



"A TIMELY, EMPOWERING STORY"

-Variety

herself

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF *MAMMA MIA!* AND *THE IRON LADY*

discussion guide



amazonstudios prime video

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Thank you to Free From, DWC, and Casita Coalition for their support.





domestic violence & PTSD discussion questions

OVERARCHING THEMES:

- What is Domestic Violence? What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and how is it related to domestic violence?
- What are the different types of abuse in domestic and family violence?
- What impact does domestic violence have on children in the home?
- What is the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)?

introduction

Domestic violence is a dangerous pattern of seeking power through controlling, manipulating and coercive behaviors in which one individual seeks to dominate and harm another individual through acts of verbal, emotional, psychological, financial, physical, sexual, reproductive, image-based, social, spiritual/religious and harassment/intimidation/stalking means. These abuses can take many forms, including but not limited to, stalking and harassment (both physically and online), using the children to inflict feelings of guilt in order to gain control, forcing participation in religious or spiritual practices against one's will, pressuring unprotected sex or requiring an abortion, using or taking nude or sexual images of an individual without their permission, use of intimidation through looks, gestures and actions, use of isolation by controlling or limiting outside communication and monitoring phone calls. These are just a few ways in which an abuser can establish power and control. For those who experience or witness these types of abuses perpetrated on a parent or loved one, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur. This mental health condition results from exposure to life-threatening or traumatic events and can have lasting effects if untreated. Those who experience PTSD often live with intense anxiety, stress and fear for a long time after experiencing trauma. They might relive the life-threatening or traumatic events through flashbacks, nightmares or remembrances. This can lead to self-isolation, attachment issues, and thoughts and behaviors that negatively impact one's ability to function day to day, ultimately disrupting their lives. The same is true of children who have witnessed domestic violence. These children may also have lasting scars, both mentally and physically from PTSD. One research study found that experiencing PTSD during the critical stages of brain development during childhood results in malformations in the development of the central nervous system and brain. Such issues raise the importance of reauthorization of critical legislation, like the

Violence Against Women Act of 2019 (VAWA), which the House of Representatives passed in April of 2019 and is designed to help protect individuals from domestic violence and its long-term devastating effects. The VAWA provides vital services and protections to survivors of domestic violence. Regardless of the title, these protections are available to not only women but any individual regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The VAWA bill is supposed to be reauthorized every five years and while the protections it affords do not expire, re-authorization allows for strengthening certain protections in the bill, expanding it and improving upon it. VAWA is currently reauthorized through 2024.

70%

of homeless
women experience
domestic violence.¹

¹Domestic violence pushes many women to homelessness Axios.com



DISCUSSION SPARKS:

Did you know...

- 50% of all individuals will experience a traumatic event during their lifetime
- Approximately 8 million Americans have been diagnosed with PTSD.
- 92% of women experiencing homelessness indicated through a survey they had experienced severe physical or sexual abuse with 60% of them experiencing these traumas by the time they were 12 years old



ACTIVISM:

In the article [*Take action: 10 ways you can help end violence against women*](#), even during a pandemic activists can:

- 1 Allow survivors to give voice to their experiences by listening without judgment.
- 2 Learn from survivors and then educate others.
- 3 Call on governments to fund and provide appropriate services, both preventative and responsive, for survivors.
- 4 Understand and talk about consent.
- 5 Know the signs of abuse and understand how you can help.
- 6 Start a conversation about gender-based violence.
- 7 Stand in solidarity against rape culture.
- 8 Support survivor organizations and services by donating.
- 9 Call out harassment and other abusive tactics when you see it in order to hold each other accountable.
- 10 Read and share the data.

What other ways do you think you can help? List at least three additional ways.



SOCIAL MEDIA:

[Orange the World](#) is part of the [UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women](#) campaign started by the UN Secretary General. [Click here](#) for access to the social media package of Orange the World and participate in sixteen days of activism, in which you can share banners, images, face filters, hashtags and sample messages in multiple languages on both your Facebook and Twitter accounts.

[Click here](#) for assets



CREATE:

Go to unwomen.org and review the ad campaign aimed at highlighting legal gaps in protections against gender-based violence. What is the message being shared and how is it communicated? How does the ad campaign address the issue of the alarming rise in domestic violence during the pandemic? In what ways does it highlight the legal gaps related to domestic violence? How does the ad campaign question the social norms around male sexual entitlement? Consider these concepts and how the ad campaign addresses them. Create your own ad campaign or poster to send a message that supports ending gender-based violence. Share your campaign ad at **#herself**.

[Click here](#) to review ad campaign



DISCUSSION:

Video resources on pg. 7

In the film **HERSELF**, Sandra (Clare Dunne) is physically attacked by her husband while one of her daughters witnesses the assault. Exposure to traumatic events can result in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In what ways are symptoms of PTSD expressed by both Sandra and her daughter who witnessed the assault? Watch the video [How Domestic Violence Impacts Children](#). What are additional impacts on children beyond PTSD?

Watch the [Power and Control video](#) and access the [Power and Control wheel](#) online. Consider the film **HERSELF** and identify the tactics on the wheel used by Sandra's estranged husband to implement power and control over her. Discuss which tactics were used and how they were used to dominate and control.

Watch [What is VAWA?](#) and the [History of VAWA](#). How is the VAWA defined and historically, why was it needed? How has the VAWA been expanded and improved over the years? Why is the reauthorization important? What additional expansions and improvements are still needed?

Watch [I Left on a Tuesday, Why I Stayed, Why I Left, & Conversations with Survivors](#). Why is it important to listen to survivor stories? What can we learn from their experiences? Why is it important to listen without judgment? What does it mean to listen without judgment?

resources



VIDEOS:

- **HERSELF Film Clip: Black Widow**
six minutes 19 seconds film clip
(0:01-6:20 minutes)
- **HERSELF Film Clip: Visitation**
one minute 25 seconds film clip
(12:15-13:40 minutes)
- **HERSELF Film Clip: The Wrong Way Around** three min 25 seconds film clip
(58:30-01:01:55 minutes)
- **Domestic Violence: Hidden Scars**
(15:40 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXXjZNkVRJw
- **PTSD in Children & Adolescents Exposed to Domestic Violence** (3:13 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bAKfOpS-LO
- **Invisible Scars: Children & Domestic Violence 2018** (2:37 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9olcmqhCZE
- **Children, Violence, and Trauma—Addressing Violence in the Home**
(8:41 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3sezLfnOJM
- **The Emotional Toll of COVID: PTSD, Domestic Violence, and, Suicide**
(1:00:23 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7LkC00XJgA
- **Abused Women May Suffer From PTSD**
(2:14 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1OIXlwDNyQ



ARTICLES:

- **Trauma & Homelessness-National Health Care for the Homeless Council**
<https://nhchc.org>
- **Domestic Violence Pushes Many Women to Homelessness**
www.axios.com/homeless-women-domestic-violence-02646cf1-fa84-4ad9-8fcf-104e260bfa73.html
- **What Is Domestic Violence?**
www.ctcadv.org/information-about-domestic-violence/what-domestic-violence
- **A High-Tech Twist on Abuse: Technology, Intimate Partner Stalking and Advocacy**
www.acesdv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/NNEDV_HighTechTwistPaperAndApxA_English08.pdf
- **Types of Abuse in Domestic and Family Violence**
www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/about/types-of-abuse-in-dv
- **What It's Like to Live With PTSD After Escaping Domestic Violence**
www.self.com/story/ptsd-domestic-violence
- **Witnessing Domestic Violence: The Effect on Children**
www.aafp.org/afp/2002/1201/p2052.html
- **Congress Must Reauthorize, Expand, and Improve VAWA in 2019**
www.americanprogress.org/issues/criminal-justice/news/2019/05/08/469082/congress-must-reauthorize-expand-improve-awa-2019
- **Survivors Know Best: How to Disrupt Intimate Partner Violence During COVID-19 and Beyond**
www.freefrom.org/s/Survivors-Know-Best-Report.pdf



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND PTSD RESOURCES:

- NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: www.thehotline.org
- VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT INCLUDES HOUSING PROVISIONS
www.ncsha.org/blog/violence-women-act-includes-housing-provisions/#text=Making-it-illegal-to-deny-sexual-assault-stalking
- NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: www.nnedv.org
- NATIONAL CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TRAUMA, & MENTAL HEALTH:
www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org
- DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER: www.downtownwomenscenter.org
- FREEFROM COMPENSATION COMPASS - How to pursue compensation for costs related to the harm experienced: www.compass.freefrom.org
- COVID-19 RESPONSE GUIDE: www.freefrom.org/news/covid19responseguide
- PEER-TO-PEER FINANCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS FOR SURVIVORS:
www.freefrom.org/news/2020/3/18/freefrom-launches-virtual-peer-to-peer-financial-support-groups

If you are in danger, please call 911, a local hotline, or the U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224



Thank you to Free From, DWC, and Casita Coalition for their support. Learn more about their good work.



A close-up, low-key photograph of a woman and a young child. The woman, in the foreground, has dark hair and is looking down with a somber expression. The child, partially visible to the right, also looks down. The lighting is soft and focused on their faces, creating a poignant atmosphere.

homelessness legislation discussion questions

OVERARCHING THEMES:

- What constitutes homelessness? What is the difference between primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness?
- What legislation exists to address the issue of homelessness? What legislation is still needed?
- What do you know about the proposed bill S. 2613: Ending Homelessness Act of 2019?

introduction

Homelessness in many communities has reached a crisis point and in many cities in America, it is a state of emergency. In the United States over half a million people are unhoused, with the vast majority, approximately one-fifth of those experiencing homelessness, located in California. Homelessness can be defined as lacking a permanent place of residence. Many who are unhoused do not live on the streets, rather they may face housing insecurity such as acquiring a fixed, safe, adequate and affordable residence. In an effort to address homelessness, some governments categorize issues facing those who are unhoused into three main types of homelessness: **Primary**, **Secondary** and **Tertiary**. Primary homelessness involves people who may live or sleep on the streets, or have access to inadequate dwellings or reside in automobiles for shelter. Individuals may also unlawfully place dwellings on uninhabited land or in uninhabited buildings. Secondary homelessness refers to individuals who reside temporarily in other people's households, who may sleep on friend's couches or who find some other temporary accommodation. The final category of homelessness is Tertiary and refers to individuals who may reside in hotels, boarding houses or other non-lease secured accommodation. As part of the COVID-19, HEROES 1.0 Stimulus Package: Emergency Solutions Grants, The Public Health Emergency Shelter Act was introduced by Senator Elizabeth Warren in the senate. H.R. 6724, S. 3856 meant to address individuals experiencing homelessness as a result of the pandemic. However, the effort has stalled out, meaning that Congress adjourned before the bill could complete the legislative cycle. Oftentimes, bills are reintroduced repeatedly before completing the legislative process. On October 16th, Senator Kamala Harris, now Vice President of the United States, introduced the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019

(S. 2613), aimed at addressing the needs of homeless individuals and increasing the funding for programs like the National Housing Trust Fund, project-based rental assistance, and project-based voucher programs. We in the United States face an affordable housing shortage, but rather than enact laws aimed at helping the homeless receive aid, shelter and food, the current trend has been to enact more laws designed to criminalize homelessness. Advocates of the homeless need to call on Congress to steadfastly commit to bi-partisan efforts to help facilitate an end to homelessness by recognizing the homeless as a protected class with rights in need of federal assistance.

No. 1

domestic violence
is a leading cause
of homelessness
for women.¹

¹ National Network to End Domestic Violence NNEDV.ORG/HOUSING



DISCUSSION SPARKS:

Did you know...

- Over half a million people are homeless in the United States.
- Women, between the ages of 16-24, have the highest per capita rate of intimate partner violence.
- Many large cities criminalize homelessness and even prohibit sitting and lying down in public.



ACTIVISM:

- In 2019, Senator Kamala Harris, now Vice President of the United States, introduced the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019. Explore the Website: S. 2613: Ending Homeless Act of 2019 <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/s2613/studyguide>. Answer these three key questions from the site:
 - What would this bill do if enacted?
 - What else do you know about this bill?
 - What can you do about this bill?

If this bill does not pass, how might you try to get it reintroduced?

- In the video, *Left Behind* (Resources on pg. 13), the statement is made, “It is very hard to access help from the street.” What is meant by this statement and what action can be taken to make assistance to the homeless more accessible? In what ways could services be brought to people who are homeless as opposed to those people having to find services? Make a list and share it with your local politician and city government.
- Brian Peterson is an artist and activist helping those who are experiencing homelessness find permanent housing and a way off the streets. Watch his amazing story at: [The Artist Who Paints the Homeless](#). In what ways can you use your talents or skills to effect change for the homeless?



SOCIAL MEDIA:

Social media gives voice to the general public and is an avenue through which policy change can happen. Leading this cause is a non-profit called Invisible People. This group educates the public through sharing stories of the homeless. To learn more go to: <https://invisiblepeople.tv> or follow them on twitter [@invisiblepeople](#).

[Click here](#) for more



CREATE:

In the TedTalk, *Homes for the Homeless*, James Furzer describes an architectural design for homeless housing aimed at symbolically “elevating” those facing housing insecurity. If you were an architect, what theme would guide your design to address homelessness? Please explain why you chose the symbol you did. What different considerations would you need to consider in designing for: individuals, families, children, veterans, domestic violence survivors, the unemployed, individuals who need mental health opportunities, or those who need drug addiction support? Consider the following in your design: safety, affordability, location, and transportation.



DISCUSSION:

Video resources on pg. 13

In the film **HERSELF**, Sandra (Clare Dunne) and her two daughters are living in a hotel to escape domestic violence at home. What category of homelessness are they experiencing? What barriers is the main character facing in surviving domestic violence and seeking to find a permanent home for **HERSELF** and her children away from her abuser? Sandra makes a compelling argument to the welfare agency that they could save money by allowing her to build a permanent home on a vacant lot. Do you think this could be a viable solution to help address the issue of homelessness and housing affordability? Support your argument.

The *Intersection of Homelessness and Domestic Violence* video emphasizes that “access to safe, affordable housing is one of a survivors’ biggest, most urgent concerns”. In your local area, what resources are available to directly address these concerns regarding housing? Discuss at least three resources.

In the *Left Behind* video it is suggested that the solution to providing safe, affordable permanent housing for the homeless is an approach called Housing First. What is Housing First and how is it different from other approaches?

Left Behind questions the impact of Proposition 47. What is this law and what impact has it had on homelessness in California?

In the video, *Hiding the Homeless*, the issue of criminalization of behaviors like sitting, lying down or eating in public, as a measure to force those who are homeless to go into hiding, is raised. Is criminalization of homelessness effective? Support your argument with credible evidence.

resources



VIDEOS:

- ***HERSELF* Film Clip: A Wish for a New House** one minute 39 seconds film clip (4:26-6:05 minutes)
- ***HERSELF* Film Clip: Build Your Own House** three minute 04 seconds film clip (21:05-24:09 minutes)
- ***HERSELF* Film Clip: Visitation** one minute 25 seconds film clip (12:15-13:40 minutes)
- ***The Intersection of Homelessness and Domestic Violence*** (2:46 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVnwGFqyEcQ>
- ***Left Behind: America's Homeless Crisis*** (33:25 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjAyLAuZIE4>
- **How Homeless College Students get by at California's Humboldt State**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ck-89phIXsM>
- **'Safe' parking lots give California homeless a lifeline** (2:57 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2Zd3wvqliA>
- **What Happens When Cities Make Homelessness a Crime: Hiding The Homeless** (12:54 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYFeY2pSOks>
- **How can cities end homelessness?** (11:42 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L41peAlrkGw>
- ***Homes for the Homeless* | James Furzer | TEDxWarwick** (18:03 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNEw7CzUrw>



ARTICLES:

- **Why Can't the Senate Pass the Violence Against Women Act?**
www.gq.com/story/senate-violence-against-women-act
- **Private Violence**
www.privateviolence.com/engage.html#getsocial
- **New legislation to combat homelessness introduced in U.S. House**
www.naco.org/blog/new-legislation-combat-homelessness-introduced-us-house
- **Invisible Struggles: What can be done to help college students experiencing homelessness?**
www.ucf.edu/pegasus/invisible-struggles
- **When the Homeless Took Over**
www.shelterforce.org/2019/10/11/when-the-homeless-took-over
- **No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homeless in U.S. Cities**
www.nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/No_Safe_Place.pdf
- **The Fight Over What It Means to be Homeless**
will.illinois.edu/news/story/the-fight-over-what-it-means-to-be-homeless-and-how-that-could-affect-illinois
- **Lobbying 101 National Coalition for the Homeless**
www.nationalhomeless.org/taking-action/lobbying



HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES:

- **NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION**
<https://nlihc.org/>
- **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS LEGISLATION**
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/housing-and-homelessness-legislation.aspx>
- **NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS**
<https://endhomelessness.org/>
- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS**
<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/domestic-violence/>
- **TURNER CENTER FOR HOUSING INNOVATION**
<https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/>
- **CASITA COALITION**
<https://www.casitacoalition.org/>

If you are in danger, please call 911, a local hotline, or the U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224



Thank you to Free From, DWC, and Casita Coalition for their support. Learn more about their good work.

FREE
FROM
Financial security and stability for survivors

W
DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER

CASITA
COALITION