Violence against women is an expression of men’s *power over* women. Our community has been silent about this for far too long.

Right now, there are *women and men* and *informal and formal leaders* in our community who are part of *SASA!* Together and who are guiding community members in how to support one another to prevent violence against women.

All violence is harmful to women. All violence impacts their lives negatively. Violence against women also harms girls, boys and men, our families, friends and neighbors, and the larger community. It also burdens our institution. Living free from violence or the threat of violence is a fundamental human right that all people deserve. When women and men balance power in relationships, there is more happiness, health and development.

Violence against women happens as a result of the imbalance of power between women and men. This imbalance can change. *Our institution can lead the way.* Everyone benefits from non-violence—women and girls, boys and men, our families, friends and neighbors, and the larger community.

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN HURTS US ALL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men’s power over women in relationships leads to violence.</th>
<th>Balanced power in relationships leads to mutual respect and non-violence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>→ Physical violence is any act that harms the body of a woman (such as beating, slapping, hitting, kicking, choking, burning, shoving, or killing).</td>
<td>→ Physical safety is freedom from bodily harm or injury or the threat of harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>→ Emotional violence is any act that involves psychological or verbal abuse and/or controlling behavior (such as shouting, threatening, insulting, controlling, isolating, committing infidelity, or humiliating).</td>
<td>→ Emotional safety is feeling respected, valued and cared for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>→ Sexual violence is any act that limits a woman’s control over her body, sexuality or reproductive health (such as rape—being forced into sex by anyone (also called forced sex); coercion—being pressured (emotionally, socially or economically) into any kind of sexual activity; sexual assault—any sexual contact with another person that is done without their consent; or sexual harassment—unwanted sexual attention).</td>
<td>→ Sexual safety is the ability to make all decisions and maintain control over one’s own body, reproductive choices and sexuality—freely and without fear of negative consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>→ Economic violence is any act that harms a woman’s financial well-being or that uses money or assets to control her (such as withholding money or food as punishment; taking away money or goods that a woman has earned; refusing her participation in financial decision-making; preventing a woman from earning an income; or abandonment).</td>
<td>→ Economic safety is the ability to earn, save and manage money and to make decisions about one’s own financial well-being, freely and without fear.</td>
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**SASA! Together in Our Institution**

**The Awareness Phase**

As part of *SASA! Together*, our institution will use our role in the community to begin talking about violence against women and why it happens—this is the first step to change!

**The Awareness phase of SASA! Together focuses on power over.**

As an institution, how can we break the silence about how men’s *power over* women is violence and an injustice? How can our protocols and guidelines ensure the institution’s own work doesn’t disrespect, silence or harm women, either within or outside of the institution?

**As an institution, we can enhance our protocols and guidelines.**

Strong protocols and guidelines help align an institution’s work with the principles of effective violence against women prevention and response. For example, strong protocols and guidelines can decrease incidents of violence, establish a safe environment for survivors to report, improve the quality of services, hold perpetrators accountable and more. Such protocols and guidelines can also help make our institutional values more explicit—for example, by signaling that the institution does not tolerate violence against women and will take concrete actions to support survivors and hold men who use violence accountable.

**What is the difference between protocols and guidelines?**

**Protocols**

A protocol is a set of rules that enforces ethical decision-making and behaviors. For example, a police department may have a use-of-force protocol, a healthcare clinic may have a confidentiality protocol or a local government office may have a protocol on handling cases of violence against women.

**Guidelines**

A guideline is the set of procedures or steps for accomplishing a given task. A guideline exists to show members of an institution how to perform a task in a particular manner or specific order: for example, a guideline for receiving a case at a police station, a guideline for asking women about violence during HIV testing or a guideline on when to handle a case at the local government level and when to refer it to another institution.

As an institution, we can affirm our belief in non-violence. We can strengthen our protocols and guidelines to better prevent and respond to violence against women.

**Get involved today!**

Contact: raisingvoices.org