



**a path
appears**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Domestic Violence in the USA:

**BARRIERS AND
RESOURCES**



 **INDEPENDENT
LENS**

 **COMMUNITY
CINEMA**

 **PBS**

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Using This Guide

“See, I didn’t know what love was because my mom abused me all my life, so I figured that was love, so that’s why I stayed so long with him. Because I forgave my mom all the time, I just forgave and forgave and forgave him.”

– **Antonya Lewis, Domestic Violence Survivor, *A Path Appears***

Community Cinema is a rare public forum, a space for people to gather who are connected by a love of stories and a belief in their power to change the world. This discussion guide is designed as a tool to facilitate dialogue and deepen understanding of the complex issues in *A Path Appears*. It is also an invitation to not only sit back and enjoy the film, but to step up and take action.

This guide is not meant to be a comprehensive primer on a given topic. Rather, it provides important context and raises thought-provoking questions to encourage viewers to think more deeply. The guide provides suggestions for topics to explore in conversations in community and classroom settings and online. It also offers information about organizations working on the ground to make a difference and provides further resources for deeper learning and opportunities to get involved. For information about the program, visit communitycinema.org.

NOTE TO READERS

This discussion guide gives a brief synopsis of the entire *A Path Appears* series, and then provides background information and resources on domestic violence in the United States. It also draws on stories and information from the corresponding book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, including discussion questions and ways to take action that connect both resources.

Trigger Warning

This episode of *A Path Appears* focuses on domestic violence and its impact on children and adults — a sensitive yet pertinent issue that may not be suitable for all audiences. Facilitators and educators are strongly encouraged to review all of the readings, materials, and links and to preview the film content to be sure the topic and lesson are appropriate for their audience. At the facilitator’s or educator’s discretion, a “trigger warning” or other preparation/discussion may be advisable, in addition to identifying viewers who might be personally or adversely affected by this material. Additional resources for the film and the book *A Path Appears* are included at the end of this discussion guide, including organizations and hotlines to refer those who need help or support.

About the Guide Writer



**ALLISON
MILEWSKI**

Allison Milewski is an educator and curriculum designer with over ten years’ experience in arts and media education. She has developed art integration programs, professional development workshops, and arts and media curricula for organizations such as ITVS, Tribeca Film Institute, Latino Public Broadcasting, the Brooklyn Historical Society, and Urban Arts Partnership and managed arts-based enrichment programs for over 20 New York City public schools. Allison’s professional experience also includes over 15 years of program management and administration with domestic and international NGOs such as PCI-Media Impact, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and the Union Square Awards for Grassroots Activism.

About the Filmmakers



MARO CHERMAYEFF

**Executive Producer and Director,
Show of Force**

Maro Chermayeff is an award-winning filmmaker, producer, director, author and former television executive at A&E/AETN. She is Founder and Chair of the MFA program in Social Documentary at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and partner in the production company Show of Force. Some of her extensive credits include: *Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace* (PBS, 2014), the landmark four-hour PBS documentary series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (PBS, 2012), 6-hour series *Circus* (PBS, 2010), the Emmy-award winning *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (HBO, 2012) *Mann v. Ford* (HBO, 2011), *Parasomnia* (France 2, 2010), the Emmy Award-winning 10-hour series *Carrier* (PBS/Nat Geo International, 2008), the 6-hour series *Frontier House* (PBS, 2002), *American Masters: Juilliard* (PBS, 2003), *The Kindness of Strangers* (HBO, 1999), *Role Reversal* (A&E 2002), *Trauma, Life in the ER* (TLC, 2001) the *Vanity Fair* web series *Eminent Domains* (2014), and over 15 specials for Charlie Rose. Represented by WME, Chermayeff is a principal of Show of Force, the production entity for the Half the Sky Movement. She is an Executive Producer of Half the Sky Movement's Facebook Game and 3 Mobile Games with Games for Change.



JAMIE GORDON

Executive Producer

Jamie Gordon co-founded Fugitive Films in 2005 after running the Development Department of GreeneStreet Films in New York City for six years as well as working on multiple award-winning Hollywood feature films. Most recently, Gordon executive produced *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity For Women Worldwide*. Her company produced *Coach* starring Hugh Dancy and the comedy *Wedding Daze* starring Jason Biggs and Isla Fisher. Among other projects, she is developing a film based on the National Book Award finalist *River Town* by Peter Hessler and a film adaptation of Brooke Berman's off-Broadway hit "Smashing." Previously, Gordon was the Head of Development for GreeneStreet Films, working on *In the Bedroom*, and co-producing *Swimfan* and *Pinero*. She worked as a story editor for producer Wendy Finerman where she worked on *Forrest Gump*. She graduated with a B.A. in history from Princeton University.



MIRA CHANG

Co-Executive Producer

Mira Chang is a producer, director and director of photography of nonfiction content for domestic and international television and several feature length documentaries. Her work can be seen regularly on ABC, National Geographic, A&E and Discovery. Her projects include *Sold* and *Jesus Camp*, nominated for a 2007 Oscar for Best Documentary. Recent projects include A&E's *Runaway Squad* and *Garó Unleashed* for the Sundance Channel. Chang was also series-producer of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*.



JEFF DUPRE

**Executive Producer,
Show of Force**

Jeff Dupre has been producing and directing documentary films for over 15 years. Together with Show of Force partner Maro Chermayeff, Dupre is director, creator and executive producer of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (PBS, 2012), *Circus*, a six-part documentary series that also premiered on PBS. He conceived and is producer and co-director of *Marina Abramovic The Artist is Present*. He is a producer of *Carrier* and Michael Kantor's *Broadway: The American Musical*. Dupre's directorial debut, *Out of the Past*, won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, among other awards.



JOSHUA BENNETT

Series Producer

With over 10 years experience producing film and television, Joshua Bennett has produced shoots in over 35 countries and on all seven continents, including the PBS series *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (2012). He has also produced programming for PBS, HBO, MTV, Discovery, A&E and The Sundance Channel, as well as music videos commercials, independent shorts, experimental works, corporate, new media and viral media campaigns. Bennett teaches documentary producing at New York City's School of Visual Arts' master's program for social documentary film.

About the Film Series



From the creative team that brought you the groundbreaking *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, *A Path Appears* is a new three-part documentary series that investigates young women in America forced into a life of prostitution and the innovative programs that have evolved to achieve remarkable results in empowering their lives. Sex trafficking and prostitution. Domestic slavery. Teen pregnancy. The devastation of poverty. Domestic Violence. These troubling situations are happening not just halfway across the world, but also in our own backyards — in places such as Chicago and Nashville and Boston.

In the second part, the series continues around the globe tracking children in Haiti, living in abject poverty after years of political corruption during times of violent protest, and captures the transformation of Kenya's most notorious slum through expanded education for girls. The series uncovers the roots behind the incredible adversity faced every day by millions of women, while also presenting glimpses of hope and change.

A Path Appears follows author/reporters Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn and celebrity activists Malin Akerman, Mia Farrow, Ronan Farrow, Jennifer Garner, Regina Hall, Ashley Judd, Blake Lively, Eva Longoria, and Alfre Woodard to Colombia, Haiti, Kenya, and throughout the United States as they explore the roots of gender inequality, the devastating impact of poverty, and the ripple effects that follow — including sex trafficking, teen pregnancy, gender-based violence, and child slavery. In their travels, they meet with inspiring activists who are creating effective solutions to gender-based oppression, transforming lives, and providing a roadmap for sustainable change.

Q&A with Producer Maro Chermayeff

1. What spurred you to make *A Path Appears*? How is *A Path Appears* different from *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*?

A Path Appears is inspired by and based on Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's newest book *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*. This four-hour series and book is a natural follow-up to our groundbreaking transmedia project *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. Kristof and WuDunn started formulating their concept for their new book as we were nearing our PBS broadcast premiere of *Half the Sky* in fall 2012. They recognized the enormous response from the readers and audience, people asking, "What can we do to truly make a difference?" They both wanted to address the subject matter and answer questions, using stories and storytelling to provide examples of organizations and methodology that had truly made a difference in philanthropic impact and outcomes.

Additionally, they were both interested in expanding the geographic footprint of their work — most particularly to include stories from our own backyard, the United States, as well as from Latin America and the Caribbean, parts of the world they'd worked far less in. The subject of what works and what doesn't in global giving, and the ripple effect of poverty and the vulnerability of women, in challenging and oppressive circumstances, remained very interesting to all of us as filmmakers — so we decided to continue our work together. An interesting new approach was that the book and the television series were developed in tandem — meaning many of the stories were found by the production team and folded into the book, as well as Nick and Sheryl telling more stories in the book than we were able to include in only three nights of primetime television.

2. What went into selecting the issue areas and locations for this new series? In particular, why did you decide to feature the stories taking place in the United States?

At the end of Kristof and WuDunn's [first] book, they had a final chapter called "What You Can Do: Four Steps You Can Take in the Next Ten Minutes." That call to action launched a huge response, and people began to think of Sheryl and Nick, and also of the Project Production Team (who run the *Half the Sky* Movement project and website), as a hub, a resource to help find ways to get involved. Our readers and viewers spoke, and we listened! Thousands of people talked about the many issues facing women and girls that were important to them. In selecting our issues we relied on the following criteria:

1. That the issue was impacting a large number of people around the globe and was falling doubly hard on women and girls
2. That we could connect the issue to an NGO [nongovernmental organization] and individuals we felt were effectively addressing and implementing opportunities for change
3. That the issue was relevant and emotionally accessible to our audience
4. That it was an issue and an organization or individual we could present in a fresh way, and was potentially underreported

Our team got together, and over the course of many months talked about the issues we wanted to address, as well as the locations of interest and how to narrow our focus to places where the issue could be best amplified, and most importantly where we could meet and tell the stories of inspiring individuals and organizations tackling these issues in their own communities and countries. We particularly wanted to expand our geographic regions because Nick and Sheryl's initial reporting in *Half the Sky* was focused on the developing world and the Global South, and we all knew that these issues were also prevalent right here at home. We wanted to add to the dialogue and to break down the illusion that some Americans seem to have: that extreme poverty, sex trafficking, or gender-based violence are not happening here to the same extent, when in fact these are very much happening here at home. We also wanted *A Path Appears* to shine a light on solutions — what was happening around the world and here in the United States. with early childhood intervention, education, effective local police and government work — so that people understood and could explore and learn more about some of these effective interventions. The reality is that these kinds of effective solutions are vastly underfunded and undersupported — when in fact if you invest in the front end, in the safety, security, and education of young people, they have far more opportunity to thrive and avoid the ripple effects of poverty and neglect, and you save enormous amounts of money on the back end in the form of prisons, drug treatment facilities, emotional and psychiatric treatment. Not to mention that they live better and more enriched lives, without oppression, fear, and abuse.

3. How did you go about choosing your subjects, and selecting which stories to tell in the final episodes of the series?

As a production team, we vet hundreds of stories, to find the ones we feel meet the criteria we have to merit inclusion in our content. The criteria include: compelling work; location; safety of our crew in telling that story in that location; inclusion of diverse, compelling, and relatable subjects who wish to be filmed and wish to be part of the project. We are always mindful that the stories we are telling are tough, but our intention is always as storytellers to be immediate and in the moment, and to add positively to the dialogue. Our goal is

to introduce our audience to individuals and issues they may not know about, and to take them to new places they may never go, in the interest of raising awareness and fostering positive solutions and change.

4. You probably had to make some tough decisions around how to portray the stories of several minors in the film, both here in the United States as well as in Kenya, Haiti, and Colombia. Please discuss what went into your choices in telling each of their stories.

As filmmakers (Show of Force) and journalists (Kristof and WuDunn) we are all highly conscious of the serious and important ongoing dialogue of how to best tell stories about individuals facing enormous challenges and brutal circumstances. Show of Force has been part of those conversations around how best to portray these stories while recognizing the effect this has on each person who agrees to share their own truth. Nick has been a leader and influencer in keeping their stories alive in the minds of the people. We have spoken with some of the leading experts including Human Rights Watch, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, and numerous other leading NGOs and educators in this subject matter all around the world. There is no single "right way" to portray an adult or a minor; every story is a case-by-case decision, with the top priorities being safety, security, long-term well-being, and the fair and equitable treatment of all.

This series is about tough issues and harsh realities facing women and girls around the world and here in the United States. It is important that people understand that these harsh realities — sex trafficking, gender-based violence, slave labor, and lack of access to education, to resources, and to opportunity — even to hope — are affecting children.

For all of the stories we tell, we work hand-in-hand with highly experienced NGOs and government officials — and all of our subjects, who are participating voluntarily and with full knowledge of their role in the project — to make our decisions. We also understand that this is a complex issue with differing viewpoints: Should minors be shown or not be shown in the context of these difficult stories and situations? Many people feel the bravery and courage it takes to come forward, both as the minor and also as the guardian or parent of the minor, is courage that deserves to be honored. Sometimes, when people on camera are blurred — it is not seen as a protection of that person, but rather a continued silencing or shaming of that person. It may continue to suggest that they are a perpetrator rather than a victim with a right to speak, a right to be seen, and a right to fight for justice.

As extremely experienced and professional filmmakers, we properly and legally release all of our subjects, of course, but more important than the paperwork is our word and [our] wish for all of our subjects to be treated as they wish to be treated — and [our desire] to help them tell their stories honestly, fairly, and openly if that is what they so desire. In some cases we do blur individuals, because of specific circumstances in which we feel it may be in their best interest or [safer] not to be seen. It is always a thoughtful and intricate decision-making process, with the respect and dignity of our subjects in mind. But on the whole, we know the subjects we spoke to and we filmed and show on camera want to tell their stories, and want to be seen and heard. We are honored to give them that opportunity.

5. Portraying the stories of survivors of trauma and abuse can be challenging terrain to navigate as well. How did you and your team approach working with survivors to tell their stories?

Between *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears*, the production team at Show of Force, in our collaboration with Kristof and WuDunn, has spent more than five years completely immersed in the complex issues facing women and girls around the globe. We take our role as storytellers very seriously and form long-lasting bonds with all of the subjects and the agents of change we feature in our films. This is also true of the actor-advocates we have brought with us on the project. Our relationship begins long before and remains long after the camera stops rolling. Through our conversations with our subjects prior to filming, and with the record that our previous body of work demonstrates, we are able to develop trust and demonstrate the quality and integrity [with] which they will be profiled. Trust is developed with subjects the same way friendships are developed between any people — through conversation, through shared experiences, through serious dialogue, and through moments of joy and laughter — and tears — where our shared goals and hopes all lie.

All the survivors — both adults and minors — we work with in our films are individuals who find the process of participating in the project empowering and rewarding, and [this] helps them to move forward and shed the shame and guilt that have weighed on them as victims. They all take their participation very seriously and all shared with us their desire to let their own story and experience help others to avoid similar fates or pitfalls. They wish to use their traumatic experiences and their survival as a beacon.

6. Was it difficult to convince the subjects to share their stories on camera? Was there a common factor that drew all of the subjects to agree to share their stories publicly through *A Path Appears*?

What is difficult is to find the right subjects, not only for this film, but for any documentary film with this nature of sensitive storytelling.

As a team, we need to look for more than one kind of story or experience, so that various facets of the story can be told, and we also need to find subjects who are emotionally prepared to share their story in this kind of way. Months of conversations and discussions take place to secure participation and work with our subjects. However, we have found that our participants on the whole are empowered by the possibility of sharing their story. Their first instinct is to want to share what happened to them, in hopes of helping others in the same situation. They appreciate being heard, and one of the most devastating experiences for them as subject is when they are not taken seriously or believed; they know in our filmmaking team that they have experienced and sympathetic "listeners" who know what they are talking about and what they have been through. We most certainly have not been through the same kind of trauma they have, but we know and care and trust our subjects, and hope and believe that they feel that.

7. What was your process for selecting the local experts on the ground in each story? And the celebrity activists?

We went into finding the stories for *A Path Appears* as we do with most films — very rigorously, with a certain focus in mind both in terms of subject matter and geography. In conjunction with Kristof and WuDunn, our team does extensive research on the people and organizations that are making an impact, and whose models are proven, scalable, and replicable. Once a good potential story was identified, we began extensive conversations with the local NGOs and activists, understanding their work and the types of stories that we would be able to capture if we were to film with them. Every potential story goes through multiple rounds of phone conversations with the subjects, vetting with other experts in the field, followed by in-person meetings, and on-the-ground scouting to determine both the strength of the work and of the stories that we will be able to capture.

The actor-advocates who travel with us are chosen based on both their own interest in and commitment to social justice and human rights issues, and their desire to raise the visibility of the work we are profiling. All of them have issues and causes to which they have already devoted a great deal of their time, although frequently we invite them on trips that are not directly related to their prior work so they can bring fresh eyes to the subject. There are always many logistical and scheduling details that have to be worked out with such busy and high-profile celebrities, but we've found that the actor-advocates who inevitably do travel with us are the ones who are immediately enthusiastic and positive about the invitation. In building our roster, we always have an eye toward diversity, not only diversity of race and age, but also diversity in terms of their prior knowledge about the subjects, and the life experiences that they bring. The nine celebrities who traveled with us for *A Path Appears* were an amazing group of dedicated individuals, and we feel each one was a unique and valuable addition to the series.

8. What message do you hope viewers will take from *A Path Appears*?

I hope that people will leave the series having been transported by incredible storytelling and filmmaking, understanding that there are real issues out in the world that deserve and require our attention and that importantly, there are solutions to the issues of sex trafficking, teen pregnancy, child labor, gender-based violence, poverty, and the overall cycle of vulnerability and exploitation that keeps so many people trapped in these situations. We wanted people to become aware, but to embrace and engage, understanding that they can have an impact and be part of sustainable change. We also want to shine a light on amazing people in our world doing incredible work to help others in peril. The film deals with incredibly difficult subject matter, and the stories are heartbreaking, but the overall message is intended to be a positive and hopeful one. We do know that early intervention, local leadership, and holistic programs that instill hope and empower the recipients work and have a lasting, generational effect. Our viewers have the opportunity every day [to] get involved and contribute toward these solutions. We hope they will seize on that message and become a part of this movement for change.

9. What have you learned from the experience of making *A Path Appears*?

Both *Half the Sky* and *A Path Appears* have been completely life-changing journeys. Before this work, before having the distinct honor of knowing Nick Kristof and having him as my good friend, I did not know very much about these issues at all. I was educated and capable, and of course [I] understood that, as Nick would say, "I had won the lottery of life," but I did not understand the web of pathologies that conspire to keep women and girls in the world from fulfilling their potential and living happy and valued lives. It was so important, as a citizen of our planet, to engage in these and other issues and get involved! As we often found, in the worst circumstances and the most daunting places, we met the most amazing people. Out of hardship comes a resilience that is frankly humbling. Everyone at my company Show of Force and specifically the dedicated producers of these two series — Jamie Gordon, Jeff Dupre, Josh Bennett, Mira Chang, Rachel Koteen, and Jessica Chermayeff — as well as the incredible postproduction team and editors Howard Sharp and Donna Shepherd, we discuss regularly how this has brought us together and brought meaning and value to our work. I have never before had so many young people contact my company asking to work on a project — or [express] how impressed they are by the stories we have been able to share with our audience. This is also true because these are not just television series, far from it. These are among the most successful social media campaigns in the world; we have a following of millions around the globe and have created extensive educational content,

and games. We all learned what a "movement" is ... what it can be, and how we can be part of it. This is the project that makes me proud to tell my daughter about what we do all day.

10. What's it like to work with Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn? What was it like to produce the film alongside the development of the book?

Nick and Sheryl are our colleagues, our teachers, and our friends. They are not always right, they don't always know everything — because they're human beings, covering a lot of territory and with a lot of responsibility. But they are always investigators and humanitarians. I admire them daily for being so tenacious, and I truly believe they have brought this kind of content forward and into the public eye (at times like [a] drumbeat) and forced people to look, listen, and "do." They also had the bright idea of letting the audience know that doing good for others will make you happier at the end of the day. We feel that way now as well.

Working in tandem on *A Path Appears*, as opposed to creating our content based on an existing book, had some tricky elements to it. One interesting element for us as filmmakers is that sometimes we found stories, and sometimes Nick and Sheryl found them — and we shared and discussed how that worked. Many more stories are in the book, and also some are more suited for text and not camera; it was interesting as a team to sort out that difference. It was extremely fun for us (gave us some bragging rights!) that we found many subjects and stories and essentially pitched them to Nick and Sheryl — and many of those are in the series and also in the book. It was fascinating to see how Nick and Sheryl would tell those stories in the context of the book, and then watch how they play[ed] out in the series. Of course for television we want and need the stories to be unfolding; the drama and stakes have to be seen and experienced — not told "after-the-fact," which in writing can be infused with drama. In the case of film ... if you don't see it ... essentially you don't know it happened.

11. Please share a few memories or experiences that stand out to you from your time in production.

Following are moments that will stay with me forever:

1. We as a team were integrally and directly involved in finding a young girl, missing for over three months: [S]uddenly, without preparation, Nick found her on a trafficking site, in the presence of her shocked and frightened mother and father. She was rescued within 12 hours by the Boston Police. We felt very lucky, but also angry. But it gave us an immediate understanding that with focus and attention to detail, young girls can be found, and pulled out of the life — and very fast.
2. Going into a Kenyan prison to talk to the man who had repeatedly been raping his granddaughter Flavian. It was dark, cold, and raining — and Nick and our producer in the field, Jessica Chermayeff, and myself had been following the story all day. In the end, we had to be fair and talk to everyone, and have everyone surrounding the story know and understand the rights release [in order] to film their stories. It was hard, it felt dangerous, but we felt we were on the right side of a horrible situation, and we were dedicated to helping this young girl. Today she is in school, and in recovery with extensive support from the NGO we worked so closely with, Shining Hope for Communities. Every day, they actually change lives for the better.
3. Driving around Nashville with Shana, and seeing the women on the street; understanding how they got there, and seeing an American city in an entirely new light. Shana is a powerful and incredibly honest person — I may never have met someone like her if I had not gone so deeply into a film trying to reveal the realities of sex trafficking in this country. I would have driven by, unaware ... I would have seen only one side of Nashville ... and there is another side. She opened my eyes, and she made me see the power of possibility.
4. The slums of Kibera in the mud rain. It is one of my favorite places on earth: the mud, the smell, the children, the world within a world — and the reality that millions and millions of people live like this in slums all over the world. Go there. You will never turn on your tap and drink a glass of water again without a reality check, and it may make you stand up and do something. Seriously!
5. The first shock of seeing an 11-year-old girl in Cartagena holding her week-old baby. She looked terrified. And I was scared for her. She didn't know she had to hold his head. He looked a little nervous too, but like all babies, he really looked right into the eyes of his mother and felt love. It was hard to understand how they could go forward together, but there they were, and there was only [moving] forward.
6. Haiti: It takes an hour and a half to get there on American Airlines ... put that in your pipe and smoke it. Insane. And we all play a part in that insanity. So chip in.
7. The girls from [the] Kibera School for Girls: Love love love them all. Kennedy and Jessica Odede — nothing but respect and love and their school is miraculous and hopeful. Little Ida, the most adorable smile on earth; "juicy sentences" being formed in the classroom; Eunice's poetry on the power of a dream. Take the time to learn more about this incredible school and how you can support their important work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Domestic Violence in the USA

Individuals Featured in This Episode

- **Nicholas Kristof**, Journalist, Co-author of *A Path Appears*
- **Sheryl WuDunn**, Journalist, Co-author of *A Path Appears*
- **Regina Hall**, Actor/Advocate
- **Ayonna Johnson**, Director of Legal Services
- **Sulaiman Nuriddin**, Men Stopping Violence Educator
- **Jasmine (alias)**, Domestic Violence Survivor
- **Antonya**, Domestic Violence Survivor
- **Tafarian**, Domestic Violence Survivor

DEFINING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“If you look at gender issues that affect Americans, then it’s hard to think of one that tops domestic violence in scope or severity, and it doesn’t get nearly the attention it deserves.”

– **Nicholas Kristof, Journalist, Co-Author of *A Path Appears***

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

The U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVAW) defines domestic violence as “a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.”

As this definition indicates, domestic violence includes, but is not limited to, physical aggression. “Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.” (OVAW, 2014)

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN DETAIL

Many forms of physical abuse have been normalized due to their pervasiveness or minimized by perpetrators, victims, and witnesses as being “less serious” than more extreme forms of aggression. The Office on Violence Against Women asserts that all forms of physical and emotional violence should be regarded as serious and details the many forms that abuse can take:

Physical Abuse: Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc. are all types of physical abuse. This type of abuse also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use upon him or her.

Sexual Abuse: Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.

Emotional Abuse: Undermining an individual’s sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem is abusive. This may include, but is not limited to, constant criticism, diminishing one’s abilities, name-calling, or damaging one’s relationship with his or her children.

Economic Abuse: Making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one’s access to money, or forbidding one’s attendance at school or place of employment (OVAW, 2014). It can also include using immigration status as a mechanism for exerting control.

Psychological Abuse: Elements of psychological abuse include, but are not limited to, causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner’s family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work. (OVAW, 2014)

- » Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, 2014: justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence and Futures Without Violence, Addressing Intimate Partner Violence and Reproductive and Sexual Coercion, 2013: healthcares-aboutipv.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/3/files/2013/04/Reproductive-Health-Guidelines.pdf

Reproductive Coercion: Reproductive coercion involves behaviors related to reproductive health aimed at maintaining power and control in a relationship. This behavior is carried out by someone who is, was, or wishes to be involved in an intimate or dating relationship with an adult or adolescent, including attempts to impregnate a partner against her wishes, controlling the outcomes of a pregnancy, coercing a partner to have unprotected sex, and interfering with birth control methods. (Futures Without Violence, Addressing Intimate Partner Violence and Reproductive and Sexual Coercion, 2013)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS EVERYONE'S ISSUE

Domestic violence is a global crisis that affects individuals, families, and communities across racial, economic, geographic, cultural, and gender lines. Although we often think of domestic abuse in terms of a specific violent incident, it rarely consists of an isolated event. Instead it is a pattern of oppressive behavior — which can be physical, emotional, sexual, and/or economic — by an individual who is attempting to establish control over his/her partner. The violence inflicted by an intimate partner resonates through families and communities and can have a devastating impact for generations to come.

WHO IS AFFECTED?

While thousands of men have experienced intimate partner abuse, women and girls are disproportionately victimized by domestic violence. According to the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, “an estimated 85 to 90 percent of domestic violence victims in the United States are female” and “domestic violence constitutes 22 percent of violent crime against women and girls and 3 percent of violent crime against men and boys.” (Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2003). Members of the LGBTQ community are also at higher risk for intimate partner violence, with an estimated 33 percent experiencing domestic abuse at some point in their lives (Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2003).

CHILDREN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is physically and emotionally devastating for the individual, but it also has dire consequences for those around them. The Office on Violence Against Women explains that domestic abuse “has a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses, and the community at large. Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence are among those seriously affected by this crime. Frequent exposure to violence in the home not only predisposes children to numerous social and physical problems, but also teaches them that violence is a normal way of life, therefore increasing their risk of becoming society's next generation of victims and abusers” (OFAW, 2014).

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Although the prevalence of certain forms of domestic violence may vary between countries and cultures, intimate partner abuse is a critical issue in every country around the world. UN Women reports that “35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence” and in some countries “up to 70 percent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner.” In addition, it is estimated that, in 2012, almost half of the women killed worldwide were “killed by intimate partners or family members” (UN Women, 2014).

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Adapted from Futures Without Violence “Get the Facts,” 2014

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Sources:

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- » Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2014: cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs-fact-sheet-2014.pdf
- » Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2014: cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/teen-dating-violence-factsheet-a.pdf
- » National Domestic Violence Hotline, Love Is Respect, 2014: loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/dating-violence-statistics

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, it is estimated that over 12 million people each year are affected by domestic abuse, with one in four women and one in seven men having experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (CDC, 2014). In 2009, 93 percent of female murder victims were killed by a male they knew, and 63 percent of those murders occurred in the context of an intimate relationship (VPC, 2011).

A 2010 report by the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that incidents of partner-to-partner violence have dropped 64 percent since 1994 (DOJ, 2010), due in part to an increase in awareness campaigns, more effective policies, and improved national and local resources. Despite this improvement, intimate partner violence is still at epidemic proportions in every community across the country, and there is much more work to be done to prevent violence and improve resources for survivors (DOJ, 2010).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

- **On average, more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States.**
- **Nearly one in four women in the United States reports having experienced violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life.**
- **Women are much more likely than men to be victimized by a current or former intimate partner.**
- **Women comprise 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend.**
- **About three-fourths of the perpetrators of family violence are male.**
- **Females ages 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 generally experienced the highest rates of intimate partner violence.**

TEENS, DATING, AND VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

A key strategy in reducing domestic violence is to stop it before it starts. During childhood and adolescence, youth develop the framework for shaping their relationships later in life. According to UNICEF, “the single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence” (UNICEF, 2006). Research indicates that children who are exposed to violence when growing up struggle more in school, have higher incidences of emotional and behavioral problems, and are more likely to experience violence in their adult relationships (UNICEF, 2006).

An additional risk arises when media and cultural attitudes reinforce violent behaviors, and actions such as teasing, name-calling, and milder forms of physical aggression normalize patterns of behavior that can develop into emotional and physical violence (CDC, 2014).

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, approximately “one in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.” In addition, “girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average” (National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2014).

Adapted from Futures Without Violence
“Get the Facts,” 2014

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- » “Family Violence Statistics: Including Statistics on Strangers and Acquaintances,” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005. bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvs02.pdf
- » Shannan Catalano, “Intimate Partner Violence in the United States,” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007. bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipvus.pdf
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- **More than 15 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year, and seven million children live in families in which severe partner violence occurred.**
- **In a single day in 2008, 16,458 children were living in a domestic violence shelter or transitional housing facility in the United States. Another 6,430 children sought services at a non-residential program.**
- **Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner — a figure that mirrors victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth.**

ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

DRAWING THE CURTAIN: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Domestic violence has a long and entrenched history in the United States. The expectation that intimate partner abuse — especially violence against women by male partners — should be limited, regulated, or eliminated is a relatively recent development and is still met with reticence or resistance (CDHS, 1999).

In 1871, Alabama was the first state to withdraw the “right” of a man to beat his wife. The judge ruled:

“The privilege, ancient though it be, to beat her with a stick, to pull her hair, choke her, spit in her face or kick her about the floor, or to inflict upon her like indignities, is not now acknowledged by our law.... [I]n person, the wife is entitled to the same protection of the law that the husband can invoke for himself... All stand upon the same footing before the law as citizens of Alabama, possessing equal civil and political rights and public privileges.”

Fulgham v. State, 46 Ala. 146-47, 1871 (USCHR, 1980)

Three years later, the court in North Carolina followed suit but added a caveat that reinforced the privileged privacy that should be afforded to abuse perpetrated between married individuals:

“If no permanent injury has been inflicted, nor malice, cruelty nor dangerous violence shown by the husband, it is better to draw the curtain, shut out the public gaze, and leave the parties to forget and forgive.”

State v. Oliver, 70 N.C. 60, 61-62, 1874 (USCHR, 1980)

Over a century later, the cultural stigma associated with domestic violence and the reluctance of social institutions to interfere in a “family matter” continues to isolate and endanger victims of intimate partner abuse. Today, survivors and advocates continue to struggle to pull back the curtain and shed light on the ongoing crisis of intimate partner abuse.

DANGER SIGNS

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

“Domestic violence doesn’t look the same in every relationship because every relationship is different. But one thing most abusive relationships have in common is that the abusive partner does many different kinds of things to have more power and control over their partners.” The National Domestic Violence Hotline has outlined warning signs and red flags that are common indicators of abuse within a relationship:

- Telling you that you can never do anything right
- Showing jealousy of your friends and time spent away
- Keeping you or discouraging you from seeing friends or family members
- Embarrassing or shaming you with put-downs
- Controlling every penny spent in the household
- Taking your money or refusing to give you money for expenses
- Looking at you or acting in ways that scare you
- Controlling who you see, where you go, or what you do
- Preventing you from making your own decisions
- Telling you that you are a bad parent or threatening to harm or take away your children
- Preventing you from working or attending school
- Destroying your property or threatening to hurt or kill your pets
- Intimidating you with guns, knives, or other weapons
- Pressuring you to have sex when you don’t want to or to do things sexually you’re not comfortable with
- Pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol

Source:

- » The National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2014: thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/

ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Among the myriad challenges that survivors of domestic violence face is the accusation that something they said or did triggered the beatings, threats, or mistreatment. The fact is that domestic violence is rarely an isolated act by the abuser, but is a complex pattern of behavior influenced and rooted in a “range of cultural, social, economic, and psychological factors” (OCAN, 2003).

According to the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, abusive behaviors can be learned through:

- Childhood observations of domestic violence
- One’s experience of victimization
- Exposure to community, school, or peer group violence
- Living in a culture of violence (e.g., violent movies or videogames, community norms, and cultural beliefs)

They also explain that intimate partner abuse can be normalized by systems that tolerate or reinforce this behavior: “The perpetrator’s violence is further supported when peers, family members, or others in the community ... minimize or ignore the abuse and fail to provide consequences. As a result, the abuser learns that not only is the behavior justified, but also it is acceptable” (OCAN, 2003).

Sources:

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- » H. Lien Bragg, Child Welfare Information Gateway, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN), 2003: childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/domesticviolence

THE COST OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The scale of the domestic violence epidemic and the stigma associated with intimate partner abuse can make it difficult to document the impact of this issue on individuals, families, and communities. In addition to the profound cost for survivors and victims, intimate partner abuse has substantial consequences with regard to health, economics, and social well being.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTH:

Survivors of domestic violence can suffer an array of physical injuries as well as debilitating emotional trauma. The World Health Organization reports that “abused women are twice as likely to suffer from poor health and physical and mental health problems as non-abused women” (WHO, 2012).

Domestic abuse can result in short-term, long-term, and chronic health problems, including physical injuries, mental illness, anxiety, and substance abuse (CDC, 2013). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, women who have experienced domestic violence are at greater risk for a range of indirect health issues including:

- 80 percent more likely to have a stroke
- 70 percent more likely to have heart disease
- 60 percent more likely to have asthma
- 70 percent more likely to drink heavily

Source:

- » Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008: cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5705.pdf

HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Every relationship is different, but the University of Washington Hall Health Center has identified some essential elements that contribute to most healthy relationships:

- Mutual respect
- Trust
- Honesty
- Support
- Fairness/equality
- Separate identities
- Good communication
- A sense of playfulness/fondness

Source:

- » [University of Washington Hall Health Center Mental Health Clinic, January 2014: depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/content/health-articles/all-undergraduates/healthy-vs-unhealthy-relationships](https://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/content/health-articles/all-undergraduates/healthy-vs-unhealthy-relationships)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

Intimate partner violence has been proven to have a severe negative impact on the emotional and social well being of the whole family. As Futures Without Violence details, “sometimes children pay a heavy price”:

- A 2004 study of women who reported an intimate partner violence incident during pregnancy showed that they were twice as likely to experience an antenatal (before birth) hospitalization not associated with delivery (*Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 2004).
- A 2008 survey using data on more than 2,500 children whose families were reported to Child Protective Services in 1999 and 2000 found that children whose mothers experience severe abuse from an intimate partner are more than twice as likely as other children to end up in the emergency room. This increased risk may continue for three years after the mother’s abuse has ended (*Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 2008).
- A 2007 Pediatrics study found that children exposed directly to intimate partner violence after they were born had greater emergency department and primary care use during the intimate partner violence and were three times more likely to use mental health services after the intimate partner violence ended (*Pediatrics*, 2007).

In addition to the health costs, a child who witnesses domestic violence is “more likely to view violence as an acceptable method of conflict resolution” (AHR, 2010). Research has consistently demonstrated that “boys who witness domestic violence are more likely to become abusers, and girls who witness domestic violence are more likely to become victims of domestic violence as adults. The transmission of domestic violence to the next generation further compounds the long-term costs to society” (AHR, 2010).

THE BATTERED WOMEN’S MOVEMENT: A BRIEF HISTORY

Less than a century ago, victims of domestic violence had even fewer resources for support. Abused spouses were routinely encouraged by family members, religious leaders, and medical professionals to focus their efforts on reconciliation. They were told to stay with their partner for the sake of their marriage, their children, and their reputation, with painful and sometimes deadly consequences (Saathoff and Stoffel, Princeton, 1999).

In the late 1960s, second-wave feminist activists ignited the Battered Women’s Movement and began to break the silence about domestic violence. Battered women’s advocates viewed domestic violence as a social justice issue, reflecting women’s oppression and lack of agency in society, rather than as a private matter between spouses or partners (Schechter, 1982).

At that time, funds for domestic violence programs were limited, and government support was not common. The initial projects were almost entirely volunteer-driven and refuges were often established in private homes (Saathoff and Stoffel, Princeton, 1999). Over the next two decades, services expanded and formalized, but it was not until 1984 that domestic violence programs were eligible for government funds under the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (HHS-CFS, 2012).

A decade later, the United Nations recognized domestic violence as a human rights issue and issued the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women resolution, which was adopted without vote in 1993. In 1994, the U.S. Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which funds services for victims of rape and domestic violence, allows women to seek civil rights remedies for gender-related crimes, and provides sensitivity training to law enforcement personnel (White House, 2013). Since VAWA was passed, more than 35 states and the District of Columbia have adopted laws targeting domestic and sexual violence. The Act was successfully renewed and expanded in 2013 after a contentious debate in both houses of Congress over the addition of protections for LGBTQ individuals, Native Americans, and immigrants.

SPEAKING OUT AND FIGHTING BACK

Sources:

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- » Katie Ray Jones, U.S. House of Representatives Document Repository, 2014: docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP07/20140325/101877/HHRG-113-AP07-Wstate-JonesK-20140325.pdf
- » National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), 2014 nnedv.org/downloads/Policy/CampaignAppropsChart_FY15_withAuthLevels.pdf
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES TODAY: MORE WORK TO DO

Although programs and services for survivors of intimate partner abuse have improved since the advent of the Battered Women’s Movement 50 years ago, resources are still inadequate to address the scope of the issue.

A 2013 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs by the National Network to End Domestic Violence illustrates the need for increased and improved support and funding. The study found that “66,581 adults and children found refuge and help on the survey day, while there were an additional 9,641 requests for services that were unmet because of a lack of resources” (NNEDV, 2014). More than 25 percent of domestic violence programs say they cannot provide adequate services “because of cuts in government spending, and 20 percent said it was because of staff reductions” (NNEDV, 2014; ThinkProgress, 2014).

In 2013, domestic violence programs laid off nearly 1,700 staff positions “including counselors, advocates, and children’s advocates, and also had to reduce or eliminate over 1,280 services including emergency shelter, legal advocacy, and counseling” (NNEDV, 2014; Jones, 2014). When program providers were asked during the 2013 NNEDV survey about the consequences for survivors who cannot access services, “60 percent said a common outcome was that victims returned to the abusers, 27 percent of programs said victims become homeless, and 11 percent said that victims end up living in their cars” (NNEDV, 2014).

A PATH APPEARS: FINDING SOLUTIONS

Despite the challenges, communities across the United States are working together to support survivors and to develop innovative responses to the domestic violence epidemic. These programs are building on over 50 years of experience and are creating effective tools for early intervention, engaging men and boys, and providing comprehensive survivor services that address immediate needs while establishing a path to a safer future. Some of the programs below focus on organizations that appear in the *A Path Appears* film series; similar programs may be found elsewhere across the country. Information on additional programs may be found in the “Resources” section of this guide.

THE WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GEORGIA

“Leaving is the most difficult time because she has often been told what’s going to happen if she even tries to leave. Things like...‘You can’t leave me, you’re not free.’”

– Ayonna Johnson, Director of Legal Services

In 1985, a woman was shot and killed by her husband in front of their seven-year-old son. The woman had recently moved to Atlanta to escape her abusive marriage and was working with the Atlanta District Attorney to establish legal protections for her and her child, but her husband tracked her down with fatal consequences (WRC, 2014b). This tragic event highlighted the need for improved victim and survivor services in Georgia and inspired the creation of the Women’s Resource Center to End Domestic Violence in 1986.

Domestic violence continues to be a critical issue in the state of Georgia, where 1,300 people were killed between 2003 and 2013 as a result of intimate partner abuse (GCADV, 2013). In 2013 alone, almost 60,000 crisis calls were made to Georgia’s certified domestic violence agencies, and as of early 2014, Georgia ranked 12th in the nation “for the rate at which women are killed by men” (GCADV, 2013 & 2014).

Sources:

- » Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence, 2013b: wrcdv.org/about-us.html
- » Governors Office for Children and Families via Georgia Commission on Family Violence 2014: w2.georgiacourts.gov/gcfv/files/DV%20in%20Georgia%20Facts%202014%20Updates%284%29.pdf
- » Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV), 2013: gcadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2013-Fatality-Review-Report-Final.pdf
- » The Violence Policy Center (VPC), 2012: vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf
- » Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence, 2013a: wrcdv.org/domestic-violence.html
- » Georgia Commission on Family Violence, 2014: gcadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/FINAL-DRAFT-Snapshot-2014-01.30.14.pdf
- » National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), 2014: nnedv.org/news/4228-nationwide-survey-reveals-urgent-need-for-increased-funding-for-domestic-violence-service-providers.html

Almost 30 years after it was established, the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence continues to serve survivors of intimate partner abuse in Georgia. Today, the Center provides protective housing for up to 32 women and their children and has expanded its services to provide more comprehensive support, including legal advocacy and consultation, financial literacy workshops, dating violence prevention programs, and a 24-hour hotline.

Despite the Center's important work, a vast number of survivors in Georgia still lack access to the most basic services and support. In 2013, over 4,000 victims and their children "were turned away from domestic violence shelters due to lack of bed space," and victims of sexual violence in 53 Georgia counties have limited or no access to the services of a sexual assault center (GCADV, 2014).

ENGAGING MEN & YOUTH TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

"Most men think, 'That's somebody else's problem, I really don't do these things'."

– Dick Bathrick, Founder of Men Stopping Violence, *A Path Appears*

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 established the Engaging Men Grant Program through the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) with the goal of funding projects that engage men in preventing violence against women and developing mutually respectful, nonviolent relationships. This initiative "represents the first time in the history of OVW that a grant program directly encourages men to be part of successful prevention efforts addressing violence against women" (FWV, 2012).

The program supports projects that create public education campaigns and community organizing to encourage men and boys to work as allies with women and girls to prevent violence. Through education and outreach the Engaging Men Grant Program aims to develop new male leaders willing to publicly speak and act to oppose violence against women and girls.

Grantees of the OVW Engaging Men Program come from diverse communities across the country, and their approaches to working with men vary accordingly. A full list of grantees may be found on the Engaging Men & Youth Program website: engagingmen.futureswithoutviolence.org/about-engaging-men-youth-program/meet-the-grantees/

Sources:

- » U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), 2011 [justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-69-million-grants-engage-men-preventing-crimes-against-women](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-69-million-grants-engage-men-preventing-crimes-against-women)
- » Futures Without Violence, 2012 [engagingmen.futureswithoutviolence.org/about-engaging-men-youth-program/](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/about-engaging-men-youth-program/)
- » Futures Without Violence, 2012b [engagingmen.futureswithoutviolence.org/why-men-boys/](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/why-men-boys/)
- » Futures Without Violence, “Engaging Men and Youth to Prevent Violence Against Women,” 2012c [engagingmen.futureswithoutviolence.org/promising-practices/innovators/men-stopping-violence/](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/promising-practices/innovators/men-stopping-violence/)
- » Men Stopping Violence, 2014a: [menstoppingviolence.org/about/history](https://www.menstoppingviolence.org/about/history)
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- » Men Stopping Violence, 2014c: [menstoppingviolence.org/docs/MSVorganizationalbrochure.pdf](https://www.menstoppingviolence.org/docs/MSVorganizationalbrochure.pdf)
- » Emory University Center for Women, 2014: womenscenter.emory.edu/Programs/Men%20Stopping%20Violence/index.html



WHY MEN AND BOYS?

Actively engaging men and boys in the movement to eradicate violence against women is a crucial step forward. According to Futures Without Violence, “we need more strategies that get to the roots of gender-based violence,” and many men “don’t recognize their own responsibility and ability to help” (FWV, 2012b).

This approach is the foundation of the model that Men Stopping Violence (MSV) has been developing for over 30 years. MSV was among the first organizations to be awarded the Engaging Men Grant, and they have used it to develop programs in partnership with Futures Without Violence that are rooted in social justice, with a focus on men’s roles and opportunities to end violence against women. MSV believes that all forms of violence are connected and “works locally, nationally, and internationally to dismantle belief systems, social structures, and institutional practices that oppress women and children as well as dehumanize men” (MSV, 2014b).

Men Stopping Violence offers services to adults and youths and “intervenes with over 2,000 men each year” (MSV, 2014c). Their programs include workshops for fathers, mentor training, community education and outreach, and domestic violence education and intervention classes (MSV, 2014c).

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Intimate partner violence is everyone’s issue. Visit the following websites to find out why it matters to you if you are:

- **A parent – find out how to talk to your kids about healthy relationships:** [futureswithoutviolence.org/using-music-movies-video-games-school-curricula-start-strong-is-promoting-healthy-relationships/](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/using-music-movies-video-games-school-curricula-start-strong-is-promoting-healthy-relationships/)
- **A teen – find tools to address cyber bullying:** [thatsnotcool.com](https://www.thatsnotcool.com)
- **A university student or employee – get tools to respond to campus sexual assault:** [futureswithoutviolence.org/colleges-universities/](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/colleges-universities/)
- **A coach or a mentor – teach boys how to respect women:** [coachescorner.org/](https://www.coachescorner.org/)
- **A health care provider – get tools on how to identify domestic violence and help victims heal:** [healthcaresaboutipv.org](https://www.healthcaresaboutipv.org)
- **A professional – make sure your employer has a policy to support victims:** [workplacesrespond.org/](https://www.workplacesrespond.org/)

Thinking More Deeply

1. What insights did the stories in the film give you about domestic violence in the United States? What information surprised you the most?
2. How is the issue of domestic violence typically portrayed in the media? In what ways did this film challenge or reinforce common representations of this issue?
3. Why is domestic violence an important issue to tackle? What are some of the ripple effects of domestic violence on families, communities, and societies?
4. In what ways does domestic violence transcend categories such as race, economic class, culture, etc.?
5. There is a culture of silence surrounding domestic violence in the United States and around the world. Survivors often experience social stigma, fear of retribution, and emotional trauma and are reluctant to share their stories. What are some of the ways that the programs highlighted in the film are breaking that culture of silence? What impact did the personal stories in this film have on your understanding of this issue? Was there a story that stood out for you?
6. In the film, the young woman defends her partner by saying, “I could have been the cause of the first one,” and “This time I was just running my mouth.” What was your reaction to this? Why do you think she responded this way? What are some possible consequences she and her family could face if she presses charges?
7. What did Regina Hall mean when she says: “The impact that [domestic violence] has on the human spirit is always shocking because you know that it reverberates through so many lives. This is not just the person who received the abuse”?
8. What are some of the barriers to justice that were highlighted in the film? What are some of the consequences for survivors who come forward to seek prosecution? Discuss some of the strategies mentioned in the film that are crucial for addressing domestic violence.
9. One of the participants in the Men Stopping Violence workshop says: “As men I think we are used to minimization.” What do you think he meant by that? Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?
10. What responsibilities, if any, do men have to address domestic partner violence? What role can they play in their own relationships? How can they contribute to healthy communities?
11. Intimate partner violence is a serious issue in the LGBTQ community, where almost a third of individuals have experienced abuse. Why do you think that is? Why are marginalized communities more vulnerable to domestic abuse?
12. Ayonna Johnson says, “I think that you stop domestic violence by working with young people.” Based on what you saw in the film, what early interventions can help youth break the cycle of violence? What youth programs are available in your community? What programs would you like to see?
13. Do you agree with Regina Hall when she says: “The criminal justice system isn’t going to get us out of this”? What strategies do you think are needed to tackle the epidemic of domestic violence? How would you like domestic violence to be addressed in your community?



Suggestions for Action

FOUR THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY:

1. Know the Facts: Debunk myths about domestic violence, and know the facts about its prevalence and impact. Check out Futures Without Violence for more information about this issue, and check out the common myths and important facts about intimate partner violence by the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

- Futures Without Violence, “Get the Facts”: futureswithoutviolence.org/resources-events/get-the-facts/
- Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence: gcadv.org/general-resources/common-myths-about-domestic-violence/

2. Share Resources: Share what you have learned with your friends, family, and community, and let people know where they can get help. Check out the Find Support section of this guide for resources and information.

3. Promote Healthy Relationships: As a friend, parent, co-worker, teacher, or coach, you can talk about healthy relationships with people you care about. For helpful resources, relationship quizzes, and other tools for facilitating these conversations, visit: loveisrespect.org

4. Ask your workplace if they offer domestic violence support programs. If not, talk to your employer about establishing a program for colleagues who may be victims of violence and abuse. If they do have a program, ask how you can contribute and help raise awareness amongst your colleagues. For a workplace toolkit to help your employer make a difference, visit: workplacesrespond.org

What’s Your Path?

Join the global movement to educate women and girls and improve the quality of life for all children. Visit our website to find out how to host a screening of *A Path Appears* with your friends, family, community, or organization and facilitate a discussion of the film and the book that inspired it: pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears/

Talk to Teens about Domestic Violence

Early intervention is key to combating dating and domestic violence.

Get the facts from Futures Without Violence about dating violence and resources for children, youth, and teens: futureswithoutviolence.org/resources-events/get-the-facts/

For free resources that promote peer to peer education and health promotion safety planning recommendations go to: futureswithoutviolence.org/hanging-out-or-hooking-up-teen-safety-card/

Share Your Time and Talents

With ongoing budget and staff cuts, domestic violence programs across the country are in need of volunteers and support. Follow in the spirit of the Battered Women’s Movement and contribute your time and skills to empower survivors in your community. Support is needed in a range of areas, including translation, health care, tutoring, and professional development. Visit the State Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions online directory, select your state from the list, and look for programs in your city or county that may be looking for you: nnev.org/resources/coalitions.html

Become a Trainer

Volunteer with the Coaching Boys into Men program to end violence against women and children through educational workshops with coaches and their athletes. Learn more: coachescorner.org

Volunteer with RAINN

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization, and there are many ways you can lend a hand, including staffing a hotline, volunteering at your local rape crisis center, raising money to support programs, and raising awareness through public education efforts like RAINN Day, their college campaign on over 1000 campuses nationwide. Learn more: rainn.org/get-involved/volunteer-for-RAINN

Reader with a Cause

Join the National Network to End Domestic Violence book club, Reader with a Cause, on Goodreads. Many of today’s most popular books raise issues that are connected to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking — creating the perfect opportunity to discuss the importance of these issues with friends, families, and communities. Join the group to make new friends and discuss equality, empowerment, and violence against women as it appears in contemporary literature:

- National Network to End Domestic Violence: nnev.org/getinvolved/dvam.html
- Reader with a Cause: goodreads.com/group/show/114966-reader-with-a-cause

For additional discussion questions and ideas for facilitated activities that may be adapted for a variety of audiences and age groups, visit pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears/resources.html to download the *A Path Appears* salon guide and lesson plans.

Find Support

Reaching out for help to stop domestic violence can be scary and confusing, but it is important to remember that there is support out there. The following resources can help you or someone you care about to both survive and thrive:

The National Domestic Violence Hotline – Call **1-800-799-7233** or **TTY 1-800-787-3224**. Provides confidential, one-on-one support, crisis intervention, options for next steps, and direct connection to sources for immediate safety: [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org)

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline – Call **1-866-331-9474** or **TTY 1-866-331-8453**, text “loveis” to **22522**. Have a secure online private chat at: loveisrespect.org/get-help/contact-us/chat-with-us

National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN) – Call **1-800-656-4673** and choose #1 to talk to a counselor. Have a secure online private chat at: ohl.rainn.org/online/

Stalking Resource Center – Online resources for you or someone you know who is being stalked: victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center

Women’s Law – Learn more about legal resources and information available to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking: womenslaw.org

The North West Network – Services by and for the LGBT community, including support for survivors of domestic, dating, and sexual abuse. Call **206-568-7777**, or visit: nwnetwork.org/what-we-do/support-for-survivors/

State Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions – Each coalition represents the domestic violence and sexual violence service providers in their state or territory. Select your state from the list, and look for the link to their members or programs for a listing of the resources in your city or county: nedv.org/resources/coalitions.html



Resources

The following resource descriptions are adapted from language provided on each organization's website.

A Path Appears – The official website for the book and film: apathappears.org

Independent Lens: A Path Appears – The online source for discussion guides, lesson plans, film modules, and a salon guide for *A Path Appears*: pbs.org/independentlens/path-appears/

Futures Without Violence – Provides extensive research and prevention tools to end violence against women, children, and families at home and around the world: futureswithoutviolence.org

Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence – A national training and technical assistance provider and a clearinghouse on gender violence in Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. It serves a national network of advocates, community members, organizations, service agencies, professionals, researchers, policy advocates and activists from community and social justice organizations working to eliminate violence against women: apiidv.org

Casa de Esperanza – The National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities (NLN) exists to advance effective responses to eliminate violence and promote healthy relationships within Latin@ families and communities. The NLN addresses four primary issues: increasing access for Latin@s experiencing domestic violence through training and technical assistance; producing culturally relevant tools for advocates and practitioners; conducting culturally relevant research that explores the context in which Latin@ families experience violence; and interjecting the lived realities of Latin@s into policy efforts to better support Latin@ families: casadeesperanza.org

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community – An organization focused on the unique circumstances and life experiences of African Americans as they seek resources and remedies related to the victimization and perpetration of domestic violence in their community. IDVAAC recognizes the impact and high correlation of intimate partner violence to child abuse, elder maltreatment, and community violence: idvaac.org

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center – A Native nonprofit organization that was created specifically to serve as the National Indian Resource Center (NIRC) Addressing Domestic Violence and Safety for Indian Women. NIWRC seeks to enhance the capacity of American Indian and Alaska Native (Native) tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Tribal and Native Hawaiian organizations to respond to domestic violence: niwrc.org

Girls Inc. – Develops research-based informal education programs that encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges: girlsinc.org

Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence – Provides support and services to survivors of domestic violence and their children in the greater Atlanta, Georgia area: wrcdv.org

Men Stopping Violence – A social change organization dedicated to ending male violence against women: menstoppingviolence.org

The National Domestic Violence Hotline – Provides confidential, one-on-one support, crisis intervention, options for next steps, and direct connection to sources for immediate safety: thehotline.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline – A project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle to engage, educate, and empower youth and young adults to prevent and end abusive relationships: loveisrespect.org

Fair Girls – Prevention education and survivor advocacy program providing opportunities for girls to become confident, happy, healthy young women: fairgirls.org

Amnesty International – A worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights for all: amnesty.org

International Rescue Committee (IRC) – IRC responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives: rescue.org

CARE International – An organization fighting poverty and injustice in more than 70 countries around the world and helping 65 million people each year to find routes out of poverty: care.org

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) – Works through local partnerships to give women tools to improve their lives, families, and communities. CEDPA's programs increase educational opportunities for girls, ensure access to lifesaving reproductive health and HIV/AIDS information and services, and strengthen good governance and women's leadership in their nations: cedpa.org

UNiTE to End Violence Against Women – Launched in 2009 by UN Women to engage people from all walks of life to end gender-based violence in all its forms: endviolence.un.org

National Organization for Women (NOW) – NOW is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States and works to bring about equality for all women: now.org

Save the Children – An organization that works to save and improve children's lives in more than 50 countries worldwide: savethechildren.org

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – An international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity: unfpa.org

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Show of Force

ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds, presents, and promotes award-winning independently produced documentaries and dramas on public television and cable, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS receives core funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

ITVS's **Women and Girls Lead** is a strategic public media initiative to support and sustain a growing international movement to empower women and girls, their communities, and future generations. Women and Girls Lead is supported by CPB and Eileen Fisher, Inc. To learn more, visit womenandgirlslead.org

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SHOW OF FORCE

Founded in 2006 by veteran television producers Maro Chermayeff and Jeff Dupre, Show of Force is known for creating some of the last decade's most ambitious and creative programs, including feature documentaries, event television series and innovative transmedia projects. Included in its projects to date is the groundbreaking *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, a multi-platform project based on the bestselling book by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. Other recent projects include the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (HBO), *Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace* (PBS) winner of the 2014 Jury Prize for Best Documentary Short at SXSW, the 6-hour series *Circus* (PBS) and the Emmy Award-Winning 10-hour series *Carrier* (PBS).

