

TIMELINE OF THE BATTERED WOMENS MOVEMENT WOMENS HISTORY MONTH 2008

The African American Planning Commission (AAPCI), Inc. celebrates Women's History Month by focusing on the history of the battered women's movement in the last 50 years and the hard work, dedication and commitment of AAPCI's domestic violence staff. We encourage you to read the information provided and to make a donation toward our efforts to develop safe, affordable housing for survivors of domestic violence.

- 1950's & 1960's: The civil rights, anti-war and black liberation movements challenge the country, laying a foundation for the feminist movement.
- 1962: In New York, domestic violence cases are transferred from Criminal Court to Family Court where only civil procedures apply. The husband never faces the harsher penalties he would suffer if found guilty in Criminal Court for assaulting a stranger.
- 1963: Betty Friedan authors *The Feminine Mystique*.
- 1965: Congress passes laws prohibiting discrimination against women in employment and requiring equal pay for equal work. The traditional marriage contract, however, remains legally intact in America.
- 1966: Beating, as cruel and inhumane treatment, becomes grounds for divorce in New York, but the plaintiff must establish that a "sufficient" number of beatings have taken place.
- 1967: The state of Maine opens one of the first shelters in the United States.
- 1968: The Harris poll interviews 1,176 American adults in October. They find that 1/5 approve of slapping one's spouse on "appropriate occasions."
- 1969: California adopts a no-fault divorce law by which either partner can request and obtain a divorce without fear of being contested by the other party.
- Late 1960's & Early 1970's: The women's liberation movement sets the stage for the battered women's movement. The emerging movement details the conditions of daily life that allow women to call themselves battered. Women's hotlines and crisis centers provide a context for battered women to speak out and seek help.
- Early 1970's: Throughout many cities, married battered women who leave their husbands are denied welfare due to their husbands' income.
- 1970's: "We will not be beaten" becomes the mantra of women across the country organizing to end domestic violence. A grassroots organizing effort begins, transforming public consciousness and women's lives.
- 1972: In June, the first emergency rape crisis line opens in Washington, D.C.
- 1973: From 1968 to 1973, the crime of rape increased 62% nationwide.
- 1974: As a result of women's groups' efforts, New York no longer requires a rape victim to give independent corroboration of the crime.
- 1975: Most U.S. states allow wives to bring criminal action against a husband who inflicts injury upon her.
- 1975: In New York, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis is formed after a domestic violence conference held in January. The AWAIC offers referral service and group counseling sessions to wives who need help breaking out of the victim syndrome.

- 1976: In November, the New York City Council passes Resolution 491, introduced by Council Member Miriam Freidlander, urging city agencies to make concrete plans for providing specialized assistance to battered women.
- 1976: Del Martin publishes *Battered Wives*, a major source of information and validation for the movement. It legitimates the view that violence against women is caused by sexism.
- 1976: The first Legal Center for Battered Women in the U.S. is funded by a grant from the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago.
- 1976: On March 4, 8,200 women from 33 countries meet in Brussels for the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women. The issues of the conference include rape, battering, forced sterilization, mutilation and economic and legal crimes against women. A resolution on domestic violence is sent to the government of all countries. Similar tribunals are held in New York and San Francisco.
- 1976: The first domestic violence shelter opened in New York City.
- 1977: New York State funding was provided for shelters and victims of domestic violence. A law was passed allowing married victims of domestic violence to file criminal charges against a spouse.
- 1977: Michigan housewife Francine Hughes is acquitted on the grounds of "temporary insanity" for the murder of her husband. She suffered abuse since 1963, but received no help from police or social workers. Even when she divorced him, he refused to move out. Her story was told in the book and movie, *The Burning Bed: the True Story of an Abused Wife*.
- 1978: The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) was established.
- 1979: The New York State Governor's Task Force on Domestic Violence was created.
- 1980: The Battered Women's Program was part of HRA's Family and Adult Services (FAS) division. FAS operated one center and contracted out operations for another. The centers provided temporary living space, individual and group counseling, and referrals to social services.
- 1981: The New York State Domestic Violence Hotline was established.
- 1981: The first annual Domestic Violence Awareness Week is celebrated.
- 1982: HRA establishes one shelter for battered women in each borough. Over 700 women were served.
- 1982: The phrase "battered women's movement" has come to symbolize the activists and organizations serving battered women and their children.
- 1983: Over 700 shelters are in operation nationwide serving 91,000 women and 131,000 children per year.
- 1983: The Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence in New York was created by Executive Order, replacing the Task Force.
- 1984: *People v. Liberta*: New York's highest court made marital rape a crime, striking down the "marital rape exemption" on the grounds that it denied equal protection of the laws to married women.
- 1985: The New York State Spanish Domestic Violence Hotline was established, the first in the nation.
- 1985: New York Asian Women's Center is formed in New York City. It sponsors programs to combat violence against Asian women.

- 1985: The National Assault Prevention Center is formed by Sally Cooper, which helps children deal with different forms of abuse.
- 1987: The Domestic Violence Prevention Act permanently funded emergency shelters for victims through local Departments of Social Services.
- 1987: The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NYSCASA) was established.
- 1989: Brooklyn Supreme Court justice Edward Pincus sentences Chinese immigrant Dong Lu Chen to 5 years probation for using a claw hammer to smash the skull of his wife. Pincus concludes that traditional Chinese values about adultery and loss of manhood drove Chen to kill his wife.
- 1990: Forty-eight states have enacted or revamped injunctions that enable courts to refrain men from abusing, harassing and assaulting the women with whom they live. Emergency protection orders outside of normal court hours can be obtained in 23 states.
- 1991: National studies show that 1 out of 7 wives report being raped by their husband; two-thirds of the rapes occurred more than once.
- 1992: The U.S. Surgeon General ranks abuse by husbands to be the leading cause of injuries to women aged 15 to 44.
- 1992: The New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) was created by statute, replacing the Commission. New York became the only state with an executive level state agency dedicated to addressing the issue of domestic violence.
- 1992: The American Medical Association releases guidelines suggesting that doctors screen women for signs of domestic violence.
- 1993: The United Nations recognizes domestic violence as an international human rights issue and issues a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. A similar resolution is issued by the Organization of American States.
- 1993: Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger and New York City Council Member Ronnie Eldridge co-chaired the Task Force on Family Violence.
- 1994: The Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act brought about the development of the Order of Protection Registry; Domestic Incident Reporting System; Victims' Rights Notification; mandatory arrest; training for judges, law enforcement personnel, and district attorneys; and the addition or revision of several crimes under the New York State Penal Law.
- 1994: The federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) created the first legislation acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes and provided federal resources to encourage coordinated community responses to domestic violence.
- 1994: New York follows Florida in recognizing that rapists cannot claim that the victim's dress provoked their crime. New Jersey and Pennsylvania add stalking to definitions of abuse.
- 1995: Governor Pataki made prevention of domestic violence a priority, declaring a policy of "zero tolerance" for domestic violence in New York State.
- 1997: The Model Domestic Violence Policy for Counties was introduced.
- 1998: The statewide public awareness campaign and school-based prevention projects were established.
- 1999: A law making stalking a felony in New York State was passed.
- 2000: The average number of New York City families served by HRA per day by was nearly 400. The DV shelter capacity increased from 871 beds in 1994 to 1,365 in 2001,

serving nearly 2,000 families. In addition to HRA residential services, HRA provided oversight for eleven contracted nonresidential DV service providers which served over 15, 000 victims during FY 2000.

- 2000: The Sexual Assault Reform Act (SARA) was passed, enacting sweeping changes in New York State's rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse laws.
- 2002: A New York State law requiring all current and new Child Protective Service workers to be trained on domestic violence issues was passed.
- 2005: VAWA was reauthorized.

Timeline Information was compiled from the following sources:

New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Mayor's Management Report, 1980-2000

HRA MacMillan Library

Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse