

## **Women in America: What Women Face in America**

1. Violence against Women
  - a. Homicide Rates by Gender
  - b. Domestic Violence
  - c. Gun Violence
  - d. Sexual Abuse
    - i. Rape and Sexual Assault
    - ii. Human Trafficking
    - iii. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
    - iv. Sexual Harassment
      1. Street Harassment
  - e. Believing Women: Victim Doubting and the Challenge of Getting Convictions
  - f. What is being Done?
2. Poverty
  - a. General Statistics
  - b. Single Mothers & Poverty
  - c. What is being Done?
3. The Pressure to be Perfect
  - a. The Culture of Beauty
  - b. Eating Disorders
4. Psychological Factors
  - a. Psychological Effects
  - b. Women and Drug Abuse
  - c. Confidence
    - i. Speaking While Female: In the Workplace

**\*\*\*MORE DATA AND ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE APPENDIX AT THE BOTTOM  
OF THE WOMEN WILL GET IT DONE HOME SCREEN\*\*\***

## 1. Violence against Women

### a. Homicide Rates by Gender

Year	Female Victims	Male Victims
1976	4,590 (24%)	14,171
1980	5,232 (23%)	17,788
1985	4,880 (26%)	14,079
1990	5,115 (22%)	18,304
1995	5,022 (23%)	16,552
2000	3,733 (24%)	11,818
2005	3,545 (21%)	13,122
2010	2,918 (22%)	10,058

*Bureau of Justice Statistics (1976-2005), and United States Census (2010)*

### b. Domestic Violence

In the United States:

- Every 9 seconds a woman is assaulted or beaten.
- One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.
- Every day more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends.
- Nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a breakup.
- Almost one-third of female homicide victims that are reported in police records are killed by an intimate partner.
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) results in more than 18.5 million mental health care visits each year.
- From 1994 to 2010, about 4 in 5 victims of intimate partner violence were female.
- 95% of men who physically abuse their intimate partners also psychologically abuse them.
- In 15 states, more than 40 percent of all homicides of women involved intimate partner violence.

- Sexual assault or forced sex occurs in approximately 40-45% of battering relationships.
- Approximately one homeless woman in four is homeless mainly because of her experiences with violence.
- Domestic and sexual violence can push women into a cycle of poverty.
- Instances of domestic violence HAVE been on the decline- falling a stunning 64% between 1994 and 2010. Credit for this decline has been given to the passage of Violence Against Women Acts which helped it become more widely understood that domestic violence is an unacceptable crime and not just a “family issue” or “badge of manhood.”

“Evidentiary constraints, myths and misconceptions about domestic violence, women’s perceived lack of credibility, and a tendency to view domestic violence cases as less serious than stranger assaults all present significant challenges to prosecuting domestic violence related cases.” -1998 Study on Prosecution Strategies in Domestic Violence Felonies.

“The criminal justice system has only recently begun to respond to domestic violence as a public offense. Although wife beating was declared illegal in all states in 1920, domestic violence was largely ignored in the criminal justice system.” 1998 Study on Prosecution Strategies in Domestic Violence Felonies.

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#### Percent of Homicide Victims by Gender: Victim/Offender Relationship

Total	100%
<b>Intimate</b>	<b>30.1%</b>
Other family	11.7%
Acquaintance/Known	21.8%
Stranger	8.8%
Undetermined	27.7%

### c. Gun Violence

- Every day in the United States five women are murdered with guns.
- From 2001 to 2012, 6,410 women were murdered in the United States by an intimate partner using a gun—a figure which is more than the total number of U.S. troops killed in action during the entirety of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.
- Women in the United States are 11 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than are women in other high income countries.
- In 36 states, more than 50% of intimate partner-related homicides of women in each state involved a gun.
- There are at least 11,986 individuals across the country who have been convicted of misdemeanor-level stalking but are still permitted to possess guns under federal law.
- Firearms – especially handguns – were the most common weapon used by males to murder females in 2010.
- Female intimate partners are more likely to be murdered with a firearm than all other means combined.
- Having a gun in the home increases the risk of homicide of an intimate partner by eight times compared to households without guns.
- The risk of homicide increases by 20 times compared to households without guns when there is a history of domestic violence in the family.

Homicide Rates, Domestic Violence and Gun Violence Section Sources: Center for Disease Control; Shannon Catalano, U.S. DOJ Report, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010; NCADV.org; Federal Bureau of Investigations; Violence Policy Center, "When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data," September 2012; American Association of University Women; Arkadi Gerney and Chelsea Parsons, *Women Under the Gun*, Center for American Progress; FBI, CDC, Office of Violence Against Women; National Institute of Justice and the Centers of Disease Control Study "Extent, Nature and Consequences of Intimate Partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, 2000; Carolyn Copps, Roxann Ryan, *Prosecution Strategies in Domestic Violence Felonies: Telling the Story of Domestic Violence*, National Institute of Justice, April 1998; Linda A. McGuire, *Criminal Prosecution of Domestic Violence*, Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse, 1999.

d. **Sexual Abuse**

i. **Rape and Sexual Assault**

- 1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed rape; 2.8% attempted rape).
- 9 out of every 10 rape victims were female in 2003.
- 7% of girls in grades 5-8 and 12% of girls in grades 9-12 said they had been sexually abused.
- 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker.
- In 2012, 346,830 women were raped (only includes **reported** cases).
- Sexual assault or forced sex occurs in approximately 40-45% of battering relationships.
- Worldwide, around 120 million girls, close to one in 10, have been raped or sexually assaulted by the time they turn 20. (In Cameroon the portion of girls 15 to 19 who have ever experienced forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts in their lifetime is 22%- Over 1 in 5).
- One researcher found that in current studies, around 11% of male students surveyed volunteered anonymously that they had engaged in or attempted forced sex. She also found that in previous studies, when men had volunteered this information, none had considered it to be a crime. "Part of the reason that few considered themselves sexual offenders was that they face no negative consequences. No accusation. No shame. No punishment."

ii. **Human Trafficking of Women and Girls**

- Victims of sex trafficking are overwhelmingly female: 94% of the confirmed sex-trafficking victims identified by the Human Trafficking Reporting System between January 2008 and June 2010 were female and women consisted of 85% of sex trafficking cases based on the Polaris Project's estimates.
- Roughly 293,000 American youth are at risk of becoming victims of sex trafficking.

- Law enforcement across the country has been slow to recognize that sex-trafficked teenagers are victims of a serious crime rather than voluntary participants in a consensual sex trade. Too often, instead of being helped and protected, victims are often prosecuted and locked up or released right back into the control of their pimp.
- “By and large, the enforcement of laws against the individuals who are the ultimate “consumers” of the “product” offered for sale by trafficking—in other words, the individuals who pay to rape and sexually abuse children and teenagers—is nonexistent.” –American Progress Report
  - In New York City in 2014, over 400 people were taken to court, accused of prostitution, but only 10 people were accused of being pimps or “Johns.”
- Victims as young as 5 years old have been reported, but the mean age for victims between 2000 and 2009 was 15 years old.

### iii. Female Genital Mutilation

- “Female genital mutilation (FGM) is any procedure involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs and is often performed on girls between the ages of 4 to 14 to ensure their virginity until marriage.” –AHA Foundation
- More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been cut in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where FGM is concentrated.
- There is no way of knowing exactly how prevalent FGM is in the United States.
- Approximately 228,000 women and girls in the U.S. have either suffered the procedure or are at risk of FGM- a number that increased about 35% from 1990 to 2000 due to increased immigration from some African countries where FGM is still commonly practiced.
- “Vacation cutting” is a term used to describe when girls living in the United States are taken to their parents’ country of origin (typically during school breaks) to undergo FGM.

- FGM is illegal in the United States, but still occurs secretly. Many authorities are unaware or lack the training to effectively stop it and prosecute offenders.
- Social pressure is a major reason for the continuation of this practice in many cultures: “In a community in which most women are circumcised, family and friends create an environment in which the practice of circumcision becomes a requirement for social acceptance.”
- “FGM has serious health consequences for girls and women. The immediate complications include severe pain and bleeding that can lead to hemorrhaging. Long-term complications include chronic infections, infertility, problems during pregnancy, and pain during sexual intercourse.” There are psychological effects as well.

#### **iv. Sexual Harassment**

- Of the 11,364 complaints of sexual harassment made in 2011, 84% were filed by women.
- 31% of female workers reported that they had been harassed at work.
- 100% of the women harassed reported that the harasser was a man.
- Of the women who had been harassed:
  - 43% percent reported that their harasser was a supervisor.
  - 27% were harassed by an employee senior to them.
  - 19% were harassed by a co-worker at their level.

#### **1. Street Harassment**

- Street harassment is defined as “anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, degraded, or like an object.” It is a form of sexual harassment that consists of unwanted comments and other actions by strangers in public areas.

According to a 2014 Study:

- 96% of American women 40 years of age and under experienced street harassment in the past year.
- At least one fifth were harassed 21 or more times.
- 85% of women in the United States experience street harassment before the age of 17.
- 77% of women under age 40 reported being followed by a man or group of men in the past year in a way that made them feel unsafe.
- Half reported they had been groped or fondled during the past year.
- Often, it is not taken as a serious issue by police and society because it is so common.
- “More than half of survey respondents altered their style of dress, refused social invitations, or changed their commute after being catcalled or worse.”
- “[If] the harassment is frequent or severe enough, women may become highly critical of their bodies and develop depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.” It can also produce extreme feelings of fear, anger or shame.
- 3% of respondents found street harassment flattering.

Sexual Abuse Section Sources: AHA Foundation fact sheet; The Daily Beast, *America’s Underground Female Genital Mutilation Crisis*, 6/11/14; American Association for University Women; Chelsea Parsons, *3 Key Challenges in Combating the Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States*, Americanprogress.org; Polaris Project, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, FBI, Human Trafficking Support System; National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; U.S. Department of Justice; U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics; *1998 Commonwealth Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls*; American Association of University Women; UN Study “Hidden in Plain Sight,” August 2014 via MSN news; Anya Kamenetz, *The History of Campus Sexual Assault*, NPR, 11/30/2014; Roxanne Gay, *How to Handle Street Harassment: Don’t “Hey, Baby” Me*, Glamour, April 2015; Beth Livingston, KC Wagner, Sarah Diaz, Angela Liu, *Researching Street Harassment*, IRL School Cornell University, 4/17/2015; Center for Reproductive Rights: *Legislation on Female Genital Mutilation in the United States*, November 2004.

**e. Believing Women: Victim Doubting and the Challenge of Getting Convictions**



- About 55% of rape victims never report being raped.
- The most common reason given by victims who do not report their rapes is that rape is a “personal matter.” Another 16% say that they fear reprisal, while about 6% don’t report because they believe that the police are biased.
- Another common reason for not reporting assault is that victims think they won’t be believed.
- Many survivors who do decide to press charges take years or decades to come forward.
- According to some estimates, between 180,000 and 400,000 rape kits remain untested nationwide, despite DNA technology that can swiftly link rapists to crimes.
- The Department of Justice reports that only between 8% and 37% of rapes ever lead to prosecution, and just 3% to 18% of sexual assaults lead to a conviction.
- Many cases are not pursued because prosecutors do not think there is a likelihood of conviction.
  - The reality is the criminal justice system often decides against prosecuting cases in acquaintance rape and date rape.
- For every 100 rapes, 5 rapists will go to prison.
- 34 states have statutes of limitations on filing rape or sexual-assault charges, ranging from just 3 years to 30 years.
  - Considering the trauma and stigma that prevent rape survivors from immediately coming forward, many of the statutes of limitations are just not long enough.
- “Domestic violence-related cases are often viewed as notoriously difficult to prosecute, in part because our criminal justice system is not structured to respond well to domestic violence-related crimes. [Domestic] violence victims are perceived as weak or responsible for the abuse. [Domestic] violence cases also are difficult to prosecute because of the perceived lack of credibility of women as witnesses. [Women] are often seen as “less

credible” witnesses in the criminal justice system.” 1998 Study on Prosecution Strategies in Domestic Violence Felonies.

“Believe Women” Section Sources: RAINN.org; Corey Williams, *Detroit’s Untested Rape Kit Backlog could Bring Justice, but Reopen Old Wounds*, HuffPost Detroit, 3/19/2012; NBC News, *More than 10,000 forgotten Detroit rape kits to be tested*, 6/5/13; Jordan Michael Smith, *These Laws let Accused Rapists off the Hook*, Mother Jones, 11/20/2014; The Sexual Victimization of College Women, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice; National Violence Against Women Survey, US DOJ Office of Justice Programs; Kim Craig, WXYZ Detroit, *100 Serial rapists identified after rape kits from Detroit Crime Lab are finally processed*. 2014; Carolyn Copps, Roxann Ryan, *Prosecution Strategies in Domestic Violence Felonies: Telling the Story of Domestic Violence*, National Institute of Justice, April 1998.

#### **f. What is being Done?**

- What has been done:
  - Domestic Violence:
    - Passage of the Violence against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994 has done much to help decrease violence against women rates. VAWA funds police IPV sensitivity training, as well as legal services such as issuing restraining order and representing victims.
    - Attitudes shifted in the ‘80s and ‘90s with public awareness campaigns, national legislations protecting victims, and training police and prosecutors to recognize intimate partner violence as a crime, rather than just a private matter.
    - The Violence against Women Reauthorization Act 2013 was signed into law March 7, 2013. This law added and expanded upon the original act including expanding pro bono legal assistance to victims as well as revising grants for programs that support families dealing with domestic violence.
  - Human Trafficking:
    - The Trafficking Victims Protection Act was authorized in 2000 and was the first federal law to address sex trafficking and labor trafficking in the U.S. It focuses on prevention and protection for trafficked survivors as well as prosecution for traffickers. It was reauthorized in 2013.

- In 2013, the Federal Strategic Action Plan on Service for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States was developed to increase the coordination, collaboration, and capacity of federal agencies in combatting human trafficking.
  - The Federal government has set up other programs through the various departments (state, homeland, health and human services, etc.) to work to stem the tide of human trafficking in the United States.
- FGM: A federal law was passed in 1996 prohibiting FGM of minors
- Gun Violence
  - Federal law already bars persons convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence from purchasing firearms.
- What IS currently being done:
  - Sexual Harassment:
    - One of the most important things being done is awareness campaigns and trainings on what defines sexual harassment and what to do when faced with it.
    - Believing women when they say they are being harassed and recognizing that it is inappropriate are also happening more and more in the workplace.
  - Trafficking:
    - Police and other authorities are being trained to be able to identify women who are victims of trafficking, as well as to be more compassionate to victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse
    - Many hotel chains are starting to educate and train employees to be aware of possible trafficking victims, especially in big cities or during big sporting events or conventions.
  - Sexual Assault
    - President Obama has started the “It’s On Us” initiative to stop campus sexual assault. This program includes sending guidance to school districts, colleges and universities on their legal obligations to prevent and respond to sexual assault, creating a task force and reviewing existing laws to make sure they adequately protect victims.
    -
- What NEEDS to be done:
  - Continued public awareness campaigns.

- Additional trainings for those in the field. There continues to be too much victim blaming- in domestic violence, rape or other sexual assaults, and trafficking. Law enforcement must be trained to overcome any gender biases.
- Campus and local law enforcement groups through the country need to better communicate and work together to stop sexual assault and rape on campuses.
- FGM:
  - Mothers and fathers need to be educated about the harmful effects of FGM. “It is essential that efforts to prevent the practice include culturally sensitive education and outreach to the relevant communities. *The deeply ingrained cultural attitudes underlying FGM cannot be changed simply by outlawing the practice.*”
  - Teachers and communities need to better aware of “vacation cutting.”
  - Laws need to be enacted making it illegal for parents of U.S. citizens to send their children elsewhere for the purpose of undergoing FGM.
- Gun Violence:
  - Pass the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act which amends the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. It was introduced in 2013 but not enacted.
  - Current laws do not go far enough to protect women from the dangers presented by batterers and stalkers with guns. Current Federal laws need to make background checks required on all gun sales, broaden the definition of domestic abusers to include abusers in dating relationships, include a ban on gun ownership for stalkers convicted of misdemeanors and are subject to restraining orders, and adequately enforce the laws already in place by disarming and prosecuting domestic abusers.

Sources: National Human Trafficking Resource Center: Federal Anti-Trafficking Efforts, accessed 4/22/2015; U.S. Department of State, U.S. Laws on Trafficking in Persons, accessed 4/22/2015; Winnie Stacelberg, Arkadi Gerney, Chelsea Parsons, and Megan Knauss, *Preventing Domestic Abusers and Stalkers from Accessing Guns*, Center for American Progress, 1/12/2013.

## **2. Poverty**

### **a. General Statistics**

- Women in America are more likely to be poor than men.
- One in seven women, nearly 17.8 million, lived in poverty in 2012.
- In 2012, the poverty rate among women was 14.5%- the highest rate in two decades; the rate for men was 11%.

- The poverty gap between men and women widens significantly between ages 18 and 24 where 20.6% of women are poor in that age group, compared to 14.0% of men.
- The poverty rates in 2012 were particularly high for black women (25.1%), Hispanic women (24.8%), and women who head families (40.9%).
- Some reasons why women face such a greater risk of poverty:
  - The wage gap
  - Women tend to work low paying jobs, or “pink-collar” jobs such as teaching and child care.
  - Women spend more time providing unpaid caregiving than men.
  - Domestic and sexual violence can push women into a cycle of poverty: Half of the cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness.
- When parents are not living together, women are more likely to take on the economic costs of raising children. Eight in ten custodial parents are women, and custodial mothers are twice as likely to be poor as custodial fathers.
- Low income is a risk for partner violence.
- Children growing up poor can create psychological stress and hurt development.

#### **b. Single Mothers and Poverty**

- 80% of single parents in the United States are single mothers.
- The poverty rate of households led by single mothers in 2010 was 40.7%.
- Single mothers in the United States—most of whom are either separated or were previously married—are employed more hours and yet have much higher poverty rates than their peers in other high-income countries.
- 62% of custodial mothers do not receive child support. There are many different reasons for this, including mothers not wanting it, having different financial agreements with the father, or not knowing where the father is. This means that there is a large population of mothers who are providing for their children without any assistance from a partner.

- The U.S. lags behind other high-income countries in support of “jobholding and caregiving,” meaning that the lack of paid leave, affordable childcare and early childhood education options are a significant barrier to single mothers finding employment and keeping it.
- Over half of all children growing up in the US today will spend some time in a single-parent family.

Poverty Section Sources: Greg Kaufmann, *The Nation*, 12/21/12; Katie Wright, *Americanprogress.org*, 5/11/12; U.S. Department of Commerce; Center for American Progress, *Washington Times*; American Association of University Women; National Women’s Law Center; Vox, Danielle Kurtzleben, 6/12/14

### **C. What is being done?**

- What has been done?
  - Government assistance programs have helped millions of Americans stay out of poverty.
- What is currently being done?
  - Minimum wages are being increased around the country.
  - Social Security, the Earned Income Tax Credit, SNAP, unemployment insurance, and Supplemental Security Income are five key programs that lift family incomes above the official poverty line.
- What needs to be done?
  - Support pay equity for men and women.
  - Create Jobs and raise the minimum wage.
  - Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit for childless workers.
  - Change cultural misperceptions and biases about single mothers.
  - Policy changes for paid family leave.
  - Universal and affordable child care and afterschool programs.
  - More flexible work schedules.
  - Modernize anti-poverty programs to support employment.

Sources: Randy Albelda, *How to reduce persistent poverty for single mothers*, University of Massachusetts, Boston, August 2012; Rebecca Vallas and Melissa Boteach, *The Top 10 Solutions to Cut Poverty and Grow the Middle Class*, Center for American Progress, 9/17/2014; National Women’s Law Center, *Fact Sheet: Public Programs Lift Millions of Women and Children Out of Poverty*, 11/04/2014.

### **3. The Pressure to be Perfect**

#### **a. The Culture of Beauty**

- 90% of all women want to change at least one aspect of their physical appearance.
- Up to 8 in 10 women will be dissatisfied with their reflection, and more than half may see a distorted image.
- Almost half of girls in a recent survey think the pressure to look good is the worst part of being female.
- Top models and beauty queens weigh 23% less than the average woman
- Almost nine in 10 teenage girls say they feel pressured by the fashion and media industries to be skinny and that an unrealistic, unattainable image of beauty has been created.
- One study reports that at age thirteen, 53% of American girls are “unhappy with their bodies.” This grows to 78% by the time girls reach seventeen.
- The body type portrayed in advertising as the ideal is possessed naturally by only 5% of American females.
- Fat-phobia and prejudice against the overweight in our culture is such that obese people (particularly women) tend to have very poor body image, not to mention severe anxiety and depression.
- Recent research has found that being overweight is a far greater disadvantage for women than it is for men: Women are increasingly less likely to work higher paying jobs and increasingly more likely to work the lower paying jobs as they become heavier. Men, on the other hand, see no such gradual effect.

#### **b. Eating Disorders**

- At any given time, one in every three women is on a diet.

- 9 out of 10 high school junior and senior girls diet while only 1 in 10 of high school girls are overweight.
- In a survey of girls 9 and 10 years old, 40% have tried to lose weight.
- One in four females aged between 11 and 17 are weighed down by pressure to conform to an 'ideal notion' of how they should look, a survey suggests:
  - More than half of the girls studied said they would be happier if they were more physically attractive.
- One in three girls said they have starved themselves or refused to eat in an effort to lose weight.
- About 1 in 100 adolescent girls suffer from anorexia. (an estimated 10-15% of people with anorexia are male)
- According to the Center for Mental Health Services, 90% of those who have eating disorders are women between the ages of 12 and 25.
- 15% of young women have substantially disordered eating attitudes and behaviors.
- An estimated one thousand women die each year of anorexia nervosa
- As many as one in ten college women suffer from a clinical or nearly clinical eating disorder.
- Five to ten million adolescent girls and women struggle with eating disorders and borderline eating conditions.

The Pressure to be Perfect Section Sources: National Institute on Media and the Family; National Institute of Mental Health; National Center for Health Statistics; depts.washington.edu; National Eating Disorders; Tru Youth Research Firm; CNN; The ReThink Beauty Campaign; Social Issues Research Center; Diana Mitsu Klos, Women's Media Center, *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2013*; Roberto A. Ferdman, *Why overweight women are more likely to earn less than overweight men*, The Washington Post, 10/28/14; Carlat, D.J., Carmago. Review of Bulimia Nervosa in Males. American Journal of Psychiatry, 154. 1997.

#### **4. Psychological Factors**

##### **a. Psychological Effects of these Issues**



- Women with low self-esteem are more likely to be victimized by abusive partners.
- Almost half the women reporting serious domestic violence also meet the criteria for major depression: one-fourth for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and 28% had symptom scores as high as a norming group of persons entering outpatient treatment.
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) results in more than 18.5 million mental health care visits each year.
- Victims of sexual assault are:
  - 3 times more likely to suffer from depression.
  - 6 times more likely to suffer from PTSD.
  - 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide.
- Eating disorders are the most deadly mental illness.
- Almost 50% of people with eating disorders meet the criteria for depression.
- Sexual harassment can have severe impacts on victims: increasing their time away from work, decreasing productivity, resulting in job turnover, and even increasing rates of stress, depression, and other emotional and physical consequences.
- In a study in Chicago, depression was the most prevalent mental health problem for battered women in participating programs, but post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and panic disorder, and substance abuse are also common among women in participating programs.

Sources: American Association of University Women; Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network; Think Progress, Bryce Covert, 8.21.13; Carole Warshaw, Gabriela Moroney, Holly Barnes, *Report on Mental Health Issues & Service Needs in Chicago Area Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs*, Cook County Hospital, January 2003.

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## **b. Women and Drug Abuse**

### Why death rates among white women are soaring: Overdosing on Painkillers

- “A lot of theories out there suggest stress has major effects on our health. We know that white women are single parents more often than they ever have been before. They’re more often the breadwinner. They’re juggling a lot of roles.”
- In 42.8% of U.S. counties, mortality rates for women rose between 1992 and 2006. Male rates increased in only 3.4% of counties.
- Between 1999 and 2011, death rates climbed substantially among *only* white women, ages 15 to 54, and a recent study attributed half the rise to “accidental poisoning,” or drug overdoses.
- Only 3.3 per 100,000 white women died from opioid-related (or painkiller-related) complications in 1999. That number surged to 15.9 per 100,000 white women in 2011.
- Deaths from painkiller overdoses among women have increased more than 400 percent since 1999, compared with a 264% increase among men.
- Nearly 48,000 women died of overdoses between 1999 and 2010.
- The highest concentration of counties with rising female death rates is clustered in historically impoverished regions of the Southwest where doctors and clinics are known to write more opioid prescriptions.

Source: Danielle Paquette, *Why death rates among white women are soaring*, Washington Post, 3/5/15; Nan Astone, Steven Marten, Laudan Y. Aron, *Death Rates for US Women Ages 15 to 54: Some Unexpected Trends*, Urban Institute, 3/2015.

## **c. Confidence**

### **i. Speaking While Female: In the Workplace**

- Unlike men, women in the workplace have to strike a delicate balance when it comes to voicing ideas and opinions: “When a woman speaks in a professional setting, she walks a tightrope. Either she’s barely heard or

she's judged as too aggressive. When a man says virtually the same things, heads nod in appreciation for his fine idea. As a result, women often decide that saying less is more."

- A 2014 study by Yale professor Victoria L. Brescoll, found that powerful women are in fact correct in assuming that they will incur backlash as a result of talking more than others—an effect that is observed among both male and female perceivers.
- Within American gender norms is the expectation that women should be modest and it is often seen as violating this "modesty norm" by boasting about one's accomplishments. This fear of violating modesty norms can be a factor in women being less likely to self-promote and speak up in the workplace.
- Women worry that talking "too much" will cause them to be disliked and studies find that they are often right.

Sources: Adam Grant and Sheryl Sandberg, *Speaking While Female*, The New York Times, 1/12/2015; Victoria L. Brescoll, *Who takes the Floor and Why: Gender, Power and Volubility in Organizations*, 12/2011.