

**SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AT WORK AND AT HOME**



**UNDERSTANDING THEIR HISTORY
AND TAKING BACK OUR POWER**

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Why We Created This Brochure

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"My husband beat me, so I took my son and escaped to the United States. I found a job as a domestic worker. When the husband of my employer grabbed me from behind and squeezed my breasts, I immediately quit. "

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"Of all the abuses in the domestic worker workplace, sexual violence is the one that is less talked about....Why so? Because there is shame, fear of losing a job, retaliation, fear of deportation, language barriers, and ignorance of workplace laws that makes us silent."

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"The son of my client gave me the "N" word and threatened to attack me. I ran out of the house without my shoes on."

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We know that sexual violence can occur anywhere anytime. In this brochure we probe into why this is happening, and why there is no protective shield for many of its victims. We also believe that we can only effectively eradicate sexual violence when we understand what causes and what supports it.

We therefore want to show how sexual violence is tightly interwoven with other kinds of violence. It has deep roots in the history of patriarchy, European colonialism, and racism. We also give suggestions for actions that can contribute to healing, to creating strong relations of support, and to changing our communities.



Note: All quotes in this brochure come from women (and some men) who either spoke privately, who came to a support group, or who spoke publically. Some of the quotes come from various published reports that are all listed in the section of "Supporting Documents." Some of the speakers had given their names while others wanted to remain anonymous. Here we do not include any names but simply allow the voices to speak for many of us.

1. What is Sexual Violence?

"She's really hot - I'm going to fuck her."

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"You think you're better than me - is that why you want my dick?"

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"You're going to give me what I want. I'm sick of this - you're going to get on your knees and you're going to give me what I want."

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We put the actual words of abusers at the beginning because they illustrate the very foundation of sexual violence:

- ◆ ***One person has more power than the other.***
- ◆ ***Sexuality is fully woven into power relations.***
- ◆ ***The perpetrator can use his (or her) sex for demonstrating his (or her) power***
- ◆ ***Sexual demands can be used as a threat, or as a direct means to humiliate the one with little or no power.***

Being afraid of losing one's job, not being paid, or getting seriously hurt if not killed when not giving in to sexual demands makes us vulnerable and powerless. In this brochure we want to translate "vulnerabilities" into forms of social injustice. Injustices can come in many forms, ranging from humiliating gestures, to unwanted sexual touches, to physical sexual assaults. All of them are held together by the use or threat of force and violence.

2. The Difference Between 'Sex,' 'Gender,' and 'Sexuality'

"Sexual violence" is related to "gender-based violence," but refers more specifically to sexual acts between people of any gender. Sexual predators focus on the fact that we all have sexed bodies of one kind or other. Sex, gender, and sexuality are therefore tightly interwoven, but they are not the same.

Sex. When we talk about a person's sex we generally imply certain biological characteristics, such as different genitals, reproductive organs, or hormonal processes. Those differences are typically categorized as "female" or "male." There are biological variations, such as people born with "intersex" characteristics. Nevertheless, our culture keeps insisting on the ultimate "binary" of male and female sex. Sticking to this binary is strongly related to social assumptions that

validate structures of inequality between men and women. These assumptions could not be upheld if we would welcome more varied or flexible sex-gender combinations or expressions.

Gender. When we talk about gender we talk about society's interpretation of sex differences, typically referred to as "feminine" or "masculine." These terms may just refer to the way someone dresses, walks, or behaves, regardless of their particular sex. At the same time, a male person dressing or gesturing "like a woman" may be ridiculed, or treated with contempt. A female person walking or talking "like a man" may be seen as stepping out of her socially assigned place. These negative responses show that our culture expects being female to correspond with being feminine, and male with masculine. People who challenge these assumptions are therefore often met with social contempt, ridicule, or direct physical violence.

The brutal history of the treatment of lesbian, gay or transgender people gives examples of the power of social norms to control how sex, gender, and sexuality are allowed to relate to each other. Stories of violence against people with "non-conforming" gender identities therefore demonstrate that sexuality keeps being defined and accepted in relation to the female/male binary. This is the norm to which we are expected to conform.

Sexuality. Sexuality is a vital force. It touches us, and our bodies, in most intimate ways. It is driven by physical desire and pleasure. It can therefore be expressed or experienced independently from any specific sex or gender.

Where sexuality happens between people whose genitals allow them to reproduce, sexuality can also result in the creation of a child, a new life. A woman becoming pregnant can therefore be a wanted outcome of sexual intercourse. It can also be an unwanted side effect, or it can be the result of rape.

Both of sexuality's vital forces, sexual pleasure and its reproductive capacity, tend to operate under the shadow of patriarchal power and control. It is a power that has transformed the biological differences between male and female bodies into grounds for social hierarchies, and therefore inequalities. Today's patriarchal structures are fully interlinked with global capitalism, which, in turn, is based on European colonialism. The history of patriarchal power and violence is therefore inseparable from the history of violence against entire peoples and their land.

3. Patriarchy, colonialism, racism

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"He called himself White Chocolate. He said that he had a black man's dick."

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Patriarchy. Ancient matriarchal cultures saw the female body's power to give birth to new life as a mandate to create life-affirming cultures. Such a mandate acknowledged the interdependence of all living beings. Biological differences between men and women were therefore not turned into unequal social relations. Instead, supporting life was considered a feminine principle that both, men and women, were equally expected to uphold.

All this changed with the development of patriarchal cultures in different parts of the world. The power to give birth to new life was no longer seen as a mandate for affirming life. Instead, it was seen as a threat to male power. Patriarchy therefore transformed the power to give life into the patriarchal power to control and take life. This included assuming control over female bodies and their capacities by claiming ownership of them and their offspring. The patriarchal right to control is therefore interlinked with the right to own. Owning a human being is by itself a form of violence.

Colonialism. European colonialism started in the 15th century. It is marked by both a patriarchal push for colonizing the European female body, and by a global capitalist move towards colonizing large parts of the world outside of Europe.

The European witch-hunts that peaked in the 16th and 17th century were used as a tool for subordinating and controlling women. At that time women worked as peasants, in trades, in the textile industry, and in crafts. Most importantly, they were doing the work of nursing and healing. Their economic and sexual independence was therefore seen as a threat by the modern patriarchal society that was beginning to emerge at that time. In particular, thousands of midwives and healers were massacred as witches, making space for the development of a white supremacist profession of male doctors.



The patriarchal need to demonize sexual and laboring bodies, and to feel entitled to control and kill, had its counterpart in the European colonies. Spanish colonizers discovered and explored "new" worlds. The riches of these worlds were extracted by forcing the original inhabitants to work on the land, or in mines. All resulting goods were sold on European markets.

In what was to become the southwest of the United States, Spanish colonialists also enslaved members of various Native American tribes. Enslaved women and children were forced to work as maids and house servants. British colonialists saw themselves as the owners of their new world by creating a settler state. They turned the indigenous peoples who had been living there for thousands of years into obstacles to be chased away or killed.

Genocide, and the robbing of land, was not the only form of violence committed by the British colonialists. They became slaveholders, just like the Spanish. They forcefully shipped millions of people from the African continent to the "new world." Most of them were made to work as slaves on the plantations of the south.

The plantation owner was the master who owned everything and everybody. He was also a sexual being that benefitted from his power to use his sexuality in any way he desired. He was, and he acted, as the owner of both his mistress and his slaves.



Racism. White indentured servants and black enslaved people were initially not treated very differently. But when they started to unite and rebel against their masters, the colonizers invented the racial divide between a superior white and an inferior black or "colored" race. Once indentured servants had worked off their servitude, they could feel free and superior to all black people. They were therefore part of the white master race.

The white masters on top of the hierarchy also constructed a racialized sexuality. This construction was very similar to the one describing the sexuality of the witches. Black women as well as men were defined as sexually wild and untamable, just like the witches. This gave legitimacy to the mass rape of women, and later to the lynching of freed black men. In contrast, white

people were presumed to have a “civilized” sexuality, with chaste and pure women on one side, and potent but disciplined men on the other. The master saw sexual relations with his chaste and pure mistress primarily in terms of producing an heir to his wealth. Sexual relations with his slaves, on the other hand, not only gave him a kind of sexual pleasure that was fully intertwined with his lust for having power over a woman. It also gave him the opportunity to create a new slave, and therefore more wealth.

In an uncanny way the sexual violence that followed the field slaves doing the hard labor of planting, cultivating, and harvesting, continues to follow today’s migrant farm workers.¹ They are being raped at an alarming rate by supervisors, or by men holding any kind of power over them.

Both farm and household workers have been seen through a racialized patriarchal lens, and treated accordingly. Not surprisingly, both working populations were excluded from legislation first offered in the 1930s that gave protection, minimum wage, and the right to organize to most other workers. Farm labor was still considered black field labor, and household labor black women’s labor. In fact, African American women comprised the majority of household workers until the 1960s.

¹ See the documentary called “Rape in the Fields.”

4. Workplace Sexual Violence

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"It's gotten to the point where I simply don't talk. I'm almost rude to the men I work with, because.... it's preferable for them to think that I'm cold and a bitch if it means that they won't talk to me. The more I become aware of these things over the years, the more I would feel a clenched fist inside myself...Anytime anything happens, I feel a combination of angry, wounded.... And exhausted."

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"The sexual harassment was ...happening every day, all the time. It was an environment that was tense, dirty, and gross....There was constant terror and fear."

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"I felt like an object. I felt worthless. And I feel that the fact that I am a Latina woman had a role in this."

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"You're the one that doesn't have power, and no one is going to believe you. You need to do the immediate thing, which is to save face so you don't lose the job because you need the job so you have money."

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"I was so lost, afraid, and realizing that I had children to care for."

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Women's work. The notion of "women's work" originated in the social separation of a public and a domestic sphere. This separation was inseparable from the patriarchal-capitalist ideal of a white middle or upper class where the man of the house made enough money to keep his wife and children at home. Black men's wages hardly ever allowed black families to live this ideal. Where white women opted for pursuing a life of leisure rather than doing housework, or where they wanted to have a job outside the house, they were still in charge of raising the children and maintaining the household. But they could transfer these responsibilities to a hired nanny or housekeeper.

A large percentage of nannies, housecleaners, and caregivers are women of color, both immigrant or native-born. Women's work is therefore itself divided along the lines of race, class, and immigration status.

Household labor has a long history of total lack of protection against exploitation and abuse. Many of today's household workers experience conditions that are similar to forced labor conditions under slavery. Racist constructions blend with hostile perceptions of immigrant populations, presumably legitimizing, just like in the past, labor exploitation and state violence in the form of police brutality, mass incarcerations, and detentions.

As reported in "From Protection to Punishment":

For many survivors, the experiences of domestic violence, rape, and other forms of gender violence are bound up with systems of incarceration and police violence. According to the ACLU, nearly 60% of people in women's prison nationwide, and as many as 94% of some women's prison populations, have a history of physical or sexual abuse before being incarcerated. Once incarcerated or detained, many women (including trans women) and trans & gender non-conforming people experience sexual violence from guards and others. Being controlled by police, prosecutors, judges, immigration enforcement, homeland security, detention centers, and prisons is often integrated with the experience of domestic violence and sexual assault. This is especially true for Black, Native, and immigrant survivors.

Due to "neoliberal" global economic developments, household labor has become one of the primary areas of employment for immigrant women. The "liberal" refers to "free trade agreements" where big corporations are free to trade across borders, without restrictions that could impede profitmaking. The north-south divide had already set the stage for more powerful countries, such as the U.S., to pressure poorer countries into privatizing public enterprises, eliminating any governmental subsidies, and removing

environmental or labor protections that would threaten a corporation's financial gains.

Because free trade agreements most negatively affect countries of the former colonies, neoliberalism has also been named "neocolonialism." The growing poverty in these countries, the destruction of their natural resources, and political unrest have all led to the migration of millions of people to the north in search of livelihoods.

Workers as sexual bodies

"They're showing us how small and insignificant we are and how our bodies aren't ours. Even our ear canals aren't ours."

"They treat workers like they are property."

The patriarchal sense of entitlement is inseparable from a sense of ownership of women's sexual bodies. It can be expressed in a variety of forms, depending on how public or private the place is where it occurs, what kinds of limits are publicly set and enforced, and to what extent they can be ignored. As documented in a number of reports, hotel rooms, the home-workplace of a household worker, or an empty office building at night, all tend to give permission to the abuser to go all the way, ranging from the abuser's self-exposure, to squeezing his victim's body parts, to rape.

Ownership can be more directly expressed in private settings. Where the place becomes more public, like in a restaurant, customers may have to limit themselves to verbal come-ons, or to engaging in unwanted sexual touches. Due to servers' financial dependence on tips, they have to endure what according to many managers "just comes with the job." Customers' sense of ownership is therefore not only fed by the power of their wallets, but also by the alleged "normalcy" of sexually abusive behavior.

In other workplaces a supervisor can use his power over a worker's job as a bargaining chip for letting the worker keep her job, or for allowing her to move up in the ranks, as long as she gives him "sexual favors."

Co-workers can also display a collective sense of male power. They express this power by subjecting women workers to a daily barrage of sexual comments and threats. The violent undertone of male bonding becomes particularly strong in workplaces dominated by men. The women are not free to resist or complain, or if they do, they may have to pay devastating consequences, including losing their jobs.²

In all cases, female bodies are first of all seen as sexual bodies. And the more powerless and vulnerable they are, the easier it is for the abuser to harass or assault them.

² See "How Tough Is It to Change a Culture of Harassment."

According to various national and local studies, more than three fourth of low-wage workers are women, with at least a third of them women of color.

Not surprisingly, women in low-wage, precarious jobs therefore have higher rates of sexual harassment than women with some job security and social standing. *The greater a survivor's social marginalization and lack of resources, the greater the attacker's sense of power.*

Here are some numbers about the workers most affected:

- nearly 90% of tipped women restaurant workers,
- 40% of fast food workers in Chicago,
- 8 in 10 farmworkers interviewed in California and Iowa,
- 77% of casino workers, and 58% of hotel housekeepers in Chicago,
- and many, especially live-in workers interviewed in 14 big cities in the U.S.

5. Ownership Sexuality and Domestic Violence

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"They always ask you, 'Why don't you call the police? Why don't you report your husband if he hits you?' The answer is very simple: Because I am afraid. Afraid that they might ask me for my papers, afraid that I'll be accused of being the violent one, afraid of being deported and having my children taken away from me."

★

"One evening I picked him up from work [in my car]....We were low on gas, and he said, 'If we run out of gas I will kill you.'" He kept threatening me, and I tried to jump out of the car. He grabbed a pair of scissors and stabbed me in the hip as I held onto the wheel. When we got home, he took me into the garage....He raped me over his car and then took all of my money. Inside the house, he forced me to lie on the carpet while he lay down on the couch. He said, 'Don't get blood on the carpet.' ³

The Home. The home can be a refuge, a place of safety, and a place of love. But it can also be a place of violence. Today there exist numerous social agencies and community organizations that assist victims of "domestic violence." This term covers sexual as well as

³ As reported in "From Protection to Punishment," Kate shot her abuser when he tried to strangle her. She was sentenced to 8 1/3 to 25 years in prison, and served 17 of them before being released.

other forms of violence among family members, including all forms of violence suffered by children.

The meaning of "domestic" is fully embedded in the development of the modern Western model of the "nuclear family." Capitalist private property relations joined with the patriarchal sense of entitlement to control and own women and children. Together they formed the foundation of the white middle-class ideal of the stay-at-home mom.

Ownership sexuality. Considering the wife as the husband's property almost automatically weaves sexual violence into the very texture of the nuclear family.

Originally the husband was the official head of household, and therefore the ruler of the house. He was entitled to combine the financial power of his wallet with the patriarchal power to demand that his wife serve all his needs, sexual ones included. Although some laws and policies changed over time, it was not until the end of the 20th century when all U.S. states finally acknowledged "marital rape" as a punishable crime. This did, however, not erase the deeply entrenched social norms that support the patriarchal sense of ownership. A patriarchal ownership sexuality and domestic violence are joined at the hip. They therefore affect all women, regardless of color or class.

In 2005 an average of three women were murdered every day by an intimate partner.



Women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner related physical assaults and rapes every year.



Young women, low-income women and some minorities are disproportionately victims of domestic violence.



African American women face higher rates of domestic violence than white women, and Native American women are victimized at a rate more than double that of women of other races.



86% of women in jail are sexual-violence survivors.

⁴ From "Violence Against Women in the United States: Statistics," and "86 Percent of Women in Jail are Sexual-Violence Survivors."

Where men have no social power, where they are socially mistreated or economically exploited, they may see women's vulnerability as a last resort for proving their manliness. But we cannot ignore the use of patriarchal violence by simply explaining that men robbed of any other outlet for their need for power tend to take it out on their woman. Regardless of the color, class, or financial resources of a perpetrator, it is precisely his sense of power and ownership we need to denounce and fight against.

This means we need to change the rape culture into a culture based on dignity and respect. As Tarana Burke, the founder of the "Me Too" movement said,

This sexual violence is so pervasive that it's not just about individual monsters who are rising up. It's about a culture that's been created that allows these men, and women, and whatever perpetrators to behave in the way that they do. And so...I think when we individualize it and start talking about how these individuals are bad people, then it takes away from theculture that's created that allows these people to do what they do.⁵

⁵ In "Farmworkers, Domestic Workers & Women in Low-Wage Jobs Face Challenges Reporting Sexual Assault."

6. Healing Ourselves and Our Communities

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"It just was way, way, way, way too much. Each time that I was taking it, again and again, it just felt like more of me diminishing, just getting smaller until it was just like a shell of a person."

Healing is a long and complicated process. We need courage, and we also need the support of friends, family members, or counselors. Most importantly, we need a safe space for breaking our silence.

As survivors we know that it is one of the biggest challenges to let go of feelings of shame and defeat. Sharing stories is therefore a big step forward in our healing journey. It shows us that we are not alone, that others have similar experiences. Most importantly, sharing stories also shows us that we are in no way to be blamed for what happened. And we are bound to learn more about how larger cultural patterns underlie individual abusers' violent actions.

The workers who came to a support group for survivors of workplace sexual violence sometimes told stories about being sexually accosted at their job while also having to endure a boyfriend or husband's violent outbursts at home. In either place, and regardless of the role of the perpetrator in their private or work lives, they felt physically and emotionally harmed. They came to the group because they wanted to find out about possible legal remedies. But they also wanted to

develop the tools for resisting and putting an end to this violence in their workplace.

One of the participants was either silent or burst into tears when the group gave her space to tell her story about what she experienced at her job. She was not yet ready to talk about it.

All workers expressed a strong need for healing, regardless of where the violence occurred. They named their group "The Survivors." The Survivors had already been working together in their organization. Their participation in the Illinois Domestic Workers' Bill or Rights campaign had given them the opportunity to learn about the history of exclusion from basic labor protection, and how it relates to racial-sexual inequalities. The stage was therefore set from the beginning for moving more easily from sharing personal experiences to analyzing larger structures of social injustice.

Forming a support group for survivors means creating a healing community. It gives us the strength and courage to heal our wounds, and to confront personal and social realities that harm us. It is also a space where we can share ideas about the larger social changes we want to make happen in our communities, and in the society we live in. This means that without everyone recognizing the individual and social harm of patriarchal power and violence, we cannot dismantle it, nor can we create safe and just communities.



An entire community, not only its individual members, suffers from violent actions. Healing our communities includes undoing cultural habits or expectations deeply rooted in patriarchal structures and relations. We therefore have to work with community groups in order to open spaces that invite not only survivors to meet and heal, but also those doing the harm. The ones doing the harm need to be willing to come and talk about their actions while supporting each other in the difficult task of changing patriarchal perceptions and values.

At the same time, we also have to challenge the social institutions and structures that directly support these values, and that condone related violent actions. Our collective efforts have to make changes on the individual, social, and political level.

Sexual violence is a social justice issue. We need a larger social movement that helps transform the patriarchal need for power and control into the power of creating relations of equality between sexes and genders. This is a huge task for which we need to connect with other social justice organizations. We need to learn from as well as educate each other about how patriarchal violence intersects with other kinds of social violence. We start by asking our own community or labor organizations to integrate sexual and gender-based violence into their daily social justice work.

7. Taking Back Our Power

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"This guy says things and it's disgusting and I don't like it, but is it going to make my life worse if I talk to him about it? Is that going to make my job harder, is it going to make me less safe, am I going to endure abuse of a different kind? You're constantly weighing out these things. Not even what battle is worth fighting, but what battle is safe to fight."

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"If one person doesn't stand for everybody, then it's just a continual cycle."

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"When women come together to organize for change, there is something very powerful about that."

Many of us fight back all the time. We want to save face, keep our job so we can feed our children. We have

to be strong, on the alert, and carefully weigh all our options. We therefore use all our strength and all our wits when we engage in these daily battles.

When we want to do more than survive, we can come together and fight for changes. But how can we turn our lives around? How can we keep our jobs while saving face and resisting at the same time? Many of us may be too traumatized, too exhausted, and too afraid to fight back. But that does not mean we are alone. We have compañerxs who encourage and inspire us with their actions.

Fighting for labor rights and protection are clear steps in the direction of making important changes. We can more effectively resist when we have a secure job with a livable wage that does not depend on our silently enduring sexual harassment. But as we know from the "Me Too" movement, higher-level jobs, or a better pay by themselves do not eliminate sexual violence.

Likewise, there exist laws and policies that officially prohibit sexual harassment, or make it a punishable crime when it involves invasive physical contact and bodily harm. The threat of punishment may make some perpetrators more cautious, but by itself it does not erase violent patriarchal perceptions and expectations. It also does not minimize the interlocking of sexual violence with racial and economic discrimination that may make women stay silent rather than accuse a member of a social group already socially stigmatized and mistreated.

The women telling their stories of violence, fear, and shame in the documentary "Rape on the Night Shift" demonstrate that it is possible to overcome fear, and to break the silence that keeps us stifled and in pain. Their stories clearly inspired other workers to engage in collective action. It made California's union for janitors and individual workers push for recognizing sexual violence as a major labor issue, and for including related provisions in contracts with cleaning companies.⁶

The janitors denounced sexual harassment on billboards, organized marches with signs saying "Ya Basta," or blocked intersections carrying a banner that read "End Rape on the Night Shift." They also staged a hunger strike in front of the California State Capitol, pressuring the governor to sign a bill that aimed at curbing sexual harassment in the janitorial industry. As Martha Mejia, one of the janitors and hunger strikers said:

We have made history. I feel very proud that all of us opened up this space and we broke that silence. We made history, being that we are poor, we are humble, we come from the bottom. It doesn't matter what your status is, it doesn't matter the color of your skin – nobody should harm your body because no means no.

⁶ Reported in "A Group of Janitors Started a Movement to Stop Sexual Abuse."

Many household workers also have made history in the fight for the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights that so far passed in nine different states. Its victory in Illinois undoes the explicit exclusion of domestic workers from the Illinois Human Rights Act, and therefore from any protection against sexual violence.

Laws by themselves do not change the actions of abusive employers. But they at least signal that sexual violence against household workers is legally unacceptable. And these laws can also give a signal to worker centers and labor advocacy groups to make their resources available for individual workers' fights, and to provide a space for workers to engage in collective action.

The Chicago Coalition Against Workplace Sexual Violence created "Ending Sexual Violence in the Workplace," a training curriculum for worker centers and community groups. Some worker centers in the Chicago area have been providing this training to their members. Other worker centers have offered support groups for survivors, organized public protests at work sites where workers had been subject to sexual violence, formed women's committees, or involved workers in public theatrical performances of their struggles with and against sexual violence.

Another example of the power of collective action on the local level comes from the cooperation of two unions in Chicago, the Chicago Federation of Labor and

UNITE HERE Local 1, the union for hotel workers. The majority of hotel workers are women of color and immigrants. UNITE HERE surveyed 500 workers and issued a report called "Hands Off Pants On." It describes the widespread sexual abuse faced by hotel housekeepers, and was successfully used in a push for the Chicago City Council to pass an ordinance to protect the workers. The ordinance includes a number of regulations concerning employer responsibilities. Most importantly, it requires employers to provide workers with a "panic button" they can quickly activate to call for immediate assistance.

There are also stories of individual workers taking the initiative to organize other workers, and to push for changes in the restaurant industry. Caroline Richter gives such an example. She worked in a bar in New Orleans, and the fact that sexual harassment was either ignored by managers, or taken rather casually, became a "huge, life-altering event" for her. ⁷ She created an organization called Medusa, the name of a mythical creature who could turn men into stone. The group created guiding principles for restaurants based on a zero-tolerance policy and reporting structure for sexual harassment. In order to ensure that restaurants that had signed on to these principles also implemented them, they created a certification program that offers training about rights, disclosure, and ways of intervening when someone is being harassed.

⁷ Reported in "When Harassment Is the Price of a Job."



The organization of janitors in California also took direct protective measures instead of simply relying on policy changes. Members took self-defense classes and learned to kick, jab, punch, and shout against possible harassers. The organization hosting the training in San Francisco also plans on going to each building where a janitor works in isolation, offer them training, and encourage them to teach what they learned to their co-workers. As Lilia Garcia-Brower, the organization's director said:

We are essentially looking to create an army of female janitors who are committed to go out and talk to as many female janitors as possible so that they too can understand that they have the power within them to defend themselves and society is wrong. And as we go one by one,

one worker at a time, we're going to get there to make that shift.⁸

Learning to defend ourselves together with others not only has a healing power. It also helps us rediscover our own power, and to take it back where it was stolen from us.

Reaching out to each other, to community groups and organizations, and to allies from all walks of life means starting a larger social justice movement. It is a movement that does not put sexual violence on the backburner. It also does not turn it into "just a gender issue," therefore of interest only to women. Sexual violence fully intersects with other social justice concerns. It is rooted in a patriarchal power that harms our bodily integrity, and that destroys life. And that's why we have to create a culture where relations are rebuilt in a way that affirms life, and that embraces gender variations that do not conform to a rigid binary. Such a changed culture will therefore support relations where sexuality is no longer a weapon of harm and destruction, but rather an expression of affirming and celebrating life.

⁸ From "A Group of Janitors Started a Movement to Stop Sexual Abuse."



8. Supporting Documents

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9. Referrals

There are many resources in the Chicago area for survivors of sexual violence, offering a broad spectrum of assistance and services. They range from individual counseling of adult or child survivors, offering support groups, to providing legal or medical assistance.

These organizations and advocacy groups may primarily address domestic or intimate partner violence. We therefore also list some workers centers that have been focusing more specifically on workplace sexual violence. Some offer direct services, such as support groups, others may be most helpful in giving you reliable referrals.

Depending on your particular need for help, or the location of the agency or workers center, contacting one of them may be a good start. It may help you finding out where to go for assistance, what informal or formal steps to take to document and resist the abuse, where and how to obtain legal or medical help, and how to start the healing process.

For a more extensive and descriptive list of resources you may consult the Latino Union Website <https://www.latinounion.org/> and click on the link to "Resources for Survivors of Sexual Violence."

Hotlines

Chicago's Domestic Violence Help Line

1-877-863-6338 (voice) or

1-877-863-6339 (TTY).

Illinois Sexual Harassment Hotline

1- 877-236-7703

Rape Crisis Hotlines

Chicago Metropolitan Area hotline: 1-888-293-2080

DuPage County hotline: (630) 971-3927

South Suburbs hotline: (708) 748-567

National Human Trafficking Hotline:

1-888-373-7888

Community Service Providers

Apna Ghar 4350 N Broadway, Chicago, IL 60613

Office: (773) 883-4663

Crisis Line: (773) 334-4663

or (800) 717-07171 for out of state calls

Centro Romero 6216 N Clark, Chicago, IL 60660

(773) 508-5300

Chicago Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)

1240 S. Damen Ave., Chicago, IL 60608

(312) 492 3700

To report abuse in Illinois: 1-800-252-2873

Outside of Illinois: 1-800-422-4453

Family Rescue

9204 S. Commercial Ave., Suite 401, Chicago, IL 60617

Office: (773) 375-1918

24-Hour Crisis Line: 1-800-360-6619, or (773) 375-8400;

TTY (773) 375-8774

Hana Center

4300 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618

(773) 583-5501

Howard Brown Health

4025 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60613

Office: (773) 388-1600

Violence Recovery Project for LGBTQ people:

(773) 388-8882

KAN-WIN P.O. Box 25644, Chicago IL 60625

24-Hour Hotline: (773) 583-0880

(773) 583-1392 (Chicago Office)

(847) 299-1393 (Park Ridge IL Office)

Mujeres Latinas en Acción

2124 West 21st Place, Chicago, IL 60608

(773) 890-7676

Pillars Community Health

6918 W. Windsor Ave., Berwyn, IL 60402

Office: (708) 745-5277

Domestic Violence Hotline: (708) 485-5254

Sexual Assault Hotline: (708) 482-9600

Resilience 180 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 600, Chicago, IL 60601

Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline: 1-888-293-2080

Central Office: (312) 443-9603

Resilience also has an Austin Community and a Northside Office; call the central office # to make an apt.

YWCA Metro Chicago

1 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1150, Chicago, IL 60602

(Administrative Office) (312) 762-2743

YMCA has other locations in the south suburban, south, near west, west/northwest, and west suburban.

Main Number: (866) 525-9922

Agencies that offer primarily legal assistance:

Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

307 N Michigan Ave., Suite 1818, Chicago. IL 60607

(773) 244-2230 ext, 204

Legal Assistance Foundation (LAF)

120 S. LaSalle St., Suite 900, Chicago, IL 60603

(312) 341-1070

Metropolitan Family Services /Victim Legal Assistance Network

Intake Line: (312) 986-4200

National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-3737-880

Workers' Centers

Centro de Trabajadores Unidos: United Workers' Center

9546 S. Ewing Ave, Chicago, IL 60617

(773) 297-3370

Immigrant workers

Chicago Community and Workers Rights

2801 S. Hamlin Ave., Chicago, IL 60623

(773) 653 -3664

All workers fighting for labor rights and just living conditions

Chicago Workers Collaborative

37 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60607

(312) 847-5185

Temp Workers

Latino Union 4811 N. Central Park Ave., Chicago, IL 60625

(312) 491-9044

Day laborers and household workers

Warehouse Workers for Justice

37 S. Ashland Ave, 1st floor, Chicago, IL 60607 ;

1 Doris Ave., Joliet, IL 60433

(815) 722-5003

Temp and warehouse workers

Workers Center for Racial Justice

2929 S. Wabash, Suite 205, Chicago, IL 60616

(312) 361-116

Marginalized Black workers

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We want to give special thanks to all the household workers who contributed to this brochure. They had formed a support group for survivors of sexual violence at home and at the workplace. They met regularly in a safe space and shared their stories. They also made numerous suggestions for providing workshops, information, and resources that would not only help survivors, but also contribute to a sense of collective power, and to preventing future experiences of sexual violence. All their ideas, experiences, and suggestions are reflected in this brochure.

We also want to thank Latino Union who provided that space, and our long-term volunteer Mechthild Hart whose efforts and dedication helped create this brochure.

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www.latinounion.org