International Women?s Day Saturday

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New report suggests violence is an economic barrier for women

MADISON?This Saturday is International Women?s Day, a day that has been celebrated for over one-hundred years to recognize and to further the advancement of women around the world. Advocates for victims of domestic violence are using the occasion to call attention to a new report that links violence against women with economic insecurity. Advocates say ending violence and improving the economic status of women go hand in hand.

The report, *Intimate Partner Violence in the United States* , from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was released in late February. It documents the alarming prevalence of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence in the United States. Advocates say the report is groundbreaking because it is the first nationwide research to explore the context and consequences of domestic violence, and, therefore, it offers a more complete picture of violence?s impact on American women.

?We know women?s economic security and physical security are linked,? said Patti Seger, executive director of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin .

?This report shows that individuals who lack stable access to food and housing experience domestic violence at higher rates,? continued Seger. ?The data also show that women who are victimized are much more likely to have long-term, adverse health consequences, which can multiply economic inequities.?

While the report shows domestic violence affects both women and men, it also highlights that women experience significantly more violence and that domestic violence tends to have deeper and longer lasting consequences for female victims. In addition to experiencing more repeat violence, women were also significantly more likely to report being in danger, being injured, needing medical care, needing housing and missing time from work or school.

?The report confirms that anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, and it reinforces that domestic violence continues to be both a source and a byproduct of women?s inequality in this country,? said Seger. ?Consequently, historically marginalized groups of women bear a disproportionate burden from intimate partner violence.?

For example, the report shows that Black women and multiracial women have a significantly higher lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, compared to White women.

?The challenge of this report is to recognize that women?s safety and equality are indistinguishably connected,? concluded Seger. ?We must continue to advocate for policies and resources that protect and empower all women and that address the present and historic inequalities that women of color experience.?

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