



# Orange Day: Say no to Violence

**November  
25th**

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## The Continuous Importance of Raising Awareness to Stop Violence against Women

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Each year, November 25th marks Orange Day, which is dedicated to take action on violence against women globally. Orange Day starts of 16 days of activism. This year's theme is "Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!" (UNwomen n.d.). The campaign is essential to spread the message and say no to violence against women! Unfortunately, violence against women is still very apparent. Gender-based violence is one of the issues where women and girls face the majority of violence compared to men and boys. Furthermore, there is often a strong correlation between substance abuse and violence against women.

*It is, therefore, of utmost importance to be aware of violence against women in general, gender-based violence, and the relation with substance abuse to stop the negative pattern.*

Gender-based violence (GBV) defines structural, physical, sexual, or psychological violence imposed on the basis of a person's gender (Alderton, et al. 2020). GBV includes, and is not limited to, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, sex-based harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and online violence (European Commission n.d.). The impact of gender-based violence on a victim is immense. Those that experience intimate partner violence are mostly women and often "have poorer health outcomes, including both fatal and non-fatal injury as a result of violence; and increased incidence of: HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; induced abortion; low birth weight babies and pre-term births; drug and alcohol use; including increased risk of suicide attempts; and depression"(Alderton, et al. 2020). WHO published a report in 2013 estimating that "one in three women have experienced either intimate partner violence (physical or sexual) or non-partner sexual violence" (Ibid). Yet, in many countries these statistics are even higher and do not include the immense forms of violence, such as psychological or economic violence.

The graphic features a red background with a stylized illustration of a woman's silhouette in shades of orange and yellow. Her arms are crossed over her chest, and a large, bold white 'X' is superimposed over the entire scene. The text 'Orange Day: Say no to Violence' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the top. In the bottom right corner, the date 'November 25th' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

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Generally, women and girls are considerably more likely to experience forms of gender-based violence compared to men and boys. Even more so during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

*Some countries have experienced an increase between 10% to 50% in domestic violence helpline calls during the lockdown.*

UN Women has named this increase of violence against women during the pandemic, the “Shadow Pandemic” (UN Women 2020). The issue, in general, is already underreported, but has decreased due to fewer possibilities to make a report instances of violence during lockdown. Lockdown measures have rendered women and children locked in with their perpetrators, oftentimes even more financially bound and with little no possibility to report to the police or social services. Yet, a decrease in reported incidents does not accurately mirror reality. In, for example, the Hubei province in China, an increase of three times in intimate partner violence report has been reported (World Health Organization 2020).

These numbers are shocking yet not surprising.

*A lockdown is a perfect opportunity for a violator to execute violence and control unnoticed due to the restricted movement and isolation of the victim.*

Intimate partner violence is oftentimes spiked by substance abuse and is, therefore, another risk. During the pandemic, alcohol consumption has seen an increase of 84,4% (Acosta 2020).

In general, there is a proven correlation between substance use and addiction, such as alcohol, and gender-based violence. Overall, addiction and domestic violence have several characteristics in common. Both cause a loss of control, continuation of a behaviour despite its consequences, both tend to worsen over time, and both involve denial or shame (Juergens 2020). In general, verbal, followed by physical, abuse towards women is caused after alcohol use lowers ones self-consciousness and judgement (Kaithuru 2015). When looking specifically at domestic violence, which falls under GBV, about 92% of the reported cases involve substance abuse, mostly alcohol.

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*Yet, “stimulants such as cocaine, crack cocaine, and amphetamines are also frequently involved in episodes of domestic violence by reducing impulse control and increasing paranoid feelings” (Zilberman and Blume 2005).*

Simultaneously, alcohol and drugs are often used by women to cope with the physical and mental pain involved in situations of domestic abuse. The use of substances by both, the violator and the victim, increases the risk to violence. Not only due to the violator being more aggressive but also the victim having more difficulty to determine how much danger they are actually in when under influence. Also, they will most likely have a harder time to defend themselves or be able to call for help during a violent attack (Juergens 2020). Furthermore, a study reported that women sensed that the violence against them was related to the perception of their “low social states, increased perceived availability, their partner’s substance use, their own verbal aggression under the influence of crack and alcohol, and conflicts related to seeking and splitting drugs” (Zilberman and Blume 2005). In general, we have to be wary of the danger that domestic abuse becomes a vicious cycle, since the victim might not report the violent attack due to their fear that their partner will “physically, emotionally, or financially retaliate” (Juergens 2020).

Therefore, gender-based violence needs to be placed into the spotlight, support needs to be offered to the victims, people need to be educated on violence, and we need to work on the negative norms.

*It is time that society starts seeing violence against women not as a “women’s issue” but as the Global Health Crisis that it is.*

Society needs to take this seriously and show that we do not stand idly by while women’s human rights are being violated. We need to Fund, Respond, Prevent, and Collect and keep on fighting against violence against women.

The graphic features a stylized illustration of a person with dark hair and a beard, wearing an orange shirt. The person's arms are crossed over their chest. The background is a solid red color. The text 'Orange Day: Say no to Violence' is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font across the top. In the bottom right corner, the text 'November 25th' is written in a smaller, bold, white sans-serif font.

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