violence. Help the group decide which of the causes they named are “triggers” and which are “root causes.” A “But why?” exercise can help the group see the difference between “triggers” and “root causes.” Seeing the root causes makes it is easier to understand how gender expectations lead to violence.

Q: Why was the man angry?

A: Because his wife went to a meeting and forgot to make him dinner.

Q. But why did that make him so angry?

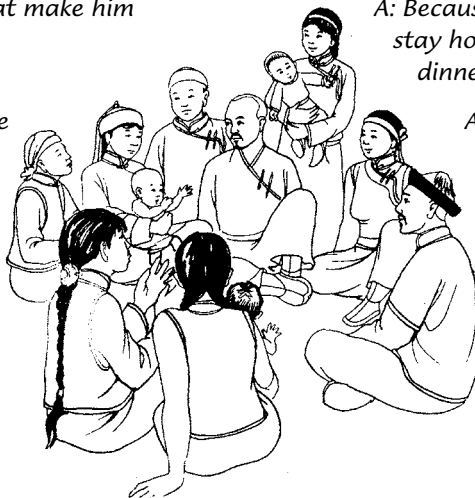
A: Because he expects her to stay home and make him dinner every night.

Q. But why does he expect that?

A: Because he thinks it is her duty to obey him, not go to meetings.

Q. But why does he think that?

A: Because men and women are taught to believe it is a woman’s job to obey.



Activity**Explore the causes of gender-based violence** *(continued)*

- 4 Explore the connection between the violence in the role plays and ideas about how men and women should act and think. For example: Why did the men in the role plays believe it was OK to treat women (and perhaps others) in a violent way? Why do so many people tolerate violence against women? What beliefs about gender teach men and women to think that violence against women is OK?
- 5 You might conclude by asking what would happen in each situation if the man did not use violence. What might he do instead? Or you can continue with the next activity to help the group think about ways to stop gender-based violence.

Activity**“Happy ending” role plays to think about change**

- 1 Ask the groups that role-played each situation to meet separately again for 15 minutes and discuss how each character could have acted differently so the situation would not end in violence. Challenge everyone to think about different actions the victim, the abuser, and the witnesses could take. Ask them to take care not to put all of the responsibility on the woman!
- 2 Act out each situation again, this time changing what happens so it ends without violence. It can be very powerful to see a realistic alternative to violence, especially for people who have experienced violence.
- 3 In the “happy ending” role plays, what do you think helped the participants and bystanders to do something different? Where do you think they might have gotten the idea to do this, or the strength?
- 4 Discuss ideas for changing some of the root causes of gender-based violence. Ask the group to consider ways to help families and others in the community see the problem and the harm it causes. You might ask them to reflect on their own situations. Is there something they would like to change in their relationships? How could they involve children in making changes for the future?

Based on the answers to these questions, the group may be ready to plan some specific actions. (See Make an action plan, page 26.)

Power and violence

People with higher status and more power often use violence against people with lower status and less power. This can be an important starting place for discussing gender-based violence with men. It may be easier for men to understand the harm and injustice suffered by women if their own experiences of powerlessness and violence are also recognized.

To prepare for the next 2 activities, you may want to read about Gender, power, and health (pages 52 to 53).

Activity

More powerful vs. less powerful

- 1 Make a large chart with 2 columns, one labeled MORE POWER and the other LESS POWER.
- 2 Ask the participants to brainstorm the groups of people in the community who have the most power. Write a list of their ideas on the MORE POWER side of the chart. Make sure people focus on status and social power, not physical strength.
- 3 Then ask whom each of these powerful groups has power over. Put these groups in the other column, labeled LESS POWER.
- 4 Ask if there are any other groups who have less power, and add those to the LESS POWER column. Then decide who has more power than these last groups and add those to the MORE POWER column.

MORE POWER	LESS POWER
Man	Woman
Adult	Child or youth
Richer	Poorer
Lighter skin	Darker skin
Boss	Worker
Majority	Minority
Urban	Rural
Native-born	Immigrant
Married	Single, divorced, or widowed
Educated	Uneducated
Without disability	With a disability
HIV negative or untested	HIV positive
Heterosexual	Gay, Lesbian, Transgender

Activity

More powerful vs. less powerful *(continued)*

I use this chart a lot as a way to start discussions, but power is not so simple. Many people are more powerful in some ways but less in others. Most people also move from one side to the other during their lifetimes. The chart also makes it look like all types of inequality are the same. But some groups face much more violence than others.

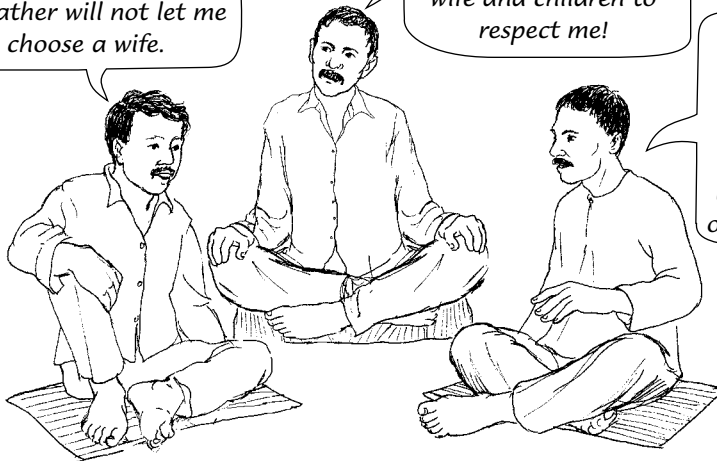


- 5** Talk about what this chart shows. Point out that people in the powerful groups have privileges or advantages that people in the less powerful groups do not have. Discuss different types of privileges that come with higher economic, educational, or social status. You might also discuss the different kinds of violence used by people in any of the more powerful groups against people in any of the less powerful groups.
- 6** Ask the participants to talk about how they fit in more powerful or less powerful groups, and the privileges or disadvantages they experience. Discuss what people on both sides of the chart can do to make the status and power between different groups more equal. (The next activity can help people in the group see where they fit in relation to each other.)

Other men come to me for advice because I have traveled. But at home, my mother and my father will not let me choose a wife.

My boss makes me work extra without pay, and threatens to fire me if I do not. At home I want my wife and children to respect me!

Is it fair to use our power over others to feel better about being less powerful in other situations?

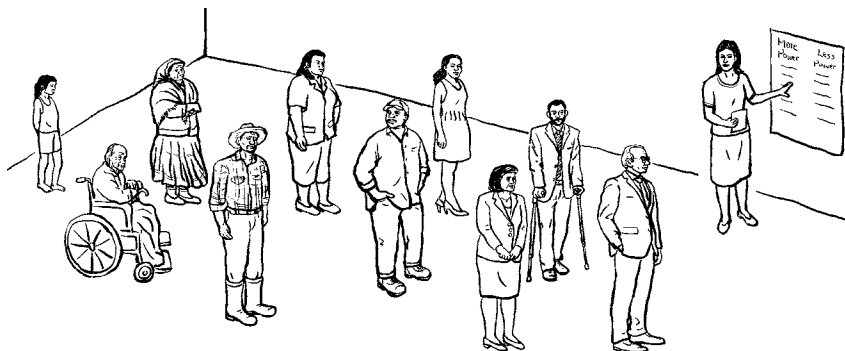


Activity

The power shuffle

Another way to explore power and privilege, especially in a diverse group, is to ask people to move across a room based on the types of power they have or do not have. Be aware that this activity may make participants uncomfortable or provoke strong feelings. This activity can be done as part of Step 6 on page 155.

- 1 Use the MORE POWER and LESS POWER chart from the previous activity, or prepare a similar list before doing the next steps here.
- 2 Have everyone line up on one side of the meeting space.
- 3 Say "Take a step forward if you are without disability," or name one of the other groups with more power. Then say "Take a step forward" again, and name another group with more power. For groups with less power, say something like, "Take a step back if you are under 25 years old." After many steps, people may be surprised to see where they are standing.



- 4 To conclude, you can start a discussion using the questions in Step 5 of the activity on the previous page.

Men can help stop violence

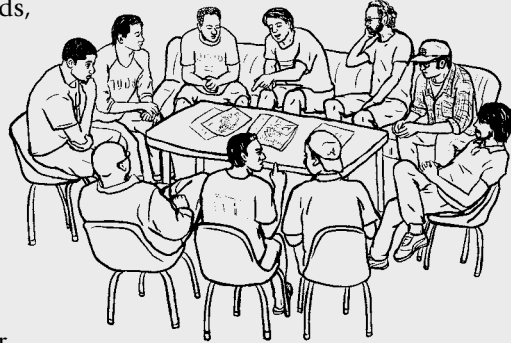
Women alone cannot stop the violence against them. No matter how many women leave violent relationships, support each other, or try to change the law, gender-based violence will only stop when men oppose it and help each other change. Men more than women teach boys how to "be a man." Fathers show sons how to treat women and girls. Those with power and influence — judges, politicians, police officers, doctors — are usually men. When they become allies, it becomes possible to change the ways men are expected to act, and to make laws and policies that protect and support women.

In fact, most men do not agree with the attitudes and beliefs that support gender-based violence, yet many do little to challenge or stop it. Some men do not use violence in their relationships, and others are working to prevent violence but lack support. Many more would probably get involved but don't know how. Often, men are also survivors of violence, but like women, few get the support they need to heal from their experience.

Lessons from the Oakland Men's Project

When Paul Kivel tells the story of the Oakland Men's project, he always credits their inspiration to women's efforts to raise awareness about rape and domestic violence. Paul describes techniques they adapted from women's groups:

First, we created a 'picture and lecture' show using images from sex magazines, record covers, magazine ads, and comic books. Most of the images showed women being humiliated, beaten, or raped. We wanted men to feel shocked and angry at how violent the images were. Some men were shocked, others were not. The show rarely led men to take any action to end violence. And it did nothing to help men understand how the system of male violence worked or how it might affect them personally.



We also experienced anger from men as we spoke out. Some men felt unfairly blamed. We told men they were powerful and privileged, and that such violence was their responsibility. The men we talked with told us that, in fact, they felt angry, hurt, vulnerable, and powerless.

Then we held workshops with boys aged 13 and 14, to help them see that men were strong and powerful in the world and women were not. The young men said they were trying to be powerful but weren't. We finally had to admit that young men are not powerful in our society. They are often victims and survivors of family, community, and institutional violence. We came to see that both boys and girls suffer from violence mostly at the hands of male adults. Boys are often taught to pass on the violence to others. Girls are expected to become victims of men's violence for the rest of their lives.

We learned that men can change when we understand how we have been raised to be masculine and the pain we suffered in that process, and yet find ways to take responsibility for any violence we commit. This means understanding the connection between individual responsibility and how we as men have been influenced by expectations about masculinity.

How can a man be strong without violence?

A support group that meets regularly can help men discuss what kind of men, boyfriends, husbands, and fathers they want to be, including learning how to reject or avoid violence.

Diversidades, a men's group in Oaxaca, Mexico, uses questions like these for discussion:

- How has violence affected your life? How did you experience violence as a boy? As an adolescent?
- In what ways do you use violence in your family and personal life? What kinds of violence? Ask yourself why you are violent. Is there another option?
- How does violence affect your relationship with your partner or with your children? How might things improve if there were no violence?
- How do boys and men influence each other either to use or avoid violence? How can you influence other men and boys to avoid violence?

Helping boys question gender violence

Adolescent boys are actively forming their ideas about becoming men, so it can be an important time to lay the foundation for healthy relationships with girls and women. Here is a story of one project that worked with adolescent boys in small groups over a whole year and sometimes longer. The goal was to enable the boys to analyze the world around them and develop their own views about gender roles.

Critical thinking helps boys question gender injustice

Between 1995 and 2010, the Conscientizing Male Adolescents (CMA) Program trained over 2,000 young men in Nigeria to consider the roots of gender inequality and the harm it causes. Much attention was given to violence against women because it is so common in Nigerian society.

CMA's question and answer approach helped the boys develop their communication and logical thinking skills. Here is an example of a group discussion about rape.

The discussion leader begins by asking the boys what their girlfriends say in romantic moments. The boys eagerly raise their hands:

Q: *What do your girlfriends say in romantic moments?*

Q: *And what do girls say when they do not wish to have sex or spend time with the boys?*

Q: *So why do boys think a girl means YES when she says NO?*

Q: *But if my neighbor comes to my house to talk to me, does it mean she's ready for anything?*

Q: *What are those actions?*

Q: *And when I'm sitting in my living room in my boxers, with my shirt open, does that mean I'm ready for sex?*

A: *"Darling, I will always love you!"
"Please hold me and don't let go."*

A: *"Leave me please."
"I'm not in the mood."
"Love has nothing to do with sex."*

A: *"Girls can't be seen to say YES, so they'll always say NO."
"That's not true, a girl can say YES. I know that."
"If a girl comes to my house, doesn't it mean she's ready for anything?"*

A: *"No."
"Actions speak louder than words."*

A: *"Wearing a mini-skirt...sitting close to me..."*

A: *"No!"*



The boys soon accept that girls mean NO when they say NO.

The next activity can be used with any group, but it can help men especially to think about ways to actively oppose gender-based violence and prevent it in real-life situations. In the activity, participants imagine witnessing threats of violence by a man against a woman, or being present at a moment of possible violence or sexual assault. They are then asked to think of ways they might intervene before, during, and after the event, either by confronting the man or men, or somehow helping the woman.

Activity

Role play the bystander

- 1 To prepare, brainstorm a list of situations people might witness. You can use situations like the ones in Preparing to role play (page 146) and add others like these:
 - Outside a party, you see a girl who has been drinking. A boy is urging her to go with him but she seems unsure.
 - A girl is walking down a dark street alone. A group of boys call to her, whistling and shouting rude things, and begin to follow her.
 - You hear a friend make a joke about rape.
- 2 Put people in pairs and give each pair one of the situations. Ask them what might happen and to make a list of at least 4 ways they could react. Suggest that they think of actions or ways they could talk with the man or the woman to prevent or stop violence. Also suggest they imagine what they could do before, during, and after the event has passed. How could they make a difference?
- 3 Ask each pair to share their situation and their list of actions, explaining which reaction would be most realistic for them, and why. Help people feel comfortable sharing what would be difficult for them to do and why.
- 4 Give the whole group a chance to discuss the various ideas and to decide which response would be most successful at stopping violence.

You might end the activity by reflecting with the group about ideas of ways to make it easier for friends, neighbors, and bystanders to act to prevent or stop abuse that they witness.



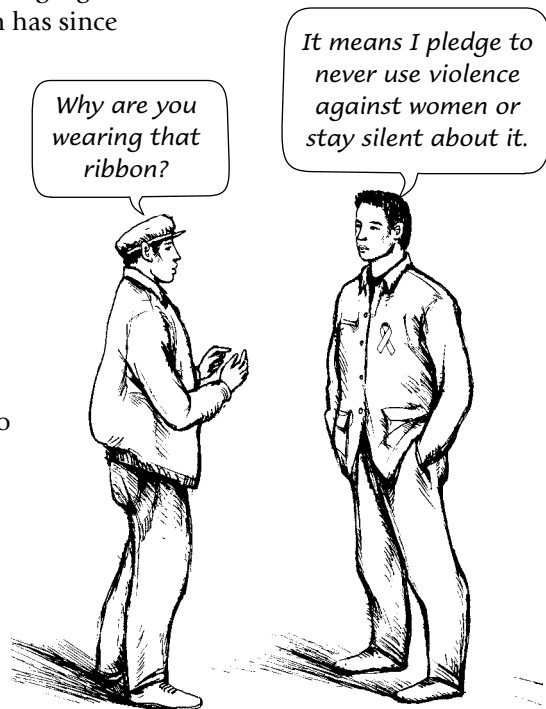
Especially when working with groups of men and women together, try not to just blame men. We must find ways of loving and accepting men while rejecting and opposing the violence men do. Help men see how stopping violence against women benefits everyone.

The White Ribbon Campaign

Campaigns about human rights, women's rights, and the right of every person to live free of violence and coercion by any other person are fairly new. Only in the last 40 years, women around the world have organized to call attention to gender-based violence as a human rights and women's health problem. As a result, there are many national and international campaigns aimed at showing the injustice of gender-based violence and gaining support to change the laws, customs, and beliefs that allow it to happen.

Some men are also following women's lead and are organizing with men in their communities to help break this pattern of violence. These men have found it useful to begin discussions asking people to reflect on everyone's right to live without violence, and then asking people to question why that right should be different for men than for women.

The White Ribbon Campaign was started by a group of men in Canada in 1991 after 14 women students were killed by a single gunman at the University of Montreal. The campaign has since spread to over 60 countries around the world. It is now the largest effort in the world of men seeking to end violence against women. Every year in November and December, men all over the world wear white ribbons as a personal pledge against violence. They also organize educational events and support groups, and use all kinds of media to reach as many people as possible. If a group can get many people in one community to participate in this campaign, it can lead to a lot of discussion.



Art and media break silence about violence

Silence about gender-based violence makes it easier for abusive men to keep hurting women and LGBT people. If we do not stand up and say that violence against women is wrong, then abusers get the message that their behavior is normal and acceptable. Silence also gives victims the message that no one cares about them or their pain. There are many ways to open people's eyes to violence in their communities and families, and say, "We as a community are against this violence!"

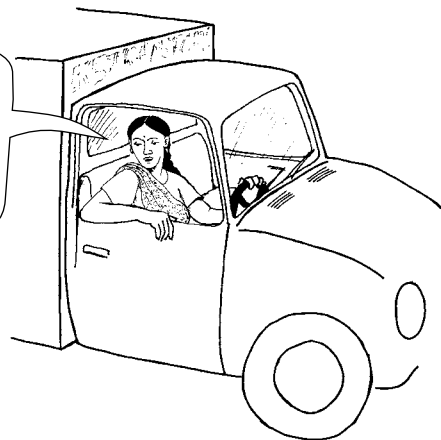
Popular music, radio, TV, and the Internet can reach many people with messages to raise awareness about violence. Here are some examples.

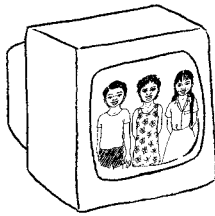
Breakthrough India created a large media campaign using radio, video, leaflets, bulletin boards, and town meetings, carrying the message that women have the right to be free from violence and showing people taking action to stop gender-based violence. A music video and hit album called "Mann ke Manjeeré," or "Violence Against Women," was seen or heard by millions of people and was especially popular among youth. The album and music video were based on the true story of a woman who left a violent husband and became a truck driver to support her children.



*My mind has begun to play its own rhythm today
My feet, once stilled, are dancing today...
Every breath I take is filled with joy
My heart is singing now
I have begun to believe in myself.*

Many communities created their own songs, other media, or informal actions as part of this campaign. For example, a group of adolescent boys decided to watch TV every night at a neighbor's house to stop him from beating his wife.

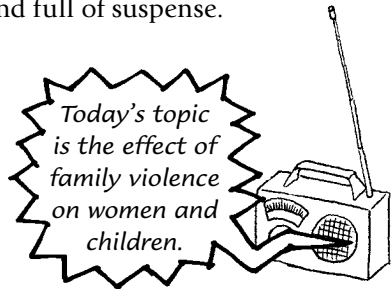




Puntos de Encuentro in Nicaragua produces a weekly half-hour TV series called “Sexto Sentido,” or “Sixth Sense,” that dramatizes issues such as sexual relationships and sexual orientation, and also violence and rape. The show follows the daily lives of a group of young people as they deal with problems in their relationships. The stories unfold over many shows, making them more realistic and complex, as well as entertaining and full of suspense.

Raising Voices in Uganda uses community radio to provide information and a space for discussion about violence against women. The programs include public service announcements about support services for women.

Newsletters, websites, and magazines can showcase art and poetry, as well as share experiences, ideas, organizing strategies, and questions from readers about gender-based violence. Information shared this way can provide support privately and across communities around the world.



Street art, such as community murals and performances in public places, can motivate people to think and talk about gender-based violence. An art project in Mexico City used male and female mannequins like the ones usually used to display clothing in stores. These mannequins were posed in dramatic scenes set up in parks and town squares, and outside subway stations. The scenes showed women as objects of violence next to men in familiar “macho” poses committing violence in different ways.

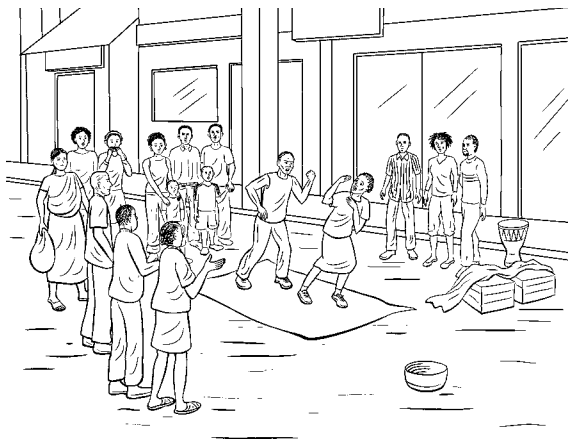


Sometimes the mannequins were posed in an obvious situation, such as a man hitting a woman. Sometimes the poses were more symbolic. For example, a male mannequin appeared to stare at a female mannequin’s body that had forks sticking out of it, as if he were eating her as he stared. Some scenes were humorous, but many of them were horrific. Paper and markers were available on a table so that people walking by could write down their thoughts or feelings and clip the papers to a clothesline where others could read and discuss them.

Participatory theater

Groups all over the world use participatory theater to call attention to gender-based violence. Some let survivors of violence — or actors playing them — act out their stories. Then they guide the audience in a discussion about violence. Other groups allow people to witness a situation that becomes violent and ask the audience to comment on it or change what they see.

Ambush Theatre in South Africa and other places involves men and women of the Sonke Gender Justice Network who act out scenes of emotional or verbal violence in public, where no one is expecting to see it. When a crowd gathers to watch what is happening, the group uses the opportunity to talk about violence and rape. Then the actors act out the scene again, asking the audience to shout “Stop!” when they want to suggest something different to say or a less violent way to act.



Sharing true stories about violence through art

Sharing personal experiences with violence helps people fight against self-blame and stigma to become survivors instead of victims. Seeing art about violence can also help others reflect on their own experiences and treat survivors with greater compassion. Art can be a powerful way to inspire people to speak out against injustice.

Poster contests, poetry contests, and art exhibitions can motivate children and adults to share their ideas and feelings about gender-based violence, whether they have heard about it, seen it, or experienced it. The art can be shown without people’s names attached if this encourages more people to participate.

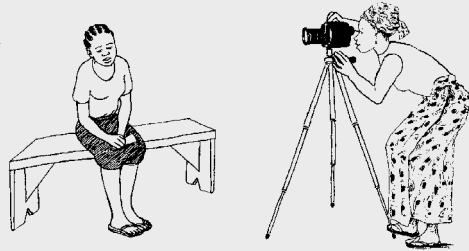
Comic books can show real-life situations that make people think about why gender-based violence happens, how the people in the story feel about it, and how things could be different.



Through Our Eyes videos about violence and rape in Liberia

During the 14-year civil war in Liberia, West Africa, soldiers used sexual violence against women to turn one group against another. Soldiers raped thousands of women and girls. After the war ended in 2003, the sexual violence did not stop. Girls were forced to marry too young. Many men believed it was right to beat a wife who did not obey them, and rape was common. Some women wanted to talk about how to be safe from sexual violence, but many people denied there was a problem.

To start community discussions about violence against women in areas most affected by the war, the Through Our Eyes project trained teams of women and men to use video cameras to produce short films about gender-based violence, as well as services for survivors. Community members were the actors in these videos,



which showed different ways women and girls were harmed, including traditional practices, early forced marriage, sexual abuse and rape, and physical violence. When the videos were shown in the community, they helped start discussions about issues rarely mentioned in public settings. After a while, many women and girls started to come forward to report assaults and seek counseling.

Whether creating or watching the videos, women survivors now say they feel less alone and less to blame for what happened to them. They see how much they have in common with other women with similar stories. And because of its success in Liberia, Through Our Eyes video projects have also been done in several other countries.



Look at my age. I'm not an educated woman, but today I can take a camera. I can film. I can do production. I never had this dream before.

Liberian video trainee participant

Community actions to support survivors

Movements to end gender-based violence usually start with finding ways to help survivors. For example, people create shelters and rape crisis centers to help women escape from abuse. Places such as drop-in centers or cafes can be set up where LGBT people can go and be safe, avoid violence, or just feel accepted. When people targeted by gender-based violence are safe from immediate harm, the community might go on to help create long-term plans for ongoing protection, healing and independence.

Support survivors to escape domestic violence

Supporting women to escape violent relationships can save lives. Share these steps with other women, and ask that they share them with any woman who might be in danger:

Before violence happens again, tell someone nearby about it. Ask that person to come or to get help if she hears that you are in trouble. Perhaps a neighbor, a male relative, or a group of women or men can come before you are seriously hurt. Think of a special word or signal that will tell your children or someone else in your family to get help. Teach your children how to get to a safe place.

When a man becomes violent, try to move to or stay in a place where there are no weapons or objects he can use to harm you, and where you can get away. Do whatever you need to do to calm him down so you and your children are safe. If you need to get away from him, think about how you can escape. Where is the safest place to go?

Get ready to leave. Save money any way you can. Put money in a safe place away from the house. If possible, open a bank account in your own name. Try to do other things to become more independent, such as making friends, joining a group, or spending more time with your family.

Find out if there are “safe houses” or other services nearby for women who have been abused. Learn how these services might help you. Ask friends or relatives you trust if they would let you stay with them or lend you money. Be sure they will not tell your abuser that you asked, or where you went.

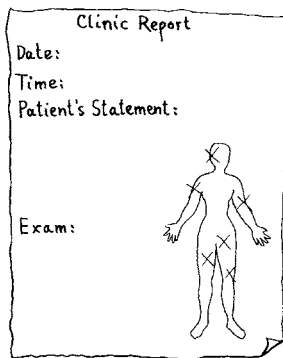
Get copies of important documents, such as your and your children’s identification papers. Leave money, copies of your documents, and extra clothes with someone you trust, so you can leave quickly. If you can do it safely, practice your escape plan with your children to see if it would work. Make sure the children will not tell anyone. (See *Where Women Have No Doctor*, pages 321 to 325.)

Health workers support survivors of sexual violence

Health workers can organize and participate in all kinds of activities to stop violence, but it is especially important that they support victims of gender-based violence who have been beaten, raped, or abused. In addition to healing injuries, a health worker can refer the victim to other community resources, such as support groups and shelters.

A woman who wants to press charges against an abuser or a rapist needs to document the injuries or other harm caused by violence. Health workers should know how to do this, along with taking care of the woman's health needs. (See *Where Women Have No Doctor*, page 335, for more details.)

To provide the most respectful care for survivors of sexual violence:



- If the victim is female, make sure a female health worker examines her.
- Keep victims' names and other information private, and tell them you will not share the information with others.
- Provide a comforting, accessible place where victims can report a rape or attack, and take care not to blame them for any violence they have suffered.
- Explain emergency contraception (EC) and help the woman use it if she chooses. (See page 194.)
- If necessary, offer medicines to prevent infection from STIs, including HIV.

Sometimes you may work with patients of different sexual and gender orientations than you are used to — people who are more masculine or feminine than you might expect, or people who are attracted to people of their own gender. If you are not sure of what gender your patient identifies as, you may want to politely ask what name they use and if they have a preferred gender pronoun, and then make sure to use it. They have the same right to dignity, privacy, and care as anyone else!

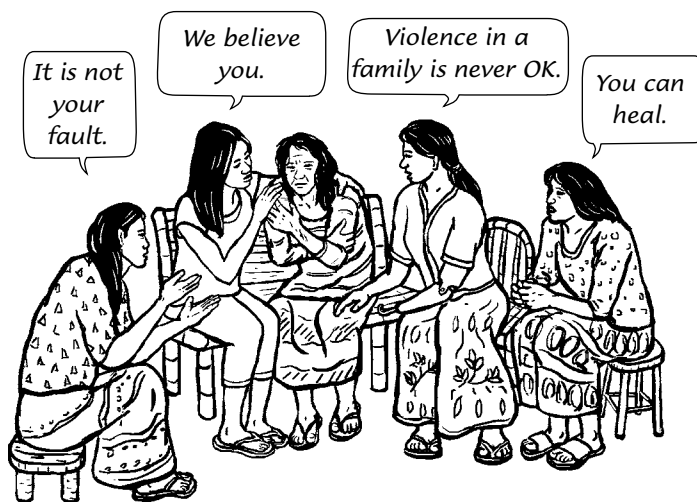


Peer support groups

People who have survived violence or rape need support from their families and communities. Unfortunately, survivors of violence — especially rape survivors — are often rejected and stigmatized. Solidarity with those who have experienced violence is a powerful way to lessen the harm, especially its lasting effects.

No one understands the struggles abused women face better than other survivors. When women come together in a peer support group, they feel less alone. They can tell their stories without fear of judgment. They can also share coping strategies and information about where to get help.

The same is true for LGBT people who have been beaten, raped, or abused due to their sexuality or their gender identity. By meeting with others who have had similar experiences, people who have suffered violence can understand they are not alone, learn from each other, and find the strength and power they need to heal.



Support survivors of armed conflict

In wars and other violent conflicts, when groups of men compete for power over territory, resources, and other forms of property, women and children become targets for sexual attack. Increasingly, men use rape and other forms of sexual abuse as a weapon to terrorize, humiliate, and dominate a rival group.

In communities devastated by armed conflict, women are often left out of decisions and plans for recovery and rebuilding — especially if people know they were sexually abused during the conflict. You can help women organize by giving them opportunities to meet each other, tell their stories, receive health care, and work together to plan for the future. When survivors become community leaders, their experience can strengthen efforts to prevent further violence.

Organize to prevent violence

Violence-prevention actions are most successful when they involve the whole community — women, men, elders, and youth. Talk with everyone about the benefits of stopping all forms of gender-based violence. Make clear that efforts to stop violence are not directed against men, but for the well-being and dignity of every person.

Map the dangers

A mapping activity can be a good way to start community organizing to prevent violence. Invite community leaders, business owners, and other allies to participate and to help plan. Also try to involve women and girls who are especially vulnerable to violence because of where they live, when and how they travel to work or school, or because of the work they do. Make sure LGBT people identify the places in the community where they feel especially at risk. Have everyone walk around the community and note the problem places, then create a map of the dangers. The group can discuss and propose changes, such as better street lighting or community safety patrols. For an example of community mapping, see Mapping the way to safe motherhood (page 218).

Workers organize for safer streets

Women working in Free Trade Zone factories in Sri Lanka live in a large community of boarding houses outside the Zone. Union organizers surveyed women about their concerns and learned that women felt unsafe traveling to and from the factories at night because of robberies and rapes in the area. The organizers helped women discuss the problem, some possible solutions, and actions that could lead to safer travel. They took their proposals to the factory owners and won several changes, including a local bus service between the Zone and the boarding houses.



Transgender women fight to prevent violence in Colombia

In many places LGBT people, especially transgender people, who live as a gender different from their biological sex, have a harder time finding jobs, getting health insurance, and completing school than their peers. People in the LGBT community are also more likely to experience sexual assault and violence in their lives. (For more information on gender identity, see page 80.)

In Colombia, attacks on LGBT people, especially transgender women, are very common. In 2004, Maria Paula Santamaría was attacked and died after being denied treatment at a hospital in Santiago de Cali. To honor her memory, 4 of her friends started the Santamaría Fundación to prevent the same thing from happening to other transgender women in Colombia.

To do this, they began publishing information about what to do if attacked, and how to file reports about assault. The group also provided helpful tips on how to stay safe, and advised women to travel in groups and to always have minutes on their cell phones to call the Fundación if they feel endangered. Realizing that police officers often harassed, sexually assaulted, and beat transgender people instead of protecting them, the group also began a “community watchdog” program to record and publish stories about police violence, including information about where and when the assaults occurred.

To raise public awareness about the problem, Santamaría Fundación also began to build memorials where women had been murdered. Copying a program the Ministry of Traffic had started, which recorded deaths from traffic accidents with black stars on roads, the group began posting pink stars where transgender people had been murdered.

The group has noticed that their pressure on the police force has decreased the amount of violence somewhat, but they know more work is needed for transgender people to be treated with the same respect and dignity as other citizens.

Link with movements for economic justice

Joining efforts to win equal pay for women and to ensure everyone receives a living wage, respect, and dignity on the job is another way the community can prevent gender-based violence. When women have a degree of financial independence, they can make choices for themselves to help ensure their health and safety.

Challenge gender-based violence in schools

In some communities, teachers, school staff, students and parents cooperate to make schools safe for everyone. They do this by agreeing on ways to actively oppose all forms of violence — including bullying and sexual violence — and creating a school environment where everyone strives to set an example of mutual respect and support.

A school program to help stop the cycle of violence

Kibera is a large, crowded settlement in the city of Nairobi in Kenya. Most people living there are very poor, and domestic violence is common. The Rehma Ta Allah Community Development Group works in schools to help children understand that violence against women is not normal and can be stopped. The program uses role-playing, skits, and other activities to teach children about the cycle of violence and how it harms them and the whole community. Discussion sessions encourage children to talk freely about violent situations they have witnessed or experienced without saying if the violence happened to them or their own families. They also draw pictures of violent situations and then talk about what the pictures show and how they feel about it. The program helps teachers recognize signs that a child or someone in her family is being abused, so they are better prepared to support students in difficult situations.

Make judicial systems work to stop violence

Justice systems — the laws, courts, police and other authorities — have a duty to act together to support the right of women and all people to live free of violence. But such freedom is rare, and gender-based violence continues to be all too common. Often, laws protecting women are not enforced, and the legal system makes victims feel that violence they have suffered is their own fault. In many places, laws against gender-based violence may not exist, or they are insufficient and need to be improved.

Learn about legal protections

The laws, courts, police, and other authorities each play an essential role in controlling violence in a community. But information about how each part of the justice system deals with gender-based violence is often confusing. To more effectively fight gender-based violence, people need to learn about the legal protections that exist, and the gaps between how laws are written and how they are applied. Then we can work on getting better laws, and better enforcement, and changing attitudes.

A group can use the next activity to learn about the roles and duties of authorities to support victims of gender-based violence.

Activity

Group investigation about roles and duties of local authorities

Prepare ahead of time by learning as much as possible about the law. If possible, find someone with knowledge about the judicial system to support you and participate as a resource person. This process will work best if you can identify people from different local authorities who are open to talking with your group.

- 1 Who can you turn to? To begin this process, bring the group together and ask the group to discuss this question: “Who can you go to for help if there is an incidence of violence against women in your community?”

Make a grid like the one below on a large piece of paper that everyone can see. In the first column, write the different authorities that the group identified. Ask the resource person to add any that the group may have missed.

Authority	Role (what do they do now?)	What can't/ don't they do? Why?	What more do they need to do?
Police (any police officer)			
Mayor, city council, council of elders			
Doctor or other health worker			
Judge or court official			
Official for Ministry of Women's Affairs			

- 2 Explain that the purpose of the group investigation is to learn how each of the authorities acts to end gender-based violence by answering these questions:
 - What does each authority do now to address violence against women and LGBT people?
 - What do they not do? What are they not able to do? Why?
 - What other things should they be doing to address this type of violence?

Activity

Group investigation about roles and duties of local authorities *(continued)*

Ask the group to form smaller teams. Explain that each team will be responsible for learning more about the roles and duties of one of the authorities, and to collect information to answer these questions. They will then share that information with the whole group at a future meeting.

- 3 Investigate! It may take several weeks for each team to collect the information they need through interviews and other research. For example, they may try to interview several people inside each institution to gain different points of view. They may also be able to interview women who have gone to different authorities for protection or seeking justice. Recent news stories and court records can help explain what authorities do and do not do.
- 4 Once the groups have completed their investigations, convene a meeting for the teams to report back to the whole group. Be sure to allow for plenty of time for each team to present and for everyone to ask questions.



Our group learned there are laws to protect us against domestic violence. Someone from the Ministry of Women's Affairs can file a report with the police so an abused woman does not have to do this herself.

- 5 To conclude, ask the group to reflect on what they have learned from this process, and what might be the focus for next steps towards making the justice system work better. For example, the group might want to focus on making more people aware of local authorities' duty to respond to cases of violence against women. Or they might want to try to make it easier for LGBT people to report the crime to police.

To develop a plan, it may be helpful to follow this discussion with the Make a power map activity (page 284).

Work with local courts and police

Judicial systems can become more supportive of women when judges, lawyers, court authorities, and police officers recognize that women and LGBT people are not treated fairly and that the authorities must act to defend and protect all people's rights. Involving those authorities in efforts to improve the system often requires time, a variety of strategies, and many meetings. You may need to work with community leaders to find people in the judicial system who are most likely to listen and to support your proposals. You may also find that some authorities will not change and you must advocate for their removal.

Here are a few examples of ways that you can improve judicial systems:

Female police units. Women often feel uncomfortable or unwilling to speak with a male police officer to report rape or domestic violence. In the 1980s, women's organizations in Brazil advocated for police units staffed entirely by women. The first all-female units were created in 1985, and many countries now use this model. Social workers often work alongside police to help women understand their rights, make decisions, and get health care and other services.



Police trained in gender-based violence.

Community activists can also provide ongoing training on gender-based violence. Some police officers do not enforce laws against domestic violence or gay bashing. They may refuse to admit that violence happens, and they themselves might abuse women or threaten gay people. To change long-held attitudes and prejudices, police officers need opportunities to learn new perspectives.

Domestic violence courts. Women are often afraid to report an abusive partner to authorities, because they depend on the partner for food and shelter. If her partner is sent to jail, a woman may lose her home or other resources. If he is not sent to jail, he may hurt her even more. Women trapped in situations of domestic violence often report abuse but are unable to break free and leave abusive partners. This can lead to repeated court cases that do not end the abuse. In the United States, several local court systems have responded to this pattern by creating problem-solving domestic violence courts.



The problem-solving courts provide social services, such as housing aid and job training, as soon as a woman's case is filed with the court. Women also receive training in planning for safety and creating escape plans for violent situations. (See Support survivors to escape domestic violence, page 166.) These courts also help keep women safe during and after the court proceedings by monitoring the behavior of their abusers. This approach speeds up court proceedings and enables survivors to leave the court system and their abusive relationships for good.

Restorative justice. When a community group helps survivors of domestic violence or gay bashing to confront and negotiate with their abusers, this is called restorative justice. Creating the conditions for this kind of community accountability takes time and training. It works best when there is strong community support.

Independent court systems. In four different cities in India, a group named Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) set up its own courts for women's legal issues. In the past, divorce and child custody cases were either handled by the state system or resolved through the Sharia (Islamic law) courts run entirely by men. These courts rarely ruled in favor of women, who were often left without financial support for themselves and their children. BMMA is working to create national laws that strengthen existing protections for women under Islamic law, and also to provide legal support to women who decide to use the state court system.

Rape is the only crime in which the victim becomes the accused.



Freda Adler,
Criminologist

Human rights laws can help

Under international human rights law, sexual violence committed as part of an attack against a civilian population is considered a crime against humanity. This means that the harm done to one group is an injustice to all people. Many groups use human rights laws when they demand justice from local courts and governments. (For more information, see Appendix A: Advocate for Women's Rights Using International Law.)

Organize to bring justice for survivors

No matter how much you do to educate the police, set up alternative courts, and design systems for restorative justice, you will still need to mobilize support in the community. If you can organize the community to understand and take action on the problem of gender-based violence, you will have forged a powerful tool for bringing justice to survivors. With a strong grassroots base, you can, for example, mount campaigns against judges who consistently discriminate against women and LGBT people, forcing those judges to change or step down. You could also organize your community to pressure the health center to develop better protocols for documenting abuse.



On February 14, 2013, women in Hong Kong joined with one billion people in 207 countries to rise and dance to demand an end to violence against women and girls. For more information about “One Billion Rising for Justice,” go to: www.onebillionrising.org

By connecting with global movements against violence, you can strengthen your organizing and get more media attention. V-Day, a global activist effort to end violence against women and girls, raises awareness and money and helps energize organizations fighting violence. The International Day Against Homophobia is another opportunity to join a large-scale, media-attracting event. Celebrated on May 17 — the anniversary of the day in 1990 that the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from their list of mental illnesses — this event helps people raise awareness of LGBT issues in their communities, workplaces, and families.

Protests in India demand an end to violence against women

In December 2012, a 23-year-old woman was attacked and raped by 6 men on a bus in New Delhi, India. A male friend who tried to defend her was badly beaten before he and the woman were both thrown from the bus. Strangers found them by the roadside and took them to a hospital. The woman died 2 weeks later from her injuries. News of the attack spread quickly around the city and the country. A few days later, thousands of demonstrators gathered in Delhi and other cities to protest the government’s slow response to the brutal rape and to demand an end to the widespread problem of sexual violence in India.

Women’s groups and other organizations in India have spoken out for years against rape and all forms of violence against women. But the massive protests — and police repression of them — attracted the news media’s attention to these problems as never before. Many protestors reported personal and family experiences of sexual harassment and rape. They were already angry at the police and the courts for dismissing their complaints and failing to punish attackers, but they had never felt they could speak out or demand justice.

Both men and women joined the protests to denounce common attitudes toward women rooted in the idea that women are men's property to use as they wish. The protesters made it clear that women are not to blame for harassment and violence against them. One men's group in Delhi showed solidarity with women by wearing women's clothing for a day to call attention to the way that women are treated in public.



People around the world heard the protestors' message. They demanded speedy arrests and trials for rape and sexual assault cases, stronger laws and enforcement for gender-based crimes, and safe public transportation for women.

International attention combined with local action created pressure for change. Several state governments strengthened rape laws and promised new services. The central government appointed a high-level committee to recommend changes to the law. Women's groups were hopeful when most of their recommendations to the committee were included in the final report. But they were soon discouraged when the government passed an ordinance that ignored the report and failed to condemn all forms of gender-based violence. The ordinance was meant to calm protests, but instead it inspired new rounds of marches and rallies.

People in India continue to speak out about gender-based violence. The national and international media now report on more cases of rape and harassment. Organized groups continue to pressure the government to strengthen anti-rape laws and increase their enforcement. These actions replace a culture of silence about gender-based violence with a culture of voices demanding change.

Bringing attention to gender-based violence can be difficult, especially in places where it has been tolerated longer than anyone can remember. But when thousands of people take to the streets to denounce rape and sexual violence, it becomes an issue for the whole world, thanks to television, the Internet, and communication by mobile phone. Even when news reports are incomplete or one-sided, they can raise awareness and create an opportunity to discuss and debate how gender-based violence is addressed locally or nationally.