



CoviDB

CoviDB Speaker Series on COVID-19

Violence Against Women during COVID-19

A Guide for Teachers and Students



Featured Speaker:
Anne Firth Murray
Founding President, Global Fund
for Women



Hosted By:
Dr. Piya Sorcar
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TeachAids

Stanford | SPICE Stanford Program on International
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Anne Firth Murray a New Zealander, is the Founding President of the Global Fund for Women, a grant-making organization that has distributed more than \$61 million to advance the rights of women and girls in 167 countries. She is the author of two books: *From Outrage to Courage: The Unjust and Unhealthy Situation of Women in Poorer Countries and What They Are Doing About It* and *Paradigm Found: Leading and Managing for Positive Change*. She has served on the boards of numerous organizations, including the African Women's Development Fund, and as the chair of the Global Justice Center. In 2005, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize as one of a group of women dedicated to social justice and peace.

Dr. Piya Sorcar is the Founder and CEO of TeachAids, a Lecturer at Stanford's Graduate School of Education, and an Adjunct Affiliate at Stanford's School of Medicine. She leads a team of world experts in medicine, public health, and education to develop software that solves numerous persistent problems in global health education. She holds a Ph.D. in Learning Sciences and Technology Design from Stanford University.

The purpose of this guide is (1) to provide information to review prior to the viewing of the interview; (2) to suggest guiding questions to consider while viewing the interview; and (3) to recommend debriefing activities.

Information to review prior to the viewing of the interview

This interview introduces “Violence Against Women During COVID-19” and focuses on five topics. For teachers’ information, each topic is listed below with a summary of the main questions asked by Dr. Piya Sorcar. During the interview, important terminology is used. A list of the terms and definitions is included on the next two pages. A review of the terms and definitions is recommended prior to the viewing of the interview.

Please be aware that the following episode introduces sensitive topics relating to violence against women and children.

Topic 1: Violence Against Women—It would be great if you could give us a general definition of some sort so we can understand how prevalent it is and have a basis or a foundation to begin the conversation.

Topic 2: New Challenges for Women—Can you tell us a little bit more about your ideas on the different kinds of challenges because of sheltering in place for these women?

Topic 3: COVID-19 and Violence Against Women—You talked a little about reporting, and how a lot of these women’s shelters are there to be able to help and support women to be able to leave the home right now. With social distancing, how do you think this impacts their options?

Topic 4: Global Implications of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women—I’m wondering if you could tell us a little about what you think the differences are both on this topic, as well as how COVID might be intersecting with the issues in different countries?

Topic 5: Call to Action – How Can Outsiders Help?—How can outsiders help during this time or even outside of this time? What can we do to help? And where can women go for this support?

Topic 6: Final Comments – Anything Else to Add?—I was going to ask you if there’s anything else that you wanted to share.

Definitions

Coercion—the practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.

Exacerbate—make (a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling) worse.

Intervention—action taken to improve a situation, especially a medical disorder.

Pandemic (of a disease)—prevalent over a whole country or the world.

Perpetrator—a person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act.

Prevalence—the fact or condition of being prevalent; commonness.

United Nations (UN)—an international organization, with headquarters in New York City; formed to promote international peace, security, and cooperation under the terms of the charter signed by 51 founding countries in San Francisco in 1945.

Violence against women (as defined by the World Health Organization)—The United Nations defines violence against women any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Shelter-in-place—an official order, issued during an emergency, that directs people to stay in the indoor place or building that they already occupy and not to leave unless absolutely necessary.

Statistics—the practice or science of collecting and analyzing numerical data in large quantities, especially for the purpose of inferring proportions in a whole from those in a representative sample.

Women's centers—a center providing medical or social services for women; sometimes referred to as women's shelters.

World Health Organization (WHO)—a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.

Guiding questions to consider while viewing the interview

For teachers who share this interview with a class, consider dividing the class into six small groups and distributing one set of questions (below) to each group.

Topic 1—How does Anne define violence against women? What are some of the examples of violence against women that Anne notes? What is the definition of violence against women as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO)? How has COVID-19 impacted violence against women? Does violence against women have to be a physical act? What percentage of women worldwide will suffer from violence against women in their lifetimes?

Topic 2—How is COVID-19 introducing a new challenge to violence against women and issues such as sheltering-in-place? What causes this violence? Is there a correlation between those who have experienced violence as children and violence later in life, including violence against women? How do we measure issues surrounding violence against women? What is the correlation of violence against women and maintaining control? What can we do to address this issue?

Topic 3—What are some ways that COVID-19 is affecting the lives of women? In what ways have women been impacted economically by COVID-19? Why is it important to measure issues such as violence against women?

Topic 4—Compare responses to COVID-19 between some countries. What is the correlation between a reduction of COVID-19 cases and violence against women? How might the style of leadership make a difference in dealing with a pandemic such as COVID-19?

Topic 5—How can women’s centers assist women victims of violence? How can we support women’s centers or individual women? In cases of violence against women, what percentage of the perpetrators are men? Where can women get support? Why is helping women victims often very complicated? What is the significance of stigmas with having

been a women's victim or survivor of violence? What advice does Anne offer to raising children and informing them of the use of violence as a way to manage or resolve conflict?

Topic 6—What recommendations does Anne make to adolescent boys? What is the significance she places upon the empowerment of young men?

Recommended debriefing activities

1. Following the viewing of the interview, have each small group (from section 2) discuss the set of questions that the group was assigned. Have one student from each group present a summary of its discussion to the class.
2. Lead class discussions on one or more of the following points that were raised during the interview. Alternatively, have students choose one to write an essay.
 - a. Anne describes violence against women as a “pandemic.” She notes that one out of three women worldwide will suffer from violence against women.
 - b. Anne notes that violence against women is used as a strategy for people to maintain control. In the case of COVID-19, many people have lost “control of their lives” in areas like lost jobs, loss of money, poor or failing health, children not being able to attend school, etc. A pandemic like COVID-19 can exacerbate the lives of people who are feeling vulnerable.
 - c. Anne notes that the countries that have done well in addressing COVID-19 are led by women. She notes some leadership styles that they may possess, e.g., collaborative, openly compassionate, thoughtful, not blaming, etc.
 - d. Anne underscores the importance of being present for someone who has experienced violence and may be feeling isolated especially during COVID-19.
3. Have students research women’s centers (sometimes called women’s shelters) in their areas. What services do they provide? How do they help with women’s empowerment? If you could develop a new women’s center in your area, what services would you provide and why?
4. Anne underscores the empowerment of young men in helping to address issues concerning violence of women. Devise an activity that might help to both empower young men as well as address issues concerning violence against women.
5. Dr. Sorcar notes, “I really appreciate the compassion through which you [Anne] are speaking, and at the end of the day, that’s what matters most... being a friend... not judging others... making sure that we are as compassionate as we can be especially

during this trying time.” Reflect on a time that you have helped someone in need. Write a diary entry about your experience.

6. Dr. Sorcar notes, “Clearly there is a role for all of us in this... It is all of our issue and there is a lot that we can do collectively as well as individuals.” Write an op-ed about Dr. Sorcar’s statement and consider submitting it to your local newspaper or school newsletter.