



Domestic Violence Project Newsletter

Winter 2008

Get the Facts:

- A Journal of American Medicine study suggests that 1 in 5 high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.
- More than 1 in 4 girls in grades 9 to 12 have been the victim of physical or sexual abuse or date rape.
- At least 37% of female patients treated in hospital emergency rooms for violence-related injuries were injured by an intimate partner.

For more statistics, please visit.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/html/statistics_resources/statistics.shtml

DVP Co-Authors Report to United Nations, Framing Domestic Violence as Human Rights Issue

NYC, Dec. 2007 – DVP is pleased to announce the release of "Race Realities in New York City", a shadow report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which contains a "Domestic Violence" chapter documenting discrimination against battered women of color and immigrants. The report can be found at <http://www.hrpujc.org/documents/NYCCERDSRWeb.pdf>.

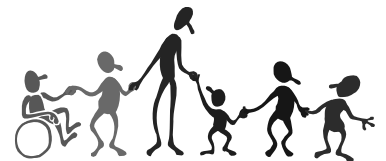


The U.S. is a party to the CERD Convention and is obligated under international law to take steps to eliminate racial discrimination in this country. This report documents continued race and ethnicity discrimination in NYC, in violation of CERD.

As part of an ongoing effort to frame domestic violence as a human rights issue, and to document the particular obstacles that racial minority and immigrant victims of domestic violence face in obtaining governmental protection and support, DVP co-authored the Domestic Violence chapter together with Columbia Law School's Human Rights Clinic and Sexuality & Gender Clinic; Voices of Women Organizing Project; and Anna Akbar (formerly of Queens Legal Services).

The US underwent periodic review by the CERD Committee in Geneva on February 21-22, 2008. Several of our co-authors attended and participated in a powerful review session where the United States delegation found itself seated in a room jam-packed with activists. Informed and encouraged by the impressive presence of activists in the room, the CERD Committee asked pointed questions and challenged the United States stance of exceptionalism with respect to international law.

Shadow reports such as this one set forth the invaluable perspective of non-profit agencies and the experiences of our clients/constituencies. If you are interested in learning more about the CERD process, or other efforts to frame domestic violence as a human rights issue, please contact us.



Power Thoughts

Survivors share their favorite inspirations

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to

shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

~ Marianne Williamson,
A Course in Miracles

Here are some questions for reflection on these thoughts:

- 1) What are some of my best qualities?
- 2) When do I most feel these qualities coming out?
- 3) When do I feel best?
- 4) How can I bring more of those good feelings into my life?

Be gentle with yourself and enjoy your explorations!

To submit a thought for our next newsletter, email vlehrer@urbanjustice.org.

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www.urbanjustice.org

Quote of the Winter:

"I am only one; but still, I am one. I cannot do everything, but still, I can do something; I will not refuse to do something I can do."
~ Helen Keller

You might think that something as simple as talking to a friend about abuse couldn't possibly make a difference. But it really does.

Just knowing that someone cares enough to ask about the abuse can break through the wall of isolation that can surround victims of relationship abuse. If you think a friend is being abused, talk to them. Listen. Let them know you care. You don't have to be an expert, just a friend. Even if they stay in the relationship and you feel frustrated, your friendship helps.

- **Listen, without judging.** Often a battered person believes their abuser's negative messages about them. The victim may feel responsible, ashamed, and afraid of being judged by you.
- **Tell them the abuse is not their fault.** Explain that physical violence in a relationship is never acceptable. There's no excuse for it – not alcohol or drugs, financial pressure, depression, jealousy or any behavior of the victim.
- **Make sure they know they are not alone.** Millions of people of every age, sex, race and religion face abuse, and many people find it extremely difficult to deal with the violence. Emphasize that when they want help, it is available. Let them know that domestic violence tends to get worse, becomes more frequent with time, and rarely goes away on its own.
- **Explain that relationship abuse is a crime,** and that they can seek protection from the police or courts, and help from us. Suggest that they call our Helpline at 1-718-875-5062 for advice and referrals, or the New York 24-Hour DV Hotline at 1-800-621-4673. TTY users can call 1-800-595-4TTY.
- **Suggest that she develop a safety plan in case of emergency.** It's a good idea to keep money, important documents, a change of clothes, and an extra set of keys in a safe place, such as at a friend or neighbor's house.



~ ~ ~ QUIZ: Is it abusive if . . .

Directions - Read these scenarios and decide whether you feel abusive behaviors are present. Circle "yes" if they are, "no" if not, and "unsure" if you're undecided. Base your decisions on the information provided only. Try to decide before peeking at our answer key!

- 1) Rosa tells her boyfriend she wants to go to "ladies' night" with her friends every Friday?
Yes / No / Unsure
- 2) LaToya continues to wear short skirts, even though her partner asked her not to?
Yes / No / Unsure
- 3) Juan tells his boyfriend Alex, in front of their friends, that Alex would look better if he lost a few pounds?
Yes / No / Unsure
- 4) Tanisha starts play-fighting with her girlfriend, who tells her to chill. Tanisha keeps playing with her, but is only playing and doesn't cause any bruises or hurt her physically?
Yes / No / Unsure

- 1) **No.** Each person in a relationship maintains the right to have friends and spend time with them. In a good relationship, each partner has friends and interests outside each other.
- 2) **No.** Both people in the relationship have the right to dress as they wish. No one should change their style of dress to suit their partner's wishes.
- 3) **Yes.** Juan is embarrassing his boyfriend in front of their friends, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- 4) **Yes.** Tanisha did not respect her partner's personal space. A good relationship is one based on friendship and respect. Although no physical harm was done, this was an invasion of personal space and a crossing of personal boundaries.

Our Answer Key: