



# We can end violence against women!

*learn, speak out and take action*

Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) and The Body Shop continue to collaborate in 2009 to highlight the issue of Violence against Women (VAW). Publishing this brochure to coincide with International Day Against Violence Against Women is significant as Malaysia joins the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign spanning over 130 countries to make a difference in ending violence against women.

## Why 16 days and why this time of the year?

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, **International Day Against Violence Against Women** and December 10, **International Human Rights Day**, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. This 16 day period also highlights other significant dates including December 1, which is **World AIDS Day**, and December 6, which marks the **Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre**.

There are four significant dates during the 16 days:

- **25th November** commemorates the anniversary of the murder of the Mirabel sisters who were brutally murdered by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960.
- **1st December** is World Aids Day to mark global effort to face the challenges of the AIDS pandemic. Furthermore the link between violence against women and their vulnerability to HIV infection is indisputable.
- *Montreal Massacre* - on the **6th December**, fourteen young female engineering students were shot dead at Montreal University in Canada in 1989. The gunman opened fire in two classrooms and the cafeteria after ordering 48 men in the room to leave, before opening fire, the gunmen shouted "You are all a bunch of feminists, and I hate feminists!"
- *International Human Rights Day* **10th December** celebrates the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed in 1948. All governments acknowledged that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex..."

**WAO is a non-profit organization that:**

- provides refuge and counselling to women in crisis, this includes battered women and their children, abused migrant domestic workers, unwed mothers, abused female refugees, rape survivors.
- conducts public education to create awareness of VAW and women's human rights.
- advocates for laws and policies in order to eliminate discrimination against women women.

## What is Violence Against Women?

*Violence against Women (VAW) is a chosen action against a woman or girl child simply because of her gender, simply because she is a female.*

*VAW is form of regulating and controlling women's sexuality – her body, identity, behaviour, movement, expression, her thoughts and her choices.*

- VAW cuts across lines of race, religion, income, class and culture. VAW is deeply embedded in all cultures so much so that millions of women consider it a way of life.
- VAW is compounded by discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, social status, class, and age.
- Such multiple forms of discrimination further restrict women's choices, increase their vulnerability to violence and make it even harder for women to obtain justice.

**Some of examples of VAW in the world today:**

Sex selective abortion, battery during pregnancy, female infanticide, child marriage, of women, domestic violence, marital rape, forced suicide of widows, murders, female genital mutilation, incest, child prostitution, pornography, date rape, rape, sexual harassment online and offline, cyber stalking, trafficking.



# Be smart, safe and secure online and off line

*Information Communications Technology (ICTs) is powerful tool for women but can also represent a danger for women*

ICTs are empowering tools to gain and disseminate knowledge, accelerate communication and mobilize support. Electronic communication forms a growing part of the way in which we interact with each other and offers many advantages of ease and convenience of use. However ICTs have been used to further control women too. Internet or cyber violence is an emerging form of violence against women which we need to learn more about.

*The vulnerable (usually women and children) are targeted in the internet.*

Online predators target the “new to the Internet” users like females and children. Although men can become victims, global statistics show that 83% are female.

It is easy to detect someone new to being online as they may not know the chat room lingo or by looking at their profile information or lack of internet knowledge. Stalkers are looking for the emotionally vulnerable. When you chat in an open channel or a chat room about feeling sad, depressed and upset, the abuser may send you a private message to comfort you quickly. This is something a stalker will look for, a moment of weakness.

## Misuse of ICTS to control and abuse women

### *Videotaping recordings and photos to threaten and humiliate*

A victim of domestic violence shared with WAO social workers how she was afraid to leave her abusive husband because he had a video recording of their sex act and threatened to broadcast over the internet. Hand phones and digital cameras are used to photograph and video sex acts and nude poses, sometimes with the consent of the woman and at other times without her consent. All of these images are used to threaten, humiliate and control a woman.

### *Persistent shorts service messages (sms) and anonymous calls*

Women are harassed with lewd messages on their hand phones and even dirty calls from men.

### *Spy software used to monitor a woman's movement*

Spy software can be installed on a home computer and allow the person to have access to all the operations made on the computer including a free access to all the incoming emails. This software can be used by an abusive partner who wants to keep track of his wife's or girlfriend's movements and communications.

### *Tracking a woman through a hand phone*

Friend Finder provided by your service provider enables a person to receive information on your whereabouts. This can turn into a controlling situation if you are being tracked by an abusive partner who wants to monitor your every movement.

### *Internet trafficking*

Traffickers recruit victims through the internet. A woman may respond to an advertised job opportunity on the internet and may find herself in slave like conditions or otherwise forced or pressured into performing a job quite different from that for which she signed up. Women responding to mail order brides websites can find themselves in an exploitive situation upon arrival in a foreign country.

### *Pornography sites*

The fast and anonymous distribution of sexually explicit images of women that degrade women as sex objects and commodities through the internet contributes to sexist and disrespectful attitudes towards women. Some porn sites display violent acts against women in a sexual act.

### *The potential dangers of social networking sites and chat rooms*

People looking to make friends or even find romance online are open to many types of stalkers. You may be chatting with people who may not be the people that they say they are. They can say they are a woman when they can be a man, they can say they are a child and they are really an adult. Online sex predators may suggest meeting up with you. There have been cases of teenage girls and boys who have been seduced through online chats so that adult sexual predators can meet up with them.

Most sexual predators like to engage in sexual images as a means to increase one's curiosity and later seduce them into acting it out. Predators often instruct you to hide the images or videos either on memory disks or external drives.

## What can parents do?

- COMMUNICATION is key in reducing the risk of children falling victim to sexual predators. Talk to your child about the dangers on the Internet.
- Spend time with your child on the computer and find out what types of sites he or she is visiting and who are they communicating with.
- Children younger than seven shouldn't be on the internet unless you have filtered the internet and you are there with them.
- If they have online accounts try to have access to it so that you can know who's talking to them. It makes it a little harder for predators to contact them if they know they are not alone online.
- Place the computer in a common area and set limits as to how much time and what sites they can visit.
- Always remind them to never give personal information such as age, living address, schooling details, schedules etc on the internet.
- Tell your children to let you know immediately if a stranger tries to make contact with them on the Web.
- Tell your child to let you know if anyone has asked them inappropriate questions (such as 'what are you wearing now')
- Install an operating system that makes you the administrator of the family computer, enabling you to control Web browser settings, content that can be viewed online, and software that can be installed. Consider installing third-party filtering software.
- Finding pornography or sexually explicit images on your child's computer is a big red flag and should be addressed immediately.
- REVIEW the content of your child's computer on a weekly basis.
- Check to see the most frequented sites.
- Look to see the type of emails or instant messages that the child is receiving or sending.
- Make sure that there are no sexually explicit or pornographic images on the computer.
- Remember, your child could be hiding the images on separate storage disks or memory cards, so it is important to address this issue if you suspect they possess this type of material.
- Parents can get Internet service providers to block certain software or adult sites if you request it.

### *Observe any changes in behaviour of your children*

Your child is spending too much time on the computer, especially after dinner and throughout the evening. Most online predators work during the day and can only communicate at night.

Your child is withdrawn and reluctant to spend time with family, friends or social activities. Isolation is a strong tactic that most sexual predators or abusers use to control their victims.

Further information at: [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2130844\\_protect-children-internet-predators.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2130844_protect-children-internet-predators.html)

### What is online harassment?

Online harassment is when a person intentionally sends repeated communications via emails, instant messaging, chat rooms to another person even after you have asked them to STOP. The unwanted communication includes sexual undertones, sexual solicitations, inappropriate language and content, and even pornographic images with the intent to "...terrify, intimidate, or harass..." another.

### What is cyber-stalking?

Cyber-stalking is similar to online harassment but there is a distinction. Cyber-stalking is almost always characterized by the stalker relentlessly pursuing his victim online and is much more likely to include some form of offline attack, as well. This offline aspect makes it a more serious situation as it can easily lead to dangerous physical contact, if the victim's location is known.

Besides tracking, harassing with threatening behaviours like following the person over chatrooms, sending harassing mails like emotional blackmailing, threatening mails, SMS and phone calls the stalker can show up at your house, work or places you frequent you go to.

### You must clearly tell the harasser to stop

Generally speaking, it is unwise to communicate with a harasser. However, as soon as you determine that you are truly being harassed by someone, you must very clearly tell that person to stop. Simply say something like "Do not contact me in any way in the future" and leave it there. You do not need to explain why, just state that you do not want the person to contact you.

Do not respond to any further messages of any sort from the harasser.

Do not have anyone else contact the harasser on your behalf. It is common for the harasser to claim that you are harassing him or her if you contact the person.

### Report to the Abuse department.

Sometimes it is helpful to copy the e mail message to the abuse department of the harasser's ISP. Keep a record of this message for your records, for example abuse@yahoo.com or abuse@hotmail.com and they will close the scammers email account.

### What do I do if someone is harassing me on the site or through Inbox on FaceBook?

We suggest that you block the person by listing his or her name in the "Blocking People" box at the bottom of the Privacy page. If this does not resolve the problem, please report the user by clicking the 'Report/Block person' link that appears at the bottom of the user's profile. To report a user for a message you have received, use the report link located next to the message in your inbox

### Save everything

One of the first impulses many harassment victims have is to just delete any communications they have received, and that is a bad idea. It's important to save absolutely every communication you have with the harasser – emails, chat logs, ICQ histories, anything. If the harasser has created a web site about you, save copies of it to your local system and have someone you trust who to save it and would testify in court for you if necessary.

If you receive any kind of postal mail or other offline communications, save them (with envelopes, boxes, etc.) Do not destroy any evidence - and do not handle it more than absolutely necessary or permit anyone else to do so. Immediately turn the evidence over to the police. Place envelopes, letters, etc. in plastic bags to protect any possible fingerprints.

### Use an ID function

If you receive any phone calls from the harasser, have them traced immediately by getting an ID function on your landline.

### Block the Mobile number

If the harasser sends SMS, you can block the SMS through your service provider. However you would not be able to block the incoming calls. For threatening calls besides making a police report your other option is to change your mobile number.

### Complain to the appropriate parties

If you're harassed in a chat room, contact whoever the service provider. If you're harassed on any kind of instant messaging service, read the terms of service and harassment policies they've provided and use any contact address given there. If someone has created a web site to harass you, complain to the server where the site is hosted. If you're being harassed via email, complain to the sender's ISP and any email service (like Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo) used to send the messages.

Make a police report if the harassment does not stop.

For further information: <http://www.haltabuse.org/help/respond.shtml>

## Safety behaviours to adopt on Internet:

- Don't respond to flaming (provocation online)
- Choose a genderless screen name
- Don't flirt online, unless you are prepared for the consequences. This is just like real life. Yes, you have the right to flirt. And you have the right to a sexy nickname. But the more obvious you are, the more likely you are to arouse unwanted attention from unwanted suitors.
- Save offending messages and report them to your service provider
- If someone makes threats in a chat room or on a message board, notify the moderator or Web site operator right away
- Don't confront the stalker/harasser, this only arouses more anger or emotional attacks
- Get out of a situation online that has become hostile, log off or surf elsewhere
- Google yourself to make sure no personal information is posted by others about you
- Never give out personal information such as a phone number, address or photo to a person you met online
- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with an online acquaintance without first talking to someone you trust and inform her/him where and whom you are going to meet and ONLY meet in a safe public place
- If the online acquaintance wants to meet you alone, be suspicious
- Never assume someone you met on internet is who they say they are
- Never respond to messages that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing
- If a website requests registration, just give the minimal information, if it asks for more information, you should leave this site
- Use anti-virus software to prevent virus attacks
- Change frequently your passwords
- Never disclose your credit card number to any site that is not secured

## General Information on VAW

**Domestic violence** is an abuse of power in intimate relationships when one partner [usually male] attempts to control and dominate the other. It is a repeated pattern. It is not only physical but sexual, economic and almost always psychological leaving the woman disempowered and living in fear.

Signs to indicate your friend, neighbour relative or colleague may be a victim of domestic violence.

- She claims that her injuries are due to clumsiness
- Her injuries are on unusual parts of the body, usually hidden
- She has multiple injuries at various stages of healing
- She is often insulted and humiliated by the perpetrator in public
- She expresses fear of the abuser
- She has to account for all of her movements to her abuser

### How can the Domestic Violence Act help?

- You can make a complaint to the Police or to Social Welfare.
- You can get stay at a shelter if you do not feel safe at home.
- You can apply to the court for an Interim Protection Order (IPO) that instructs the offender not to abuse you.
- You can ask the court to add a power of arrest to the IPO, if you fear that the offender is likely to hurt you again.
- If you are taking care of someone who is being abused, (like a child or a disabled person), you can apply for an IPO for them.
- If the offender violates the IPO, he can be punished by the court.

### Rape and sexual assault

Sex without consent is rape. In law, rape is limited to the insertion of the penis into your vagina against your will. If you are under 16 years of age, sex with or without your consent, is statutory rape. Sexual assault includes forced anal sex, insertion of objects into your vagina, mouth or anus.

**Often victims feel deeply ashamed and powerless. As a friend you must assure her she is not to be blamed.**

### Laws on rape:

- Section 376 of the Penal Code states that whoever commits rape shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to twenty years, and shall be liable to whipping.
- Marital Rape is not legally recognised but the new Section 375A states any husband causing fear of death or hurt to his wife in order to have sex shall be punished for term which may extend to five years.
- Heavier punishment of imprisonment for term of not less than five years and not more than thirty years under these circumstances:
  - i) in addition causes hurt to the woman, or any other person; or
  - ii) in addition, puts the woman in fear of death or hurt to herself or someone else; or
  - iii) rapes her in the presence of other people; or
  - iv) rapes a girl under 16 without her consent; or
  - v) rapes a girl under 12; or
  - vi) gets consent from a woman by using his position of authority over her, or because of their professional relationship or other kinds of relationship of trust.

### What to do if you are raped.

**Do not wash.** Although your first instinct may be to clean yourself, do not wash. Go to the hospital immediately for a medical examination. There may be seminal and body fluids, mud, debris, fibres, hairs that provide important evidence.

**Go to the Emergency Room at a government hospital,** the doctor will examine you and your genital area, as well as your clothes. You will also be asked to first fill out a form to give approval of

the examination, and that the information will be used for police investigation. Hospital staff will also notify the police. A female officer will take your report at the hospital.

If you suspect you were given a drug you should **get tested** ideally within 24 hours of ingestion.

**If you go to the police first,** a female police officer will accompany you take your report and accompany you to the hospital.

**Contact a Women's NGO.** You may want or need counselling and support. The WAO Sexual Assault line 7936 30 30

**Sexual harassment** in the workplace refers to sexual conduct that is unwanted, unwelcome, or unsolicited. This includes requests for sexual favours which are inappropriate and offensive.

### Forms of sexual harassment:

- verbal harassment: e.g. offensive or suggestive remarks, comments, jokes, jesting, kidding, sounds, questioning.
- non-verbal/gestural harassment: e.g. leering or ogling with suggestive overtones, licking lips or holding or eating food provocatively, hand signal or sign language denoting sexual activity, persistent flirting.
- visual harassment: e.g. showing pornographic materials, drawing sex-based sketches or writing sex-based letters, sexual exposure.
- psychological: e.g. repeated unwanted social invitations, relentless proposals for dates or physical intimacy.
- physical harassment: e.g. inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, stroking, brushing up against the body, hugging, kissing, fondling, sexual assault.

### What to do if you are being sexually harassed?

- Tell the harasser that his behavior is unwelcome and that you want it to stop. Say it firmly so the harasser knows you mean business!
- If the harasser continues, talk to someone in your organisation who could help you; i.e. personnel officer, employee/union representative.
- Record the details of each event: date, time, location, what happened, what was said, how you felt, and the names of any witnesses or others victimized by this person.
- You can write a letter to the offender, including description, date and time of unwelcome behavior, clear statement you want the behaviour to stop, and the warning of further action for non compliance. Add your signature and date.
- Seek help from the Labour Department or a women's NGO

### Employer's Responsibility

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure a harassment-free workplace.

Sexual harassment affects morale, job performance, and productivity. It increases the rate of sick leave/absenteeism and creates a higher rate of employee turnover.

## Useful phone numbers

Women's Aid Organisation	03 – 7956 3488 (3 lines)
WAO Sexual Assault helpline	03 – 7960 3030
Women's Centre for Change, Penang	04 – 228 0342
All Women Action Society of Malaysia	03 - 7877 0224
TELEDERA	1 – 800 – 883040
Befrienders	03 – 7956 8144

## Useful resource

[http://www.apcwomen.org/section/violence\\_against\\_women\\_and\\_icts](http://www.apcwomen.org/section/violence_against_women_and_icts)

