

The Source

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Girls and Violence: Is the Gender Gap Closing?

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Reading the paper or watching television it's hard to avoid the impression that girls' violence has increased dramatically over the last decade. Headlines like "Ruthless Girlz," "Are Girls Getting Meaner?," and "Bad Girls" all warn of the new face of youth violence. This report reviews the objective evidence regarding youthful female violence, makes suggestions about what is occurring, and then briefly suggests ways that those who work with and care about girls can address the issue positively.

First, there certainly appears to be evidence that we are seeing a change in girls' violence, if one reviews trends in juvenile arrests. Between 1992 and 2003, girls' arrests increased 6.4 percent while arrests of boys actually decreased by 16.4 percent. While decreases were seen across many crimes of violence for both boys and girls, the period saw a 7 percent increase in girls' arrests for aggravated assault during a period that showed a 29.1 percent decrease in boys' arrests for this offense. Likewise, arrests of girls for assault climbed an astonishing 40.9 percent when boys' arrests climbed by only 4.3 percent (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2003).

This report reveals, though, that other sources of data on youthful misbehavior, most specifically data collected by the CDC on "self-reported" delinquency, paint an entirely different picture of girls' behavior over the last decade. A quick look at their data reveals that while 34.4 percent of girls surveyed in 1991 said that they had been in a physical fight in the last year, by 2001 that figure had dropped to 23.9 percent or a 30.5 percent decrease in girls' fighting; boys' violence also decreased during the same period but less dramatically—from 50.2 to 43.1 percent or a 14.1 percent drop (Centers for Disease Control, 1992-2002).

How is this possible? This report suggests

that three trends are likely responsible for the increase in arrests of girls for violent behavior.

Relabeling of girls' status offense behavior into criminal behavior, which sometimes involves the arrest of girls involved in scuffles with family members for assault.

Rediscovery of girls' violence by media and policy makers alike. Self-report data have consistently shown that girls engaged in more violence than arrest statistics indicated, in past decades. We simply did not arrest girls for this behavior, but that has now changed, due to policy shifts in enforcement.

Upcriming refers to policies (like "zero tolerance policies") that have the effect of increasing the severity of criminal penalties associated with particular offenses. Related to "rediscovery," this phenomenon also explains the racialized patterns of enforcement that are observed in the official juvenile justice data. Specifically, when you examine the consequences of labeling girls violent (increased detentions and referrals to court), it appears that certain communities, notably communities of color are being differentially impacted by this new concern about violence among girls.

Careful analysis of trends in girls' violence then fails to confirm that we face a dramatic increase in this troubling behavior. Research does suggest, though, that when confronting girls' violence, we need to foreground gender (particularly the role played by relational aggression in girls' outbursts with other girls). We also need to look for prevention and intervention programs that give girls ways to be angry appropriately while also empowering them in settings like schools which often tend to ignore, silence, and marginalize them.

In Brief: *Girls and Violence: Is the Gender Gap Closing?* is part of a longer document authored by Meda Chesney-Lind for the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, PCADV, and VAWnet. This document and references are available online at www.vawnet.org/.

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About the Resource Center

The Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence enhances the capacity of individuals and organizations to prevent violence against women and strengthen service delivery for survivors. This unique collection of books, videos, journals and other media promotes awareness and increases accessibility of educational information and resources for the state of Michigan. These materials are useful for training, counseling, education, research, nonprofit business management, program development and activism.

The Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence is a collaboration of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board and the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Cultural Considerations and Violence Against Women

- **Multicultural Counseling Competencies: Assessment, Education, Training and Supervision**
- **Working With Battered Immigrant Women: A Guidebook For Prosecutors**
- **To Have & To Hit: Cultural Perspectives On Wife Beating**
- **Latina Outreach Manual**
- **Chain Chain Change: For Black Women in Abusive Relationships**
- **Working With Battered Immigrant Women: A Handbook To Make Services Accessible**
- **Introductory Manual To Domestic Violence In Indian Country**
- **Speaking The Unspeakable: Marital Violence Among South Asian Immigrants In The United States**

National Criminal Justice Reference Service Releases Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations

Sexual violence continues to plague our nation and destroy lives. All members of society are vulnerable to this crime, regardless of race, age, gender, or social standing. When sexual assault does occur, victims deserve competent and compassionate care. This first *National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations* provides detailed guidelines for criminal justice and health care practitioners in responding to the immediate needs of sexual assault victims. We know that effective collection of evidence is of paramount importance to successfully prosecuting sex offenders. Just as critical is performing sexual assault forensic exams in a sensitive, dignified, and victim-centered manner. For individuals who experience this horrendous crime, having a positive experience with the criminal justice and health care systems can contribute greatly to their overall healing.

As we have learned in the 10 years since the implementation of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, coordinated community efforts are the best way to stop violence against women and hold offenders accountable for their crimes. That is why this protocol was designed as a guide for criminal justice and health care practitioners who respond to victims of sexual assault.

Combining cutting edge response techniques with collaboration among service providers will greatly enhance our ability to treat and support victims as well as identify and punish the sex offenders. We hope that this protocol lays the foundation for these efforts.

Download the *National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations* at www.ncjrs.org.

Alianza Latina en contra la Agresión Sexual (ALAS) Releases Position Statement

Alianza Latina en Contra la Agresión Sexual (ALAS) released a position statement, *Eliminating Barriers to Services for Latina Survivors of Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence*. Initiated in February 2004, ALAS is a national Latina online workgroup united in a major goal: to help make risk-reduction and victim service information more accessible to Spanish-speaking Latin@s.

For more information about the position statement as well as how to become of a member of this dynamic new group, please visit www.artesana.com.

Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults and Companion Animals

Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults and Companion Animals is a new resource manual for professionals who work in the fields of animal protection, adult protective services, and elder abuse prevention. The manual expands knowledge of the role of companion animals in patterns of elder abuse, exploitation, and self-neglect. This resource is intended to foster collaboration among animal protection and adult protective services agencies. This comprehensive manual includes articles that introduce the complexities of animal hoarding and animal cruelty as an indicator of family violence.

Contact the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663, ext. 17 to borrow *Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults and Companion Animals*.

National Organizations Working to End Violence Against Immigrant Women

National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women

<http://www.immigrantwomennetwork.org/index.htm>

National Network for Immigration and Refugee Rights

<http://www.nnirr.org/>

National Immigration Law Center

<http://www.nilc.org/>

National Immigration Forum

<http://www.immigrationforum.org/>

National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild

<http://www.nationalimmigrationproject.org/>

Legal Momentum – Advancing Women’s Rights

<http://www.legalmomentum.org/issues/imm/index.shtml>

For more information on immigration and domestic violence, contact the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663, ext. 17 or visit us on the Web at www.mcadsv.org/mrcdsv to download Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence, a new bibliography compiled by the Resource Center.

*National Domestic Violence Hotline
Linea Nacional sobre la Violencia Domestica*

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

TTY 1-800-787-3224

*Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)*

Elder Physical and Sexual Abuse: The Medical Piece

Elder Physical and Sexual Abuse: The Medical Piece is a two-hour video formatted training program produced to provide training on forensic wound identification and links to successful criminal investigation and prosecution. The training is designed to foster a multidisciplinary approach to meet the critical and currently unmet need for recognizing, investigating and protecting against elder abuse by targeting law enforcement, adult protective services and prosecution agencies. The training will enable investigators and those mandated reporters to recognize evidence of abuse and educate prosecutors to gather, analyze and present this evidence in a compelling manner. By understanding what is needed to prosecute an elder abuse case, mandated reporters, healthcare professionals and law enforcement can provide prosecutors with better information to build the case.

Contact the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663, ext. 17 to borrow *Elder Physical and Sexual Abuse: The Medical Piece*.

New Dating Violence Resources Available

Dating Violence Information Packet

Teen Dating Violence: Information and Resources, an information packet developed by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRC DV) in June 2004, introduces readers to the dynamics, prevalence and consequences of teen dating violence. The packet includes an overview, and review of key issues and extensive resource lists. *Teen Dating Violence: Information and Resources* is available at www.vawnet.org.

Dating Violence Resource Center

The Dating Violence Resource Center, a program of the National Center for Victims of Crime, provides communities and programs training, resources, and information to increase awareness of dating violence. Practical overviews on dating violence-related topics for teens, parents, victim service providers, and school administrators are available including resource reviews, fact sheets, research and outreach materials.

Visit the Teen Dating Violence Resource Center at www.ncvc.org.

Date Rape/Abusive Relationships: The Teen Files Flipped

In this popular MTV program 17-year-old Mario, who takes pride in seducing as many girls as possible, and 15-year-old Debbie, who is drawn to a possessive, potentially abusive boyfriend are given an unsettling look at the nature of unhealthy dating relationships. To borrow *The Teen Files Flipped* contact the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663, ext. 17.

New Resources Help Domestic Violence Service Providers Navigate Child Welfare System

Reprinted from the Family Violence Prevention Fund Newsflash.

Families experiencing domestic violence often have trouble navigating the child protection system, which frequently takes children away from non-abusive mothers who have enormous difficulty reuniting with their children. Two new resources from the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) show domestic violence service providers how to do more to help battered mothers and their children in these circumstances.

Advocacy Matters: Helping Mothers and Their Children Involved with the Child Protection System and *Confidentiality & Information Sharing Issues* give domestic violence experts the information they need to deal successfully with child protection systems and to help battered mothers whose children have been removed from their care. It includes information and tips that help advocates better address the needs of battered mothers and their children.

Confidentiality & Information Sharing Issues addresses legal and confidentiality issues advocates face when working with the child protection system and juvenile courts. It encourages advocacy and focuses on information issues advocates face when they counsel battered mothers whose children have been placed in the child protection system. Each section offers tips and suggestions for advocates, questions for consideration, and examples of effective practices. The appendix features worksheets that expand upon the topics addressed in each section.

Download *Advocacy Matters* and *Confidentiality & Information Sharing Issues* at www.endabuse.org.

Stalking Resource Center Releases New Brochure for Victims of Stalking

The new brochure from the Stalking Resource Center (SRC), *Are You Being Stalked?*, defines and describes stalking, identifies common emotional reactions of victims, and provides information on safety planning and community resources for victims of stalking.

Download the brochure from www.ncvc.org/src. To print the brochure with your organization's contact information, call the SRC at (202) 467-8704. SRC staff will add your contact information to the PDF and e-mail the file to you.

For more information on stalking including research, educational tools and model protocols visit the Stalking Resource Center's extensive online information clearinghouse at www.ncvc.org/src.

Dating Violence Internet Resources

See It and Stop It
Includes statistics, fact sheets, brochures and pamphlets on dating violence for teens.
www.seeitandstopit.org

National Youth Prevention Resource Center
Resources for professionals, parents and youth working to prevent violence committed by and against young people.
www.safeyouth.org

Teen Victim Project
The Teen Victim Project is a youth leadership initiative designed to get adolescent victims the help they need to reduce the incidence of repeat victimization and to develop youth leadership. **This site is available in English and Spanish.**
www.ncvc.org

Out Proud
The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth, serves the needs of young men and women by providing advocacy, research, information and Support.
www.outproud.org

The Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence is a collaboration of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board and the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

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**MICHIGAN
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
PREVENTION &
TREATMENT BOARD**



New Nonprofit Management Resources Available

The BoardSource Committee Series is a compilation of six booklets that introduce new thinking and proven strategies for committee structure. Collectively, the series provides an in-depth approach on how to determine what an appropriate committee structure is, and provides new details on the responsibilities of key committees. This series is now available to borrow from the Resource Center:

- *Transforming Board Structure: Strategies for Committees and Task Forces* by Marla J. Bobowick, Sandra R. Hughes and Berit M. Lakey, takes a look at committees and how your board can use them and other work groups to streamline the work of the full board.
- *Governance Committee* by Lakey, Hughes and Outi Flynn prove why governance committees are essential to every board. They illustrate how a governance committee can not only recruit new members, but also transform those recruits into productive and capable board members. It outlines duties of the governance committee and provides helpful hints and guidelines on selecting the right members to serve on this committee, how the committee can help determine the scope of your board's diversity, where to find the suitable individuals, and how to orient and continuously educate your members.
- *Executive Committee* by Mark Light tells a cautionary tale of executive committees known for taking on too much power, often resulting in confusion among the rest of the board members. Find out in which situations executive committees may be beneficial, and in what circumstances they may be a hindrance.
- *Financial Committees* by Thomas A. McLaughlin discusses the importance of accountability and how it is increasingly important to nonprofits and how every board must be engaged in understanding its fiduciary duties. Furthermore, you'll learn about the core responsibilities of the finance, audit, and investment committees.
- *Development Committee* by Eugene R. Tempel, introduces the concept of organizational development committees.
- *Advisory Councils* by Nancy R. Axelrod expands on the traditional way of looking at the concept of advisory councils and explores ways in which they can help the board to keep its own significance without losing impact. It explains how these groups have more functions than usually assigned and also explains the role an advisory council can play in helping your board to expand outreach efforts, find new supporters, distribute tasks and incorporate new perspectives.

Contact the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663, ext. 17 to borrow the Board-Source Committee Series.

The Family Violence Prevention Fund Offers Resources for Immigrant Women

Resources for Immigrant and Refugee women are available through the Family Violence Prevention Fund. These materials were developed to empower and educate immigrant women about their rights and to help develop leadership so they can become involved in changing policies that affect them.

Building The Rhythm of Change: Developing Leadership and Improving Services within the Battered Rural Immigrant manual provides suggestions and guidance on how to organize projects, based on a Family Violence Prevention Fund pilot project in Iowa and Texas and the experiences of grassroots immigrant women's organizations, aimed at improving services and eliminating barriers to safety for battered immigrant women by empowering the women. Geared primarily for domestic violence service providers focusing on advancing the rights of battered immigrant women and improving their access to services, the manual may also be useful for other organizations or individuals advocating for immigrants' legal rights.

Raising Our Voices: Queer Asian Women's Response to Relationship Violence is a booklet based on the results of focus groups with Queer Asian immigrant women of different backgrounds with the goal of integrating the communities' needs and the barriers to accessing services. A joint project of Queer Asian Women's Services (QAWS) of Asian Women's Shelter and Family Violence Prevention Fund

Unheard Voices: Domestic Violence in the Asian American Community is a booklet based on the results of focus groups with Asian immigrant women and Asian American women from different backgrounds. The booklet identifies needs in the Asian community and discusses barriers confronting Asian battered women.

Building the Rhythm of Change, Raising Our Voices and *Unheard Voices* are available for download at www.endabuse.org or by calling the Resource Center at (517) 381-4663, ext. 17.

Visit us on the Web!



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materials online at
www.mcadv.org/mrcdsv**