



# SIGNATURE PROGRAM

## DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

### 2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

**"NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE HEART OF A CHAMPION" RUBY TOMJANOVICH**

**"A CHAMPION IS SOMEONE WHO GETS UP WHEN (S)HE CAN'T" JACK DEMPSEY**

#### BECOME A CHAMPION - KNOW THE PROGRAM!

The goal of the GFWC Signature Program is to increase awareness of and help prevent the widespread occurrence of domestic and sexual violence abuse in communities across the nation by working with national domestic violence networks, supporting existing activities, working with various established programs, and initiating educational opportunities for club members and local citizens. GFWC aims to be a powerful voice for victims and survivors.

In partnership with GFWC and community members, we pledge to work together with passion and purpose to **advocate** for survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence and **educate** the public on the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence in our local communities and how informing members can improve outcomes for survivors.

The Signature Program has eight areas of focus:

- **Campus Sexual Assault**

Campus sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs on a school campus without the explicit consent of the recipient.

- **Child Abuse**

Child abuse includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.

- **Elder Abuse**

Abuse later in life includes the physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or stalking of an adult age 50 years or older.

- **Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes**

Sexual human trafficking is any act that has been induced by recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for purposes of a sex act in which anything of value is given to or received by any person.



**GFWC**  
est. 1890  
**GENERAL FEDERATION  
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

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- **Intimate Partner Violence**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as sexual coercion and stalking by a current or former intimate partner. An intimate partner is a person with whom a person has or had a close personal or sexual relationship.

- **Military Sexual Assault**

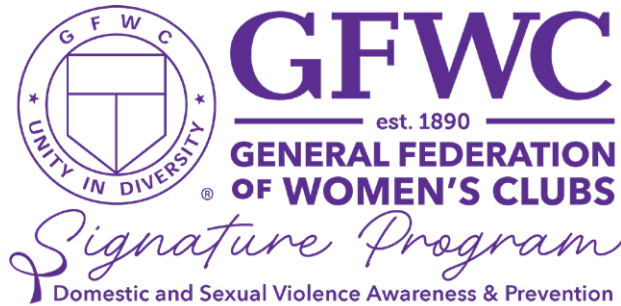
Military sexual assault is the use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority during intentional sexual contact. It also includes instances where the survivor is unable to consent. Survivors of military sexual assault include both men and women.

- **Teen Dating Violence**

Teen dating violence (TDV) - also called intimate relationship violence or intimate partner violence among adolescents or adolescent relationship abuse – includes physical, psychological, or sexual abuse; harassment; or stalking of any person ages 12 to 18 in the context of a past or present romantic or consensual relationship. For more information about teen dating violence, visit <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/crimes/teen-dating-violence>

- **Violence Against Native American Women**

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) women and two-spirit people in tribal communities are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence in the United States. Research and advocacy have brought attention to the unique nature of victimization in our AIAN communities.



GFWC Signature Program Icons & Logos are available in the Digital Library for download.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

BECOME A CHAMPION: BE THE VOICE FOR  
THOSE WHO HAVE NO VOICE.



"Intimate partner violence occurs when one person in a relationship uses some form of violence to exert power and control over the other person" (Victoria Women's Transition House Society).

- Communities need education on how to help victims of Intimate partner violence. One in 3 women and 1 in 4 men report having experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime, one in 5 women and 1 in 13 men have experienced contact sexual violence by an intimate partner, and 14% of women and 5% of men report having been stalked by an intimate partner.

To raise awareness in our communities, we must learn to become the voices of those who lack one.

- Teach safe and healthy relationship skills to our youth and adults.
- Advocate and support legislation that provides stricter laws in your States against abusers and rights for victims.
- Work with your local shelters and find out how you can help and what they need. Sometimes, it's the items we overlook that matter the most.
- Encourage your club to support victim-centered services, which could include therapy, housing programs, teen dating violence prevention, and legal assistance.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or Text START to 88788 can be used on your social media tag lines, added on all printed materials, and used on websites. Become a Champion and Energize More People Out there With Educating Real survivor knowledge (EMPOWER).

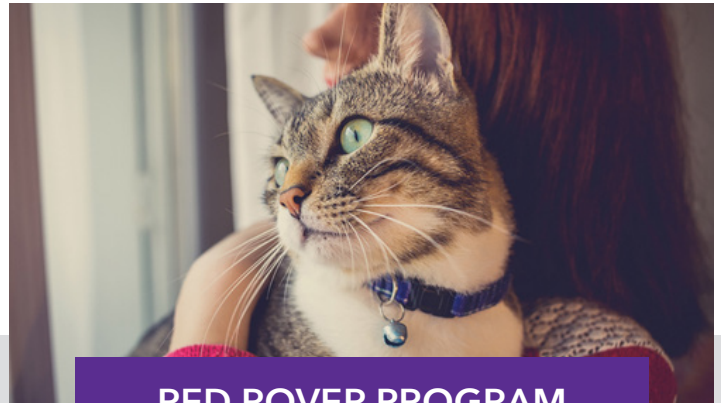


## FEATURED PROJECTS



### FLASHLIGHTS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

GFWC Past Presidents Club (DE) collected and distributed small flashlights to shelters and organizations that work with victims of domestic violence, including human trafficking. When victims decide to escape their circumstances, it is often in the middle of the night, and they leave quickly and with no time to pack items. Small flashlights can easily fit in your pocket. The flashlight allows a person to see hazards and street signs.



### RED ROVER PROGRAM

GFWC Rotonda West Women's Club (FL) objective was to aid families in moving forward to safety but not without their pets. The club negotiated a partnership with the local humane and animal rescue sanctuary to assist with temporary shelter for small pets so victims did not have to leave their beloved animals behind. They provided support by donating to programs that sponsor and support the Red Rover program.



### WILL KEEP OUR GIRLS SAFE AT COLLEGE

GFWC Oak View Women's Club (CA) assembled safety kits for high school seniors leaving for college. The kits included personal alarms and door and window alarms for dorm room personal safety. Two pamphlets were also included in each kit: one was on teen dating and the second was the CFWC College Safety pamphlet. Over 200 kits were distributed, and the club used social media, bulletin boards, word of mouth, and other avenues to get the kits to local seniors heading to college.



### ANGEL SHOT POSTERS

GFWC Morris Woman's Club (IL) placed Angel Shot posters in women's restrooms at every restaurant and bar that sells liquor to patrons. The posters alert women who need help due to abuse or unwanted advances that there is help available for them and provides instructions to go to the server/bartender and ask for an "angel shot", the signal to the bartender that help is needed. Other words that are used as a call for help include:

<b>Neat</b>	(needs an escort to their car)
<b>Dressed</b>	(call an Uber or Lyft)
<b>Angel Shot w/lime</b>	(call the police)

Cheat sheets were also made describing the shot types to go behind the bar as a reference for the servers/bartenders.







## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT

Campus sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. More than 1 in 4 women attending college are survivors of campus sexual assault. Women are not the only survivors. About 7% of college men and 23% of gay/lesbian/transgender students are also survivors. It is not just other students that present a risk; sometimes it is a member of the faculty or staff.

As a college student, the first step in prevention is believing it could happen to you and that it will most likely be by someone you know. The second step is thinking ahead of time how you can safeguard yourself. Decide on boundaries before going on a date, to a party, or other activity.

Colleges must take responsibility for the environment on campus. They should facilitate open discussions with students and employees about the issue and have policies in place for handling reports of sexual assault in a sensitive, compassionate, and professional manner.

It is estimated that less than 5% of campus sexual assaults are reported.

Survivors often do not file a report or seek help or counseling because they are too embarrassed or ashamed or believe they can handle it on their own. Having a supportive environment on campus and with friends can make filing a report easier to do. Staff and campus police need to be fully trained on how to handle reports as well as understanding survivor impact and behavior. Supportive services from a crisis advocate are invaluable in helping survivors navigate the reporting and subsequent legal process.

Survivors of campus sexual assault may need immediate assistance to locate safe housing, obtain counseling, and, if necessary, file a civil restraining order.

If someone you know is assaulted, these are things you can do to help:

- Help get them to a safe location.
- Keep reminding them it was not their fault.
- Be a supportive listener.
- If you observed any part of the assault, take detailed notes about what you saw.
- Go with them to medical and other appointments.
- Continue to follow up with them and encourage them to seek counseling.



## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Ensure that your campus has appropriate policies and procedures in place to address incidents of sexual assault and follows federal requirements under the Clery Campus Safety Act and Title IX, as well as applicable state and local laws.
- Ensure that resources like safe housing, advocates, counseling, and medical care are available to help survivors.
- Use social media to spread awareness and advocate for social change.
- Hold a bystander intervention session to teach bystanders how to intervene in situations that involve sexual violence.
- Get involved in national campaigns.
- Organize or participate in public awareness initiatives:
  - It's on Us – An initiative through the American Association of University Women that reframes sexual assault in a way that inspires everyone to see it as their responsibility to do something, big or small, to prevent it. ([itsonus.org](https://itsonus.org))
  - The Clothesline Project – Have people affected by violence decorate a shirt and hang it on a public clothesline as a testimony to the problem of sexual violence. [www.theclotheslineproject.org](https://www.theclotheslineproject.org)
  - Take Back the Night – Take part in an after-dark march on a college campus and make a statement about women's right to be in public at night without the risk of sexual violence.
- Volunteer at your local rape crisis center.
- Sponsor a door-decorating contest or art contest at your local middle and high schools about healthy relationships/dating abuse/domestic violence and have the winning entry made into a poster to distribute.

## RESOURCES

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) [www.nsvrc.org](https://www.nsvrc.org)

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

[www.justice.gov/crt/overview-title-ix-education-amendments1972-20-usc-1681-et-seq](https://www.justice.gov/crt/overview-title-ix-education-amendments1972-20-usc-1681-et-seq)

Clery Center for Security on Campus [www.clerycenter.org](https://www.clerycenter.org)

Victim Rights Law Center [www.victimrights.org](https://www.victimrights.org)

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) [www.rainn.org](https://www.rainn.org)





## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. Children and even infants witnessing or experiencing abuse can display negative behavior years later. There are four common types of abuse and neglect:

- Physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force that can result in physical injury. Examples include hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other shows of force against a child.
- Sexual abuse involves pressuring or forcing a child to engage in sexual acts. It includes behaviors such as fondling, penetration, and exposing a child to other sexual activities.
- Emotional abuse refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional wellbeing. Examples include name calling, shaming, rejection, withholding love, and threatening.
- Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. These needs include housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care.

Child abuse and neglect are common. At least 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the past year. Children living in poverty experience more abuse and neglect. Rates of child abuse and neglect are five times higher for children in families with low socioeconomic status compared to children in families with higher socioeconomic status.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month, also known as Child Abuse Prevention Month in America, is an annual observance in the United States dedicated to raising awareness and preventing child abuse. April has been designated Child Abuse Prevention Month in the United States since 1983.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example:

- Substance use by a parent.
- Parent participating in criminal activity and in prison.
- Neglect by parent.
- Sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Living with a parent/caregiver who has a serious mental illness.
- Witnessing violence in the home or community.



ACEs can have lasting, negative effects on health, wellbeing, and opportunity. These experiences can increase the risks of injury, sexually transmitted infections, maternal and child health problems, teen pregnancy, involvement in sex trafficking, and a wide range of chronic diseases and leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and suicide.

Hotline numbers are a valuable resource for those who are mandated by law to report suspected abuse. Most hotlines staffed by professional crisis counselors are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These professionals can offer crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. All calls are confidential. Calls can come from children at risk for abuse, distressed parents seeking crisis intervention, and concerned individuals who suspect that child abuse may be occurring. Most states have a division of their health and human services department that people should call if abuse is suspected.

Children need support after suffering abuse. Talking to a professional therapist can help many children, and many abuse-related disorders can be successfully treated with medications. Reporting suspected abuse is critical to helping an abuse survivor get the help and support the child needs.

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems that can have lasting harmful effects on its survivors. The goal of preventing child abuse and neglect is to stop this violence from happening in the first place.

## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Provide support and supplies to families in need at emergency shelters.
- Advocate for changes in culture and communities to reduce the likelihood of child abuse.
- Accompany victims to court or to the hospital to provide support and assistance.
- Encourage club members to become Court Appointed Advocates (CASA) and/or Guardians ad Litem.
- Collect teddy bears to give to children at a child advocacy center, where children are interviewed and examined after an incident of abuse.
- Support local Child Protective Service agencies with kits for children entering foster care.
- Provide used suitcases and bags to Child Protective Service agencies to reduce the need for children to use garbage bags for their belongings.
- Support legislation that eradicates child abuse and/or makes laws tougher.

## RESOURCES

**CASA** [www.nationalcasagal.org](http://www.nationalcasagal.org)

**Childhelp USA/National Child Abuse Hotline** [www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org); 1-800-422-4453

**National Link Coalition** [www.nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse](http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse)

**Children's Defense Fund** [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org); 202-628-8787

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/technical-packages.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/technical-packages.html)  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/aces/fastfact.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/aces/fastfact.html)  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES.pdf)

**Prevent Child Abuse America** [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

**Healthy Families America** [www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org](http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org)

**Domestic Shelters** [www.domesticshelters.org/help#?page=1](http://www.domesticshelters.org/help#?page=1)







## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: ELDER ABUSE

Abuse later in life includes, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or stalking of an adult age 50 years or older. Approximately 1 in 6 people 60 years or older experienced some sort of abuse during the past year. Rates of elder abuse are high in institutions such as nursing homes and long-term care facilities, with 2 in 3 staff reporting that they have committed abuse in the past year.

Seventy-seven million baby boomers are aging, and approximately 10,000 turn 65 every day. People 85 and older, the fastest growing segment of the population, are disproportionately women. As the population ages, so does the opportunity for abuse. Likely targets are adults who have no family or friends nearby and people with disabilities, memory problems, or dementia.

In most cases, the survivor is in an ongoing relationship with the perpetrator, such as a spouse, partner, family member, or caregiver. Society expects there to be a trusting and caring connection. Research indicates that for every incident of abuse reported to the authorities, 23 incidents remain undiscovered and unreported.

Older individuals face unique challenges when seeking assistance or services. Older survivors may refrain from seeking help or calling the police due to shame or embarrassment because the abuse was committed by a spouse, adult children, grandchild, or caregiver. They may also be intimidated by threats of being placed in a nursing home. Signs of elder abuse may be missed by professionals working with older Americans because of a lack of training in detecting abuse. Professionals must be trained to be diligent about doing physical body check exams for abuse. Abuse can happen to any older adult but often affects those who depend on others for help with everyday life care including bathing, dressing, and taking medicine. People who are frail may appear to be easy victims.

It is estimated that elders throughout the U.S. lose a minimum of \$2.9 billion annually due to elder financial abuse and exploitation. These numbers are staggering. We need to support and educate our elderly population and their caregivers. With so many entities playing a role, there is a growing recognition of the need for multidisciplinary collaboration. Depending on the nature of the abuse, additional expertise and assistance may be sought from healthcare providers, social service agencies, financial institutions, civil attorneys, and others.



## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Contact the Senior Center to hold educational programs and seminars. Provide professional speakers and materials for those attending.
- Support and plan projects during Older Americans Month in May and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15.
- Create awareness during National Family Caregivers Month in November.
- Provide resources and support materials in nursing homes, such as "Pass It On" materials, available at [ftc.gov/PassItOn](https://ftc.gov/PassItOn).
- Organize a "Letter to the Editor" writing campaign to raise awareness not only of elder abuse but of the local resources available in your community on aging offices. Be sure to include contact information and hotline helpline information.
- Distribute elder abuse public awareness materials at local sporting events, concerts, fairs, and grocery stores.
- Hold a community yard sale at a central location such as a senior center or church with proceeds going to an elder abuse support group or community outreach program to help support elders in crisis.
- Learn to identify the risk factors and warning signs of abuse. Offer to bring them to an adult protective services agency or to help them seek medical care.
- Support the investigation and prosecution of elder abuse cases by providing funds and/or advocating for funds for training and resources to federal, state, and local investigators and prosecutors.
- Enhance services to elder abuse survivors by improving identification of elder abuse and enhancing response and outreach to individuals who experience abuse.
- Develop a public awareness campaign, with clear and consistent messaging to raise awareness and understanding of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Organize training for survivor service providers, health care professionals, community organizations, faith-based advocates, and local agencies to better serve survivors of abuse in later life.
- Work with local nursing homes to ensure their staff is knowledgeable and has had the proper training.
- Commit to the prevention of elder abuse by holding education seminars at Senior Centers.
- Partner with a local nursing home on June 15, for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and host a BBQ or picnic. Include activities and food for residents and their families, staff, and the community. Ask volunteers to bring food and games to play and coordinate the activities with nursing home staff. Invite the press for added exposure and increased elder abuse awareness.
- Organize a collection of robes, socks, pajamas, sweatpants, and shirts that can be donated to senior citizen centers or nursing homes.
- Call or visit an elderly loved one and ask how he or she is doing.
- Organize a "Respect Your Elders" essay or poster contest at your local school.
- Join the Ageless Alliance. This group connects people of all ages nationwide, who stand united for the dignity of older adults and for the elimination of elder abuse. You can join for free at [agelessalliance.org](https://agelessalliance.org)
- Ask your bank manager to train tellers on how to detect elder financial abuse.
- Provide a respite break for a caregiver.



## RESOURCES

National Committee for Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) [www.preventelderabuse.org](http://www.preventelderabuse.org)

Elder Abuse - National Institute on Aging [www.nia.nih.gov/health/elder-abuse](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/elder-abuse)

National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) [www.ncea.gov](http://www.ncea.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/features/elderabuse/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/features/elderabuse/index.html)

Federal Trade Commission [www.ftc.gov/PassItOn](http://www.ftc.gov/PassItOn)

American Psychological Association [www.apg.org](http://www.apg.org)

World Health Organization [who.int](http://who.int)

Elder Care Locator [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or 1-800-677-1116





## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES

Sexual Human Trafficking is any sex act that is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. Victims of sex trafficking can be women, men, children, and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian/gay men/bisexual/ transgender/queer/intersex and asexual) individuals. Vulnerable populations are frequently targeted by traffickers, including runaway and homeless youth, as well as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or social discrimination. Women and children are the most common victims. More recently, LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals, especially transgender individuals, are increasingly found to be victims of sexual exploitation across international borders. The average age of a trafficked child is 15 years old.

Many survivors become romantically involved with someone who then forces or manipulates them into prostitution. Sexual exploitation occurs in various settings, including (but not limited to) brothels, strip clubs, massage parlors, online ads, or escort services, on streets or truck stops, at hotels, motels, or in private homes. Others are lured in with false promises of a job, such as modeling or dancing. Some are forced to sell sex by family members. Individuals are trafficked domestically and across international borders. They may be involved in a trafficking situation for a few days or weeks – or may remain in the same trafficking situation for years.

Sex traffickers use threats, manipulation, lies, debt bondage, and other forms of coercion to compel adults and children to engage in commercial sex acts against their will. Under U.S. law, any minor under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking – whether the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) recognizes that traffickers use psychological and physical coercion as well as bondage. Coercion includes threats of serious harm to a person and any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to any person.



## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Learn the indicators of human trafficking and report suspicions to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888).
- The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is the first comprehensive federal law to address trafficking in persons. The law provides a three-pronged approach that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution.
- Many victims of sex trafficking benefit from mental health services. Providers can help victims in dealing with their trauma while helping them become survivors through mental health support, job training, and affordable care and access to services.
- January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Participate in awareness campaigns in your community. Educate yourself about human trafficking. Take this quiz to learn how social media is used by traffickers: [www.polarisproject.org/human\\_trafficking\\_recruitment\\_quiz](http://www.polarisproject.org/human_trafficking_recruitment_quiz). Advocate to stop legislation that decriminalizes pimping, brothel-keeping, and sex buying. Help unmask human trafficking networks and urge Congress to pass legislation that will help find traffickers and hold them accountable.
- Collaborate with an organization advocating against sex trafficking.
- Study the culture and reasons for this activity. Read articles and books on the subject and invite guest speakers.
- Partner with an advocacy group to bring education to school-age children alerting them to how traffickers work online to grow relationships and earn the trust of unsuspecting youth.

## RESOURCES

**Current Federal Laws / Polaris** [www.polarisproject.org/current-federal-laws](http://www.polarisproject.org/current-federal-laws)

**National Human Trafficking Hotline** [www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org); 1-888-373-7888

**U.S. Department of Justice National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking** [www.justice.gov/humantrafficking](http://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking)

**Department of Homeland Security (ICE) Most Wanted Sex Traffickers Photos** (updated daily) [www.ice.gov/features/human-trafficking](http://www.ice.gov/features/human-trafficking)

**Covenant House** [www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-issues/human-trafficking](http://www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-issues/human-trafficking)

**Erase Child Trafficking: Human Trafficking Victim Recovery** [www.erasechildtrafficking.org/human-traffickingrecovery](http://www.erasechildtrafficking.org/human-traffickingrecovery)

**Rahab's Daughters** [www.rahabsdaughters.org](http://www.rahabsdaughters.org)

**U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking (usiaht) Safe Homes** [www.usiaht.org/our-safe-homes](http://www.usiaht.org/our-safe-homes)

**U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services** [www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit/victims-of-human-trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit/victims-of-human-trafficking)

**Sustainable Recovery for Trafficking Survivors (THORN)** [www.thorn.org/blog/sustainable-recovery-traffickingsurvivors](http://www.thorn.org/blog/sustainable-recovery-traffickingsurvivors)

**Set Me Free Project** [www.setmefreeproject.net](http://www.setmefreeproject.net)

**Office for Victims of Crime** [ovc.ojp.gov](http://ovc.ojp.gov)







## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence (IPV) includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as sexual coercion and stalking by a current or former intimate partner. An intimate partner is a person with whom a person has or had a close personal or sexual relationship.

Domestic or Intimate Partner Violence is a silent epidemic and is a prevalent problem in today's society. Intimate Partner Violence happens in all types of relationships, including dating couples, married couples, same-sex couples, former or ex-couples, and couples who live together but are not married. Intimate Partner Violence happens more often among younger couples. According to the 2022 National Statistics, on average, nearly 24 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. This equates to more than 12 million women and men each year. One in 4 women and 1 in 9 men have experienced intimate partner physical violence, though women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence.

Safety is the most important concern. Those in immediate danger should call 911. Domestic violence often results in physical and emotional injuries; get medical care. It can also lead to other health problems, reproductive health challenges, mental health conditions such as depression, and suicide. Women affected by Intimate Partner Violence are also more likely to use drugs or alcohol to cope. After the physical injuries have been treated, a mental health professional should be used to help cope with emotional concerns. A counselor or therapist can help to deal with emotions in healthy ways, build self-esteem, and help develop coping skills.

Make a safety plan to leave, save the evidence, find out where to get help in the local community, talk to someone and look into a restraining order, and call a helpline for free, anonymous help.



## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Support programs that:
  - Teach safe and healthy relationship skills to school-aged children.
  - Engage influential adults and peers.
  - Disrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence.
  - Create protective environments.
  - Strengthen economic support for families.
  - Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harm.
  - Finance a project for your local domestic violence shelter through grant funding for non-profits.
- Assemble SHARP (Stalking, Harassment, and Rape Prevention) Kits, and donate them to a Rape Crisis Center. Each kit contains a cell phone and charger, a small paper tablet and pen, a flashlight, a whistle, a datebook, and a canister of pepper spray in non-transparent cosmetic bags.
- Apply for Walmart's Community Grant program ([www.walmart.org/how-we-give/localcommunitygrants](http://www.walmart.org/how-we-give/localcommunitygrants)) to finance a project for your local shelter or to bring awareness.
- Partner with local school departments and help to implement a school-based prevention program for middle and high school students designed to stop or prevent the initiation of dating violence, victimization, and perpetration.

## RESOURCES

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)** [www.avp.org/ncavp](http://www.avp.org/ncavp); or 212-714-1141 for 24-hour assistance in English or Spanish

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org); 1-800-799-7233

**World Health Organization** [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)





## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT

Military sexual assault is the use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority during intentional sexual contact. It also includes instances where the survivor is unable to consent. Survivors of military sexual assault include both men and women.

Military personnel are encouraged to use the unit or installation Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SARP), or speak with an MCIO (Military Criminal Investigative Organization) investigator. The Military victim will then be able to decide whether to make a restricted or unrestricted report. (DoDI 6495.02, Volume 1, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Program Procedures," March 28, 2013, Incorporating Change 7 September 6, 2022 (whs.mil))

Military bases offer the services of a Family Advocacy Program (FAP) [www.militaryonesource.mil/preventing-violence-abuse/unhealthy-relationships/family-advocacy-program-support/#](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/preventing-violence-abuse/unhealthy-relationships/family-advocacy-program-support/#) The FAP prevents and responds to adult-initiated child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in the military and coordinates the multidisciplinary team response to problematic sexual behavior in children and youth.

DoD Safe Helpline [www.safehelpline.org](http://www.safehelpline.org) is the sole secure, confidential, and anonymous crisis support service specially designed for members of the Department of Defense community affected by sexual assault and is operated by Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN). The anonymity of the Safe Helpline provides Service members with a "first-step" option to get information, support, and resources on their path to recovery after sexual assault. There are six ways to get access to help anytime, anywhere: online, by telephone, through the Safe Helpline app, chat, local resource connections, and self-paced educational programs.

Veterans who were victims of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) have resources that can be accessed anonymously [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/resources.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/resources.asp).

The information and resources can assist survivors in finding support, shelters, and advocacy services.



## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Recommendations include modifying laws that create barriers to reporting or are used in retaliation against survivors, increasing support for survivors, and improving awareness of resources for current military members, their families, and veterans.
- Find your local affiliate and volunteer or donate to National Coalition of Domestic Violence (NCADV) [ncadv.org/stay-connected/state-coalitions](https://ncadv.org/stay-connected/state-coalitions) and/or National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) [nnedv.org/content/state-u-s-territory-coalitions/](https://nnedv.org/content/state-u-s-territory-coalitions/)
- Spread the word about the DoD Safe Helpline. Free materials are available at [shop.safehelpline.org/](https://shop.safehelpline.org/). Share on social media, at local veterans events, and/or host a coffee for Service members, family, and veterans using the free coffee cup sleeves.
- Contact local advocacy groups to learn what supplies and collections are needed in nearby shelters.
- Contact and speak to someone at the Family Advocacy Program to learn how your group could help clients at a local military installation.
- Find local veterans centers, clubs, and events and share information about the free, secure, trauma-sensitive mobile app that was created specifically to support the health and well-being of survivors of sexual assault or harassment during military service [mobile.va.gov/app/beyond-mst](https://mobile.va.gov/app/beyond-mst)
- Volunteer at local homeless shelters and ask them to share available Military Sexual Trauma (MST) resources.

## RESOURCES

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) [www.ncadv.org](https://www.ncadv.org)

National Network to End Domestic Violence [www.nnedv.org](https://www.nnedv.org)

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233; [www.thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org); [www.WomensLaw.org](https://www.WomensLaw.org)

Protect Our Defenders Foundation [www.protectourdefenders.com](https://www.protectourdefenders.com)

DOD Safe Helpline [www.safehelpline.org](https://www.safehelpline.org)





## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Teen dating violence (TDV) is a type of Intimate Partner Violence. It occurs between two people in a close relationship.

TDV includes four types of behavior:

- Physical violence is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- Sexual violence is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.
- Psychological aggression is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another person mentally or emotionally and/or exert control over another person.
- Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the survivor.

TDV is common; it affects millions of teens in the U.S. each year. Data from CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey indicate that:

- Nearly 1 in 11 female and approximately 1 in 15 male high school students report having experienced physical dating violence in the last year.
- About 1 in 9 female and 1 in 36 male high school students report having experienced sexual dating violence in the last year.
- 26% of women and 15% of men who were victims of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime first experienced these or other forms of violence by that partner before age 18.
- The burden of TDV is not shared equally across all groups—sexual minority groups are disproportionately affected by all forms of violence, and some racial/ethnic minority groups are disproportionately affected by many types of violence.

Dating violence can take place in person or electronically, such as repeated texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online without consent. Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Teens often think some behaviors, like teasing and name-calling, are a "normal" part of a relationship—but these behaviors can become abusive and develop into serious forms of violence. However, many teens do not report unhealthy behaviors because they are afraid to tell family and friends.





Safe Dates curriculum for Teen Dating Violence (TDV) is a good resource. It covers the different types of abuse – verbal, physical, emotional, financial – and explains the differences. It facilitates discussions on stalking and digital abuse, as well. Additionally, learning to identify “red flags” in relationships and talking about safety planning is important.

Learn to recognize the signs of TDV. Unhealthy, abusive, or violent relationships can have severe consequences, short-term, and long-term negative effects on a developing teen. For instance, youth who are victims of TDV are more likely to:

- Experience symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Engage in unhealthy behaviors, like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol.
- Exhibit antisocial behaviors, like lying, theft, bullying, or hitting.
- Think about suicide.

Violence in an adolescent relationship sets the stage for problems in future relationships, including Intimate Partner Violence and sexual violence perpetration and/or victimization throughout life. For instance, youth who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

To help victims of TDV:

- Encourage her/him to talk about it with someone, a friend, family member, or other trusted adult.
- Help her/him to keep a record or journal of the abuse, documenting each instance.
- Accompany her/him to seek medical attention or psychological support, as needed.

Supporting the development of healthy, respectful, and nonviolent relationships has the potential to reduce the occurrence of TDV and prevent its harmful and long-lasting effects on individuals, their families, and the communities where they live. During the pre-teen and teen years, it is critical for youth to begin to learn the skills needed – such as effectively managing feelings and using healthy communication – to create and foster healthy relationships.

## WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Inform pre-teens and teens of safe and healthy relationship skills.
- Engage influential adults and peers to assist with forums in school settings.
- Interrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence by advocating with information and education.
- Create protective environments and publicize locations.
- Strengthen economic support for families by advocating for funding.
- Facilitate an information session for parents on teen dating violence at your school.
- Sponsor art classes for local high schools in which students make posters about dating abuse and domestic violence awareness and prevention. Encourage the use of photography, computer graphics, and artwork to make the posters unique. Work with your local library or community center to post finished artwork for the entire community to view.



## RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Freedom House [www.freedomhouseillinois.org](http://www.freedomhouseillinois.org)

Office on Violence Against Women [www.justice.gov/ovw/dating-violence](http://www.justice.gov/ovw/dating-violence)

Safe Place [www.nationalsafeplace.org/teen-dating-violence](http://www.nationalsafeplace.org/teen-dating-violence)





## HOW YOUR CLUB CAN ADVOCATE AND EDUCATE: VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) women and two-spirit people in tribal communities are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence in the US. Research and advocacy have brought attention to the unique nature of victimization in our AIAN communities.

- Approximately half of Native American women have experienced sexual violence and approximately half have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner.
- Murder is the third-leading cause of death for AIAN women in the United States.
- AIAN female victims are more likely to need victims' services such as medical care and legal services, but more than a third were not able to access or receive those important services.
- AIAN victims are more likely to be victimized by non-Native perpetrators.

### WHAT CAN GFWC DO?

- Inclusive messaging and advocacy will help bring attention to the unique and common characteristics of violence against all women.
- Bring Awareness to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day on May 5 of each year. Plan a campaign to bring attention to missing and murdered AIAN persons and help bring justice for victims.
- November is Native American Heritage Month. Plan a campaign to celebrate and honor Native American heritage and culture.
- Educate members and communities about domestic and sexual assault issues facing AIAN women. Research, share, and advocate for legislation and public policy like the Not Invisible Act of 2019, Savanna's Act, and the Violence Against Women Act.
- Volunteer with or donate to victim service organizations that serve AIAN victims. Help your community connect to the government and non-profit organizations doing research, sharing resources, seeking justice, and serving victims of violence.
- Collect gently used purses and tote bags and fill them with health and beauty aids, jewelry, children's items, and other toiletries. Present them to your local shelter.
- Learn and then teach dance from one of these cultures to promote the importance of their culture with others to help them better understand the customs of the group.
- Partner with a junior high or high school and organize an art contest to show the 'culture through art' of one or more indigenous cultures.



## RESOURCES

Indian Law Resource Center [www.indianlaw.org](http://www.indianlaw.org)

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) [www.niwrc.org](http://www.niwrc.org)

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence [www.ncdsv.org/ncd\\_linksnativetribal.html](http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_linksnativetribal.html)

StrongHearts Native Helpline [www.strongheartshelpline.org](http://www.strongheartshelpline.org); 1-844-762-8483

Tribal Law and Policy Institute [www.home.tlpi.org/violence-against-native-women-publicatio](http://www.home.tlpi.org/violence-against-native-women-publicatio)

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence [nrcdv.org](http://nrcdv.org); 1-800-537-2238

Domestic Violence Action Center [www.domesticviolenceactioncenter.org](http://www.domesticviolenceactioncenter.org)



## CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS



### HOPE FOR JUSTICE

Hope for Justice and the General Federation of Women's Clubs share a common mission and vision: to live in a world free from trafficking. We see a world where every human is free and equal. We believe every person can be a force for good. Human trafficking is a global problem, and Hope for Justice brings a global solution. We target our resources where they will have the most impact and help the most people. We want to create nations and societies that are hostile to trafficking – because what you tolerate, you will never change.

Find Hope For Justice Contact information in the Affiliate Organization Contacts section of the Club Manual.

## AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention projects and Affiliate Organization projects as follows:

- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

## RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions adopted by GFWC are the foundation of our organization. They guide our call to action and are the basis of all programming and advocacy. Current Resolutions for the **Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention** are listed here by number and title. Refer to the complete text in the GFWC Resolutions document, filed under "Governance" in the Digital Library on the Member Portal. Resolutions are an important and integral part of GFWC Programs.

110-010 Campus Sexual Assault

110-020 Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention

110-030 Elder Abuse Prevention

110-040 Military Sexual Assault

110-050 Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits

110-060 Sexual Harassment

