

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FACTS

Gender-based violence impacts the lives of countless women and their families across the United States. Women and girls of all ages, income levels, racial and ethnic communities, sexual orientations and religious affiliations experience violence in the form of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, trafficking and stalking. The enactment of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994 provided a national, streamlined response to how communities respond to violence against women by giving law enforcement, prosecutors and judges the tools they need to hold offenders accountable and keep communities safe while supporting victims. VAWA serves as a vital funding source for YWCAs and other organizations that provide critical services directly to victims of abuse and sexual assault.

Victims of violence face many barriers to accessing resources and safety. Women of color and other marginalized populations experience disproportionate experiences of violence, and increased barriers in seeking help. These barriers range from: fear of criminal justice systems; the lack of a financial safety net; religious and cultural barriers; fear of deportation; lack of awareness or knowledge of the legal system; lack of adequate childcare services; lack of low-cost housing options, and skepticism of social service institutions. While many of the experiences of survivors cut across all racial, ethnic and class lines, due to complex histories with these systems, some survivors face increased difficulty in finding support.

Many of these barriers stem from long-standing inequity in public policies and social safety nets. At YWCA, we know that all violence is not acknowledged or responded to equally and that some victims go unrecognized altogether. That is why we firmly support legislation that is comprehensive and inclusive of the needs of all victims of gender-based violence, particularly those who face increased barriers to safety, such as Native women, immigrant women, communities of color, and those with multiple marginalized identities.

FACTS

Gender-based violence continues to be a pervasive problem in the United States, with far-reaching consequences.

- Every two minutes another American is sexually assaultedⁱ.
- Out of every 100 cases of rape, 12 lead to an arrest, 9 are prosecuted, and only 5 lead to a felony convictionⁱⁱ
- Less than half of domestic violence incidents are reported to policeⁱⁱⁱ.
- One in three girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the United States^{iv}.
- One in four women will experience domestic violence and, on average, more than three women are murdered by their partners in the United States every day^v.

- One of every four homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her and over 92 percent of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime^{vi}.
- Victims of domestic violence lose about eight million days of paid work per year because of the violence that they experienced^{vii}.
- 65 percent of all women have experienced street harassment. Among all women, 23 percent have been sexually touched, 20 percent have been followed, and 9 percent have been forced to do something sexual^{viii}.
- Food service and hospitality workers report the highest levels of sexual harassment in the workplace and often have the least amount of employment protections^{ix}.

Gender-based violence occurs across all races, ages, classes, and ethnic backgrounds, though at disparate rates and with disproportionate impacts for women of color.

- A lack of job stability, unemployment, the nation's history of segregation, and the strain of navigating racism help to explain some of the factors leading to high rates of IPV in communities of color. They also help to explain why women and families of color, who are more likely to live in poverty, have fewer resources available to help them leave violent situations or to seek care for the violence they have suffered^x.
- Native Americans are victims of rape or sexual assault at more than double the rate of other racial groups^{xi}. In fact, more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime. This includes 56.1 percent who have experienced sexual violence, 55.5 percent who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 48.8 percent who have experienced stalking, and 66.4 percent who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner^{xii}.
- Black women experienced intimate partner violence at a rate 35 percent higher than that of white women, and about 22 times the rate of women of other races^{xiii}. More than two-fifths of Black women experience physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetimes, compared with 31.5 percent of all women.
- Additionally, Black women are at an especially high risk of homicide by men compared with all women. In 2015, Black women were two and a half times more likely to be murdered by men than were White women. Ninety-two percent of Black female victims were killed by men they knew, and 56 percent were killed by current or former intimate partners. In cases where the murder weapon was identified, 59 percent of Black female victims were shot and killed with guns^{xiv}.
- Survivors of domestic violence and low-income Black women experience heightened risk of criminalization. From the "War or Drugs" to the sexual abuse to prison pipeline, Black women and girls are more likely to have interactions with criminal justice systems as a result of their experiences of trauma. More than 90 percent of girls in juvenile justice systems self-disclose trauma.^{xv} In fact, justice-involved girls are victimized by sexual violence at an earlier average age, and for a longer average duration, than other forms of abuse^{xvi}.

- In an ongoing study conducted by Black Women's Blueprint, 60 percent of Black girls will experience sexual abuse before the age of 18^{xvii}.
- Statistics indicate that 21–55 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander women report experiencing intimate physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime.^{xviii} A/PI survivors are more likely to experience abuse from multiple family members, including a spouse, and in-laws than other survivors. 13 percent of Asians/Asian Americans identified in-laws as the persons committing the abuse for which they sought help from a domestic violence program. This proportion is higher than those found for other groups: four percent for Hispanics/Latinx, three percent for Whites, and one percent for African Americans/Blacks^{xix}.
- 48 percent of Latinas in one study reported that their partner's violence against them had increased since they immigrated to the U.S.^{xx}. Approximately one in three Hispanic/Latina women have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their life time^{xxi} and 1 in 12 of Hispanic/Latina women experienced this violence in the previous 12 months^{xxii}. Additionally, a national study found 63.1 percent of Latina women who identified being victimized in their lifetime reported having experienced more than one victimization^{xxiii}.

Newly-arrived immigrant survivors may face additional forms of abuse that women of color and Native women born in the United States may not, including:

- threats of deportation despite immigration status
- possible language barriers
- lack of knowledge of the American legal system
- threatening to report employment status if survivor works "under the table"
- threatening to deport her and keeping the children
- withdrawal of petition to complete legalization status
- intimidation by destroying important documents such as an identification card or passport

In addition, there are some barriers that make reaching out for help and obtaining culturally and linguistically appropriate support services more challenging for many communities of color. Equally as important to note, these barriers are often also seen as factors for resilience, including:

- cultural barriers/resiliencies
- economic barriers, threat of homelessness, job insecurity
- religious barriers/resiliencies
- fear of law enforcement and other systems, including child protective services

ADVOCACY RESPONSES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Ensure that legislation and policies to prevent gender-based violence and to support survivors are inclusive of all victims and survivors including access to VAWA, U Visa, T Visa, and Battered Spouse Waivers.
- Increase collaboration between community service providers and law enforcement to improve justice system responses to survivors.
- Expand the availability of support services for survivors to address unmet needs.
- Expand the list of perpetrators covered by orders of protection to close the loophole that currently permits abusers to access guns.
- Pass safe leave legislation to allow survivors take time off from work without penalty to receive medical attention, make court appearances, seek legal assistance, and get help with safety planning for themselves or immediate family members.
- Ensure that survivors of violence have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services

As the largest provider of domestic violence services in the United States, YWCA supports legislation and public policies that protect survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and work to eradicate sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, trafficking in women and girls, and dating violence. Specifically, we support the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), the Family Violence Prevention Act (FVPSA), and other legislation that is inclusive of the needs of all victims of violence, particularly those who often experience higher risks of violence, such as native women, immigrants, communities of color, and LGBTQIA/TGNC survivors.

ⁱ Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010-2014 (2015).

ⁱⁱ 97 of Every 100 Rapists Receive No Punishment, RAINN Analysis Shows, RAINN, 2012

ⁱⁱⁱ Lawrence A. Greenfeld et al. (1998). Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends. Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice. NCJ #167237. Available from National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

^{iv} Dating Abuse Statistics, Love is Respect, Break the Cycle, 2015

^v Violence Prevention Fact Sheet, centers for Disease Control and Prevention

^{vi} Family Homelessness Facts, Green Doors, Austin, TX, 2016

^{vii} U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013, December 24). Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences.

^{viii} Statistics, Stop Street Harassment, 2016

^{ix} Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, Forward Together, et al. October 7th, 2014. The Glass Floor: Sexual Harassment in the Restaurant Industry. New York, NY: Restaurant Opportunities Centers United.

^x i Michael L. Benson. The Correlation Between Race and Domestic Violence is Confounded with Community Context. Social Problems 51:3 (2004): 326-342. Retrieved 23 January 2017 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249985526_The_Correlation_Between_Race_and_Domestic_Violence_is_Confounded_with_Community_Context.

^{xi} A Bureau of Justice Statistics Statistical Profile, 1992-2002: American Indians and Crime (2004)

^{xii} Rosay, A. Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men, National Institute of Justice Journal 277, 2016 <https://nij.gov/journals/277/Pages/violence-against-american-indians-alaska-natives.aspx#>

^{xiii} Women of Color Network Facts & Stats: Domestic Violence in Communities of Color – June 2006

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- ^{xiv} DuMonthier, A., Childers, C., & Milli, J. (2016). The Status of Black Women in The United States. Retrieved September 1, 2017, from https://www.domesticworkers.org/sites/default/files/SOBW_report2017_compressed.pdf
- ^{xv} Julian D. Ford, et al. (2007). Trauma Among Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: Critical Issues and New Direction. Retrieved 15 January 2017 from http://www.ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2007_Trauma-Among-Youth-in-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf.
- ^{xvi} Malika Saada Saar, Rebecca Epstein, Lindsay Rosenthal, Yasmin Vafa, Center for Poverty and Inequality | Georgetown University Law Center, The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: the Girls' Story http://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015_COP_sexual-abuse_layout_web-1.pdf
- ^{xvii} Black Women's Blueprint, 2016
- ^{xviii} Facts & Stats Report: Domestic Violence in Asian & Pacific Islander Homes Mieko Yoshihama, Ph.D. and Chic Dabby Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence Updated 2015 <http://www.api-gbv.org/files/Facts.Stats-APIIDV-2015.pdf>
- ^{xix} Ibid.
- ^{xx} Women of Color Network Facts & Stats: Domestic Violence in Communities of Color – June 2006
- ^{xxi} National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities, Prevalence and Occurrences Fact Sheet, Retrieved September 1, 2017 from <https://nationallatinonetwork.org/learn-more/facts-and-statistics/prevalence-and-occurrence>
- ^{xxii} Breiding, M.J., Chen J., & Black, M.C. (2014). Intimate Partner Violence in the United States--2010. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
- ^{xxiii} Cuevas, C. A., Sabina, C., & Picard, E. H. (2010). Interpersonal Victimization Patterns and Psychopathology Among Latino Women: Results From the SALAS Study. *Psychological Trauma-Theory Research Practice and Policy*, 2(4), 296-306. doi: 10.1037/a0020099