

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.