

## RESOLUTION ON DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sponsors: Jewish Women International

Cosponsor:

1 **Summary:**

2 Over 10 million people experience abuse every year in the United  
3 States. Domestic and sexual violence affect our society at an  
4 epidemic level. An estimated 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have  
5 experienced physical violence by a partner, and an estimated 1 in 6  
6 women and 1 in 33 men have experienced sexual violence.  
7 Domestic and sexual violence include a variety of abusive behaviors,  
8 including physical abuse, sexual assault, and stalking. Other forms of  
9 abuse and domestic violence include elder abuse and child abuse.

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11 Domestic and sexual violence can occur in any type of  
12 relationship, including between spouses, dating partners, parents and  
13 children, other family members, or caregivers and patients.  
14 Unfortunately, domestic and sexual violence occur in all communities  
15 and impact people of all ages, genders, and sexual orientations.

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17 Domestic and sexual violence remain seriously underreported  
18 crimes. Survivors continue to face obstacles of shame, stigma,  
19 harassment, and disbelief or denial. Police and criminal justice  
20 responses to reported crimes are too often inadequate or harmful.

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22 People ages 12-34 are at the highest risk of sexual violence,  
23 and young women are especially vulnerable. Women ages 18-34  
24 experience the highest rates of domestic violence. Women ages 16-19  
25 are 4 times more likely (than the general population) to experience  
26 sexual violence, and female college students ages 18-24 are 3 times  
27 more likely. A weapon is used in 19% of domestic violence incidents.  
28 Firearms are a particular risk factor for domestic violence fatality: the

29 presence of a gun in an abusive relationship raises the risk of  
30 homicide for a female victim by 500%. Domestic violence has serious  
31 impacts on a victim's physical and mental health, with only 34%  
32 receiving medical care for abuse-related injuries. Victims are also at  
33 increased risk of depression and suicidal behavior.

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35 Fifty-five percent of sexual assaults occur in or near the  
36 victim's home and 3 out of 4 perpetrators are known to the victim,  
37 most commonly a friend, acquaintance, or intimate partner. Rape and  
38 sexual assault have serious impacts on victim's physical health,  
39 including the risk of STIs and pregnancy, as well as mental health.  
40 Ninety-four percent of victims experience symptoms of post-  
41 traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and over one-third experience  
42 suicidal thoughts.

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44 In 1994, the passage of the federal Violence Against Women  
45 Act (VAWA) signaled a major shift in governmental awareness and  
46 response to domestic and sexual violence. VAWA provides funding  
47 to states to support victim services, law enforcement, and other  
48 response and prevention efforts. VAWA funds support the National  
49 Domestic Violence Hotline, as well as local domestic and sexual  
50 violence coalitions, shelters, legal services, transitional housing, and  
51 more. Other federal programs, such as the Family Violence  
52 Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), have also been instrumental in  
53 responding to domestic and sexual violence and providing crucial  
54 services to victims and survivors.

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56 Our Jewish values of respect for human life, safety, and  
57 dignity give us a mandate to work for the protection and advancement  
58 of human rights.

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60 **The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes:**

61 that we have a moral and ethical responsibility to combat domestic  
62 and sexual violence in the U.S. and around the world. Laws,  
63 regulations, and enforcement must be strengthened at all levels of  
64 government to deter and combat domestic and sexual violence;  
65 prevent future violence; support survivors of violence; and ensure  
66 appropriate criminal justice responses.

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68 **The JCPA should:**

- 69 • Lead in working with faith communities, clergy, ethnic and  
70 community-based organizations, health professionals, service  
71 providers, educators, and other stakeholders to continue  
72 working for the prevention of domestic and sexual violence.
  
- 74 • Advocate for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women  
75 Act and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act.

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77 **The community relations field should:**

- 78 • Advocate for the reauthorization of the Violence Against  
79 Women Act and the Family Violence Prevention Services Act.
  
- 81 • Work with the courts, law-enforcement agencies, legislatures  
82 and social service agencies to develop strategies to combat  
83 domestic violence and sexual assault and support survivors.
  
- 84 • Work with legislators at the federal, state, and local level to  
85 address the dangerous intersection of firearms and domestic  
86 violence, both through new laws and additional funding  
87 necessary to improve the safety of victims and survivors.

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- 90           • Work with legislators on policies that promote the economic  
91           security of victims and survivors, including affordable  
92           housing, employment and housing nondiscrimination, paid  
93           sick and safe days, paid family leave, and public benefits.  
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- 95           • Work with Jewish Family Services organizations to ensure  
96           that services are culturally-sensitive and address the holistic  
97           needs of victims and survivors.  
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- 99           • Promote age-appropriate abuse prevention education in  
100          community schools, camps, and youth groups. Comprehensive  
101          education teaches children, teens, and young adults about  
102          healthy dating relationships, sexual consent, and recognizing  
103          and responding to abuse.  
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- 105          • Raise awareness of the epidemic of sexual assault on college  
106          campuses, and the need for strong enforcement of Title IX to  
107          ensure equitable access to education for victims and survivors.  
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- 109          • Continue to organize and engage with local Jewish domestic  
110          and sexual violence coalitions to create and implement  
111          effective prevention and intervention strategies; organize and  
112          participate in interfaith work; and promote education for  
113          clergy and lay leaders in recognizing and responding to  
114          domestic and sexual violence in the Jewish community.