



White Ribbon Campaign In A Box

Promoting Healthy Equal Relationships

A guide book for teachers and community leaders for Ontario youth ages 11 to 14.

Funded by the Government of Ontario, Ontario Women's Directorate



Ontario

Campaign In A Box Resource Kit

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Resources for Promoting Healthy Equal Relationships to Youth

White Ribbon Campaign in a Box: Fully interactive exercises designed to help teach and promote healthy, equal relationships among boys and girls. Meets Ontario curriculum expectations and is specifically formulated for use in grades 5 – 8. Order Campaign in a Box at: www.whiteribbon.com or 1-800-328-2228. (English only) Guidance provided by: Faculties of Education, and the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

RePlay Video Games: Youth aged 8-14 years can learn how to challenge behaviours and attitudes as part of this online game about healthy relationships based on equality and respect. Resource booklets for youth, educators and parents accompany the video games. Package also includes research on best practices and Ontario youth preferences for video game design. (English only) More details are available at www.metrac.org. Developed by Metrac with guidance provided by: Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Tools for Change Educator's Website: A comprehensive listing of resources that promote healthy, equal relationships, reviewed and critiqued using a strengths-based model and matched to grade levels (3 -9) and the Ontario curriculum. A pedagogical review will help educators choose resources for their own teaching style. Available at www.toolsforchange.ca. (English only) Developed by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children with guidance provided by: Faculty of Education and local Public and Catholic school boards.

Equal Relationships Teachers' Kit: Teacher workshops, interactive resource materials, and opportunities for youth to produce their own resources are just some of the elements of this comprehensive kit to promote respectful, healthy equal relationships in grades 3-5. The project also has resources on girls' conferences, tip sheets in multiple languages and curriculum materials. A newsletter on prevention will highlight current initiatives and resources. Call Springtide Resources at: 416-968-3422 or visit www.springtideresources.org. (English only) Partners include: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

EqualityRules.ca: On this fully bilingual and accessible website, youth aged 8- 14 years, will learn skills needed to develop healthy equal relationships, and to recognize negative behaviours and attitudes that perpetuate violence against girls. The website also provides information on where to go for help. Go to www.equalityrules.ca or call the Ontario Women's Directorate at 416 314-0300.

Contents

5 About this resource

6 Key Issues for teachers and community leaders of youth 11 to 14 years old

- 6 Violence against women
- 12 The causes of men's violence against women
- 14 Issues for young men and women about building healthy equal relationships
- 15 Community action and resources for women
- 16 The White Ribbon Campaign
- 17 Teaching and facilitating on these issues
- 17 A: Your role as a discussion leader
- 18 B: Discussion tips for teachers and youth
- 19 C: Answering difficult or hostile questions
- 21 D: Homophobia, Sexism and Men's Fears
- 22 E: Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse

23 Child and Family Services Act

25 Children's Aid Societies in Ontario

28 Roadmap for using this resource

29 Letter To Parents & Guardians

Educational Activities

- 30 Activity 1: Exploring Power Differences and Individual Responsibility
- 34 Activity 2: Sharing What We Really think
- 44 Activity 3: Life in a Box: Girls should.... Boys should....
- 48 Activity 4: Scenes of Dating
- 52 Activity 5: Scenes of Dating – Andrea and Azar
- 56 Activity 6: Boys don't have to be one of those boys
- 61 Activity 7: Our Future has no violence against women, The White Ribbon Campaign

64 Story of the White Ribbon Campaign

65 Your White Ribbon Campaign

- 65 Section 1: Summary of possible White Ribbon Campaign activities
- 68 Section 2: Getting prepared
- 70 Section 3: Attracting media coverage
- 73 Section 4: White Ribbon Activities Checklist

Appendix

- 74 A. Ground Rules for Discussion
- 75 B. Frequently Asked Questions About the White Ribbon Campaign
- 77 C. Bookmark Template
- 78 D. Tip Sheets

About this resource.

A remarkable thing is happening around the world. In White Ribbon Campaigns in almost 50 countries, men and boys are showing their strength by speaking out against the epidemic of violence against women. Men and boys are examining their attitudes and actions. They are asking important questions about creating healthier and happier relationships. They are proudly joining with women and girls to end the many forms of violence against women that are some of the most persistent human rights problems in the world today. They are proclaiming that our future has no violence against women.

Through funding from the Government of Ontario, Ontario Women's Directorate, the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) is offering this kit as an accessible and straightforward resource for education and action. It combines classroom exercises (so youth can learn about a range of issues) and step-by-step suggestions for public awareness activities. We believe strongly that the most effective efforts to raise awareness are ones that are created and led by people within their own communities. This allows people, young or old, to speak to their peers using the most effective language and approaches.

In 1991, a handful of Canadian men started the White Ribbon Campaign. We knew that many men did not commit violence against women, and yet most men had been silent about this violence. Through this silence, men had allowed the violence to continue. The WRC would be a vehicle to end that silence.

In many countries, the focus of the campaign is around November 25 (proclaimed by the UN as the International Day for the Eradication of Violence against Women and, in many countries, referred to simply as "White Ribbon Day"). In some countries, White Ribbon Days continues for one or two weeks. In Canada, it runs from November 25 to December 6, the anniversary of the 1989 murder of 14 women in Montreal by a man who resented women's achievements and independence. In other countries, the focus is other times of the year. Whenever it is, these focus days are a time for public awareness efforts in schools, workplaces, places of worship, the media and communities.

KEY ISSUES FOR TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

For teachers and community leaders who will be leading the exercises and activities in this kit

Topics

1. Violence against women
2. The causes of men's violence against women
3. Issues for young men and women about building healthy equal relationships
4. Community action and resources for women
5. The White Ribbon Campaign
6. Teaching and facilitating on these issues

Topic 1. Violence against women

Violence against women includes woman abuse, intimate partner abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and murder. It also includes things that can be more subtle, such as domineering and controlling behaviour, and demeaning sexist jokes.

Violence against women is the most common crime of violence in our country even though, in most cases, it goes unreported and unpunished. It affects girls and women from all age groups, religions, socio-economic classes and cultural backgrounds. Several large Canadian studies revealed the following statistics about the problem.

- In Canada, in 1998, 82.6% of victims in reported cases of sexual assault were women; 98 per cent of the accused were men.¹
- In 70 per cent of the reported cases of sexual assault, the victim knew the accused; 62 per cent of the victims were under the age of 18.²
- Women accounted for 88 per cent of all reported spousal (domestic) violence victims in 1997.³
- Some 20 per cent of women who leave an abusive partner experience continued (and often more severe) violence during or after the separation.⁴
- Children witnessed violence against their mothers in almost 40 per cent of violent marriages.⁵
- In 1997-1998, 15,257 women and 13,455 dependent children were admitted* to shelters in Ontario.⁶
- Four out of every five Canadian victims of spousal homicide in 1998 were female.⁷

¹ Juristat: Canadian Crime Statistics, 1998, vol. 19, no. 9.

² Ibid.

³ Family Violence in Canada: Statistical Profile, 1999, Statistics Canada.

⁴ Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada, Autumn 1997.

⁵ Violence Against Women Survey 1993, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

⁶ Juristat: Canada's Shelters for Abused Women, Vol. 19, no. 6 (* A person might be admitted more than once during the year.)

⁷ Juristat: Homicide in Canada, 1998, vol. 19, no. 10

- Six in 10 Canadian incidents of spousal homicide involved a history of domestic violence, of which police were aware.⁸
- Young women under 25 are at greatest risk of spousal homicide.⁹
- In 2004, there were nearly 28,000 incidents of spousal violence reported to the police: 84% of victims were female; 16% of victims were male. Women were more likely than men to report being targets of 10 or more violent spousal episodes.¹⁰
- Over a 10 year period, police reports showed males were much more likely than females to be the perpetrators of spousal violence incidents coming to the attention of police and more likely to repeatedly abuse their spouse. Of one time incidents of spousal violence incidents, 86% were committed by males versus 15% that were committed by females. Of repeated spousal violence incidents 94% were committed by males versus 6% that were committed by females. Of chronic spousal violence incidents 97% were committed by males versus 3% that were committed by females.¹¹
- Women were twice as likely to be injured as a result of spousal violence.¹²
- The cost of men's violence is estimated to exceed \$4 billion annually in Canada.¹³
- According to Statistics Canada, only 6% of all sexual assaults are reported to police.¹⁴
- Of the 6% of sexual assaults that are reported, only 40% result in charges being laid. Of those cases where charges are laid, two-thirds result in conviction.¹⁵
- Only 1% of women who have been sexually assaulted by an acquaintance report the incident to police.¹⁶
- An Alberta study on sexual assault against people with disabilities found that while 88% of offenders are known to the victim (family members, friends, acquaintances, care givers), 80% are never charged and less than 10% are convicted.¹⁷
- It is estimated that over 80% of women who are sexually assaulted do not report it due to feelings of shame and humiliation or due to their fear of re-victimization through the criminal trial process.¹⁸

These statistics are just the tip of the iceberg. The enormity and context of the problem of men's violence against women goes beyond what these statistics attempt to convey. Consider the following;

- The impact of men's violence on some women contributes to a climate of fear generated and felt by all women;
- The potential public shame and the fulfillment of negative stereotypes brought towards her community for speaking out about the actions of another member of her community (e.g. a woman from a linguistic, visible or cultural minority speaking out against a man who used violence who is also from her same group);

⁸ Juristat: Homicide in Canada, 1998, vol. 19, no. 10.

⁹ Family Violence in Canada: Statistical Profile, 1999, Statistics Canada.

¹⁰ Family Violence: A Statistical Profile, 2006, <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf> pg 11

¹¹ Family Violence: A Statistical Profile, 2006, <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf> pg 13

¹² Family Violence: A Statistical Profile, 2006, <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf> pg 21

¹³ Selected Estimates of the Costs of Violence Against Women," The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, 1995.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, "The Violence Against Women Survey," The Daily, November 18, 1993.

¹⁵ Parriage, A., & Renner, K.E. "Do Current Criminal Justice Practices Lead to Unjust Outcomes For Adult Victims of Sexual Assault?", (1998).

¹⁶ Diana Russell, Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Abuse and Workplace Harassment, California: Sage Publishing, 1984.

¹⁷ Sobsey, D. "Sexual Offenses and Disabled Victims: Research and Practical Implications", 1988. *Vis-à-Vis: A National Newsletter on Family Violence*. Vol.6. No. 4. Winter.

¹⁸ Fassel, M. (1994). Disclosure of Medical and Therapeutic Records in Sexual Assault Trials: The Implications for Women's Equality. Unpublished paper presented at the Canadian Institute Conference, Toronto: April 1994 at 3. Cited in: Diane Oleskiw and Nicole Tellier, Submissions to the Standing Committee on Bill C-46, 1997, Ottawa: National Association of Women and the Law, p. 9.

- The fear about loss of Canadian residency/immigration status if she comes forward with the problem;
- Fear and shame felt by women and the implications of her needing to 'cover' for him and his behaviour;
- The high incidence of violence directed towards differently abled women to confront and address abuse by caregivers or by those she relies upon;
- The impact of children witnessing the violence and the damaging learning of their worth and role as boys and girls who will someday become women and men;
- The loss of quality of life and potential poverty that is characteristic of single parent families headed by women;
- Social pressure by family, friends and social institutions to remain in a monogamous two parent family, even if power and responsibilities within that family remain unequal and destructive.

Woman abuse exists as a result of complex, multifaceted factors, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Gender role stereotypes

Traditional stereotypes (about men and women) limit the choices we make in our daily lives. Gender role stereotypes often compel men to be tough and controlling, and women to be passive and obedient. While there have been some changes over the last 30 years about the gender roles of men and women, there still exists within our society a culture of male-dominated power and control. This is a privilege that men have which is sometimes obvious and out in the open (i.e. women still shoulder the main responsibility for child care in the family), but more often takes subtler forms (i.e. men earn more than women).

- The socialization of girls and boys

The messages we receive as children stay with us as we become adults.

Some kids grow up learning that men are supposed to be tough and controlling and women are supposed to be passive and obedient. These kinds of stereotypes are harmful because they teach a child that being male is more desirable and more valued than being female. When family, friends and others in the community expose children to gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, children learn to act in ways that support gender inequalities.

- Violence in the media

Generally speaking, the mass media plays a big role in supporting gender stereotypes. Specifically, woman abuse is often justified in the media, as the male perpetrator does not face the consequences of his abusive actions toward women. This normalizes woman abuse and serves as a model for what is considered acceptable behaviour in society.

- Societal attitudes condoning woman abuse

Our society generally values men more than women. This creates a societal attitude condoning woman abuse. This attitude makes it more acceptable to disrespect or harm women because they are viewed as less important and powerless compared to men. Each of the factors described above contribute to inequality between women and men in our society and an uneven sharing of power. Communities may not easily recognize the social context that surrounds the issue of woman abuse. Important points to emphasize are:

- Woman abuse continues to happen because women are not truly equal in our society
- While the act of abuse occurs between two people, in seeming isolation, a true understanding of woman abuse does not exist without recognizing the systemic oppression and inequality of women.
- Oppression/discrimination is sustained by the privilege of status associated with gender, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, age and physical ability.

Around the world

The issue of violence against women is a global problem and it happens differently depending on the context.

Youth from war zones (for example, Bosnia, Somalia, Afghanistan, the Sudan) have not only experienced the horrors of war but may have directly or indirectly experienced sexual assault or the threat of sexual assault as a tool of warfare and official terror.

In some countries in Africa many girls and young women have been subjected to female genital mutilation in which the clitoris and sometimes the labia are cut off. Amnesty International estimates that over 130 million women worldwide have been affected by some form of female genital mutilation with over 2 million procedures being performed every year. (Some women and men in these countries are working hard to end this traditional practice, which can have dire health and emotional consequences.)

In some Asian countries, because some people have a preference for having boy children, they may choose to have an abortion of female fetuses. In some communities in parts of South Asia, there is great concern over high rates of trafficking girls into prostitution.

In Pakistan and Jordan, among other countries, some young women (and sometimes young men) have been murdered by their families in so-called "honour killings" for marrying against the wishes of their parents.

Tens of thousands of young women from Russia, Eastern Europe and North Africa are "trafficked" to serve as prostitutes in Western Europe, the Middle East, Asia and North America. In some states in the United States, there is still no penalty when a man rapes his wife.

For more information on violence against women in a global context see:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>

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

<http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng>

None of these facts should make us feel smug here in Canada even if Canada is no different from any other country, aspects of the problem take a different turn or shape. We too have a severe problem that we must solve.

We used to think that whatever happened in our homes was a private affair. We've all heard phrases, such as "a man's home is his castle," that reinforce the idea that a man is the head of a family, the one who should be in control. Such attitudes have encouraged some men to assert themselves through violence. A combination of these attitudes, fear and lack of alternatives has encouraged some women to remain in abusive relationships. Luckily, because of hard work by women in recent years, we now realize it is everyone's business if a woman or a child - or, for that matter, a man - is being abused in the privacy of a home.

What about violence against men?

Violence against men is also a huge problem. But most such violence is committed by other men. It occurs in the forms of violence by boys and male teens against their peers, sexual assault against boys (usually by men who see themselves as heterosexual), physical assault by parents (often fathers) against sons.

There also can be violence by women against their spouses. But surveys by Statistics Canada tell us that spousal violence by a woman against a man is less likely to cause injury than the other way around (18% versus 44%).¹⁹

Even though some men, like women, do experience violence from their spouses, they are much less likely to live in fear of violence at the hands of their spouses. They are also much less likely to experience sexual assault. And many cases of physical violence by a woman against a spouse are in self-defense or the result of many years of physical or emotional abuse.

The White Ribbon Campaign is opposed to all forms of violence in relationships, as well as other forms of violence. But the campaign focuses its efforts on ending violence against women. This is similar to a campaign that focuses on cancer: it does not mean a lack of support for causes such as diabetes or heart disease; it simply means the campaign chooses what its focus should be.

How does violence against women affect young people?

Statistics Canada tells us that in 40% of cases involving violence against women, children are witnesses.²⁰

Research shows that witnessing violence against someone you love has the same emotional impact as directly experiencing it against yourself. Witnessing violence against a mother is a form of violence against children.

Alarming numbers of children experience sexual assault. Among reported incidents, 61% of those who are sexual assaulted are under 18 years old.²¹ In this age group, eight of 10 cases of assault are of females.²² We know that perpetrators of child sexual assault are often well known by their victims. Of the girls and boys who experience sexual assault, 79% of girls and 83% of boys experience it at the hands of someone they know (family members, friends or acquaintances).²³

Childhood sexual assault involves unwanted touching or sexual acts usually performed by a family member, relative or adult care giver, most commonly a male.

An alarming number of boys and girls experience physical assault. According to Health Canada (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence), 34% of investigated cases were substantiated.²⁴ Often the assault is by the father who is beating the child's mother, or by the mother herself.

¹⁹ Statistics Canada, Family Violence in Canada (Ottawa: Minister of Industry; <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/nfvc-cnivf/familyviolence/pdfs/85-224-XIE2005000>).

²⁰ Ibid. p 77.

²¹ Ibid. p 11.

²² Ibid. p 69.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Nico & Wolfe, David. Child Maltreatment in Canada - Selected Results (National Clearing House on Family Violence, Health Canada, Ottawa), 2001.

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/nfvc-cnivf/familyviolence/pdfs/cmiv_e.pdf

Meanwhile most girls have some experience of sexual harassment in school, on the streets or in after-school jobs. Sexual harassment refers to any unwanted touching, comments, put-downs or unwanted sexual advances.