Domestic Violence.
The National Association of Social Workers Comprehensive Overview

Social workers are at the forefront in preventing domestic violence and treating victims of domestic violence.

Prepared By:
Rita A, Webb, ACSW, DCSW
Senior Policy Associate
Diversity & Equity Issues
Domestic Violence: National Association of Social Workers Comprehensive Overview

Domestic Violence is a preventable problem that regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, race, nationality or religion significantly affects individuals, families and communities. Even though both men and women are victimized by domestic violence, women are more likely to experience serious physical, if not lethal violence, in their lifetime.

Preface

Young women between the ages of 18-24 are at a high risk of domestic violence victimization (NCADV, 2014), while African American women disproportionately face the likelihood of domestic violence homicide (VPC Report, 2014). This alarming domestic violence data is only a snapshot of the complexity of issues and concerns affecting women, men and children, and demonstrates that violent and aggressive acts in intimate relationships can have a tremendous everlasting impact.

Social Work: Implications for Practice, Programs & Policy

Social workers have immeasurable possibilities to directly and indirectly impact the lives and well-being of individuals, families and communities impacted by domestic violence. In multiple settings where social workers practice, direct programs, or develop policy there is increasing opportunity for them to influence and enhance the provision of services and influence ending the vicious cycle of violence.

Researchers suggest that domestic violence is a cross cutting issue that impacts a number of individuals, who seek services in a variety of settings where social workers practice, such as mental health, substance abuse, medical, schools, aging, child welfare, shelters, courts, child and family services. (Danis, 2014). In order to address this problem, social workers need to be skilled in domestic violence screening, risk assessment, and intervention. Social workers increasing involvement in addressing domestic violence can greatly enhance and promote preventative interventions, increase the provision of services, and advocate for better outcomes for both survivors and batterers.

This NASW Domestic Violence Tool Kit is an aggregate of work that reflects the Association’s commitment for social workers to address domestic violence.

References


A Message on Domestic Violence and Social Work Intervention
from NASW CEO, Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW

We can help end domestic violence

Recent headline news of domestic violence within the NFL has sparked much-needed national conversation.

Statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence indicate the problem is a worldwide epidemic.


According to Domestic Violence Statistics (domesticviolencestatistics.org), every nine seconds in the United States a woman is assaulted or beaten, and the abuser most often is a member of her own family. DVS reports that domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women — more than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined.

Domestic violence is a serious and deadly problem. Every day in the United States, more than three women are killed by their husbands or boyfriends. The WHO estimates that 38 percent of all women murdered are killed by their intimate partner. Domestic violence also has a devastating economic impact on victims. DVS says the costs of intimate-partner violence in the U.S. alone exceed $5.8 billion per year; $4.1 billion is for direct medical and health care services, while productivity losses account for nearly $1.8 billion.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act, which provides $1.6 billion toward investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women, imposes automatic and mandatory restitution on those convicted, and allows civil redress in cases prosecutors chose to leave unprosecuted.

The Act establishes the Office on Violence Against Women within the Department of Justice. The VAWA emphasizes coordinated community-based efforts to end domestic violence, sex dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

One of the community-based prevention efforts VAWA funding supports is a program known as the White Ribbon Day Campaign, which challenges men to take active steps to end violence against women.

In 1991, a group of Canadian men started the observance. These men pledged to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls.

The White Ribbon has spread to more than 60 countries around the world since then. The campaign encourages men to wear the ribbon and take the pledge, which is a promise to be part of the solution to curb, reduce and eventually eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault against women.

It is a promise to take action: “If you see something, say something; if you know something, do something; if you hear something, take action.”

On Valentine’s Day 2008, I first took the White Ribbon Pledge. Since then, I have had dozens, if not hundreds, of discussions with boys and men about what we can do to end domestic violence.

My personal white ribbon journey has been enlightening, sobering and inspirational. I’ve met so many people who have influenced and deepened my commitment.

I met an 18-year-old man who was contributing to the cause by conducting breakup workshops with his peers, teaching them how to end relationships without resorting to violence. I met a 47-year-old man who engaged his friends at the local bar during his Thursday “guys night out” to have frank discussions on how they were possibly, tacitly contributing to sanctioning domestic violence within their community, and offering concrete ways to be part of the solution.

I met a woman who — after 27 years in an extremely abusive relationship — was helping other women find strength to stand against intimate-partner violence. I met a woman who sponsored weekly spaghetti dinners to offer her community a forum for public discourse.

From this day forward,
I promise to be part of the solution to ending domestic violence against women.

– Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW
I met another man who lost his daughter to domestic violence on a college campus. In her memory, he had dedicated his life to speaking out against domestic violence (especially on college campuses) and demanding that men stand firm against it.

When I raised my right hand and promised to be part of the solution to end domestic violence against women, I envisioned a world where masculinity embraces the best aspects of our humanity.

As social workers, we can help individuals, families, groups and communities examine the causes of domestic violence and create a culture without intimate-partner violence.

NASW member Tricia Bent-Goodley, a professor at Howard University in Washington, D.C., wrote a book titled “The Ultimate Betrayal,” which examines the issues surrounding domestic violence. Each chapter includes additional resources for further reading. The book is available through the NASW Press at naswpress.org.


Domestic violence impacts communities all across the world each and every day. This is an issue that does not discriminate. Domestic violence occurs among all races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientation, ages, and places of origin. According to the CDC (Black et al., 2011), someone is physically abused by an intimate partner every 20 minutes. This means that over 10 million people experience domestic violence each year. Over 85% of reported victims are women. According to the NNEDV (2014), more than 20,000 phone calls are placed to domestic violence hotlines in the United States each day. This year, the Violence Against Women Act celebrates 20 years of providing critical protections to survivors of domestic violence all across the country. VAWA has ensured expanded criminal justice trainings and responsiveness, targeted culturally specific services, prevention education within educational institutions, and expanded protections for Native American women. Social workers have been critical to responding to domestic violence (Lockhart & Danis, 2010) we provide supports at all levels of service for victims, families, and perpetrators. Social workers provide direct support and services to survivors, offer case management and clinical services to children, collaborate with other professionals to ensure the safety and well-being of survivors and their children, engage perpetrators of abuse through evidence-based practices, provide information to organize, mobilize, and educate communities on this issue, craft and promote structural supports through needed policy advocacy and implementation, and conduct important research that informs the field (Bent-Goodley, 2011). Social workers have long been important and critical voices in the fight to end domestic violence. As we pay particular attention to domestic violence each October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we challenge each social worker to continue to find ways that they can be impactful on this issue. We also bring attention to the critical role social workers play in stopping domestic violence and communities around the nation and around the world.

Statement from NASW NCOWI on Domestic Violence

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References

Domestic Violence and Women of Color: Complex Dynamics

Behavioral Health, Diversity & Equity, Health, Peace and Social Justice Practice Perspectives, 2011

Rita A. Webb, MS

Violence and abuse have profound costs for all communities. Yet, for communities of color, the preponderance of violence can be linked to a host of outcomes that have both immediate and long term implications. Though domestic violence, also called intimate partner violence (IPV), is not limited to any one socioeconomic, ethnic, racial, or religious group, the burden of exposure for racial minorities to domestic violence is reported to be significantly high. The findings indicate that minority women experience higher rates of domestic violence than their white counterparts. In order to address the prevention of domestic violence in communities of color, federal, state and county agencies continue to work cooperatively in support of research, community capacity building projects, reports and initiatives that increase understanding, and to identify possible ways to approach the needs of individuals in a culturally responsive way. For social workers and others who provide services to women of color who are survivors of domestic violence, consideration needs to be given to how the women characterize help and the social and cultural context in which they have experienced violence. Despite the increase in education, legal intervention, medical and community awareness, and the dissemination of more accurate information on the extent of domestic violence, it is difficult to determine overall incidence due to under-reporting. For women of color, under-reporting is a greater concern because they are statistically overrepresented as victims and survivors of domestic violence. Even between racial and ethnic groups of African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians/Alaskan Americans, Asians and Pacific Islander women, there is considerable variation in the rates of domestic violence. Surveys indicate that key components of these findings are the respondents’ willingness to disclose domestic violence and the role of social, demographic, and environmental factors (USDOJ, OJP, 2000).

To read more visit

Resources

Domestic Violence Safety Planning: www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/events/domestic_violence/DV_safety_planning.PDF

Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention: www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/events/domestic_violence/assessment.asp


NASW resources on domestic violence education and legislation policies:
key federal legislative programs that provide states, counties and territories grant funding and technical assistance resources to improve and expand for legal, health, mental health, social services and school response to domestic violence and abuse.

www.socialworkers.org


www.naswdc.org/sections/areas/news.asp?news=220


www.socialworkers.org

The extent of consequences for women who have experienced physical violence each year depends on the severity and frequency of the abuse. Violence hinders a woman’s ability to practice her right to self-determination, which affects many areas of her life and choices.

To read more go to:

www.socialworkers.org/assets/secured/documents/practice/diversity/WKF-MISC-51610%20DiversityPU.pdf

Women and Domestic Violence: Implications For Social Work Intervention

Diversity & Equity Practice Update, 2010

Rita A. Webb, MS

For many immigrant women who are abused and recently arrived to this country, the pain and anguish of domestic violence is often heightened by limited English-speaking ability, uncertainty of their legal rights and adjustment to new and different cultural and social systems.

To read more go to:


Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking: Double Jeopardy for Immigrant Women in the United States

Diversity & Equity Practice Update, 2010

Rita A. Webb, MS
The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study: Implications for Mothers’ & Children’s Exposure to Domestic Violence

Children, Youth & Families Practice Perspectives, 2013

Rita A. Webb, MS

Of the 76 million children living in the United States, it is estimated that 46 million can expect to have their lives affected by violence, abuse, crime, and psychological trauma (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). Approximately 15 million children witness domestic violence each year (Futures Without Violence, 2008). Even as bystanders to domestic and family violence, children may experience psychological traumatization as if abused themselves. Both children and adults exposed to violence may find it difficult to talk about their traumatic experiences. Some children may even experience severe to moderate posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Groves, 2012).

To read more go to: www.socialworkers.org/assets/secured/documents/practice/children/acestudy.pdf

Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Aging, Behavioral Health, Health, Domestic Violence Practice Perspectives, 2014

Chris Herman, MSW, LICSW

In recent years, the problems of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation have garnered increasing attention within the United States. This publication describes the nature, incidence, and risks of elder mistreatment; highlights recent federal elder justice initiatives; and provides strategies, tools, and resources to help social workers address elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To learn more: www.naswdc.org/practice/practice_tools/elder_abuse_neglect_and_exploitation.asp

Domestic Violence Legislation: Opportunities for Social Work

Children, Youth & Families, Diversity & Equity, Violence Tools & Techniques, 2013

Recent federal legislation addressing domestic violence contains many opportunities in health, criminal justice and social services for social work practice, advocacy and research.

To read more go to: www.socialworkers.org/assets/secured/documents/practice/domesticviolencelegislation.pdf
In 2011, SPS did an edition of the InterSections in Practice for their members on the broad category of violence, including domestic violence.” This edition is described as: “The focus turns to discourse on multiplicity of issues that arise when safety and security are compromised at deep levels. The very institution we generally perceive will provide sanctuary can just as likely invoke anxiety. In homes and families, in schools and workplaces, the insidious impact of emotional and physical violence is given voice.” Domestic violence is addressed in several articles of this publication as seen from diverse demographics such as age, ethnicity, and diversity.

To read this special Intersections in Practice on Domestic Violence go to: www.socialworkers.org/assets/public/documents/practice/domestic_violence/SEC-NL-77211.InterSectionsNL.pdf

NASW Webinars on Domestic Violence

NASW Webinars on Domestic Violence continuing education credit for social workers. Besides live teleconferences, members can access the transcripts and audio/podcast component of the teleconference through NASW’s website:

New Domestic Violence Policies: Implications for Social Work Practice

This presentation examines the implications and opportunities for social work practice, advocacy, and research in domestic violence through new policies.

To learn more about this webinar go to: www.naswdc.org/ce/online/lunchtime/lCourses/Default.aspx?courseID=98819e6c-b62e-4d9b-99bb-0f63aa894561&header=OFF

The Cultural Context of Domestic Violence with African American Women

This presentation will introduce some of the considerations practitioners should have related to domestic violence and how it intersects with culture for African Americans.

To learn more about this webinar go to: www.socialworkers.org/ce/online/lunchtime/lCourses/frmthankyou.aspx?courseID=e05b
Legal Defense Fund (LDF)

As part of its mission, LDF has supported precedent setting lawsuits and makes available legal resources of interest to NASW members and social workers generally. Below are amicus briefs NASW joined in related to domestic violence.

**Anderson (Saenz) v. Roe**
(United States Supreme Court, 526 U.S. 489 (1999))

**Case Description:** Challenge to California’s one-year waiting period for welfare benefits for new residents

**NASW Supported:** Roe

**Outcome:** Won

**Date Brief Filed:** 12/8/1998

» Text of Brief (PDF Document)
www.socialworkers.org/ldf/brief_bank/default.asp

**Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama v. Bentley**
(United State District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, No. 5:11-cv-02484-SLB; 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 137846 )

**Case Description:** Request for preliminary injunction against harsh immigration policies passed by Alabama legislature as HB 56.

**NASW Supported:** Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama

**Outcome:** Mixed. Court temporarily enjoined enforcement of portions of HB 56.

**Date Brief Filed:** 8/5/2011

» Text of Brief (PDF Document)
» List of Amici Organizations (PDF Document)
» Motion for Leave to File Brief (PDF Document)
www.socialworkers.org/ldf/brief_bank/default.asp

NASW News & Press

Domestic Violence Resources
NASWPress.org » SocialWorkers.org/pubs/news

**By Grace: The Challenges, Strengths and Promise of African American Marriages (2014)**
Tricia B. Bent-Goodley

The book examines contemporary and historical issues that have affected black marriages, relationships, and families.

**To read excerpts go to:**
www.naswpress.org/publications/diversity/inside/african-american-marriages-chapter.html

**The Ultimate Betrayal A Renewed Look at Intimate Partner Violence (2011)**
Tricia B. Bent-Goodley

Intimate partner violence, also called domestic violence, is a complex problem that has devastating effects on every socioeconomic, racial and ethnic group.

**To read excerpts go to:**
www.naswpress.org/publications/children/ultimate-betrayal.html

The ninth edition of Social Works Speaks presents, in one comprehensive and unabridged collection, the policy statements adopted by the NASW Delegate Assembly in 2011. The Delegate Assembly, NASW’s key policymaking body, meets every three years. Social Work Speaks is the result of the Delegate Assembly’s systematic approach to policy development and guides NASW’s advocacy efforts in social policy.

In relationship to domestic violence social policy, two policy statements address domestic violence in their policy statements: Family Planning and Reproductive Choice and Women’s Issues.

To read the Forward of this book go to: www.naswpress.org/publications/practice/inside/speaks-foreword.html

To purchase this book go to: www.naswpress.org/publications/practice/speaks.html

Journals


http://sw.oxfordjournals.org/content/59/1/73.extract?sid=b9104401-68de-4075-8299-8945fb1fce99

For more articles in NASW’s Social Work Journals go to: http://sw.oxfordjournals.org/search?fulltext=domestic+violence&submit=yes&x=17&y=10

News

Social Work Plays a Key Role

In recent years, great strides have been made in federal legislation to aid those experiencing the effects of domestic violence.

While there is still room for improvement, social workers remain key players in helping domestic abuse victims and survivors both personally and through continuing advocacy efforts.

To read more of this news article go to: www.socialworkers.org/pubs/news/2013/10/domestic-violence-awareness-month.asp?back=yes

NASW’s Outside Organizations Collaborations, Coalitions and Appointments

» National Health Collaborative on Violence (NHCVA) http://nhcva.org/


» Office of Women’s Health (OWH) US Department of Health And Human Services: Reviewers for OWH eLearning on Domestic Violence www.womenshealth.gov/index.php

» Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Girls Globally http://womenthrive.org/tags/coalition-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-globally

» Institute of Medicine (IOM) Forum on Global Violence Prevention http://iom.edu/Activities/Global/ViolenceForum

Domestic violence is a preventable problem that regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, race, nationality or religion significantly affects individuals, families, and communities.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which evolved from the first Day of Unity observed in October, 1981, by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The intent was to connect battered womens advocates across the nation who were working to end violence against women and their children. Visit ncadv.org for more information.