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**WomenSafe, Inc.**  
**PO Box 67**  
**Middlebury, VT 05753**

**24 Hour Hotline**  
 802.388.4205 or 800.388.4205

Business: 802.388.9180  
 Fax: 802.388.3438

**The Supervised Visitation Program**  
 (The SVP) 802.388.6783

info@womensafe.net  
 www.womensafe.net

*Language interpretation services available.*

*Deaf callers please use telephone relay.*

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**Keeping Ourselves Safe in the Age of Technology**

By Shannon McMahon, *Outreach Advocate*

In the year 2016, technology is a major part of our lives. We use technology to guide us through our daily tasks, connect with loved ones and even to grocery shop. We intertwine our information on multiple websites in order to read the daily news faster or make purchases online. The more we use technology, the more personal information is shared online, making our lives much more convenient than they used to be. However, it also poses threats to our safety that did not have to be considered ten years ago.

Facebook is one of the most mis-used sites online today. As of July 2016, 1.49 billion people have a Facebook account. Of those 1.49 billion, almost half of those users have documented experiencing harassment, threats and stalking on the social media site. For people who experience dating, domestic, sexual violence or stalking, online safety is incredibly important and advocates are making great efforts to combat the violence created from misused technology. The advocates at WomenSafe would like to share some tips on how to keep your digital footprint as secure as possible.

**1. Trust your instincts.** People who abuse or stalk can act in incredibly persistent and creative ways to maintain power and control. If you suspect someone knows too much, it is possible that your phone, computer, email, or other activities are being monitored. With most computer monitoring

software, someone would need to have physical access to your computer ONLY one time. From that point on, all tracking can be from another location and spyware (computer tracking software) can be extremely difficult to remove from your system (phone, computer, tablet, car). If your battery dies quickly (tracking software tends to drain a lot of battery) or if the screen flashes while the system is turned off, it may be a sign that your system is being tracked. If the suspected system is a phone, it is best to get a new phone and NOT transfer any information from the old phone, not even contacts. If you have any worries or questions, please contact an advocate who can work with you every step of the way.

**2. Google yourself.** See if your private contact information can be found online. Go to Google or another search engine and do a search for your name in quotation marks: “Full Name.” You can also set up a Google alert for your name. That way you will be alerted when any information about you has been posted online.

**3. Be password savvy.** Using personal information such as your or your children’s birthdays, mother’s maiden name, high school mascot etc. are extremely easy to figure out. The information is often online or simply known by someone who is close to you. It is best to create long and random passwords with different numbers and characters. For security questions, lie! Some find it helpful to create an excel

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## SOCIETY'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING MEN'S ROLE IN Ending Violence Against Women

By Heather Harrington, *Supervised Visitation and Exchange Program Coordinator*

There are challenges to engaging men into the discussion around men's violence against women. Sadly, all over the world, women continue to be treated unfairly; inhumanly. Violence against women is recognized as "a global health problem of epidemic proportions" by Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General, the World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>) and women all over the world continue to be held to rigid beliefs on how they should behave, speak and think. If women dare speak or step out of those rigid boundaries it can be lethal.

As a society, we continue to hold rigid beliefs around gender. We struggle as a nation to make changes and eliminate violence. Thankfully, there are discussions going on such as gender equality, gender identities, and removing the gender binary—allowing people able to be who they are. At the same time, women continue to fight daily for our right to live free from violence and oppression and to be accepted for who we are. Still today, we, as women, have a constant battle to prove our worthiness and to be treated fairly and with respect.

It is not too much to ask of men to take a stand, to speak out and to hold one another accountable despite discomfort in doing so. There will be discomfort. The brave men that do stand by our side are a part of a movement that is trying to break down deeply embedded beliefs that are a normal part of conditioning and socializing boys and men. It will be necessary to take a real hard look at how as a society we raise our boys. It is important for us to ask ourselves why approximately 90% of violence is committed by boys and men? Even when men experience sexual assault



or rape, it is most often perpetrated by heterosexually-identified men. Further, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) will experience intimate partner violence (IPV) by a partner at the same rate that women experience IPV by male partners.

From an early age, boys are socialized to believe that to be a "real man" they must behave in very specific ways. Boys and men do not dare to step outside that "man-box" or else they risk being harassed, bullied and called names such as "sissy" or "whipped." Negative messages influencing how children are socialized to be 'boys' or 'girls' are everywhere. We see them on baby clothes, in the media, films, commercials, and music. Our young men are being forced to see, over and over again, negative, often violent images that ultimately have them believing that in order to be accepted as a "real man" they need to be hyper-masculine. They are left confused by the masculine stereotypes that are relentlessly projected on them suggesting that violence is an accepted part of masculinity. They learn to use coercion and threats, even physical violence to get

their way, and to maintain power and control over their intimate partners. The messages that they receive can ultimately lead to lives of incredible pain and suffering, both for themselves and for others.

Men do not have to accept what society is dishing out to them, they need to take a stand and speak out, loudly. Men should be asking why are young men being encouraged to be so violent? They should be asking why is the media constructing such a violent masculinity as the cultural norm? They should be questioning why women continue to be sexually assaulted. We, as feminists, believe that boys deserve better. We believe that by taking a closer look at violence in America and making the connection between how we raise boys and challenging the messages they receive, we can begin to make significant change. It is our hope that the next generation of women and girls can be free from violence and that boys and men can live healthier, more harmonious lives, free from the pressure to be so hyper-masculine and violent.

Our boys deserve the chance to grow up in a world that honors them

(Continued on page 7)

# Lessons from Advocacy

By Sarah Karerat, *Middlebury College Summer Shepherd Intern*



**M**y name is Sarah Karerat and I have spent this summer working at WomenSafe. WomenSafe's services include a 24-hour hotline, direct advocacy services, outreach to underserved communities, support groups, supervised visitation for parents, and community education. I primarily work as a direct service advocate. This advocacy consists of providing survivors with whatever kind of support they may need, or directing them to whoever can. Thus, sometimes my advocacy works consists of simply

picking up the phone and lending an ear, but it can also involve providing emotional support during Relief from Abuse hearings at the courthouse or facilitating survivors' entry into an emergency housing program to enable them to flee their abusive partners. The key word here is certainly 'support', though I've learned that a fundamental part of this job is knowing that we are not here to help survivors, but rather, to enable them to help themselves. After all, it is their strength that has carried them thus far and that will continue to. This has been an incredibly valuable lesson that WomenSafe confirmed for me, and is something that I will hold with me throughout my future work in any communities.

As for now, I am glad that the bubble of Middlebury College has popped in my life; it has been incredibly informative and humbling to learn about the realities of poverty in Addison County. I spent half of my childhood living in large cities in India where a significant population lives in poverty, but this summer has shown me how poverty takes on many different personalities. I have started to understand poverty as it manifests itself in Vermont, and the community response to it in this area. My training and subsequent experiential learning at

WomenSafe has also vastly increased my understanding of the intricacies of trauma and violence. Despite telling myself to separate my work and my personal life, with work like this, I feel that I have experienced a fundamental shift in perspective that influences all aspects of my life. The way that I view my own behavior, my interactions with others, and relationships and interactions around me has changed. In fact, it would probably be most accurate to say that my perspective has grown; I feel that it will constantly change, hopefully for the better!

Of course, WomenSafe is a non-profit organization, and I've learned from my time spent on meticulous data entry that there are many hoops to jump through in order to do anything community-related. Luckily, among the stress of this all, WomenSafe is an incredibly supportive workplace where self-care is key. The empathy that I see as so essential to my advocacy work is ever-present among colleagues too.

Needless to say, I feel blessed to have this opportunity to learn at an organization like WomenSafe and to have the privilege of witnessing the strength of individuals across Addison County. I look forward to volunteering once my internship ends.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO AMERICAN FLATBREAD



A shout out to **American Flatbread**, Danielle, and the entire Flatbread staff for another successful fundraiser—the **Annual Benefit Bake For WomenSafe** this past May raised \$300! American Flatbread's dedication to WomenSafe and the supportive, generous community

members who order take-out or dine-in at the historic Marbleworks location are what make this a successful fundraiser each year; thank you! Please look for the next Annual Benefit Bake for WomenSafe in the spring of 2017! We hope to see you there.

# Domestic Violence to Responsible Choices

By Annie Mientka, *Advocate*

Addison County’s domestic violence accountability program, Domestic Violence to Responsible Choices (DVRC), has seen a drastic increase in enrollment the past few months. Melissa Deas, the program coordinator and co-facilitator, explained that the class size remained steady with about 3-6 members until a recent upsurge in enrollment.

Melissa speculates that the class size will keep increasing, largely due to referrals from the Department of Children & Families (DCF). She suspects that this increase in referrals is due to outreach to community partners, and a previous DVRC facilitator who now works at DCF bridging the gap between the two organizations. Melissa expects that the class size increase may be enough to create and sustain a second class in Addison County. A second location would make the classes more accessible to participants in some of the more rural towns in the county. The current class takes place in Middlebury.

The steady and increasing enrollment is great news for DVRC, espe-

cially considering that as of May 2015, funding for DV accountability programming across the state underwent sudden and unexpected changes. This was extremely concerning, because it is a valuable service that provides people who perpetrate domestic violence with accountability-based education that challenges their thinking and offers healthy alternatives to abusive behavior. With community collaboration and because of Ms. Deas dedication, Addison County’s programming remained available during the transition.

Within the next year, an exciting new evidenced-based batterers’ intervention curriculum, called Achieving Change through Value-Based Behavior (or ACTV) will be piloted in Burlington’s DVRC class (also coordinated by Ms. Deas). DVRC facilitators will attend a 3-day training with assistance from Department of Corrections funding. A potential additional class in Burlington would use this curriculum exclusively. This new curriculum is exciting because of its evidenced-based results. A study conducted in Iowa compared the

existing curriculum to ACTV, and found that after 24 weeks of classes, the randomly assigned men who completed the new ACTV training had significantly lower levels of psychological, physical, and sexual aggression. The rates or recidivism were also lower in the group of men who completed the ACTV classes. This could be because of the approach, which includes a wider definition of accountability. Participants are taught to redirect their behaviors across multiple arguments they have had in their relationships, instead of focusing on the abusive incident that directly led to their arrests. ACTV facilitators are also using less shaming language, and replacing judgment with a neutral approach to increase the participant’s likelihood of sharing and taking accountability of their behaviors.

All of these changes and upcoming transitions within the DVRC program will hopefully lead to fewer instances of recidivism, a wider service area, and healthier intimate relationships in our communities.

# Child Marriage in the United States

By Foresta Castañeda, *Transitional Housing Program Coordinator*

The recent passage of changes to Virginia’s marriage law earlier this summer have brought renewed attention to the issue of child marriage. Child marriage or the practice of marrying off children under the age of 18, most often to adults significantly older in age, is a human right’s issue that disproportionately affects girls. Though often thought of as an issue in the developing world,

child marriage is also increasingly occurring right here in the United States.

According to UNICEF, more than 700 million women worldwide were married as children. That’s four times the female population of the United States. In 2012 it was estimated that in developing countries over 70 million women now aged 20-24 were married as girls. One third of girls in the devel-

oping world are married before they are 18 and 1 in 9 are married before they are 15 years old. If these rates persist, 150 million girls will be married before age 18 in the next decade, an average of about 15 million girls each year.

In the U.S., only 10 states or territories have criminal statutes specifically addressing forced marriage and child marriage. While most states set the

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# Gender-Based Pricing: What's It Costing You?

By Willow Wheelock, *Training and Education Coordinator*

Recently, the Vermont Human Rights Commission, together with the Attorney General's Office, took a strong stand against the practice of gender-based pricing. Clothing, personal hygiene products, toys, dry cleaning and haircuts are some examples where consumers might experience gender-based pricing.

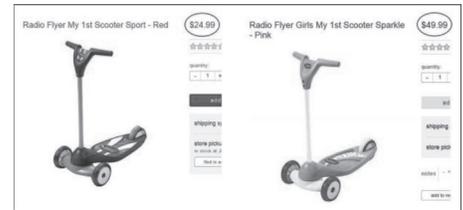
A recent study of gender-based pricing in New York City revealed that 42% of the time, women's and girls' products carried higher price tags when compared with similar products for men. Despite products mirroring each other outside of slight style changes or color, products 'designed' for women can cost significantly more. One blaring example is the \$49.99 price tag on a 'Girls Pink Scooter' compared to the \$24.99 cost of the identical scooter made by the same company in RED. Whether the cost is double or subtler, such as identical men's and women's razors with price tags of \$5.00 vs. \$7.00, this practice is costing consumers money; over

the course of a person's lifetime, the 'gender tax' can cost someone tens of thousands of dollars.

Gender-based pricing is both a form of discrimination and against the law in Vermont. When a business treats people unequally based on (among other things) sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, they are violating Vermont's Public Accommodations and Consumer Protection Acts. If you or someone you know experiences gender-based pricing on goods or services, there are ways to address the situation:

- Request to pay the lower rate for services or products
- File a complaint by filling out a Public Accommodations Complaint Form with the Vermont Human Rights Commission
- Consult with a lawyer to pursue private right of action
- Patronize businesses that do not discriminate based on gender

Only by raising our collective awareness of this pricing phenomenon,



**Hair Services:**

Women's Haircuts: \$28

Men's Haircuts: \$18

can we begin to tackle it. We can all encourage businesses to price goods and services without regard to gender, make our friends and family members aware that this happens and point out the discrimination involved when gender-based pricing occurs.

## Child Marriage (Continued from page 4)

legal age to marry at 18, all 50 states allow at least one of three different exceptions: parental consent, judges' ruling or emancipation.

- **Parental Consent:** Most states will allow 16 to 17- year-old children to marry with parental consent. Sometimes this parental consent is actually coercion on the part of the parent or family and state laws do not call for anyone to investigate whether a child is marrying willingly.
- **Judicial Approval:** This exception lowers the marriage age to below 16 with a judge's ruling in many states, and some states do not specify a minimum age.

- **Emancipation:** Emancipated minors who have petitioned the court to be legally independent from their parent or guardian are able to marry.

In Vermont, the legal age to marry is 18 years old; however, minors 16-17 years old can be married with parental consent. Vermont law does not allow anyone under age 16 to marry.

While some evidence suggests that increases in child marriage is in part due to increased populations of immigrants in the United States, a 2011 study by the Tahirih Justice Center found that child marriage exists in families of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Mormon and other faiths,

and occurred in immigrant and non-immigrant communities. While no one profile of child marriage exists, the common denominator seems to be closed communities.

Regardless of the reasons, child marriage puts girls and young women at a higher risk for experiencing abuse including: domestic violence, rape and other forms of violence. Child marriage leads to decreased levels of education and an increased risk of health complications- particularly around pregnancy and reproductive health. More work is still needed to prevent and respond to child marriage in the United States.

# Legislative Changes EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2016

By Megan Ashley, *Colby-Sawyer Student and WomenSafe Summer Intern*

According to Auburn Watersong, Public Policy Associate Director at the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (Network), there have been several changes to laws that affect people who experience dating, domestic and sexual violence and stalking.

- The Relief from Abuse Order (RFA) statutes have been amended to allow minors 16 and 17 years old to file an RFA against a dating partner or any household member.

Previously, a parent or guardian had to file an RFA on the minor's behalf. With the new statute in place, the minor is the agent in the situation. Watersong reports the challenges of having parents filing on their child's behalf in dating or sexual relationships. She says, "Advocates reported that numerous teens – especially 16 and 17-year-old youth were either uncomfortable discussing their circumstances with their parents or were estranged from their families for various reasons, including estrangement due to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) identity."

Additionally, the changes made to the Sexual Assault & Stalking Orders have more clear definitions of what constitutes as stalking. Vermont previously defined one of the stalking requirements as "a perpetrator who is purposefully engaging in a course of conduct."

- The new stalking statute clarifies the "course of conduct" to include "two or more acts over a period in which the perpetrator monitors, surveils, threatens, makes threats about another person or impedes on another's property."

These actions can be carried out through any means of device or method. This statute was created to include the ever-changing use of technology in instances of stalking.

- Another protection provided by the new statute is if someone induces "fear of unlawful sexual conduct, unlawful restraint, bodily injury, unlawful restraint or death." This would include threats, but it does not require overt threats.

Behavior would count as stalking if the perpetrator causes the individual to change their daily routines, such as

compelled housing relocation, forcing changes in work performance including rearranging schedule or losing a job all together.

- It is no longer a necessity to prove "fear of further harm" in order to qualify for Sexual Assault orders. It can be based solely on one incident that happened without determining the threat of continuing danger.

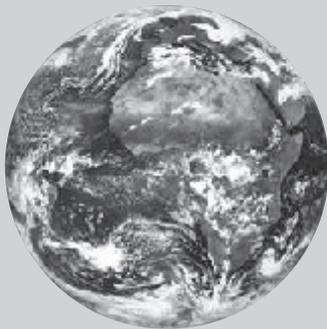
It takes an abundance of dedication and patience from survivors, advocacy organizations, legislators and supporters to request that a bill be amended, but the outcome of a more just legal process is worth the efforts.

All previously mentioned Statute changes went into effect July 1, 2016.

For a complete list of laws passed during Vermont's 2016 legislative session that impact survivors of dating, domestic, sexual violence and/or stalking, please visit: <http://www.vtnetwork.org/about/public-policy/>

For more information about Vermont Statutes, please visit: [www.legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/](http://www.legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/)

## HELP US BY GOING PAPERLESS



WomenSafe works diligently to conserve our environment. Please help us by signing up to receive *The Advocate* via email. Your participation means that not only would we save more trees and use less petroleum products in the production and distribution of this newsletter, but you would also be helping us to continue to raise awareness and consciousness of the issues faced by families, friends and neighbors who are being victimized by their partners or other people in their lives—in a cost-effective manner.

Thank you to our more than 130 e-readers who already receive the newsletter via email! If you would like to "Go Paperless," let us know at: [info@womensafe.net](mailto:info@womensafe.net). In order to avoid gaps in delivery, please inform us of any email address changes by calling Carol at 388-9180.

# Technology

(Continued from page 1)

spreadsheet with a password containing all passwords and security questions.

### 4. Think about your safety.

Completely blocking someone from all social media is always an option. However, for some, that might cause them to retaliate or become more threatening/violent. If it is a safe option for you, monitoring the posts of the person can help you to assess any risk of safety. Take additional precautions if the person is good at technology, either for work or a hobby. Always remember, YOU are the expert of your situation!

### 5. Know available resources.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence has a SafetyNet team that is constantly getting new information about technology and how to keep everyone safe. For information about all kinds of technology abuse and how to combat it, check out [www.techsafety.org](http://www.techsafety.org) on a safe system.

There are many more safety tips WomenSafe would love to share with you! We have advocates available 24/7 for resources, safety planning, or any questions about technology abuse. Feel free to call (even anonymously) WomenSafe's hotline: 388-4205 or 1-800-388-4205 or schedule a time to meet with an advocate.

# Society's Role

(Continued from page 2)

for who they are. They deserve a path to manhood that does not promote or condone violence but nourishes those qualities that support men in being good human beings. Boys deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and presented with the facts, not misguided by inaccurate information.

Violence against women and gender oppression is a complicated matter. It is embedded throughout our society, and for those holding the power and control it will not be easy to give up. Change is needed. We know that men's and boys' violence against girls and women is not determined by genetics but rather is a learned behavior. Together, we should challenge media and advertising outlets, financial and education institutions and each other to be more thoughtful. Together, we need to take a stand against young men being pressured to fit into a box that tells them how to be a "real man." Together, we need to tell our young women that they deserve to only be



treated with dignity and respect. Together, let's make changes and allow for women and men to be who they want to be without the fear of violence.



## Donate Your Old Cell Phones to WomenSafe

Please consider donating your old or broken cell phones/Smartphones to WomenSafe. We can include them in stalking kits or recycle them for cash. If you would like to donate a phone, please call us at 388-9180.



## Hannaford Helps Reusable Blue Bag Program

Hannaford again selected WomenSafe to be a beneficiary of the Hannaford Helps bag program for the month of July. For every Blue Bag sold at the Court Street Hannaford, WomenSafe received a \$1 donation. In the past two years, over \$300 has been donated through the bag program!

*The* **Advocate**

Newsletter of WomenSafe

**WomenSafe Provides:**

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