



WOMEN FOR
AFGHAN WOMEN

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

MAKING OUR HOMES & COMMUNITY SAFER

Presented for the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV) by Women for Afghan Women. This webinar is funded by Grant Number 90EV0526 to API-GBV from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

WHO WE ARE?

Women for Afghan Women (WAW) is a grassroots organization that supports the rights of all women and girls to live without fear, in peace & dignity. Violence and oppression against women and girls must be eliminated. We operate in Afghanistan, New York City and now are opening a community center in Virginia!

We work with mainly the Afghan and Muslim immigrant population by providing immigration, legal services. We also support domestic violence victims & survivors through case management and free empowerment classes

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic Violence can be categorized as:

- Verbal
- Psychological
- Sexual
- Financial
- Physical

MISCONCEPTIONS

Domestic Violence is **NOT** limited to one culture or ethnic background

DV is prevalent across the globe, and Afghans are not immune to the issue

In 2020, **22,441** domestic violence victims were reported across New York City (NYPD)

OUR WORK

WAW has assisted over **+1,000** domestic violence victims & survivors since 2001

In 2021, Women for Afghan Women assisted over **364** domestic violence victims

We believe our cultural competency has been crucial in successfully serving our community

DV is considered to be a taboo subject, and many Afghan women shy away from discussing a matter taking place within the home

NEEDS

BREAKING TABOO - discussing DV is hard, but in our community it is considered particularly sensitive. It is a matter which happens within the home and many women feel that it needs to stay within the home. This is where awareness comes in through our women's circle workshops and empowerment classes

LANGUAGE SKILLS - our case workers are able to speak Dari/ Farsi, Pashto & Urdu; the language of our clients many of whom are immigrant women and cannot communicate in English

RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING - the community we serve is largely a Muslim population. We understand the rights given to women in Islam and educate women that intimate partner violence violates the basic foundations of a healthy marriage. In certain cases, we have asked a local Imam (religious leader) to mediate between the husband and wife, and hold the husband accountable for not fulfilling his responsibilities

WARNING SIGNS

Some warning signs our survivors have identified are:

- Since our population is largely of immigrants, threats of deportation or taking away immigration documents is a **HUGE** reason why women feel trapped in abuse relationships
- blaming the victim if the children don't do well in school
- accusing survivor of becoming Americanised/forgetting culture and customs
- forcing them to wear hijab, or not forcing the victim to not wear the hijab (headscarf)
 - controlling what the victim wears

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY?

- FEAR
- LACK OF MONEY/ RESOURCES
- LANGUAGE BARRIER/ IMMIGRATION STATUS
- MAINTAINING A FAMILY FOR THEIR CHILDREN

THE EFFECT ON CHILDREN

Children who are exposed to violence in the home are **ALSO** victims of abuse

They are at risk of long term physical and mental health issues, and may be at risk of perpetuating violence when they grow older

We offer **free youth leadership programs** for both boys and girls to provide children with a safe space where they can discuss any issues they might be facing at home

In our youth programs, we raise awareness about several issues including **domestic violence**

RESOURCES

- Call 911
- Document the abuse and get medical help
- Visit Women for Afghan Women where we can provide
 - case management
 - mental health services
 - empowerment classes
 - legal services