

*Women's Rights International  
and  
The Women's Health & Development Program*

## **Violence Against Women in War**

Workshop I: Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women



***A Manual for Training  
Certified Midwives in Liberia***

*To all women victims of violence, especially the women of Liberia,  
and those who support them with love and care.*

This manual is the result of a collaboration between Women's Rights International of the Tides Center, and the Women's Health and Development Program at Mother Patern College of Health Sciences, Don Bosco Polytechnic.

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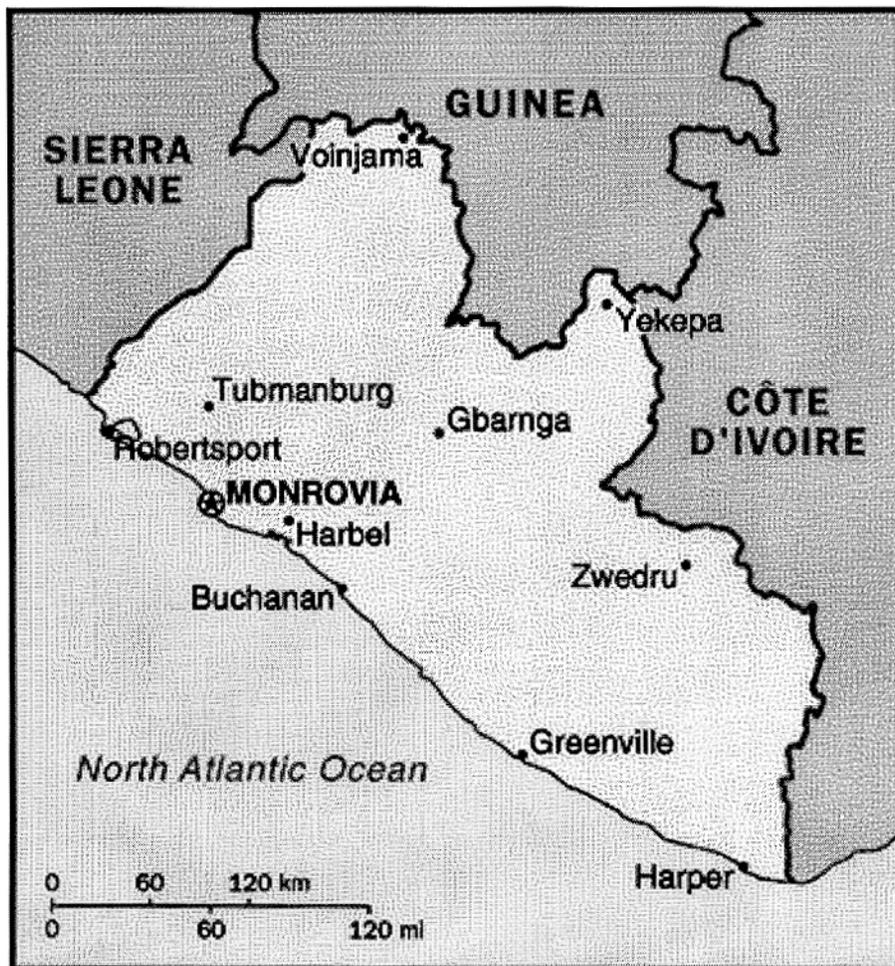
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# *Workshop I*

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## Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women



### *A Facilitator's Manual*

## CONTENTS

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>   | <b>1</b>      |
| The Use Of The Manual .....  | 1             |
| Criteria For Selecting Certified Midwives.....   | 2             |
| Guidelines For Setting Up The Awareness Workshop.....                                    | 2             |
| Guidelines For Participants.....   | 2             |
| How To Use The Stories And Discussion Questions.....                                     | 3             |
| Guidelines For Leading The Group Discussions: .....                                      | 3             |
| Find Your Own Answer (WHDP’s Approach).....  | 4             |
| Unit I: Introduction And Expectations .....  | 5             |
| <b>Activity I: In-depth Introduction.....</b>  | <b>5</b>      |
| <b>Activity II: Expectations .....</b>   | <b>5</b>      |
| <br><b>CHAPTER 2: ETHICS FOR CERTIFIED MIDWIVES.....</b>                                 | <br><b>6</b>  |
| Purpose .....  | 6             |
| Unit I: Secret Keeping (Confidentiality) .....   | 6             |
| <b>Activity I: Group Discussion.....</b>   | <b>6</b>      |
| <b>Activity II: Role Play or Story: "The Girl who was Gang Raped" (Secret Keeping).6</b> | <b>6</b>      |
| <b>Activity III: Group Discussion: Secret Keeping.....</b>                               | <b>7</b>      |
| <b>Activity IV: Blindfold Game (Trust Building).....</b>                                 | <b>7</b>      |
| <b>Activity V: Role Play or Story: "Mind Your Mouth" .....</b>                           | <b>8</b>      |
| <b>Activity VI: The Rope Game (Trust Building).....</b>                                  | <b>10</b>     |
| Unit II: Judgements, Stereotypes, Prejudice.....   | 11            |
| <b>Activity I: Discussion on Tribes (Prejudice and Stereotype).....</b>                  | <b>11</b>     |
| <b>Activity II: Role Play or Story: "Sis Kaly" (Being Judgemental).....</b>              | <b>12</b>     |
| <b>Activity III: Role Play or Story: "Bassa and Kpelle" (Being Judgemental).....</b>     | <b>13</b>     |
| <br><b>CHAPTER 3: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN .....</b>                                       | <br><b>14</b> |
| Purpose .....  | 14            |
| Unit I: Violence Against Women.....  | 14            |
| <b>Activity I: Group Discussion.....</b>   | <b>14</b>     |
| <b>Activity II: Role Play or Story: "Tenneh and Her Problems" .....</b>                  | <b>15</b>     |
| <b>Activity III: Story: “The Marriage That Turned Cold” .....</b>                        | <b>16</b>     |
| <b>Activity IV: Group Discussion: Weapons of Violence .....</b>                          | <b>19</b>     |
| <b>Activity V: Courtroom Drama: Story on Kaymah's Trouble .....</b>                      | <b>19</b>     |
| <b>Activity VI: Story: "The Neglected Wife" .....</b>                                    | <b>20</b>     |
| <b>Activity VII: Group Discussion: Fraternal Twins .....</b>                             | <b>22</b>     |
| Unit II: Response To Violence.....   | 23            |
| <b>Activity I: Story: "Because of My Children".....</b>                                  | <b>23</b>     |
| <b>Activity II: Story: "The Unforgettable Lesson" .....</b>                              | <b>24</b>     |
| <b>Activity III: Additional Stories .....</b>  | <b>25</b>     |
| <b>Activity IV: Group Discussion: Definition of Violence Against Women.....</b>          | <b>28</b>     |
| Unit III: Role Of Women.....   | 29            |
| <b>Activity I: Group Discussion.....</b>   | <b>29</b>     |
| <b>Activity II: Poem: "Ain't I A Woman?" by Sojourner Truth.....</b>                     | <b>29</b>     |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Since the civil crisis in Liberia, based on small group discussions and a survey<sup>1,2</sup> carried out by the staff of the Women's Health and Development Program (WHDP) we know that violence against women is a huge problem and has many health consequences. During the war, women were mainly responsible for the care of the family, as a result, they were exposed to and experienced violence including rape. These experiences pose tremendous health problems for women which include but are not limited to women feeling constantly sick, teenage pregnancy, septic abortion, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, among others.

Cultural background and traditional beliefs make it difficult for most women to talk openly about these violations or violent experiences that they have encountered. The issue of violence against women is not a common thing that women talk about in Liberia. The WHDP has started a program that uses a new approach with health workers to discover what violence is, that violence is a health issue with its own consequences, and that women need to find their own solution for it. We want to create a way that women can trust each other and share their problems with each other and be able to do something together about their problems. The WHDP approach encourages women to look at violence in their own way, to see there is a problem, and see how they themselves can find a solution to that problem together.

The purpose of this Workshop for Certified Midwives (CMs), "Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women" is to bring about awareness on the issues of violence in the participants' lives as women living in a community. Before female health workers can begin to address violence against women, they must first have an understanding of what violence is and how it affects their own and other women's lives.

### THE USE OF THE MANUAL

This facilitator's manual is to be used by health workers who are already trainers of traditional midwives. They need to have participated in a Training for Transformation Workshop as well as two workshops for certified midwives (Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women, and Working with Communities on Violence Against Women). After completing these workshops, health workers will complete an apprenticeship with the staff of the Women's Health and Development Program where they lead a Workshop on Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women with a group of traditional midwives using the Raising Awareness Manual on Violence Against Women for Traditional Midwives.

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<sup>1</sup>"Survey on Women's Experiences During War and Primary Health Care Needs." Women's Rights International, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA; and Mother Patern College of Health Sciences, Monrovia, Liberia.

<sup>2</sup> Swiss, S., & Jennings, P. J., Aryee G. V., Brown G. H., Jappah-Samukai R. M., Kamara M. S., Schaack R. D. H., Turay-Kanneh R. S. (1998). Violence against women in the Liberian civil conflict. *Journal of the American Medical Association.*, 279, 625-629.

This Workshop for Certified Midwives, "Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women," helps CMs discover and understand violence against women in their own lives and in their communities. This Workshop does not train certified midwives to work with traditional midwives on the issues of violence. The Raising Awareness Workshop (Workshop I) is a prerequisite to participating in the Working with Communities Workshop (Workshop II) and the apprenticeship with WHDP, which complete the training for the CM to work with Traditional Midwives on issues of violence.

### **CRITERIA FOR SELECTING CERTIFIED MIDWIVES**

1. They should be interested in the topic.
2. They must have worked with traditional midwives or women in the community in rural areas.
3. They must be willing to work in rural areas.
4. They must be at least 35 years old.
5. They must be respected members of the community.

### **GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP THE AWARENESS WORKSHOP**

1. The Awareness Discussions should be held in a quiet place where there is not much distraction.
2. There should be between 8-12 participants. This number allows participants to share freely and fully during the discussion, helps to build trust and ensure confidentiality, and allows the Workshop Facilitator to guide the discussions so that everyone can participate.
3. Duration of CM Awareness Workshop should be two weeks (10 working days).

### **GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS**

1. Everyone should attend the workshop until the end.
2. Listen to what people have to say here, even if you don't agree. Give each other the chance to end what she is saying.
3. Stress the importance of secret keeping in the group now and throughout the discussion. This helps create trust. You should emphasize the importance that everything that is said here should remain here.

4. Discourage participants from taking notes. It is important not to take notes so that everyone feels free to talk. Also emphasize the importance of listening. The mind does not comprehend all that is said if one is writing because the mind at that time has two things to concentrate on.
5. Encourage everyone to share their experiences and things they feel comfortable sharing with others. During this time the facilitator should stress that it is not compulsory that you share even though it is important that everyone has something to say. It is hoped that as time goes on, those who did not share will be willing to share with the group.

## **HOW TO USE THE STORIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. These stories were created by WHDP staff to portray what happens to women in real life. They do not portray the story of any one individual woman.
2. There may be more than one story on a particular topic in a section. The Workshop Facilitator may use one or more stories, depending on the flow of the discussion.
3. The stories can be told or role-played. When telling one of the stories, make it as close as possible to real life. Use names and characters from the region that the participants can identify with. Be sure to let the participants know that these stories are made-up and do not tell any one woman's story.
4. Read the story before the workshop so that you can be familiar with it and tell it instead of reading it.
5. There are a number of discussion questions at the end of each story. Make sure you are familiar with the questions after the story so that the women don't take you away from the story during the discussion.
6. If a question after the story does not generate a discussion, continue with the other questions and come back to that question and try again.
7. Some questions are specific to the story and some are more general to what happens in real life. Avoid dwelling on the story during the discussion questions. The main idea is to relate the story to their real life situations. Help keep participants on track of the specific question that was asked.

## **GUIDELINES FOR LEADING THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS:**

1. Participants should be seated in a circle.
2. Facilitator should only lead the discussion and give more talking time to the participants. Facilitator may share her own personal experience briefly to encourage others to share.

3. If Facilitator does not understand a parable or what someone has said, ask a question for more information or clarification. Do not paraphrase.
4. Facilitator should not use participants' personal stories as examples.
5. If someone who has been participating in the discussions becomes very quiet and stops participating, ask them what happened that they are no longer talking.
6. At the end of the Awareness Workshop, the Workshop Facilitators will select the CM participants who will participate in the Working with Communities Workshop. Facilitators should observe the CM participants in this workshop for:
  - a. their interaction with other participants, i.e., sharing experiences, response to issues raised during the discussions, and understanding of concepts.
  - b. those whose responses encourage others to share their feelings and experiences with the group.
  - c. those who grasp the concepts well.
7. Be mindful that there are negative responses as well:
  - a. a prolonged reaction to personalizing an issue raised during the discussion which is held onto until the end of the workshop.
  - b. blaming the victim and justifying why these things happen to her.

### **FIND YOUR OWN ANSWER (WHDP'S APPROACH)**

1. We bring women together in small groups and try to create an atmosphere where women can talk freely about their problem and find solution through discussion.
2. We do this by telling stories and asking a lot of questions to help you find your own answer.

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**UNIT I: INTRODUCTION AND EXPECTATIONS**

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**Activity I: In-depth Introduction**

The participants should know that when they share, it sometimes makes them feel good or feel worse for some time. Let them know also that they can share some good experiences as well. Facilitator should know that while sharing participants may break down and cry, let them cry, don't interfere, don't give advise, don't allow another person to take over while she is crying and don't ask her outside. The facilitator should stress the aims and objectives of the program and its limitation. Tell them exactly what you can do and what you can not do. Let the women understand that it is important to stay through out the discussion, and no one has complete power over another person's opinion. Everyone has their own unique experience and so people's opinions should be respected and discussed.

Guidelines

The in-depth introduction should be done by both the facilitator and the participants while they are seated in a circle. This form of introduction helps people to know one another better so that they can interact well. To start, let the facilitator introduce herself first, when she finishes then she can open the floor for anyone to continue with the introduction. Encourage everyone to say a little about herself, stress the importance of secret keeping at this point again and be specific about the following:

- Name
- Age
- Where she's from and her tribe
- What she does and profession
- How she started the work she is doing now
- Marital status
- Number of children
- Her likes and dislikes

**Activity II: Expectations**Discussion Questions

1. What do they want to achieve from the discussion?
2. What made you interested in coming?
3. What benefit do you think you will get from the program and how will it benefit your community?

## CHAPTER 2

### ETHICS FOR CERTIFIED MIDWIVES

#### PURPOSE

1. To work with Certified Midwives to emphasize the importance of secret keeping.
2. To consider the possible effects of jumping to conclusions and judging a person based on the group or tribe she belongs to.

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#### UNIT I: SECRET KEEPING (CONFIDENTIALITY)

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##### Activity I: Group Discussion

###### Discussion Question

What comes to your mind or what is meant by secret keeping? (What is secret keeping?)

##### Activity II: Role Play or Story: "The Girl who was Gang Raped" (Secret Keeping)

Once there was a girl living with her mother. She grew up into a beautiful girl. The girl and her parents remained in their village until the other village engaged them in a tribal fight. Everybody scattered and the girl found herself in the bush alone. While in the bush she was raped by three of the fighters from the other village.

When things started to quiet down, the girl went to the oldest Zoe who was her aunt. The aunt made medicine for her and told her she will be okay. Few days later the girl started to hear news of the rape in the town. She became confused as to how it spread. The girl was forced to leave the village because of the shame and disgrace she felt.

###### Discussion Questions

1. Explain what you hear in the story.
2. How would you have felt if your secret was broken?
3. What have you seen/heard that is the same like this story in your community or town?

### **Activity III: Group Discussion: Secret Keeping**

#### Guidelines

Facilitator should probe and ask each participant why she gave whatever answer to the following discussion questions.

#### Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about secret keeping?
2. What are your individual experiences on secret keeping?
3. What happens when a secret is broken?
4. What part of the body is responsible for breaking a secret?
5. Why is it good to keep secret?
6. What are some of the things you tell others?
7. What are some of the things women tell you that you don't tell anybody?

### **Activity IV: Blindfold Game (Trust Building)**

#### Guidelines

1. Have participants select a partner.
2. One partner ties a headtie on the other face, covering her eyes.
3. Guide your partner around to a short distance and come back to the room.
4. When you return change positions and repeat the exercise.
5. After the exercise, ask them how they felt when they were being carried around as a blind person.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Describe how you felt when you were being carried around.
2. Why did you follow (the feeling you just explained)?
3. What makes you comfortable to tell someone your secret? (confide in someone?)

### Activity V: Role Play or Story: "Mind Your Mouth"

#### A. Role-play: "Mind Your Mouth"

Characters: To be selected among participants

- Pregnant woman
- Sand cutter
- Chief
- Four wives

#### B. Story: "Mind Your Mouth"

Palm Town was a place with happy people. When it was night and the moon was shining, the young children played in the moonlight and the good sized ones sat with older women to listen to events of their past life. It was during one of these story telling times that this story was told.

The women in this town were all beautiful and men came from all around to look for wives. One day the Paramount Chief of the area came and said he wanted a woman no man had wished to marry. The only solution was to engage a pregnancy, assuming that the baby will be a girl. Zoekan was pregnant at the time the chief came, so he engaged her pregnancy. Zoekan delivered a beautiful baby boy two months after the Chief's visit. She became sad because the Chief had already sent rice, goats, chickens, tins of oil, and lappa suits to support the pregnancy of a baby girl. She asked the Zoe that delivered her to please not tell anyone that she had given birth to a baby boy and the Zoe agreed and did not tell anyone. Zoekan went to a sand cutter to ask advice, who told her to do certain things.

Zoekan went home and did as she was instructed by the Sand Cutter. She raised the child as a girl and named him Musu. The delivery gift the chief brought wasn't easy. He came to see his new bride and brought two bags of rice, two tins of oil, one jimmy jug of cane juice, one kinja of dried meat, and ten suits of lappa for the other. Twelve farming seasons after the birth, Musu was taken to the chief's quarter and presented to the head wife to be prepared as the chief's future wife. Musu had one law which was not to climb up any tree or kitchen top. The chief loved Musu very much and made sure that she was comfortable and made no secret of his affection for her. This made the head wife very jealous and she didn't rest until she thought of a way to get at Musu. She sent Musu in the attic for rice.

Reluctantly, Musu climbed the ladder and went into the attic for rice. While she was climbing up, the head wife stood under the ladder and looked up under Musu. To her amazement, she saw that Musu had male private parts. She

quickly ran and spread the news to the other wives and did not stop there. She told the chief that one of his wives was not a woman at all. The chief told her that he will see the nakedness of all his wives the next day at the waterside after their bath.

Musu got worried when she heard the news and went to her mother. Her mother took her to the same Sand Cutter who was very old by then. "Don't worry my child, I'm coming." He went into his room and came back with a rope. He tied the rope around Musu's waist and gave her instructions. "When you all go to the creek to bathe tomorrow, wait until the other women have gone into the water. You go upstream and get into the water last. The women will begin to sing. When the song is hot, cut the rope and you will be free."

The next day, the four wives went ahead to the creek singing and the three of them got into the water at the usual bathing spot. Musu acted lonesome as usual and went upstream. When the song was hot she took off her clothes, got into the water and cut the rope from around her waist. Immediately she was freed of the male private parts. Musu was so happy she took lead of a song. At that moment, the rope went down and touched the head wife and she got the male private parts. The head wife got chills in the water and could not sing anymore.

At that time the chief appeared and the women came out of the water to show themselves one by one to him. The head wife shivered as she went to the chief wrapped up in her lappa.

### Discussion Questions

1. Explain what you heard/saw in the story.
2. How would you have felt if your secret was broken?
3. What have you seen/heard that is the same in your community?
4. What does the play teach us?
5. How do you handle secret keeping?

## **Activity VI: The Rope Game (Trust Building)**

### Purpose

This exercise is done to show that when trust is built, it can be disgruntled just by one person saying something at the wrong time.

### Guidelines

Using a ball of thread or rope the first person hold the loose end of the rope. She throws the ball to another woman while she is still holding on to her end. The second woman, she too throw the ball to another while holding on to her end. This is repeated until everyone has the rope in her hand.

Ask the group to describe how the thread looks like while every one is still holding onto the thread. Then ask two or more women, depending on the size of the group, to drop their end. Now let the group describe the thread while only part of the group is still holding onto the thread.

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**UNIT II: JUDGEMENTS, STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICE**

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**Activity I: Discussion on Tribes (Prejudice and Stereotype)**

This discussion is used to prove that people do jump into conclusion about others/tribes. It is done to show that people can be of different tribal or social groups and have similar feeling or behavior. No good or bad can be attributed to any particular group or tribe.

Guidelines

- Do not be defensive to any of the issues that might come up in this exercise.
- Be careful not to talk too much, just to watch.
- Let participants share how they feel.
- Observe participants' reactions while the exercise is going on to be able to lead the discussion in a way that participants can understand why it is good to have an open mind.
- At the end of the day, during the wrapping up time, make sure that participants understand what was discussed during this exercise.

1. Let participants state their tribe.
2. Let participants say what they know about each tribe present.
  - a. Ask participants to talk about only one experience.
  - b. If all participants are of the same tribe, let them say what they know about the different quarters of their area.
3. Probe and find out what happened in the group while the sharing is going on.

Discussion Questions

1. How did you feel when your tribe was talked about (the things listed about your tribe)?
2. What experience did you have that was caused because of who you are (for example, tribe, status, association)?
3. How do you behave to people (for example, tribe) if you have bad feelings about them?
4. What is in this list that is common to other tribes?

5. Is anything in this list unique to only one tribe?
6. What happens when you:
  - a. jump to conclusion?
  - b. point fingers?
  - c. blame?
  - d. relate to people based on the tribe or ethnic group they belong to?
7. What do people do that make you judge them?

### **Activity II: Role Play or Story: "Sis Kaly" (Being Judgemental)**

Sis Kaly saw Yama and Bendu standing on the notorious Gurley Street. Sis Kaly went home and told Bendu's Ma that she saw Bendu and Yama on Gurley Street among some men.

Bendu's mother jumped to the conclusion and said because Yama's mother was Gronna that's why her daughter Yama was carrying her good daughter Bendu in the street to spoil her. She went and made palaver with Yama's mother for Yama carrying Bendu around and to advise her not to take Bendu anywhere. She didn't want her daughter to spoil.

Bendu came home and said she was passing on Gurley Street and saw a rogue cut a lady's hand because he wanted to jerk her bag. Bendu told her mother that she and her friend saw this happen and they were testifying to the police in plain clothes. Bendu's mother said, "Oh, but then I lied on Yama."

### Discussion Questions

1. Explain what you heard/saw in the story.
2. How would you have felt if you were Bendu' mother?
3. What have you seen/heard that is the same in your town?
4. How does it affect women you know?

**Activity III: Role Play or Story: "Bassa and Kpelle" (Being Judgemental)**

Once upon a time, there was a Traditional Midwife name Hawa who was advised by her husband not to deliver any Bassa woman from Harbel. His reason was that the Bassa women always cry poor mouth and they had to live on the fees Hawa collected from her deliveries.

One day Sarah came to Hawa house in labor and knocked at the door. When Hawa saw Sarah, she first asked her for her tribe. Sarah was afraid to say she was Kpelle so she said I am Bassa.

Hawa said I am sorry, my husband said I should not deliver any Bassa woman but since you are here, pay my money before I can deliver you. Sarah promised to pay the money after she deliver because she was in so much pain. After the delivery Sarah paid the money.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you hear in the story?
2. How would you have felt if you were Sarah?
3. Have you heard about or seen any similar case?
4. Why did the Traditional Midwife not want to deliver the woman?

## CHAPTER 3

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

#### PURPOSE

1. To discuss what violence is and how it affects women in the community.
2. To work with Certified Midwives to identify signs that indicate a woman who has experienced violence.

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#### UNIT I: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Most of the time, women talk about violence as verbal, emotional, and economic. Be sure to facilitate the discussions in the rest of the workshop so that physical violence is included.

#### Activity I: Group Discussion

##### Guidelines

The definition of violence against women should be in the participants' own words. Facilitator should only ask the questions, not help to give the answer.

##### Discussion Questions

1. What does the word violence mean?
2. What do you consider violence against women?
3. What does a violent act do to women in the community?
4. What is your own experience about violent acts in your life?

## Activity II: Role Play or Story: "Tenneh and Her Problems"

### Guidelines

This activity can be done in either of the following ways:

1. Tell the story and divide the women in two groups. Have each group discuss Tenneh's problem. What should Tenneh do?
2. Select three women from the group of participants. Explain the story and have them role play it. Have the whole group discuss the questions at the end.

### "Tenneh and Her Problems"

There were three women, Tenneh, Sangai, and Mariam, who met at the water side in Wea-Sua. Tenneh was the first to reach to the creek. She was sitting on her bucket and looking far in the bush and thinking. "...What should I do, if I go to my people no one will listen to me. If I continue to stay in his house he will do something to me one day. I can't mind because he can buy all the good things for me and don't talk." Mariam came with her tub of dirty clothes to wash. When she spotted Tenneh down the road she started thinking, "Look how lucky Tenneh is. She got her man who can do everything for her. Even though he can beat her but at least he can spend for her." But all she was talking was to herself. Tenneh saw her coming and asked her, "Mariam, what are you talking to yourself about?" Interestingly enough each of them were not willing to share what she was thinking with the other. Mariam answered and said, "Nothing." Each woman contemplating what to do about her problems.

Tenneh then got up to go, "Um let me go for my water yah and get out of here." "Oh ever since you came you have not drawn your water yet?" Tenneh said, "No. I have been sitting here thinking on the way my husband beats me almost everyday especially in the night. But you girl you lucky all that thing you husband can do for you. I wish I had a man like that." "You think he did not like you he would buy all those things for you," Mariam told Tenneh. "You girl wait yah because of things I must let my body get sour everyday," Tenneh answered back.

While they were discussing, Sangai came to the waterside to take a bath. She asked, "what are you people talking, I could hear your voices way up there on the road." Tenneh said, "You mind this girl I am talking about how that man can beat me then she telling me to thank God. That the kind of thing people can thank God for?" "Even if he loves me and doing everything for me so he must make my body sour every day?" Tenneh explained. "But once the man did not beat you to get hurt, tie it to your lappa. If you mind the men you will not sit in one marriage, the hardest thing is he must just provide for you."

Tenneh stopped drawing the water to look at Mariam. "What do you mean by that, are you serious? That the same thing my mother keep telling me," Tenneh said out loud. She started to grumble to herself. "Is this the way men will continue to treat us?" Tenneh asked quietly to herself. She wanted to argue but did not know what to say. The women are older than her. What can she say to them?

### Discussion Questions

1. What happened in this story?
2. How would you have felt if you were Tenneh?
3. Has this happened in your town?
4. Is beating a problem in your town?
5. How big a problem is it?
6. Do women see beating as a problem? (If not, why not?)

### **Activity III: Story: "The Marriage That Turned Cold"**

Once there lived a man by the name of Saa Po, who fell in love with Sia Wanda. He did not rest until he got married to Sia Wanda.

The first year of marriage, Sia Wanda got pregnant and give birth to her first son. Two years after her first son, she gave birth to another son. Things were alright just until her second son's birth.

Sia Wanda work very hard to keep her husband and the children happy. She would get up very early, clean up the house, cook breakfast, fetch water, go in the market, cook supper week-ends, and fetch fire wood. Sia wanda did all of these things but her husband was never happy. He always suspected Sia of having a boyfriend. Whenever she came from either the market, from fetching water or fire wood he would accuse her of coming from a man's house. He thought Sia Wanda was using whatsoever she had come from doing as an excuse. Saa would then use all kinds of abusive language on Sia. This went on for over a year and Saa's behavior got Sia worried. There were times when Sia's friends came to visit her, he would talk to them roughly and even stop them from visiting her.

One day Sia Wanda was surprised when her husband came home with a bag of rice, a pack of maggi cubes, salt, plus fifty Liberian dollars and yelled, "Sia!

Come here and listen to me. From now on, you want or need anything you have to ask me and I will give you it you hear me? You must never leave the house. Day and night you must always be here, you hear me good good? Here are all the things I finish buy. The money that is for soup. If you don't want trouble you must stay home. It clear? I gone oh!" and he was gone before Sia Wanda could say anything.

Then Sia Wanda put her two hands on her head and started crying, "Oh my people, I die, ooo-oh. What kin na trouble I fini find myself inside so? Ooo-oh my ma come for me ooo-oh!" But Saa Po was nowhere to be seen.

Late that night, when he came from wherever he may have been and went straight to where Sia was sitting deep in thought. "Sia!" he yelled and Sia jerked. "Did you get my message this morning? I mean everything I said." "You can't mean what you are saying you must be joking," said Sia, "you know I have people, I have friends and relatives that I visit once in a while. You think no one born me I come from stick?" "I say I fini make my mind," replied Saa Po. "For you to know that I mean everything I say, now, now I moving in the stranger room. I'll have nothing to do with you. I will make sure you have enough food inside the house and also make sure you take good care of my children. I want to see them clean and well fed at all times. That what I am working for. But never you leave the house."

So early one Saturday morning when Saa Po had gone out, Sia decided to go visit her aunt. When she returned from her aunt's house she and her husband met at their door.

"Where have you been," he halla. "Did I not tell you never to leave this house? You for nothing human being! I just wasting my money on you for nothing. Let me catch you again. You will know who born dog."

Sia Wanda didn't say a thing because words couldn't come from her mouth. Besides she saw her oldest son coming out of the house curious to know why his father was in such a rage yelling outside. Sia simply got up, pass by her son, and went straight in her room and started crying softly.

When her son entered her room, she quickly dried her face but her eyes were red. Then her son asked, "What happen Ma, that you Papa was cussing? I heard all. But you know I small, I can't do anything now. So Ma please hold you heart just for my sake." Sia Wanda was dumbfounded to hear such words from her son. She didn't say a thing to her son.

Sia Wanda was just in the house feeling very unhappy and didn't know what step to take next. While she was sitting down thinking, she saw one of her relatives, Ma Kumba coming to her.

She got up went and hugged her. "Welcome" she said. "What news? How is my pa?" "He is not well that what I came to tell you," said Ma Kumba. "He sick plenty?" ask Sia Wanda. "Yes, oh, you have to go and take him to hospital." "Let Saa come, let me tell him. If he will listen to me self, the way he already fini turn his back on me, that only God I depend on now." "What you mean?" Ma Kumba asked. "Ma Kumba," Sia Wanda replied, "it hard to talk but Saa Po no longer cares for me as a wife. He even stop talking to me. He can only bring food and leave small money for soup for the month. I can't visit friends. No one can visit me. I am here just like a prisoner. If he were here maybe he was not going to let you come in the house. It really hard on me."

"I was just thinking to go tell my pa but now that he is sick, I do not know if I can stand it. Anyway thank you for bringing the message. I will tell Saa whenever he comes home. If he will listen to me self, that will be another story. But I the one in the jam I like it oh, I not like it oh, I must tell him that my Pa sick."

Then Ma Kumba said, "I think telling him is the best thing to do and you will hear what he has to say." With that Ma Kumba left.

When Saa Po came that evening he got through eating, had his bath he went straight in his room without speaking to Sia Wanda. Then Sia Wanda went to his door, "Kpo kpo, kpo, may I come in?" Sia asked. Saa replied, "I don't want to see you. You hopeless human being move from in front of my door." "I beg you please listen," Sia went on without a break before he could say another word. "Ma Kumba was here today and say my Pa seriously sick and I have to go. So I come to tell you."

"I say move from in front of my door. You Pa live oh, he die oh, that his business and that you kinja." He never opened his door.

### Discussion Questions

1. What do you make out of the story?
2. What would you do if you find yourself in similar situation as Sia Wanda?
3. Is this a problem in your town?
4. How big a problem is it?
5. Do women see it as a problem? (If not, why not?)

### **Activity IV: Group Discussion: Weapons of Violence**

#### Discussion Questions

1. Looking at all that have been discussed, what are things that are used to cause violence against a woman?
2. How are these things (weapons) used?
3. What do they do to us?

### **Activity V: Courtroom Drama: Story on Kaymah's Trouble**

During the courtroom drama people get involved emotionally and put their true selves into the drama, so the facilitator should be keen and should assure participants that it is normal and it was expected. Women's issues are very sensitive and when being discussed people get involve. Sometimes participants blame themselves for the side they have taken but the facilitator should assure that it is normal to feel that way and it is usually expected.

#### Guidelines

1. After reading the story, ask: Who is to be blamed in Kaymah's trouble and why? Facilitator should not analyze, but only ask the question.
2. Set up courtroom for who is to be blamed, Kaymah, Chief, Yarkpawolo, or whoever participants name to be blamed.
3. After the courtroom drama, ask the discussion questions at the end of the story.

If a participant feels that she was wrong for blaming Kaymah, ask the group the following questions:

- What do you all think?
- Why do we usually blame a woman for bad things that happen to her?
- Why should the woman be blamed when she is the one who has been hurt?

#### **"Kaymah's Trouble"**

In a village called Sammy Town, there lived a woman called Kaymah. Kaymah was a widow whose husband was shot to death during the heat of the Liberian civil war. Kaymah lived all by herself in her little house. Her other family members had moved to Monrovia after the war.

One morning, about 6 o'clock while on her way to fetch water, Kaymah dropped the key to her room. She did not realize that she had lost her key until she returned from the riverside. She decided to retrace her steps to the riverside to look for her key.

As Kaymah looked for her key, a man named Yarkpawolo approached her and asked her what was she looking for. She said that she dropped her key and was looking for it. He told her that he had found a key while cleaning the road and asked Kaymah to follow him to his house in order to see whether the key he found was hers.

Kaymah followed Yarkpawolo to his room. To her surprise, Yarkpawolo, upon entering the room, locked the door and forced himself upon her. When she yelled and called for help, Yarkpawolo became afraid and pushed her out of his room. Kaymah began to cry while going back home. Ma Bendu, an old lady, saw her crying and called her to find out what was the matter. Kaymah explained what Yarkpawolo did to her. Ma Bendu took Kaymah to a traditional midwife for examination. During the examination, the traditional midwife saw signs of forced sex. The traditional midwife along with Ma Bendu took Kaymah to the town chief to report the matter. The chief sent them away saying that women are full of too much complaints.

### Discussion Questions

1. What do you think should happen to the person who's to be blamed?
2. Have you heard about similar situations?
3. What lesson did you learn?

### **Activity VI: Story: "The Neglected Wife"**

Josoe lived with her husband in Soko Town. She was a strong woman and made a big rice farm and cassava farm. She had three children before she and Lamah got together.

"Lamah, my wife just delivered with a big boy child!" Borbor said proudly to his friend. "That girl know how to born, my man." Lamah shook his friend's outstretched hand and the two of them happily went to the shop to celebrate. "Borbor, the first snap is on me. I hope by next year my wife will born my son too," Lamah said and they knocked glasses and the drinking started.

The next morning, Lamah woke up and stretched on the bed. He felt the effects of the liquor in his head and as he was about to get up, Josoe came in

from the bathroom. She had her lappa tied under her arms and over her breasts. As she began dressing Lamah looked at her and started thinking what made her different from Esther, Borbor's wife? He said to Josoe, "Josoe, we have been married now for 5 years and not one day you can tell me you miss your time self? Look at Esther, she and Borbor just rolling the babies. They got together after us and she has 2 children now. What's wrong with you?"

"Children come from God, Lamah. You met me with 3 children. Maybe our blood not mixing good yet. You think it can't worry me? That's my name going so, the way I haven't born for you yet," Josoe said sadly and finished dressing and went out of the room.

That same week, Lamah approached a woman he had been eyeing. "Musu, I really love you. You the type of woman for me. Your shape is so fine and you know how to hold a man. You Ma born you good. Hold this fifty dollars to cook cassava leaf for me," Lamah said and patted Musu on the butt. "Your butt and all, that real woman butt." "Aye Lamah," Musu said rolling her eyes. She took the money and went to get things for the cassava leaf.

That evening Lamah came home, bathed and went straight to Musu's house. She was waiting for him. He ate the food with pleasure and spent the night with Musu. This pattern went on for a week and Lamah moved to Musu's house all together.

Josoe met Lamah on her way to the farm one morning and called him. "Lamah, you know we need to eat too ehn? You just letting that woman fool you to take your money from you. Give my food money so the children and I can look after ourselves. The news all over now how Musu get belly for you now, but God knows," Josoe said. Before she could finish, she felt the slap across her face. Lamah beat her up and kicked her like a football. "Look at you. I will beat you. I see you just like a man. Men can't born. You jealous because Musu get belly. At least I know my money not going in vain. I have to support my belly. At least I know my own is my own. By me feeding you children, they will go looking for their father one day. I have to carry Musu to good hospital. You think my money will be wasting on my friend man again? Sit down there yah. Don't try to manage for yourself. When Musu delivers then you will see how man can treat woman," Lamah said and walked off leaving Josoe on the ground naked because he had torn her clothes off.

### Discussion Questions

1. Explain what you heard/saw in the story.
2. What have you seen/heard that is the same in your community?
3. What usually happens to women who do not have children in your community?

4. What do men expect women to do?
5. What does the community expect women to do?
6. What are things women cannot do?
7. How do we want to change?

### **Activity VII: Group Discussion: Fraternal Twins**

This exercise is done to prove that nature does not distinguish men from women. We are all equal even though our body structures are different.

All of you as midwives may have one time or the other done a twin delivery or witness a twin delivery with single placenta.

#### Discussion Questions

1. When you cut the cord of the boy, what is the color of the blood that comes out?
2. When you cut the cord of the girl, what is the color of the blood that comes out?
3. How is the color of the blood different from the boy or the girl?
4. What make us think/say boys are different/better than girls?

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**UNIT II: RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE**

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**PURPOSE**

1. To learn how women behave when they experience violence.
2. To think about how we can work with other women in our community to minimize violence.

**Activity I: Story: "Because of My Children"**Guidelines

Facilitator can complete the story or stop at a point and ask participants to complete the story before asking the discussion questions.

**"Because of My Children"**

There was once a woman who was very hard working and industrious. She had four children and though she was not educated, she tried her best to send her children to school. She made a large garden and sold her greens and other vegetables on the market.

Her husband was the typical man. He always had clean pressed clothes and appeared decent among his friends. He had the opportunity to go to school and managed to finish high school and get a degree at the University, all out of his wife's sweat.

This woman always sacrificed her time, pleasure and her services to provide for her family. One day she decided to treat herself to a new suit of clothes and slippers for the coming Christmas festivities. She bought clothes for the children also. On Christmas Eve when she and her eldest daughter returned from the market, she presented the gifts to each of the children. They prepared the meat and fish for the next day's meal. When her husband came home that evening and found dry rice and fried fish, he became furious. Driven by drunken rage he beat his wife severely until the children had to call neighbors to intervene. The woman was seriously injured and had to be taken to the hospital for suturing on her face. The next day which was Christmas was a sad one for the woman and her children. Although they all had a good meal and new clothes to wear they could not enjoy it because the woman was in severe pain.

By New Year's day, she felt better and dressed up very nicely. When she came out of her room, the children all praised her and came around to admire how nice she looked despite the plaster on her face. She went off to visit with

some friends. When she came home, she met a serious slap waiting for her. Her husband accused her of coming from a boyfriend's house. He abused her and slapped her with all his might. She turned around and dropped to the floor. The husband fearing that she had fainted, ran into the room for alcohol. When he came back she wasn't there. She had quickly gotten up and gone straight to her uncle's house to seek refuge with her aunt-in-law who was a traditional midwife. This woman would sit and cry everyday and it was hard to get her to stop once her tears started flowing. The aunt talked with her and tried to console her. After a week of staying indoors and not going to her market or garden, the aunt became worried and called another Zoe, who was also a traditional midwife...

*[Facilitator: Either stop telling the story here and let the participants tell you what happened next before going to the discussion questions, or finish telling the story and go on to the questions.]*

Both decided to talk to her. The aunt felt that her niece was worried about some home matters, that maybe something had happened between she and her husband again. The two women talked to her, telling her some of their life experiences. It was at this time that she broke down with heavy crying. They both decided to continue talking and sharing their experiences with her until she felt better and went back home to her children.

### Discussion Questions

1. What would you do if you were treated by your husband like this?
2. Is secret keeping important when women talk about their experience of violence?
3. What would you do if it were your daughter that were beaten?
4. What might you see that would help you to realize that something bad has happened to a woman you know? How might she act?

### **Activity II: Story: "The Unforgettable Lesson"**

There once lived a woman named Ma Gbe. She married Tommy and they were blessed with many, many beautiful sons and daughters. Tommy had a serious problem. He never trusted her and he drank too much. He always came home late from out and was always beating on her and accusing her of having a lover. He most of the time forced her to confess to a lover and examined her whenever she came home late. Tommy did not allow Ma Gbe to leave the house to visit anyone.

Ma Gbe got fed up with this kind of life and decided to do something about it. She got up one day and left her house to visit her family without letting Tommy know. She however told others where she was going. She knew he was not going to allow her to visit her parents, so she did not inform him. She told her family people how her marriage to Tommy was a living hell and informed them of the cruel things Tommy did to her.

When Ma Gbe's family heard her story they became extremely angry that Tommy would treat their daughter so. They immediately sent for him to explain his actions.

Tommy got the news that Ma Gbe's family wanted to see him. He became very afraid and did not know what to do. He called his family people to go along with him, for he knew what the problem was.

Tommy went to Ma Gbe's family and was faced with the entire town who wanted to know why he had been treating their daughter so. Tommy became ashamed and cried for mercy. He was fined heavily and sent back to his town with the promise that he would never lay a finger on his wife again.

### Discussion Questions

1. What would you have done to Tommy and why?
2. What can women's response do to men?
3. What would you do if you husband beats you, examines you or forces you to confess?
4. What did we learn from the story?

### **Activity III: Additional Stories**

#### Guidelines

Depending on whether the participants need more discussion to grasp the concepts, use one or more of the following stories below on women's response to violence. The facilitator should read all of the following stories. That will help her pick the stories to use next. She can use any one of them to continue the discussion. Discussion questions for all of these stories are at the end of the third story.

#### *Story 1: "Love in the Cassava Patch"*

Once upon a time there lived a woman named Garmeh who owned a large cassava farm that supplied almost the entire village of Soniwhn. Although she had people who worked for her on the farm, she usually visited the farm by

herself every evening to assess the work being done there daily. This daily routine of Garmeh was observed by a notorious criminal named Kalifah. He planned evil for Garmeh as he watched her go to her farm every day.

One evening while Garmeh passed by Kalifah on her way to their farm, Kalifah decided to put his evil plan into action. He followed Garmeh all the way to her farm and hid himself in the bush with a cutlass. Garmeh completed her evening's work on the farm and was returning to the village when Kalifah jumped in front of her from the bush with his cutlass blocking her path. He said to her, "You woman, the thing you are looking for every day on this road, I will give it to you. Ehn you call yourself man-woman." Garmeh begged Kalifah not to harm her and that she was going to give him whatsoever he wanted. Kalifah told Garmeh that he was going to have her. Garmeh said, if that is what you want then it's okay with me. Kalifah smiled right away, dropped his cutlass and began undressing himself. Garmeh artfully lifted her lappa and lied on the grass where the cutlass was laying. As soon as Kalifah tried to get on top of Garmeh, she grabbed his penis, took the cutlass from on the ground and she carried him to town naked.

When she hit the outskirts of the town a man saw them coming. When he realized what was happening, he rushed over to them and tried covering Kalifah's penis but Garmeh refused to let go of the penis. She held on to it until they reach the Town Chief's quarter. After this incident, no one ever heard of the notorious Kalifah again.

### *Story 2: "Pack my Load"*

Once there was a man by the name of Kabaja and his wife Lealo. They both lived in the village call Doso. Every day Kabaja would make a fuss with Lealo. He even hired a gang of young men to sing bad songs with Lealo's name in all of the songs. When Lealo heard the song being sung with her name, she and Kabaja had a very heated argument. Kabaja stripped Lealo naked, beat her severely and left bruises all over her body. He punched her in the face which was swollen for a whole week. During the fight, Kabaja threatened to teach Lealo a lesson she would never forget.

One month later when Lealo was cooking, Kabaja come to sit by her. While conversing he ask Lealo to spend the night with him. Lealo then reminded him of the time they had the fight and he had said he would teach her a lesson she will never forget. Kabaja said he did not mean what he said but in reality he wanted to get even with her. Lealo sat for a long time without talking and later agree to spend the night with him.

While they were in the act of love making, Kabaja grab Lealo's throat to strangle her. As God would have it, she slowly carried her hand down and grabbed his penis. Kabaja yelled and started begging Lealo. While Lealo still

held on to his penis with one hand, Kabaja ask Lealo to go and open his trunks and take all the costly gowns for herself.

Whenever Kabaja tried to gain a little strength, Lealo would twist his penis a little then he would yell. Lealo made Kabaja promise her faithfully that he would always respect her, never make fuss with her or any other woman for that matter. When he become very helpless, Lealo let go of his penis.

She took all the costly country cloth gowns, went back to her room and packed all her belongings. The next day she went to her parents and that was the end of the marriage.

### *Role-Play and Story 3: "Women's Trap"*

There was a man who always hid himself and waited along the road, in the bush, in the cassava patch, and at the waterside during fishing time for women to force himself on.

This thing happened so much that the women complained to the town chief and all the men in the town. The men did not take the women seriously. After some time the women decided to gang up against this man and do something to stop this disgrace to womanhood. They went fishing this day and set a trap for him. While they were at the waterside fishing, the man started to come slowly. He did not know they had set a trap. They waited until he got closer to them. They jumped on him and beat him severely and later left him at the waterside while the women went to tell the town chief that they had caught the man who had been raping the women.

### *Role Play of Women's Trap*

#### Characters

- 3 women
- the town chief (who always delayed in taking decision)
- the rapist (who always attacks the women on the road)

#### Narrative

- 1st woman went for wood and was attacked and ran back to town.
  - 2nd woman went for cassava, had similar experience and came running back to the town.
  - 3rd woman going on farm, she too ran back to town.
- The different times the women are raped, they came to their friends and complain. Each of those times they went to the town chief to tell him what was happening, the victim is always accompanied by women. The town chief said, "You women are full of problems. Go with your trouble." So the women meet and decide to set a trap for this man. The sign for calling the women was to play sassa.

Discussion Questions

1. What are things women face in your community?
2. What would you do if you were the women in the story?
3. What usually happens when a bad man is exposed or disgraced?
4. What have you learned from the story?

**Activity IV: Group Discussion: Definition of Violence Against Women**

Discussion Questions

After hearing and talking about all these stories:

1. When you hear the word violence, what comes to you mind?
2. How can we, in our own words, define violence against women?

"Violence against women means..."

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**UNIT III: ROLE OF WOMEN**

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**Activity I: Group Discussion**Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the word "woman" what comes to your mind?
2. When you were growing up, which woman in your community did you want to be like?
3. From morning to night what are all the things you do as a woman?
4. How much of that time is for yourself?

**Activity II: Poem: "Ain't I A Woman?" by Sojourner Truth**Guidelines

Poem should be read. Let each participant discuss what stood out for her or what interested her the most.

*Ain't I A Woman?*

"That man over there say  
a woman needs to be helped into carriages  
and lifted over ditches  
and to have the best place everywhere.  
Nobody ever helped me into carriages  
or over mud puddles  
or gives me a best place...

And ain't I a woman?  
Look at me  
Look at my arm!  
I have plowed and planted  
and gathered into barns  
and no man could head me...  
And ain't I a woman?  
I could work as much  
and eat as much as a man-  
when I could get to it-  
and bear the lash as well  
and ain't I a woman?

I have born 13 children  
and seen most all sold into slavery  
and when I cried out a mother's grief  
none but Jesus heard me...  
and ain't I a woman?  
that little man in black there say  
a woman can't have as much rights as a man  
cause Christ wasn't a woman  
Where did you Christ come from?  
From God and a woman!  
Man had nothing to do with him!  
If the first woman God ever made  
was strong enough to turn the world  
upside down, all alone  
together women ought to be able to turn it  
rightside up again."  
- Sojourner Truth

### Discussion Questions

1. What part of this poem stood out for you?
2. How do you relate this poem to your first idea of the word "woman"?
3. What is your definition of "woman" now?