

10 Things You Can Do

1. Understand Intersections of Violence Against Women (VAW) like Domestic Violence

VAW is internationally defined as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. This means VAW can include sexual, economic, spiritual, reproductive, and domestic violence, to name a few. The 12 women who were recently killed were victims of domestic violence.

The results of VAW can be deadly, like it was for the 12 women of NYC who were murdered by way of Domestic Violence.

Domestic Violence (DV) also known as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) or Interpersonal Violence (IV) is about maintaining power and control over another. Abused persons live in a controlling environment, feels fear and often “walks on eggshells”. An abusive woman can often develop low self-esteem, face difficulty communicating her abuse, and/or is afraid of losing her partner.

Abuse takes many forms. Examples of abuse include: physical abuse ranging from pinching and shoving to physical assault (strangulation, punching, kicking, use of items causing injury), verbal/emotional abuse (degrading remarks and threats of harm and deportation, intimidation, sexist comments), financial abuse, sexual exploitation and rape, and symbolic violence (throwing furniture, punching walls, etc).

For more information about types of abuse read here:

http://www.opdv.state.ny.us/whatisdv/about_dv/wheeltext.html

For more information about the characteristics of abusive individuals, read here:

<http://www.aardvarc.org/dv/batterer.shtml>

2. Know the Facts

- An international statistic from the United Nations shows that 1 in 3 women will experience some form of violence in her lifetime.
- 1/4 of ALL women will experience DV in her lifetime.
- 1/3 of all women murdered, were killed by their partners with over 16,000 murders due to an intimate partner.
- The cost of IPV exceeds 5.8 billion dollars each year. 4.1 Billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services.
- IPV results in 18.5 million mental health care visits.
- Most cases of DV are never reported to the police; it is chronically underreported.

For more national statistics on Domestic Violence read here:

[http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet\(National\).pdf](http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet(National).pdf)

3. Be Aware of Yourself

Challenge how your own behaviors and words contribute towards violence and the violation of women and others. Check out your own attitude. Look within. Think of how your own thinking and behavioral patterns were shaped by those you observed growing up.

How do you refer to women in every day speech? Each culture bares responsibility for reducing violence against women and interpersonal violence. Examples includes language like “bitch” and “hoe”. Author Marlon Cadogan of *Stand-up Men* provides one detailed example, “What does it mean to call a woman words such as “cow”? Cow = Inferior. Subhuman. Male property. Once a person is reduced to property, the abusive person can feel they can exploit and use the other in any way.”

Having awareness and challenging your behavior can be transformative. Taking small steps to not tolerate sexist, abusive attitude can add up to big strides in preventing and stopping domestic violence. Make a decision today. Inform a “buddy” to hold you accountable to your change.

4. Intervene With Caution

Talk to a friend who is verbally or physically abusive to women in a private, calm moment, rather than in public or directly after an abusive incident.

Talk to a group of his friends and strategize a group response. (There is strength in numbers.)

If you are a high school or college student, approach a trusted teacher, professor, social worker, or health professional. Tell them what you have observed and ask them to do something, or ask them to advise you on how you might proceed.

For more information about what to consider in bystander intervention, read: <http://toolkit.endabuse.org/GetToWork/WhatMenAndBoys/TakingAction.html>

5. Listen Well

If a victim/survivor comes forward about the abuse, be supportive. Listen privately and separately. Do not blame the victim. Validate the person’s feelings by believing her. Support her coming forward about the abuse. Understand it isn’t easy and often not safe for the victim/survivor to “just leave”. Help the victim/survivor understand the power and control dynamics of abuse and the life-threatening safety and health risks when there is escalating violence that affects her and her children. Don’t pressure the victim/survivor to leave when the situation is not fully understood and the victim/survivor is not ready. Empower the victim/survivor to make the best decision for herself and the children. Put safety first. Listen calmly, fully, and patiently.

6. Get Help. Contact Local Agencies

For victim support and more information, reach out to a local agency which can provide free, confidential, and multi-lingual support services. Agencies can offer

resources and practical help such as: toll-free hotline, counseling, clothing, food, shelter, financial, legal, healthcare or referrals to medical services and much more.

Contacting an agency is helpful because it compliments your support of listening and allows professional intervention to address some of the complex issues that intersect with interpersonal violence. In the case of interpersonal violence, a witness to the violence (also known as a bystander) may not fully understand the dangers and complex dynamics involved in women staying.

For a directory of agencies that can offer support, click here:

<http://www.nyscadv.org/directory.htm>

7. Stop Making Excuses

Stop blaming abusive behavior on drugs, alcohol, job stress, anger, provocation, and “loss of control”. Only the abusive person can stop the violence by committing to a lifetime change towards positive non-violent behavior. This has to be the abusive person’s decision to change the harmful behavior.

8. Honor Choice

Part of stopping VAW is about recognizing and honoring her choice. By respecting things like her decision to say yes and no and her freedom to make choices, you are honoring her basic human rights. Honor your mother, sister, grandmother, family member, colleagues and friends by treating her with care.

9. Speak Out

Mentor, teach, and display to young kids how to behave in ways that don’t involve degrading and abusive patterns. Use phrases like it is “not right” and “not cool” if they participate in behavior that disrespects women on any level. One slogan to keep in mind is:

“Real men don’t abuse women”

“If we can get men to drop their macho stance, we can end violence against women.”
– Marlon Cadogan, *Stand-Up Guys*

“If we see a woman as just body parts, something we own or control, we will continue to be violent,” .. “Objectification is the beginning of thinking we can do whatever we want with a woman. We need to see women as our equals.” – Quentin Walcott, CONNECT

For more information, click: <http://www.connectnyc.org/current/newsview.php?id=11>

10. Volunteer and Donate

Contact local anti-violence programs and see how you can help support their mission. Many programs help hundreds of victims of abuse and are involved in prevention of interpersonal violence, but can be underfunded and need people to contribute.

Volunteer your time. Offer interpretation and translation skills. Donate clothing and supplies in excellent condition that everyday people seeking help may need. Donate money.

Advocate for social change and be creative. Take action in small to large ways, and encourage different networks, such as the workplace, community of faith, and other social groups to address VAW openly like through discussion groups, forums, and awareness raising community events.

For NYS anti-violence programs, click here:

<http://www.opdv.state.ny.us/help/fss/resource.html>

CONNECT

www.connectnyc.org

New York Asian Women's Center

www.nyawc.org

Redeemed Outreach Ministries

www.redeemedoutreach.org

The Wright Group

Violence Intervention Program

www.vipmujeres.org

Dwa Fanm

www.dwafanm.org

Beautiful Me Foundation

Day One

www.dayoneny.org

Challenging Male Supremacy Project

Precious Pearls

Medgar Evers College Center for Women's Development

http://www.mec.cuny.edu/academic_affairs/student_affairs/womens_cntr.asp

Common Justice

www.vera.org

Lutheran's Family Support Center

www.lutheranmedicalcenter.com

Fearless Females, Inc

www.fearlessfemales.org

Staten Island Legal Services

www.silsnyc.org

Office of NYC Councilwoman Inez Dickens

www.council.nyc.gov