

## Resisting Violence Against Women

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WGST 112

### Slide 1

[No audio]

### Slide 2

I do like to bring this topic up after you've watch this "Killing Us Softly" by Jean Kilbourne because she brings up several times that in advertising very often we see that women being sexualized encourages violence against women. Not so much so with men, maybe in the gay community. But that these visuals do encourage it very often and of course she explained way.

Violence against women is a very broad topic. Back when women were coming together in these consciousness raising groups in the sixties, this was a topic that did emerge. It was one of those subjects that was considered a private, family matter. It began to be discussed and it was a very widespread problem. We do know, as you see here, that women are 10 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner. Of course, men are victims of violence as well. But statistically, you're going to see that this is generally an issue that has to do with women. But I do want to make that disclaimer that sometimes they are. But as a gender, it is a particularly alarming women's issue. The rates of violence in the United States are certainly quite alarming. Compared to figures from the early 1990's, some things have certainly decreased but certainly not as it should be.

It's so broad. The range of gender violence includes acts of intimidation, harassment, stalking, voyeurism. It can be workplace harassment, obscene phone calls, pornography, prostitution. Emotional, psychological, physical and sexual abuse. I bring up a phrase that we have all probably used and didn't really realize what it meant: the "rule of thumb." Back in early America, it was not inappropriate to beat your wife. But the rule was that the stick should not be any bigger than your thumb. If the stick was any bigger, you might impair her in some way but it was ok to beat her with a stick the size of your thumb. So anytime you use that, you might think of this.

Again, please read the chapter. You can skim the articles. It's a very complicated issue. I think what I really want you to be aware of as well is teen violence. There is a sheet on your module about dating violence. Women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of intimate violence. This is pretty big. We're talking about you. You usually think that this is the old guy in the trailer park who's unhappy with his job. He's 50 years old and he beats his wife.

First of all, gender violence crosses all socio-economic levels. It's not someone who's under economic stress although it tends to rise when the economy is poor. But it's the

preachers' wife. It's the college student. It's a very complicated issue. I'm sure in your head you're saying: "Boy, if somebody were to be abusive to me, I'd just walk away". But it's very complicated.

And there is a cycle of violence when you're in a committed relationship. Very often, particularly women who are in relationships where they've been isolated or there are little children, it's just not as easy as it seems. The average woman who leaves an abusive situation will return between 5 and 7 times before she makes the break. The most dangerous time for a woman is when she does make that decision to make the break. The most dangerous call that a police officer can make is a domestic violence alert because very often there's alcohol involved. Again, it's something that we don't like to think about. But it's something you need to recognize for what it is. I hope you'll look closely at that dating violence sheet that's on your module.

Campus violence: 21% of college students report they have experienced dating violence by a current partner. 32% report dating violence by a previous partner. 60% of acquaintance rapes on college campus occur in casual or steady dating relationships. So do look at it. Most of you probably realize that there is an office here on campus that is available to you if you need some type of support under these circumstances. I guarantee you there are some of you who know, either you or somebody else, who does.

Again, this is a very complicated matter. It's a very expensive circumstance. When I was the director of the Commission on Women under Governor Hodges, this was one of the issues that we brought to the forefront. And we realize that it costs the state millions of dollars every year not to address this issue. Again, it's a public health issue. There needs to be social support. There are certainly negative mental health consequences of violence against men or women. Do read the article. Be aware that it is a very critical health issue not only here but around the world. It's something that we constantly have to be aware of. What I would like for you to do, if you have the opportunity, there was movie with Julia Roberts called "Sleeping With the Enemy". Some of you may have seen it. It's an old movie. It came out, I think, in 1991. It was the first real example of a domestic abuse situation. She was married to a very wealthy man and how she had to escape from him - if you ever have an opportunity to watch that. It was the first movie that came out and really did address the issue.