

Assumptions about Violence

◆ Violence is pervasive and takes many forms.

It is important to see the whole range of violence in one picture – including state and individual, public and private. Violence includes childhood sexual, emotional, and physical violence; "domestic" violence and stalking; rape and the threat of rape in the public sphere; dangerous working conditions, state-sanctioned violence. Racism, ableism, homophobia, poverty, sexism, and other oppressions are violent and foster further violence.

◆ Different forms of violence are intertwined.

All kinds of violence build upon each other in one person's experience. When a woman is made vulnerable by one form of oppression, each additional violence has increased impact and deepens the first violation.

◆ Violence affects all of us.

All women are vulnerable to and shaped by the presence of violence. Whether or not we experience life-threatening violence directly, we all live with the possibilities of violence, and all women, and many marginalized men, are diminished daily by society's acceptance of violence.

◆ Violence is institutionally supported.

Violence is not only perpetrated by individuals, it is also systemic. The institutions and systems of society support and allow violence to continue. When a court gives a suspended sentence to an abusive husband, when the limitations of welfare leave a woman trapped with an abusive partner, when the only jobs available in a racist, sexist society do not allow a woman to afford safe transportation, daycare or accommodation, institutions are perpetuating violence.

◆ Institutions harm; we all participate in those institutions.

We cannot avoid participating in institutions that perpetuate the violence our society supports.