



Domestic Violence Increases in Natural & Man-Made Disasters



16 Days of Activism Against
Gender-Based Violence
November 25 – December 10, 2020

Center for the Women of New York



Empowering Women to Achieve Full Equality Since 1987

Domestic Violence Increases in Natural & Man-Made Disasters

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Summer 2020

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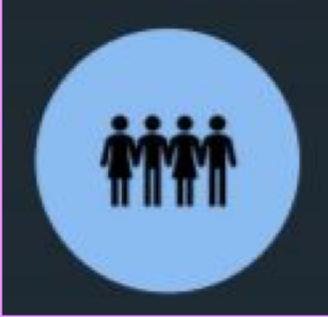
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About CWNY



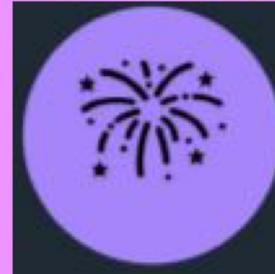
Since our founding in October of 1987, the Center has shown that women working together can be an effective force. We are a voluntary, non-profit organization, dependent on dues from our members and on the volunteer efforts of business, professional and community women and men in New York City.



We advocate strongly for women's full equality by partnering with like-minded organizations and elected officials. We participate in women's marches and organize symposia on topics like domestic violence and human trafficking. We help women in crisis through referrals to social services.



At the Center for the Women of New York, we believe education is a cornerstone of women's economic independence. To that end, we offer classes in conversational ESL, computer skills, and other topics, and an annual Career Conference to enable women to gain employment and rise in the workplace.



Whether we're marching for worthy causes, celebrating women's accomplishments in leadership, the arts, or sports, camaraderie is a hallmark of CWNY. We've come a long way since the Second Wave of the Women's Movement in the latter half of the 20th century, and while there are many struggles ahead, we celebrate how far we've come.



**CWNY Report on
Domestic Violence Increases
in Natural & Man-Made Disasters**

Domestic Violence Calls Down in Quarantine but DV Abuse Up



In April 2020, CWNY hosted a panel discussion on domestic violence. Several participants were under the mistaken impression that domestic violence had decreased in the COVID pandemic. Our expert panelists from New York City Police Department Domestic Violence Unit, Mount Sinai Health System Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI), Violence Intervention Program, Inc. for Latinx survivors, SAKHI for South Asian Women, and Wisselman & Harounian family law firm clearly stated that calls were down but domestic violence was up.

Domestic violence survivors had fewer opportunities to communicate with domestic violence support agencies due to isolation and proximity of abusers. When near, an abuser monitors a victim's use of technology. Panelists agreed that with isolation, abusers had more time with their partners and more opportunities to abuse during the pandemic. They also stated that first-time abusers increased due to the stress caused by isolation and job loss in the pandemic.

The quotes in this report are from studies and articles relating to domestic violence in disasters.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

The Global 16 Days Campaign, launched by the [Center for Women's Global Leadership](https://www.cwgl.org/) (CWGL) at its first Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991, has been used worldwide to call for the elimination of gender-based violence (GBV). It is run annually from November 25 (International Day Against Violence Against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day).

<https://16dayscampaign.org>



As the world retreated inside homes due to the lockdown measures introduced to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, reports showed an alarming increase in the already [existing pandemic of violence against women](#).

“Accompanying the crisis has been a spike in domestic violence reporting, at exactly the time that services, including rule of law, health and shelters, are being diverted to address the pandemic,” stated the UN Secretary-General's report, [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#).

UN WOMEN

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>



NATURAL DISASTERS

Domestic violence often spikes after major disasters. It is an increasingly pressing issue as climate change drives more storms and fires, and people worldwide are trapped at home due to the pandemic.

Rebecca Hersher, National Public Radio, aired on July 13, 2020

<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/13/890558036/how-wildfires-have-triggered-a-spike-in-domestic-violence-in-australia>

Report on the First Australian Research to Investigate Post-disaster Domestic Violence

Parkinson, D. and Zara, C. (2013). The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 28(2), 28-35.

<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-apr-2013-the-hidden-disaster-domestic-violence-in-the-aftermath-of-natural-disaster/>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288432753> The hidden disaster Domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster

The natural disaster context may compound preexisting risk factors for domestic violence by increasing feelings of helplessness and giving prominence to feelings of loss of control over the well-being and protection of one's family (Coontz 1992). For example, following the 2009 “Black Saturday” bushfires in Australia, qualitative interviews and anecdotal evidence revealed an increase in IPV among those families that were affected (Parkinson and Zara 2013). Research after Hurricane Andrew, a Category 5 hurricane that made landfall in South Florida in 1992, found that spousal abuse calls to Miami's helpline increased by 50 percent post-disaster. More than one-third of calls reporting abuse stated that someone living in the home had recently been stressed to the point of losing physical or verbal control (Morrow 1997).

. . . there is frequently an emphasis on the importance of the family unit in times of great duress. However, the safety of the family unit itself is an issue that has largely not been addressed by relief organizations, which are often working under very difficult conditions to meet the immediate physical and mental health needs of a large number of people.

The disaster context may exacerbate existing barriers to reporting, and even contribute to community-wide indifference toward the issue, as victims are encouraged to forgive their abusers, or are accused of being inconsiderate or over-reacting (Parkinson and Zara 2013).

Gearhart, S., Perez-Patron, M., Hammond, T.A., Goldberg, D.W., Klein, A. (2018) The impact of natural disasters on domestic violence: An analysis of reports of simple assault in Florida (1999-2007). *Violence and Gender*, 5(2).



Wildfires in Australia

How Wildfires Triggered A Spike In Domestic Violence In Australia

The Black Saturday bushfires in 2009 caused 173 deaths, injury to 414 people, the destruction of 2,030 houses and relocation of 7,000 people. Research studies on the aftermath of wildfires in Australia show a spike in domestic violence. Debra Parkinson, a researcher in Australia, stated that there was an increase in divorce after the wildfires and developed *Disaster is No Excuse for Family Violence*, a guide for social workers, fire fighters, police, and chaplains with 4 steps and toll-free numbers to keep women and children safe after natural disasters.

Rebecca Hersher, Interview aired on National Public Radio, July 13, 2020

<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/13/890558036/how-wildfires-have-triggered-a-spike-in-domestic-violence-in-australia>

Disaster is No Excuse for Family Violence – quick guide for responders

<https://www.genderanddisaster.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Disaster-is-no-excuse-for-violence-edited.pdf>

Disaster is No Excuse for Family Violence

Guide for Responders



You can help in just **4** steps:

ASK: Are you safe at home?

NAME IT: What you've just described to me is violence and it's a crime.

RESPOND: Give contact details of the local domestic violence service, and local police.

FOLLOW UP: Last time you spoke about your safety. I'd like to know how you are now.

Adapted from *Raped by a Partner*

Parkinson, D. and Zara, C. (2013). The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 28(2), 28-35.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINES

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

www.thehotline.org/help/

NYS Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-942-6906

opdv.ny.gov/help/dvhotlines.html

NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Hotline

1-800-621-HOPE (4673) (Safe Horizon)

www1.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/index.page

Police: Dial 911

Adapted for US, NYC & NYS by V. Pilotti

How Wildfires Triggered A Spike In Domestic Violence In Australia

continued

The percentage of women who lived in severely burned areas in 2009 and reported family violence was seven times that of women in areas that were not burned severely. But why? Previous research suggested that feeling like a victim as opposed to feeling in control could lead some men to feel depressed and inadequate. Being laid off from a job can trigger the same feelings in some people. And some of those men lash out violently. Parkinson says her research after the fires was quite unpopular. For one thing, a lot of men had battled the flames, saved their houses or helped save the homes of neighbors, and the media had labeled them heroes and heroes don't hurt people.

Given that men were considered heroes in the wildfire, the research on increased domestic violence was ignored and the researcher was demonized resulting in the disregard of women's and children's needs.

NPR, Rebecca Hersher, 7/13/20 How Wildfires Triggered a Spike in Domestic Violence in Australia

<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/13/890558036/how-wildfires-have-triggered-a-spike-in-domestic-violence-in-australia>

The Fire, The Virus, The Violence: Australia And The Lessons Of Natural Disasters

The 2019 and early 2020 fires in Australia killed at least 35 people and destroyed nearly 2,000 homes.

Thousands of Australians were jobless and still in temporary housing as the coronavirus pandemic swept through with its widespread lockdowns, illness and economic pain.

In one report, the percentage of women in badly burned areas who said they experienced physical violence was seven times that of women in areas that had been only moderately or minimally affected by the fires.

Women residing in severely burned communities were found to have experienced the highest levels of violence. The violence has been associated with a decrease in income after bushfires and with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression systems in family members.

Talking about family violence after disaster is not a welcome thing, says Debra Parkinson, a women's health researcher at Monash University in Melbourne who studied family violence in towns that were severely burned in 2009.

Researchers had a lot of pushback from even trauma counselors and from community members saying "Who are you to come into this traumatized community and talk about family violence? You are adding to the pressures." Parkinson says such concerns are misplaced, arguing that when you ignore family violence after disasters, it's not good for the women and the children. And it's certainly not good for the men either.

In the interviews Parkinson conducted of families affected by the fires, there was a lot of concern about men not expressing how they were feeling and how they were dealing with the recovery. A lot of people took on drugs [or] alcohol. Risk-taking taking behavior.

Many studies have documented how alcohol and drug abuse are [associated](#) with intimate partner violence. Financial hardship and loss of employment are also linked to family violence, both of which are more likely after a major fire or during an economic meltdown.

Domestic violence will spike in the bushfire aftermath, and governments can no longer ignore it

Generally, disasters disproportionately affect women and girls, with women and children 14 times more likely to die in a natural disaster on a global scale.

Research shows women are more likely than men to want to evacuate.

Despite growing awareness that natural disasters amplify conditions leading to incidents of male-to-female domestic violence--climate, disaster, and environmental laws and policy are *gender blind*, not mentioning or recognizing gender as an issue.

Since the bushfires destroyed many houses, meaning longer-term financial ramifications, the emotional toll can bring families to the breaking point.

Not only does the Australian government need to adopt a gender-sensitive approach in disaster policy and planning, but also it should better fund groups at the front line responding to gender-based violence following a disaster.

The Conversation, 11/17/19

<https://theconversation.com/domestic-violence-will-spike-in-the-bushfire-aftermath-and-governments-can-no-longer-ignore-it-127018>

Floods

Domestic violence following a natural hazard event in New Zealand: A case study of the Whakatane flood

Qualitative interviews were undertaken with both government and non-government agencies working in the field of domestic violence. These interviews showed a clear increase in domestic violence that was between 200-300% depending on the agency.

The interviews also highlighted factors involved in the increase such as a lack of cash flow, a lack of insurance, school closure, and misinformation being given out. The time to get back into homes took longer than anticipated and many families were stuck living with extended family for months following the event. Over a year after the event, at the time of the interviews, agencies felt they were still dealing with an increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence in the region stemming from the flooding event in July 2004.

It is important to note that the stress of the event not only impacted on perpetrators of domestic violence, but also on the victims. This meant that not only did the violence intensify, but the victims' tolerance level was reduced leading to an increased proportion of reported cases, as well as increasing unreported cases.

Gender & Disaster Network, n.d.

http://www.gdnonline.org/sourcebook/chapt/doc_view.php?id=7&docid=703

After the 1990 Charleville, Australia flood

A social worker wrote that after the 1990 Charleville flood:

Human relations were laid bare and the strengths and weaknesses in relationships came more sharply into focus. Thus, socially isolated women became more isolated, domestic violence increased, and the core of relationships with family, friends and spouses were exposed.

Dobson, N. (1994). From under the Mud-pack: Women and the Charleville Floods. *The Macedon Digest*, 9(2), 11-13.

Parkinson, D. and Zara, C. (2013). The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 28(2), 28-35.

Hurricanes

Amid Hurricane Chaos, Domestic Abuse Victims Risk Being Overlooked

Disasters leave physical and social environments in disarray and are likely to increase any person's or family's vulnerability to violence.

Loss of property, inadequate food and water, unraveling social networks and loss of income heighten stress during disasters, which can leave domestic abuse victims particularly vulnerable.

During and after a disaster, it can be more challenging for these women to obtain services and aid. Domestic violence hotlines may be disconnected, and emergency responders can be overwhelmed, sometimes leaving abused victims to fend for themselves. That, in turn, can lead them to return to or remain with their abuser.

The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence reported that after Katrina, women were being assaulted by their partners in emergency shelters.

The New York Times, 9/12/17

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/us/domestic-violence-hurricanes.html>

Leading Hurricane Sandy Recovery for Domestic Violence Victims

A snapshot of these services on an average day in New York and New Jersey revealed that on just one day in September 2014, 2,725 survivors found refuge in domestic violence programs in these two states. On that same day, however, close to 670 requests for help were denied because programs did not have enough resources to assist everyone that needed it.

Many survivors of domestic violence found themselves having to choose between living with an abuser, relocating out of state, moving to a homeless shelter, or living on the streets--all options that compromised their safety.

Economic dependence on an abuser is a key factor affecting a survivor's decision to stay or leave a violence relationship.

Involuntary relocation can also have a dangerous effect on survivors by distancing them from their friends, families and support network, increasing their risk for subsequent violence.

Administration for Children & Families, 9/4/15

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/blog/2015/09/leading-hurricane-sandy-recovery-for-domestic-violence-victims>

After Hurricane Maria, a Hidden Crisis of Violence Against Women in Puerto Rico

In September 2017, Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and among debates about the collapse of the power grid, the death toll, and the political crisis, an already vulnerable community remains forgotten: survivors of domestic violence.

The immediate crisis was focused on getting food and water to people, saving lives, but the social part, from the police's involvement to support systems for survivors, was overlooked. "We didn't know how to protect victims. Who would we call when their abusers came near them?" said Yadira Pizarro Quiles, executive director of the nonprofit ESCAPE.

Andrea Gonzalez-Ramirez, Refinery29, September 19, 2018

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/09/210051/domestic-violence-puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-effects-anniversary>

Natural Disaster & Domestic Violence May Have An Alarming Connection

There is evidence that shows that an uptick in domestic violence often occurs post-natural disaster.

According to a 2005 World Health Organization publication, several reports, mostly from the United States, reveal that anecdotal evidence and a small number of systematic studies indicate that intimate partner violence, child abuse and sexual violence are highly prevalent after disasters.

Domestic violence increased by 45 percent in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Those working in relief and recovery services should be able to connect victims of domestic violence with long-term recovery resources and should proactively disseminate this information.

Bustle, 8/29/17

<https://www.bustle.com/p/natural-disasters-domestic-violence-may-have-alarming-connection-79673>

Increased Gender-based Violence Among Women Internally Displaced in Mississippi 2 year Post-Hurricane Katrina

The crude rate of new cases of gender-based violence among women increased from 4.6/100,000 per day to 16.3/100,000 per day in 2006, and remained elevated at 10.1/100,000 per day in 2007. The increase was primarily driven by the increase in intimate partner violence. Gender-based violence was significantly associated with increased risk for poor mental health outcomes.

Anastario, M., Shehab, N., and Lawry, L. (2009). Increased gender-based violence among women internally displaced in Mississippi 2 years post-Hurricane Katrina. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep*, 3(1),18-26.
doi:10.1097/DMP.0b013e3181979c32

National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19293740/>

As Domestic Violence Rises in New Orleans in Wake of Katrina, Catholic Charities Provides a Refuge for Abused Women

At a time when domestic violence in New Orleans has increased 45 percent since Hurricane Katrina and women have few places to go, Catholic Charities' Crescent House is providing a safe place for women to come to escape the abuse at home and get support determining the next steps for a positive future.

Domestic violence has always existed in New Orleans, but has been exacerbated by the increasing stress of the property loss, job loss, dislocation and other issues that resulted from the storm.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Crescent House has redesigned its services to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of the victims who are more isolated and in need of support than ever.

U.S. Newswire, 4/10/06

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/AsDomesticViolenceRisesinNewOrleansWakeKatrina.pdf>

Tsunamis

Domestic Violence Higher in Tsunami Zone

Domestic violence in Japan's tsunami and nuclear disaster zone has risen dramatically, [according to] a report released on International Women's Day, [March 8].

Increased stress caused by coping with the aftermath of the tsunami of March 2011, or the fear of radiation from the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant, could be to blame.

In Fukushima, where the towering tsunami sparked reactor meltdowns and radiation leaks, 840 cases of domestic violence were reported to police in 2012, 64% higher than a year earlier.

Japan Today, 3/11/13

http://www.simplyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Domestic-violence-higher-in-tsunami-zone-%e2%80%b9-Japan-Today_-Japan-News-and-Discussion.pdf

How Women Were Affected by the Tsunami: A Perspective from Oxfam

The tsunami decimated Southeast Asia on 26 December 2004, killing more than 220,000 people in 12 countries and leaving 1.6 million people homeless. According to a survey recently carried out by Oxfam, four times as many women than men were killed in the tsunami-affected areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India. Some of the reasons for this are similar across these countries: women died because they stayed behind to look for their children and other relatives. Women in these areas often can't swim or climb trees, which meant that they couldn't escape.

The overcrowded camps and resettlement sites for people who have been made homeless and the imbalance in the male-to-female survival ratio have resulted in several gender-specific problems. For example, women in the camps are often verbally and physically harassed by men and are at risk of being sexually abused.

Plos Medicine, 6/28/2005

<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.0020178>

Natural Disasters and Gender Inequalities: The 2004 Tsunami and the Case of India

Post-tsunami Challenges Faced by Women

Temporary shelters and camps created many challenges for women. Most shelters were partitioned by either broken partitions or flimsy cloth, thereby encroaching on women's privacy. The lack of privacy resulted in problems such as rape, violence and abuse on camp sites.

Many men and women had taken to alcohol as a stress reliever. Women faced abuse from the male counterparts of the family who were drunk.

Hines, R. I. (2007). Natural disasters and gender inequalities: The 2004 tsunami and case of India. *Race, Gender & Class*, 14(1-2), 60-68.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41675195?seq=1>

Earthquakes

Women in the Aftermath of the 2010 Haitian Earthquake

Given the climate of increasing insecurity and gang activities in the makeshift camps for the displaced, women and girls have been daily victims of sexual violence and exploitation.

In a recent survey of households in four camps for internally displaced persons in and around the capital, fourteen percent of the respondents declared that, since the earthquake, one or more members of their household have been victimized by sexual violence [...] According to the same study, about seventy percent of the respondents admitted being more concerned about sexual violence after the earthquake than before.

Data from a study conducted in the shantytown of Cite Soleil in Port-au-Prince showed that rape and other forms of violence, including robbery, beating, and fighting, were rampant in the encampment areas. Many women and girls reported having been beaten by men out of rage.

Duramy, B. F. (2011). Women in the aftermath of the 2010 Haitian Earthquake. *Emory International Law Review*, 25(3), 1193-1215.

<https://law.emory.edu/eilr/content/volume-25/issue-3/symposium/women-aftermath-2010-haitian-earthquake.html>

Pandemics

Under-reporting of Domestic Violence in Global Pandemic

Increase in domestic violence during the COVID crisis in New South Wales, Australia is alarming but not unexpected as natural disasters and recessions often result in increased family violence.

The difference for Covid-19 is the social isolation and stay-at-home measures that were in place have significantly reduced victims' options and ability to seek help, which in turn could lead to an under-reporting in police figures.

The Guardian June 4, 2020

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/04/alarming-but-not-unexpected-increase-in-domestic-violence-in-nsw-during-covid-19-crisis>

COVID-19 Pandemic: Domestic Violence Cases Surge

Shanghai-based online publication Sixth Tone reported that police in one county along the Yangtze River in central Hubei province, near where the pandemic began in Wuhan, received 162 reports of domestic violence in February—three times more than the 47 reported during the same month in 2019.

Feng Yuan, co-founder of Equality, a nongovernmental organization in Beijing focused on gender-based violence, says there's been a rise in requests to her organization for help. Lockdown brings out latent tendencies for violence that were there before but not coming out. Lockdown also makes seeking help more difficult. Police were so busy enforcing quarantines that they were sometimes unable to respond to emergency calls from battery victims. Women experiencing violence were not able to leave, and courts that normally issue orders of protection were closed.

Zhang Wanqing, Sixth Tone, March 2, 2020

<https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1005253/domestic-violence-cases-surge-during-covid-19-epidemic>

COVID-19 Pandemic: Divorces Spike in China

Divorces surged in China as husbands and wives began emerging from weeks of government-mandated lockdowns. Incidents of domestic violence also multiplied.

Sheridan Prasso, Bloomberg Businessweek, March 21, 2020

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-31/divorces-spike-in-china-after-coronavirus-quarantines>

SHADOW PANDEMIC: Violence Against Women During COVID-19

One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified.

This is the Shadow Pandemic growing amidst the COVID-19 crisis and we need a global collective effort to stop it.

UN WOMEN 2020 [unwomen.org/shadowpandemic](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19)
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

SHADOW PANDEMIC: Violence Against Women During COVID-19



UN WOMEN 2020 unwomen.org/shadowpandemic

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

SHADOW PANDEMIC: Violence Against Women During COVID-19

[On May 27, 2020] UN Women, the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, launched the Shadow Pandemic public awareness campaign, focusing on the global increase in domestic violence amid the COVID-19 health crisis. The Shadow Pandemic public service announcement is a sixty-second film narrated by Academy Award-winning actor Kate Winslet, who has championed many humanitarian causes. The [video](#) highlights the alarming upsurge in domestic violence during COVID-19 and delivers a vital message urging people to act to support women if they know or suspect someone is experiencing violence.

UN WOMEN [unwomen.org/shadowpandemic](https://www.unwomen.org/shadowpandemic)

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llNP_bW-o0

Take action: 10 ways you can help end violence against women, even during a pandemic

1. Listen to and believe others.
2. Teach the next generation and learn from them.
3. Call for responses and services fit for purpose.
4. Understand consent.
5. Learn the signs of abuse and how you can help.
6. Start a conversation.
7. Stand against rape culture.
8. Fund women's organizations.
9. Hold each other accountable.
10. Know the data and demand more of it.

UN WOMEN November 17, 2020

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/11/compilation-take-action-to-help-end-violence-against-women>

MAN-MADE DISASTERS

The Link Between Natural/Man-Made Disasters and Domestic Abuse

Victims of domestic violence are at their most vulnerable immediately after they leave their abusive partners. Approximately 75 percent of women who are murdered by their abuser are killed as they are in the process of leaving or just after they depart. This vulnerability is compounded in the wake of natural disasters, when something as simple as evacuating to a relief shelter becomes a heavy threat.

After disasters occur, there is often an uptick in domestic-violence incidents. Domestic-abuse experts say this is likely because batterers often have more access to their families, because they are not at work.

In the initial months following the **BP oil spill**, southern Louisiana programs showed an increase in the number of crisis hotline calls and people needing shelter.

The Atlantic, 9/28/16

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/09/disaster-domestic-abuse/501299/>

Depression, Mental Distress, and Domestic Conflict among Louisiana Women Exposed to the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill in the WaTCH Study

The findings of a study of Louisiana women exposed to the BP oil spill: respondents reported an increase in the number and intensity of domestic conflicts.

Rung, A. L., Gaston, S., Oral, E., Robinson, W. T., Fonham, E., Harrington, D. J., Trapido, E., and Peters, E.S. (2016). *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 124(9), 1429-1435.

<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/full/10.1289/EHP167>

Post-Disaster Conclusions & Recommendations for Domestic Violence



Emergency service responders' training should include the 4 steps outlined by Parkinson:

- 1. Are you safe at home?**
- 2. What you've just described is violence and it's a crime.**
- 3. Here is how you contact the local domestic violence support and police.**
- 4. Follow up: Last time you spoke about your safety. I'd like to know how you are now.**

Worldwide national and local governments should provide domestic violence support in their response to disasters.

V. Pilotti



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINES

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

www.thehotline.org/help/

NYS Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-942-6906

opdv.ny.gov/help/dvhotlines.html

NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Hotline

1-800-621-HOPE (4673) (Safe Horizon)

www1.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/index.page



Current Services

Caregivers Phone Support Group

Conversational English as Second Language Class

Legal Support Team

Referral Services

Webinars on Women's Issues

Women in Crisis Individual Counseling

Women in Crisis Support Group

Upcoming Events

Book Club

Computer Classes

Financial Literacy Classes

Career Conference

Walking Group

Center for the Women of New York



Help CWNY continue to provide educational programs



Donations

<http://cwny.org/donations/>

or volunteer with us!

<http://cwny.org/volunteer/>

Memberships

<http://cwny.org/membership/>

Center for the Women of New York



Empowering Women to Achieve Full Equality Since 1987