

WWV 2020 TALKING POINTS & MESSAGING GUIDE

During YWCA's 26th annual Week Without Violence — on October 18-24, 2020 — we invite YWCAs and allied groups to organize events that raise awareness about gender-based violence and the issues that survivors face. Most importantly, we encourage you to explore how the tools of civic engagement can advance the work of justice in your community, highlight critical voices and issues in your community, and empower people.

This Messaging Guide provides talking points to assist you in framing communications around gender-based violence; YWCAs' response to gender-based violence; survivors—including their needs, solutions for meeting those needs, as well as the barriers survivors face and solutions for overcoming those barriers; and results from our recent YWomenVote survey.

YWCA's Response to Gender-Based Violence

YWCA is the largest network of domestic and sexual violence services providers in the United States.

- More than 140 (70%) of YWCAs around the country provide domestic and or sexual violence services to survivors

Gender-Based Violence Overview

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.

- Every 90 seconds another American is sexually assaulted.
- Out of every 1000 cases of rape, only 57 lead to an arrest, 11 are referred to prosecutors, and 7 lead to a felony conviction.
- Only half of domestic violence incidents are reported to police.
- 1 in 3 girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the United States.
- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence and, on average, more than 3 women are murdered by their current or former partners in the United States every day.
- 1 of every 4 homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her and over 92% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime.
- Victims of domestic violence lose about 8 million days of paid work per year because of the violence that they experienced.

- 81% of all women have experienced street harassment. Among all women, 51% have been sexually touched, 34% have been followed, and 27% have survived sexual assault.
- Food service and hospitality workers report the highest levels of sexual harassment in the workplace and often have the least amount of employment protections.

Gender-Based Violence and Women of Color

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

- Native Americans are victims of rape or sexual assault at 2.5 times the rate of other racial groups. In fact, more than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3%) have experienced violence in their lifetime. This includes 56.1% who have experienced sexual violence, 55.5% who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 48.8% who have experienced stalking, and 66.4% who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.
- Black women experience intimate partner violence (IPV) at a rate 19% higher than that of White women. 45% of Black women experience physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetimes, compared with 37.3% of all women.
- 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 White women. 92% of Black female victims were killed by men they knew, and 56% were killed by current or former intimate partners. In cases where the murder weapon was identified, 59% of Black female victims were shot and killed with guns.
- In an ongoing study conducted by Black Women's Blueprint, 60% of Black girls will experience sexual abuse before the age of 18.
- 21–55% of Asian and Pacific Islander (A/PI) women report experiencing intimate physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime. A/PI survivors are more likely to experience abuse from multiple family members, including a spouse, and in-laws than other survivors.
- Approximately 1 in 3 Hispanic/Latinx women have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime and 1 in 12 of Hispanic/Latina women experienced this violence in the previous 12 months. Additionally, a national study found 63.1% of Latina women who identified being victimized in their lifetime reported having experienced more than one victimization.

Housing and Gender-Based Violence

Housing is the most common need for survivors of domestic violence and is often the most unmet need. No one should have to choose between shelter and safety.

- Recent statistics suggest that on a single night in January 2017, 16% of the overall homeless population, 87,329 people, reported having experienced domestic violence at some point.
- Due to “zero-tolerance” nuisance ordinances, many landlords can evict domestic violence survivors because of the damage their abusers inflict in the apartments they lease. Women who have experienced recent or ongoing domestic violence are more likely to face eviction than other women.
- In 2014, FVPSA grantees reported 196,467 unmet requests for shelter—a 13% increase over those reported in 2010. This represents a count of the number of unmet requests for shelter due to programs being at capacity.
- Access to safe housing is even harder for some survivors. In a national survey, more than 60% of LGBT sexual and domestic violence survivors said they were denied access to domestic violence shelters. In a 2014 national study, more than half of transgender individuals who accessed homeless shelters were harassed by shelter staff or residents, and almost 29% were turned away altogether.
- By age 12, 83% of homeless children have been exposed to at least one serious violent event and nearly 25% have witnessed acts of violence within their families.

Immigration and Gender-Based Violence

In addition to the risk of violence, immigrant women experience increased barriers to fleeing abuse due to a complex set of factors. Among those are language barriers, fear or confusion about US legal systems, financial abuse, and social isolation.

- Immigrant status has been found to have an impact on survivors’ help-seeking behavior. A study found that Latinx immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to seek help for domestic violence from formal agencies (6.9% vs. 14.7%).
- In a review of community-based studies, 41–61% of respondents in Asian homes reported experiencing intimate partner violence (physical and/or sexual) during their lifetime.
- 48% percent of Latinas in one study reported that their partner’s violence against them had increased since they immigrated to the United States.
- Married immigrant women experience higher levels of physical and sexual abuse than unmarried immigrant women, 59.5% compared to 49.8%, respectively.

Economic Abuse

Economic abuse can have severe and lasting consequences on survivors' economic security that undermines their ability to recover from trauma or be independent from an abuser. Economic abuse may leave survivors homeless, unemployed, or unable to access supports or resources that can help them rebuild their lives.

- Financial abuse is experienced by 94 to 99% of domestic violence survivors and occurs across all socio-economic, educational, racial and ethnic groups.
- In a recent study, DV programs across 10 states reported that 88% of abusers controlled all finances and 73% stole money from their victims.
- DV shelters report that 74% of survivors stay with an abuser longer due to financial concerns.
- Between 1/4 and 1/2 of domestic violence victims report that they have lost a job due to domestic violence. 24% of survivors report being asked to resign or fired due to stalking at work.
- Between 35% and 56% of victims of intimate partner violence are harassed at work by their abusers.

Domestic Violence and Voting

Survivors of gender-based violence face many unique obstacles and barriers to voting.

- Survivors are often isolated from election information and voting materials by abusers. Using physical, psychological, and economic means, abusers often restrict survivors' access to the outside world and information via the phone and internet, particularly social media platforms.
- Abusers may use intimidation or threats of violence if survivors vote or fail to vote in a specific way. For instance, Abusers may threaten to restrict survivors' access to children, eliminate survivors' financial support, or physically or sexually abuse survivors if they express a voting preference.
- Survivors must often supply their home address to register to vote, placing them in further danger even once they've left abusive partners. Only 11 states prohibit the public sharing of voter registration lists, other states make them publicly available or permit them to be purchased.
- At least 29 of the 41 states that have Address Confidentiality Programs for survivors prevent participants' voter records from being shared in order to keep survivors' addresses from being sold and accessible in voter lists. However, this is not a guarantee of privacy.
- Some survivors do not feel safe going to their polling place to cast their ballot. However, 16 states require survivors to meet certain conditions in order to vote absentee. During the

COVID-19 pandemic, survivors are still required to meet conditions (beyond a fear of COVID-19) in 7 states.

- Women who are worried about experiencing or sexual assault or domestic violence are much less likely to vote than women who are not worried. Women who are not worried are 26 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are worried, and 41 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are very worried about experiencing gender-based violence.
- Women who are worried about accessing counseling and other needed services after experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence are much less likely to vote than women who are not worried. Women who are not worried are 21 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are worried, and 37 percentage points more likely to vote than women who are very worried about access.
- Women who have experienced sexual harassment at work within the last year are more likely to be very worried about both being able to cast their vote without interference or obstacles (38% v. 24%) and about whether their vote will count in the election (46% vs. 34%).

YWomensVote and Gender-Based Violence

New data from [YWomensVote2020](#) — YWCA's 3rd national survey of women in the United States — reveals that women around the country are deeply concerned about gender-based violence, and this concern is also impacting their views on voting.

- Women have substantial concerns about gender-based violence: 36% of women are concerned about experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence (21% are very worried); 49% are worried about being believed when reporting gender-based violence (31% very worried); and 38% of women are worried about being able to access counseling and other needed services after experiencing gender-based violence (22% very worried).
- Women of color are more likely to experience higher levels of concern than white women about all aspects of gender-based violence.
- Gen Z women's concerns about gender-based violence are substantially higher than those of other age cohorts. As many as 8 in 10 Gen Z women are worried about aspects of gender-based violence.
- Women who are worried about gender-based violence are more likely to be worried about all concerns, but are particularly more likely to be worried about keeping themselves and their families safe from gun violence (+33 percentage points), and having a medical expense that they or their family cannot afford (+30 percentage points).