

### Children who witness violence may:

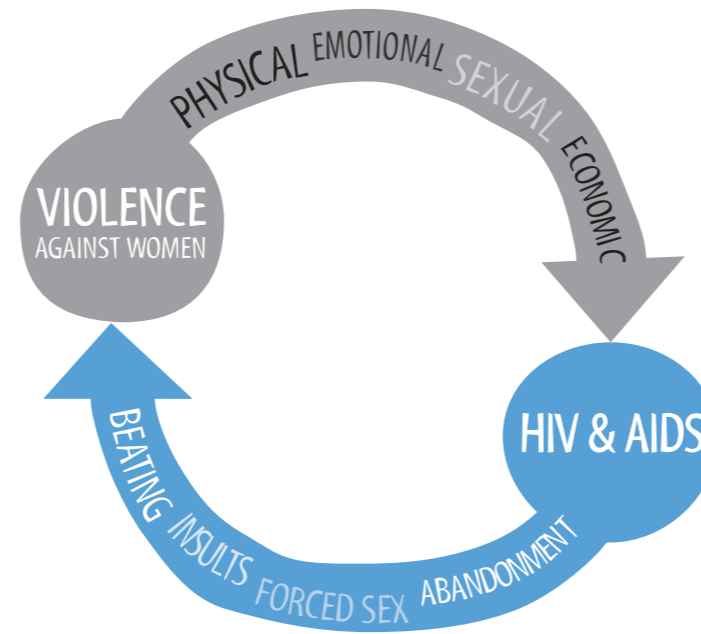
- be fearful of and distrust their fathers
- feel afraid for their mothers
- feel sad and depressed
- perform poorly in school
- run away from home
- have nightmares
- behave violently toward other children
- withdraw from activities and friends
- grow up believing that violence is normal

### Communities that remain silent about violence may:

- lose out on women's participation
- spend resources responding to violence against women
- have increased crime
- have overburdened social services (health care, police, social welfare)
- experience less or slower development
- have greater prevalence of HIV/AIDS
- lack solidarity and harmony

## The Connection between Violence against Women and HIV/AIDS

When girls and women lack power in their relationships, families and communities they are more vulnerable to violence and more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. For many women, the violence they experience leads to HIV infection. For others, their HIV positive status brings violence, which can speed the onset of AIDS. Violence against women and HIV and AIDS are closely connected.



Violence against women is both cause and consequence of HIV and AIDS.

### Get Involved!

*SASA!* is a movement in your community for preventing violence against women and HIV. It involves many community members working for positive change.

To learn more about *SASA!* and how to get involved contact:

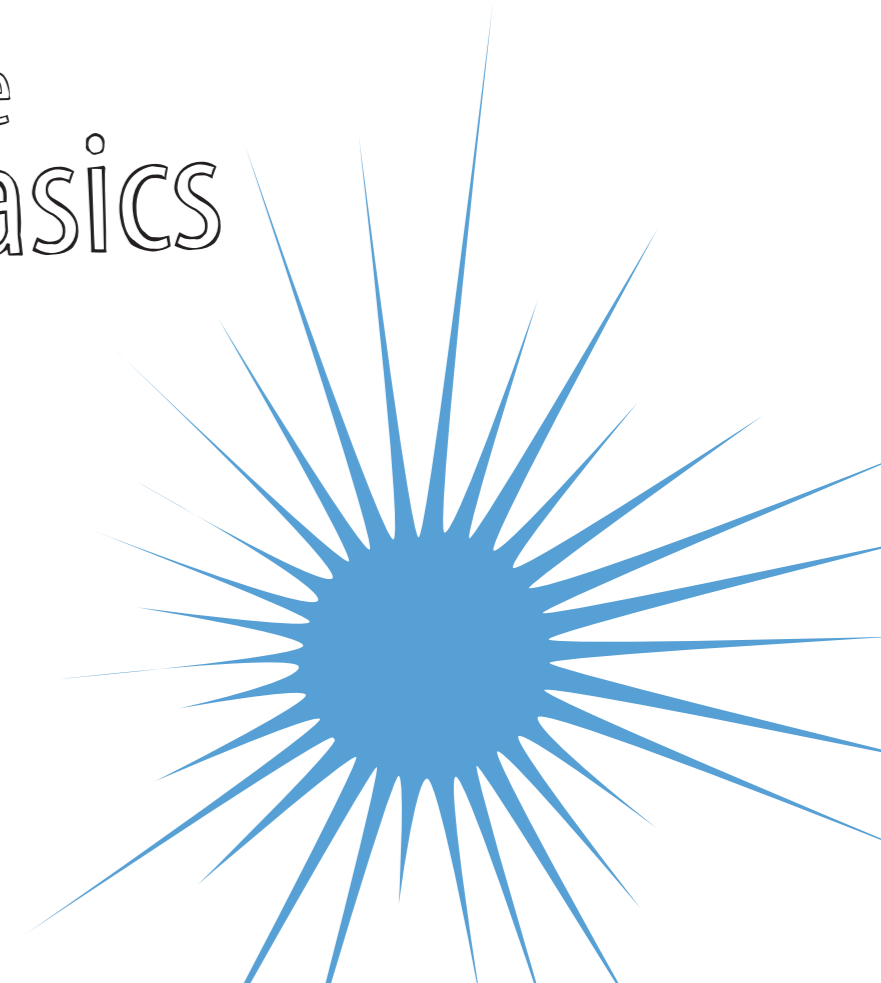
[www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php)



# Violence Against Women

## info sheet

### Know the Basics



### What is Violence against Women?

Violence against women is any threat or act (physical, emotional, sexual, economic) directed at a girl or woman that causes harm and is meant to keep a girl or woman under the control of others.

Violence against women happens to women all over the world. Women of all races, cultures, nationalities, religions, ages and class experience violence. It is a human rights issue that hurts us all.

## Types of Violence against Women

People often think that violence against women is strictly physical violence—like beating, slapping or pushing. While physical violence is one type of violence that is used against women, it's not the only type of violence against women. In fact, there are four different types of violence against women. They are: physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence and economic violence.

**Physical Violence** is any act that harms the body of a girl or woman. Physical violence includes:

beating	burning	slapping	kicking	assault with a weapon
hitting	shoving	punching	choking	killing a girl or woman

Physical violence is the most visible, but many women try to hide their injuries because of shame or fear of stigma from others.

**Sexual Violence** is any act that limits a woman's power over her body, her sexuality or her reproductive health. Sexual violence includes:

forced sex — being physically forced into having sex, by a partner, acquaintance or stranger; also called “rape”  
coerced sex — being pressured into having sex—emotionally, socially or economically, e.g., being pressured to have sex without protection or with the knowledge or fear of exposure to HIV  
sexual assault — unwanted sexual contact or attention  
transactional sex — being pressured into having sex outside an intimate relationship in exchange for money or material assistance

Sexual violence is a very common yet often hidden problem in our communities. Many women and men do not identify their experiences or acts as sexual violence.

**Emotional Violence** is any act that involves psychological or verbal abuse and/or controlling behavior. Emotional violence includes:

shouting	infidelity	humiliation	insults
threats	intimidation	isolation	controlling

Emotional violence can be just as hurtful as the other forms of violence. Women experiencing physical, sexual or economic violence also experience emotional violence.

**Economic Violence** is any act that harms a girl or woman's financial well-being, or that uses money to control her. Economic violence includes:

withholding money or food as punishment	preventing a woman from earning an income
taking away money or goods that a woman has earned	abandonment
refusing her participation in financial decision-making	

In our communities, women are often dependent on their husbands, fathers or brothers for their basic needs. This dependence often traps women in violent relationships.

All four categories of violence against women are serious problems in our communities. All violence is harmful to women. All violence impacts their lives negatively. Not only does violence against women harm the girls and women in our community, it also harms the boys and men; our families, friends and neighbors; and the larger community.

## Why does Violence against Women happen?

Violence against women happens as a result of the imbalance of power between women and men. In most communities we grow up being taught that men are more important and more powerful than women—and that they have a right and even a responsibility to discipline and control women.

However, one adult controlling the life and decisions of another adult is unjust; it is not fair. In a relationship, when one person uses her/his power over the other to take control, it is violence. Throughout the world, men are given more power as individuals and as a group than women. Men's use of power over women and the community's silence about this is the root cause of violence against women.

facts  
about **Violence**  
against **Women**

Violence against women is a serious global problem.

**Women who experience violence are more at risk for HIV infection.**

Studies show that women who have experienced violence are up to three times more likely to contract HIV than those who have not experienced violence.

**Women who are HIV positive are more at risk for violence.**

Women who are diagnosed HIV positive are at risk for violence from their partners, families and the community. They face the possibility of being beaten, abandoned or having their children and home taken away. This violence may limit their access to information and treatment and can further damage their physical and emotional health, speeding the onset of AIDS.

## Consequences of Violence against Women

Violence against women harms all of us. One of the major consequences of violence against women is HIV infection. But there are many other consequences, for everyone in the community.

**Women and girls who experience violence may:**

- lack self-confidence
- avoid participating in activities
- stop visiting friends or family
- have visible physical injuries
- experience sadness and low self-esteem
- have increased health problems, including being infected with STIs by their partners
- experience anxiety and fear
- be unable or afraid to make decisions about their health
- be unhappy at home
- be fearful of their partners
- be at increased risk for HIV infection

**Men who are violent toward women may:**

- feel tense and angry
- have tension in their homes
- have children who fear and distrust them
- lack intimacy and enjoyable sexuality with their partner
- have partners who lack affection and trust for them
- be rejected by their families and community
- feel disrespected by others
- feel pressure to maintain their power in the home
- have to spend money on treating injuries caused by their violence