



# UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

## Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Presenter: Jimmie Briggs, Co-founder and Executive Director Emeritus, Man Up Campaign

### Lesson Description

Gender-based violence is a global epidemic. It crosses every social and economic class, ethnicity, race, religion, and education level and transcends international borders. This lesson covers the facts and consequences surrounding violence against women and girls, the responsibility that men have in preventing gender-based violence, and the necessary and practical approaches to ending it.

### Lesson Objectives

1. To define violence against women and girls.
2. To examine the impact of the phenomenon on individuals, communities and nations.
3. To identify actions to address the issue.
4. To explore the connectedness of violence against women and girls with other social issues.

### Discussion Questions

According to U.N. Women, violence against women causes more death and disability for women and girls between the ages of 15 and 44 than do cancer, traffic accidents, malaria and war combined. Worldwide, an estimated 1 in 3 women will be physically or sexually abused in her lifetime, and 1 in 5 will experience rape or attempted rape. In some places, especially in conflict zones, these statistics are even higher. This violence doesn't only affect women and girls: It threatens entire communities, precludes economic growth, and fuels cycles of violence and conflict.

1. Gender-based violence is rooted in traditional roles given to men and women in society. These roles are not based on facts or truths of physical or mental ability. What are some of the beliefs about the roles and abilities of men and women that are used to keep women and girls marginalized in your community? Challenge your assumptions — discuss your own beliefs about women and girls, specifically ways that you perceive women being “less than” a man in regard to certain actions or issues. In what ways do you perceive “manliness” or traditional roles that are supposedly reserved for men? How were these perceptions formed in your mind? What do you do when you witness someone engaged in gender-based violence or the denial of a woman's or girls' right to make individual choices? When do you speak out and when do you stay silent?

2. Violence against women and girls is a fundamental breach of women and girls' human rights, particularly their right to a life free from fear and violence. Violence against women and girls should not be condoned, tolerated or perpetuated. In addition to changing attitudes and behaviors, providing a safe space for women and girls to escape violence, as well as providing emotional support, is critical to their recovery. How can individuals and groups create safe and effective ways to support those dealing with gender-based violence?

3. Gender-based violence, as Jimmie Briggs notes, is “tragically normalized.” A boy who sees female members of his family constrained because of their gender is more likely to adopt those practices as an adult. A mother who was not permitted to go to school may think it is unnecessary for her daughter. In what ways can intergenerational biases against women and girls be addressed and eliminated?

### Developmental Action

1. Educate yourself! Research in more detail the specific issues raised in this course. Identify personal development goals to raise self-awareness and alter any personal behaviors that perpetuate gender bias.
2. Develop a messaging campaign around the premise that “real men don't abuse women.”
3. Collaborate with Network members to think of ways to support victims of gender-based violence.

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**About the presenter:** Jimmie Briggs is executive director emeritus and co-founder of Man Up Campaign, a global movement to engage youth to end gender-based violence and advance gender equality. Briggs is a journalist, lecturer and educator. He has served as an adjunct professor of investigative journalism at the New School for Social Research and was a George A. Miller Visiting Professor in the Department of African and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana.

