



# Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls: Ways We Can Help

## Lutheran Peace Fellowship (LPF) Action Guide

This guide is for people of faith who want to help stop violence against women and girls. Are you a pastor or a member of a women's or men's group? A parent or a student? An advocate for peace and justice? Or simply a person who yearns for a nonviolent world? Here are some ways we can together make a difference.

And why are we committed to doing so? Some cultural and religious traditions consider women's suffering as a burden to be borne without complaint. Some suggest a connection between Jesus' suffering on the Cross, and women's suffering from violence. However, this guide is built on commitments to solace, compassion, and an end to the life-damaging effects of violence. We come from a [Lutheran theological tradition](#) that emphasizes God's grace and support for the full humanity of all people -- including women. For Bible verses on abuse and violence, see the UK website [Hidden Hurt](#).

### Overview

Sister Joan Chittister, co-chair of the Global Peace Initiative for Women, tells the story of a daughter who rejected her mother's advice on salary negotiations, family roles, and domestic abuse. "Oh, mother, please," the daughter said. "That feminist stuff is so *your* generation. It's passé. - We don't have those problems anymore." "Really?" says Chittister in a [presentation](#). She then goes on to speak about attitudes, paternalistic theology, wage inequalities, rape, violence and other subjects that still very much confront women today.

### Action Ideas

1. Actively support an anti-violence effort
2. Read, discuss facts on violence against women (p.2)
3. Explore and choose an issue to act on
4. Support a women's shelter;  
volunteer for a peace education program
5. Plan and promote an observance
6. Share and post hotline numbers (p.2)
7. Pray and keep praying; see poem (p.4)
8. Read quotes for inspiration (p.3)
9. Read and share LPF's [Nurturing Peace: Gifts of Women](#) (forthcoming in 2014)
10. See LPF's [Women's Peace Resources](#) – additional info
11. Study biblical texts, articles and books on nonviolence, for example LPF's [Shalom essay](#).

### Observances

Use observances to plan forums and activities to promote learning and mobilize action

January: [National Stalking Awareness](#)

March 8: [International Women's Day](#)

April: [Sexual Assault Awareness](#)

October: [Domestic Violence Awareness](#)

October 11: [International Day of the Girl Child](#)

November 25: International Day for the [Elimination of Violence Against Women](#)

Of course, resources and activities associated with these dates can be used any time of the year, such as when an event in the news creates awareness.

There are also many lectionary texts that encourage us to share information, resources and activities on the issues raised here. And other observances such as Mothers Day, Veterans Day, Lent and Advent can be occasions to sensitively raise these crucial issues.

## Hotlines

You can help by publicizing hotlines/helplines that offer valuable care in your area or nationally. Get the word out through social media, church and community websites, and bulletin boards – in coffee houses as well as in parish halls.

### [National Dating Abuse Helpline](#)

1-866-331-9474

### [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

### [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network](#)

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

### [The Trevor Project](#)

1-866-488-7386 LGBTQ youth

Thanks to Futures Without Violence for the hotline info above.

## Facts on Violence Against Women

### In the United States...

**Battering** is the single leading cause of injury in the U.S. to women between the ages of 15 and 44, more than rape, auto accidents and muggings combined. (Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

*Asian:* 41-60% of women report experiencing domestic violence in their lifetime. (Source: API Institute on Domestic Violence)

*Black:* women experience intimate partner violence at rates 35% higher than their white counterparts. (Source: U.S. Department of Justice)

*Overall:* 1 in 4 women in the U.S. will have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner in her lifetime. (Source: Futures Without Violence)

**Murder:** Every day, 3 women are killed by their husbands or boyfriends. (Source: ELCA Violence Against Women webpage)

*Latino:* Of all the women murdered in Puerto Rico in recent years, about 50% were cases involving domestic violence. (Source: Alianza)

**Sexual assault:** Every two minutes in the U.S., a woman is sexually assaulted. (Source: U.S. Department of Justice)

*College:* 1 out of 5 women experience sexual assault in their college years. (Source: National Institute of Justice-supported study, 2007)

*Military:* The Pentagon estimates there are 26,000 incidences of sexual assault during the year, with only 3,374 of them being reported. (Source: U.S. Defense Dept. 2012 survey)

*Native American:* An estimated 1 out of every 3 women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, with 88% of the perpetrators being non-Native men. (Source: YWCA)

*Young women:* Approximately 80% of female victims experienced their first rape before the age of 25 and almost half experienced the first rape before age 18. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice)

**Sexual harassment:** 83% of girls age 12 to 16 experience a form of sexual harassment in public school. 40% of Black women experience coercive contact by age 18. (Source: Black Women's Blueprint)

### Worldwide...

Up to 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime. (Source: United Nations)

90% of the victims of war worldwide are civilian women and children. (Source: Joan Chittister, presenter at the Westminster Town Forum, Minneapolis, MN, Fall 2012)

Less than one percent of foundation funding globally is allocated to domestic violence -- even though it kills or harms one in three women worldwide. (Source: Spiritual Alliance to Stop Intimate Violence, quoting reports from the Foundation Center and the World Health Organization)

## Groups and Resources to Explore

### Faith-based

ELCA Justice for Women

[Gender-Based Violence](#) and [Human Trafficking](#)

Davila, Emily. "[Human Trafficking](#)" *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, Feb 2010

[Fistula Stories](#) (maternal health, Advent Bible study)

[National Council of Churches Women's Ministry](#) (domestic violence)

### People of Color

[Alianza](#): National Latino Alliance

[Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence](#)

[Black Women's Blueprint](#)

[National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#)

## Youth

[Day of the girl issue primers](#)

[Coaching Boys into Men](#)

## Funding

[Ms Foundation for Women](#)

[Spiritual Alliance to Stop Intimate Violence](#)

[Women of the ELCA Grants](#)

## Other

[Men Care](#) (global fatherhood campaign)

[National Resource Center on Domestic Violence](#)

[Service Women's Action Network](#) (SWAN)

See many more links (global and domestic) at LPF's [Women's Peace Resources](#), a brief reference list.

Also see LPF's resource guide on [Nurturing Peace: the Gifts of Women](#) (forthcoming in 2014) for more on empowerment, gender equality, advocacy, legislation, violence prevention, and the unique role of women as peacemakers.

## Quotes

"I maintain that nothing useful and lasting can emerge from violence."

– **Shirin Abadi**, Nobel Peace Prize winner 2003 for efforts to change Iranian attitudes toward women and children's rights

"Women are two-thirds of the illiterate of the world, two thirds of the starving of the world, and two thirds of the poorest of the poor everywhere. That can't be an accident. That's a policy -- and it must be changed."

– Sister **Joan Chittister**, international speaker and author on peace, justice, and women's rights

"When they come for the innocent, let them be tripping over me." – adapted by **Cathy Brechtelsbauer**, Bread for the World and LPF volunteer, Sioux Falls, SD, from a quote used in the Catholic Worker movement since the 1980s

"We need more men with the guts, with the courage, with the strength, with the moral integrity to break our complicit silence and challenge each other and stand with women and not against them."

– **Jackson Katz**, co-founder of Mentors in Violence Prevention

"The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war." – **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit**, Indian diplomat and politician, first woman president of the UN General Assembly

"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

– **Mother Teresa**, humanitarian and missionary

"There are two ways of spreading light, to be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it."

– **Edith Wharton**, first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Literature

"Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment."

– **Oprah Winfrey**, global media leader and philanthropist

"I will tell him how important education is and that 'I even want education for your children as well.'...now do what you want." – **Malala Yousafzai**, Pakistani girl shot by Taliban for championing girls education, when asked after her recovery what she'd say to the gunman

See LPF's [Peace Deck](#) for additional quotes.

This Stopping Violence Against Women resource was compiled by LPF board member Lily R. Wu with thanks to Jean Martensen, Bonnie Block, and Andrea Langeland.  
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Lutheran Peace Fellowship (LPF) is a nationwide community of Lutherans responding to the gospel call to be peacemakers and justice-seekers. LPF offers many [resources](#) for adults, youth, and activist groups: leaders guides and resources on topics ranging from [biblical peacemaking](#) to [international conflict](#); engaging [blog posts](#); [advocacy updates](#); a [computer-based activity](#); [leadership training](#); the [Women's Path of Hope](#), activities relating to it, and more. See <http://www.lutheranpeace.org>

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and reports on your activities. **Connect with us** at [lpf@ecunet.org](mailto:lpf@ecunet.org) or (206) 349-2501. **Join with us** as we walk together, sharing the gifts of justice, peace, welcoming community!

Lutheran Peace Fellowship, 1710 Eleventh Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122.

## To Weavers Everywhere

by M. Rienstra

An inspirational poem to share in your efforts to stop violence against women



God sits weeping  
The beautiful creation tapestry  
She wove with such joy  
Is mutilated, torn into shreds,  
Reduced to rags,  
Its beauty fragmented by force.  
God sits weeping.  
But look!  
She is gathering up the shreds  
To weave something new.  
She gathers  
The rags of hard work  
Attempts at advocacy,  
Initiatives for peace,  
Protests against injustice,  
All the seemingly little and weak  
Words and deeds offered  
Sacrificially  
In hope, in faith, in love.  
And look!  
She is weaving them all  
With golden threads of Jubilation  
Into a new tapestry,  
A creation richer, more beautiful  
Than the old one was!  
God sits weaving  
Patiently, persistently,  
With a smile that  
Radiates like a rainbow  
On her tear-streaked face.  
And She invites us  
Not only to keep offering her the  
Shreds and rags of our suffering  
And our work,  
But even more -  
To take our place beside Her  
At the Jubilee Loom,  
And weave with her  
The tapestry of the New Creation

-- from the Ministry for Women