

# Mending the Sacred Hoop

Volume 3, Issue 4



## Newsletter



September 2001

### Study Says 20% of Girls Reported Abuse by a Date

*By Erica Goode, Incite!, Women of Color Against Violence, Aug. 8, 2001 Newsletter*

Their faces are far younger than those that appear in public service advertisements about domestic violence. They are too young to drink legally and, in many cases, too young to vote. But a new report suggests that one in five adolescent girls become the victims of physical or sexual violence, the researchers found, in a dating relationship. And the experience of such violence, the researchers found, is frequently associated with serious health problems, including drug abuse, unhealthy weight control practices, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy and suicide attempts.

Of the high school girls, ages 14 to 18, surveyed in the study, about 20 percent reported that they had been hit, slapped, shoved or forced into sexual activity by a dating partner. Dr. Jay Silverman, an assistant professor of health and social behavior at the Harvard School of Public Health and the lead author of the report, called the numbers "extremely high". It appears today in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. "Unfortunately," Dr. Silverman said, "the prevalence estimate is not surprising considering what we know

*Girls Reported Abuse continued on page 5*

### Domestic Violence Is Not A Native American Tradition

*The excerpts below are from a presentation by Marlin Mousseau at the first annual Inter-Tribal Women's Gathering "Healing Our Hearts" held at Treehaven in Tomahawk, WI.*

#### 1. Domestic Violence is not a Native American Tradition

Domestic violence is not a Native American tradition. It was not tolerated and in the rare event that it occurred, it was taken very seriously. The penalty for the offense of wife battering varied from Nation to Nation but it was definitely dealt with. Some Nations banished the abuse while other ostracized him. Still others left retaliation to the male relatives of the victim.

At the very least, a man who physically abused his partner was not considered for any type of leadership. If he couldn't control his behavior within the family he did not possess the personal characteristics to lead the People responsibly. Whatever the consequences, abuse was not ignored or simply considered a "family" problem.

If a household broke up because of abuse, the woman was free to make the man leave her lodge. She did not have to fear retaliation or terrorism. He recognized her right to make her own choices and if he could not respect this, the Tribe intervened to insure her safety and teach him proper behavior.

The making of a relationship was not a religious act. Therefore, breaking up or divorcing was not thought of as breaking a religious code. This is a modern influence of Christianity. A woman who broke the household because of abuse was viewed as honorable for having the self-respect and dignity in leaving a destructive relationship behind.

Women were valued and honored in our culture. Almost all of Native American creation stories have women being made first. This of course, is contrary to Christian creation stories, as we know them. The majority of Native American spiritual concepts revolve around the feminine principle. It was the essence of femininity that brought us our Pipe and spiritual teachings. Our

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connection with Mother Earth also demonstrates this

## **2. Anishinabe Values/Social Law Regarding Wife Battering**

In pre-reservation life, there were explicit social laws to deal with the rare occurrence of wife battering. The Ojibwe term used to identify a wife batterer is "Megatiggwa Ish" meaning "he who fights his wife always," implying that he is irrational, petty, and jealous. Once a man battered his wife, she was free to make him leave her lodge if they lived among her people. He'd leave her lodge and from then on be known as a man whose wife had broken the household of abuse. From then on, he could never "marry" again. When a "married" woman was abused by her husband, her brothers were obligated by social law to retaliate against him, or even killing him. If the couple lived among the man's relatives, his parents were obligated to get her away and return her to her people.

In a situation in which a household had been broken because of abuse, it was not known as a divorced family as it is today. It was viewed as honorable for having self-respect in leaving the destructive relationship behind. In a broken household, the sons could go with the father, the daughters with the mother.

A man who battered his wife was considered irrational and thus could no longer lead a war party or a hunt; he could not be trusted or participate in either. He could not be trusted to behave properly and thus may bring harm to the other men involved. The wife batterer could no longer own a pipe. If he somehow did, no one would smoke it with him. He was thought of as contrary to Anishinabe law and lost many privileges of life and many roles in Ojibwe society and the societies within.

A man who killed his wife was considered as not Ojibwe anymore. He had broken a primary law of Anishinabe Society, that is, an Ojibwe NEVER kills another Ojibwe. He became an enemy of the people. His name would never be spoken again. He would cease to exist. The children of this household would be given to another family so they would not be known as coming from a man who did not exist, and so they would not be known as the offspring of such a person.

## **3. Pre-Reservation Ojibwe Philosophy on Wife Battering**

In pre-reservation life, family social laws were based on Ojibwe values, morals and philosophies of life. At the heart of all values, and therefore the laws, were the safety,

harmony and continuity of the family (clan). In the old society, the clan system was immeasurably vital for the survival and perpetuation of the Ojibwe people.

In the pre-reservation society of the Anishinabe people, wife abuse/battering was rare. This kind of behavior was unacceptable and it broke the law of the mighty Ojibwe people. When it occurred it disrupted harmony, the value of living in harmony with things around us including what the Creator has given us. Wife battering emerged in reservation life as a result of the disintegration of our people's freedom to make life the way we chose.

## **4. Role of Men and Women In Pre-Reservation Society**

Deeply enmeshed in pre-reservation Ojibwe philosophy was the reality of men and women existing as equal creatures of the Creator. There was no "battle for superiority". Men and women held definite roles in society that were considered equal in importance to the Anishinabe Nation.

Spirituality, with the coming of the sacred pipes, we as Ojibwe people are reminded that men and women must coexist as a team. As the Lakota people, with the coming of the sacred White Buffalo Pipe, the Great Spirit (Manitou) brought the Pipe to the Ojibwe people. Men and women were selected to become pipe carriers. Each carrier carried that responsibility charged by the spirits. The united reality of men and women was a way of life. Both men and women held a definite place in society\*



*Look in further editions for the continuance of this article.*



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### “RURAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND INVESTIGATION”

OCTOBER 10-11, 2001 PINOL Co., AZ  
NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION / NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER ON DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ASSAULT WILL BE HOSTING THIS TRAINING WITH EXPERT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, PROSECUTORS AND VICTIM ADVOCATES THAT WILL TEACH CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND INVESTIGATION WITH CONCENTRATION ON PROTECTING VICTIMS FROM FURTHER ABUSE.

**CONTACT:** BRIGETTE WITTEL AT NSA, 703-838-5337. FOR REGISTRATION AND HOTEL INFORMATION CONTACT DEBORAH TUCKER AT NTCDSV, 512-407-9020 OR [WWW.NTCDSV.ORG](http://WWW.NTCDSV.ORG).

### “ADVOCACY, SHELTER, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING”

OCTOBER 14-16, 2001 MINOT, ND  
MENDING THE SACRED HOOP TA PROJECT IN CONJUNCTION WITH SACRED CIRCLE IS PROVIDING THIS TRAINING THAT WILL PROVIDE GRANTEEES WITH VITAL INFORMATION ABOUT SHELTERS POLICIES, ADVOCACY, CONFIDENTIALITY POLICIES, ALLY BUILDING, AND DEVELOPMENT OF CODES AMONG MANY OTHER TOPICS.

**CONTACT:** KIM FRANK AT 888-305-1650 OR [KFRANK@DULUTH-MODEL.ORG](mailto:KFRANK@DULUTH-MODEL.ORG).

### “SOUTHWEST FULL FAITH AND CREDIT REGIONAL MEETING”

OCTOBER 17-19, 2001 GALLUP, NM  
DNA – PEOPLE'S LEGAL SERVICE, INC. WILL BE HOSTING THIS TRAINING WHICH WILL FOCUS ON THE FULL FAITH AND CREDIT PROJECT WHICH WILL BRING TOGETHER INDIAN NATIONS AND STATES IN THE SOUTHWEST IN A SERIES OF REGIONAL MEETINGS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PLANS FOR MAKING THE FULL FAITH & CREDIT PROVISIONS OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA) A REALITY.

**CONTACT:** EMERY McCABE AT DNA PEOPLE'S LEGAL SERVICE, 520-872-5644 OR [EMERYM@DNALEGALSERVICES.ORG](mailto:EMERYM@DNALEGALSERVICES.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION

### “ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN OF NATIVE WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN BATTERED”

OCTOBER 25-26, 2001 DENVER, CO  
THIS WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY SACRED CIRCLE/CANGLESKA EXAMINES THE ROLE OF CHILD ADVOCATES AND THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON CHILDREN. TOPICS WILL INCLUDE: HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THE VIOLENCE THEY HAVE WITNESSED, WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN SHELTER, SYSTEMS ADVOCACY TO PREVENT THE RE-VICTIMIZATION OF CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHERS.

**CONTACT:** SACRED CIRCLE/CANGLESKA, 605-341-2050 OR [DONNA@SACRED-CIRCLE.COM](mailto:DONNA@SACRED-CIRCLE.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION

### “NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: COLLABORATION TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT”

NOVEMBER 4-7, 2001 SAN ANTONIO, TX  
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUND/NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES.  
THIS SPECIAL NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY

TEAMS OF JUDGES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATES, AND CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS IN VAWO S.T.O.P., RURAL, AND ARREST GRANTTEE JURISDICTIONS.

**CONTACT:** AMY SAATHOFF AT NCJFCJ, 775-784-6967 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

### “ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN TRAINING INSTITUTE”

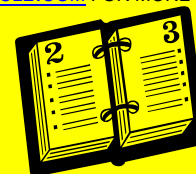
NOVEMBER 5-9, 2001 RAPID CITY, SD  
SACRED CIRCLE / CANGLESKA OFFERS FOUR WORKSHOPS DURING THE TRAINING INSTITUTE TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN IN INDIAN COUNTRY: THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT; THE ROLE OF BATTERER'S PROGRAM; THE ROLE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM; AND THE ROLE OF SHELTER AND ADVOCACY.

**CONTACT:** SACRED CIRCLE / CANGLESKA, 605-341-2050 OR [DONNA@SACRED-CIRCLE.COM](mailto:DONNA@SACRED-CIRCLE.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

### “PROSECUTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INDIAN COUNTRY”

NOVEMBER 30-1, 2001 PHOENIX, AZ  
SACRED CIRCLE/CANGLESKA: THIS WORKSHOP WILL ASSIST PROSECUTORS IN UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN AIDING PROSECUTION AND SUCCESSFUL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROSECUTION WITH OR WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM THE VICTIM.

**CONTACT:** SACRED CIRCLE/CANGLESKA, 605-341-2050 OR [DONNA@SACREDCIRCLE.COM](mailto:DONNA@SACREDCIRCLE.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION.



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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO TERRORIST ATTACKS

Reprinted and adapted from 'News Flash'

(<http://www.fvppf.org/newsflash>), an online newsletter of the Family Violence Prevention Fund

Every American was affected by last weeks terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. Thousands of people lost their lives, and countless others lost family members, friends and colleagues. The incidents themselves and the ongoing media coverage are deeply traumatic for adults and children alike.

In New York, battered women's programs are helping survivors and family members cope with the trauma and, around the country, programs are providing support to communities. While many government offices and businesses are closed, the work at the shelters and programs that serve battered women and their children continued.

The issues raised by the attacks are deeply disturbing. Many battered women's advocates are horrified by the violence toward Arab Americans and the vandalism that has occurred at mosques around the country. Others are alarmed by the talk of war coming from Administration officials and the nation.

This horrific event has changed history, and it fundamentally changes the climate, in which we carry out our work, said Family Violence Prevention Fund Executive Director Esta Soler. Our movement seeks change beyond our nation's borders. Our mission is to fight the oppression of women and girls wherever it occurs. As we seek to build understanding and address the roots of terrorism, we must also stand with the Arab American community to see that their rights are not abridged.

Many advocates are looking to connect with others. This issue of NewsFlash! offers resources for battered women's programs and other organizations that are helping communities cope with the trauma. ■

## Signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Each one of us has been hurt in some way by the attacks on America. Shock, stress, tension, high emotions -- they are all normal reactions to such traumatic events. The DSM-IV criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are as follows:

**The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:**

- a) The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
- b) The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. NOTE: In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior.

**The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:**

- a) Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. NOTE: In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.
- b) Recurrent distressing dreams of the event. NOTE: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content.
- c) Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated) NOTE: In young children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur.
- d) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
- e) Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolized or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

**Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:**

- a) Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma.
- b) Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma.
- c) Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma.
- d) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.
- e) Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
- f) Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)
- g) Sense of foreshortened future

**Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before trauma) as indicated by two (or more) of the following:**

- a) Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- b) Irritability or outbursts of anger
- c) Difficulty concentrating
- d) Hyper vigilance
- e) Exaggerated startle response
- f) Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than 1 month
- g) The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

*The opinions expressed herein are those of the writer alone. If you have questions about your health, you should consult your personal physician. This is meant for informational purposes only. ■*

about intimate partner violence with adult women.” In a recent national survey, 25 percent of adult women reported being the victims of violence by a romantic partner.

Commenting in Dr. Silverman’s study, Esta Soler, the executive director of the Family Violence Prevention Fund in San Francisco, said: “Those are disturbingly high statistics for young women. Adolescence is such a hard developmental time anyway, and young girls feel so off balance in so many respects that to now learn that violence is such a factor in their lives is very disturbing.” Ms. Soler said the study provided hard data to back up what those who work in the field of domestic violence had suspected for many years. Dr. Silverman said the findings underscored the need for more prevention programs and services for both the victims and the perpetrators of adolescent abuse. The researchers analyzed responses to a single question about dating violence in both the 1997 and 1999 versions of the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, part of a national assessment of public school students, grades 9 through 12, in schools across the country. Students were asked if they had ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with. They responded by indicating, “No, I was not hurt by a date, “Yes, I was hurt physically, “Yes, I was hurt sexually, “Yes, I was hurt physically and sexually.” The survey, administered in randomly selected classrooms, also included questions about smoking, drinking, thinking about or attempting suicide, sexual intercourse, condom use, pregnancy and unhealthy eating behaviors like laxative abuse or self-induced vomiting. Of 1,977 high school girls who participated in the survey in 1997, 20.2 percent said they had been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. In 1999, 18 percent of 2,186 girls said they had been the victims of physical or sexual violence.

In both years, the majority of girls who reported sexual abuse said they had been physically abused. The study is the most comprehensive to examine dating violence among adolescents, and the first to ask adolescents if they had ever been victims of violence in a dating situation. Previous studies have come up with similar statistics, though with smaller numbers of subjects and a more restricted focus. A study by Dr. Ralph DiClemente and his colleagues at Emory University, which appeared in the journal *Pediatrics* in May, found that 18 percent of 522 black girls from 14 to 18 years old reported having been physically abused by a dating partner within the previous six months. Dr. Silverman said he thought the most striking finding of the new study was the strong link between dating violence and risky behavior.

For example, in the 1999 survey, being the victim of sexual violence by a dating partner was also associated with binge drinking; laxative use or vomiting to lose weight; not using a condom during sexual intercourse; having three or more sexual partners within the previous three months; and having been pregnant. Girls who had experienced both physical and sexual abuse were also more likely to report cocaine, nicotine and alcohol use; unhealthy weight-control practices; suicide attempts; pregnancy; and to say that they had first had sexual intercourse when they were younger or were the result of the abuse. Other studies, he noted, had found high rates of depression among adult battered women. “A plausible explanation would be that adolescent women are also suffering from depression due to the abuse and degradation they have suffered that is making them more vulnerable,” he said. According to estimates by the Justice Department, more than 1.5 million women experience physical or sexual violence by a boyfriend, husband or date each year in the United States. ■

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## Crisis in America

Our thoughts go out to all of the people in New York and Washington D.C. and the feelings that they must be experiencing: fear, uncertainty and anxiety from this horrible act that was done on September 11, 2001. This is reminiscent of what millions of women who experience violence in their homes feel everyday. Every day thousands of women are abused physically, mentally, spiritually and sexually. Each day we stand against the violence that happens within our households and to millions of women right here in our own country and throughout the world.



Mending the Sacred Hoop S.T.O.P. Violence  
Against Indian Women Technical Assistance Project  
202 East Superior Street  
Duluth, MN 55802  
Toll Free: 1-888-305-1650, Web Site: [www.msh-ta.org](http://www.msh-ta.org)

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