



WorldYWCA

APRIL 24, 2023

#YWCALEADERS #WORLDYWCADAY2023

## Every Safe Space Has a Story

What is a safe space? How do the words “safe” and “space” connect to become something so powerful- much more than just a space- an emotion, a feeling or a lived experience that impacts humans in various forms? Why is it that when we say “safe space”, we relive moments, stories and incidents that give us a feeling of trust, empathy, and comfort and evoke in us an emotion of “being heard”?

Safe spaces offer respite, provide opportunities for vulnerable sharing and foster the conditions to show up as authentic versions of ourselves. Today, safe spaces are also places where we continue to practice our leadership skills without denying the realities of individuals, communities or the world. Offering calm environments away from constant critique, very often safe spaces become places where women, young women and girls get a feeling of belongingness.

**Safe spaces are online or offline places that seek to provide an environment where all people feel safe, and comfortable, and can share their experiences, opinions, and views without fear or threat of political, economic or personal harm.**

While this is true, we also know that safe spaces can mean different things to different beings. This is why it is important to create intentional opportunities for gathering—especially for women, young women, and girls. Within trusting environments, we can engage freely, share our stories, and explore new ideas.

This World YWCA Day, we invite you to share your stories around safe spaces. What comes to your mind when you think of the term “safe spaces”? What incident, experience, or anecdote can you recall regarding your first safe space, your best safe space, a space you felt yourself for the first time, or even a space where you explored the idea of safety beyond yourself?

**Because every safe space has a story, we invite you to engage with the YWCA movement this World YWCA Day 2023 by bringing to light YOUR safe space story.**

## Share your safe space story and get featured!

Remember safe spaces where you shared ideas, experiences, questions, and dreams and still felt invited, welcomed, not judged or ignored? Where was it that you were met with curiosity, reciprocity, care and celebration? What was that safe space experience? World YWCA invites all of you to send us these stories at [getinvolved@worldywca.org](mailto:getinvolved@worldywca.org) by April 23, 2023. We will publish them on World YWCA Social Media during World YWCA Day on April 24, 2023, thereby sharing your stories around the world.

You can also choose to share these stories directly on your Social Media or website, using the hashtags [#YWCALeaders](#) [#WorldYWCADay2023](#) and tagging us at [@worldywca](#). We will make sure we highlight them.

You can also use the template at the end of this document for sharing short stories (100 words) during World YWCA Day. Templates are open for you to translate into your local language.

You can also share long narrative stories around your safe space experiences with World YWCA at [getinvolved@worldywca.org](mailto:getinvolved@worldywca.org) and we will publish it at our blog SheSpeaks.

Read some inspiring short stories:

[SURVIVORS SPEAK ~ #BULLETANDDOVE STORIES - LEADERS TAKING ACTION](#)

Read some long form narrative stories:

- [RiseUp!: Safe Spaces in Bangladesh](#)
- [Inspiring Leaders: Story of Kosalina](#)
- [YW4A Leadership Story of Neema](#)
- [Inspiring Leaders: Story of Isabelle](#)

## Host a safe space gathering on World YWCA Day!

Traditionally, World YWCA Day is often celebrated by hosting fundraising breakfasts and conversations. We invite you to consider hosting a physical or a virtual safe space, an intergenerational space to celebrate these stories and spaces you all have experienced. You can also think of making this a key conversation around how YWCA can be a better safe space for intergenerational women and young women in your community.

Should you decide to host such a space, we would love to hear more about it. Do write to us or tag us in your Social Media posts.



# Expand your YWCA safe space by using the refreshed World YWCA's "Our Spaces, Power Spaces" Guide!



This Guide, Our Spaces, Power Spaces tells the story of how and why practicing safe spaces can be transformative. And at the heart of any transformative action is a profound sense of engagement, buy-in, and ownership. With this in mind, this Guide is a customisable template to make your own! Adding your unique context to this Guide helps your safe space to be culturally relevant. Building on the Defining Standards in this Guide allows you to create a welcoming environment.

Explore the guide in all its beautiful glory, dig deep with the refreshed safe space standards, and think how this can help you in your mission, your vision for your YWCA, aligned with the YWCA Goal 2035, engaging 100 million young women and girls in transforming power structures. Remember, it is more than just a physical space now! Need any suggestions or help on how to use the guide? Write to us at [worldoffice@worldywca.org](mailto:worldoffice@worldywca.org).

**“When you raise your voice loud enough and consistently enough, it resonates with other voices.”**

**- Tarana Burke, founder of the #MeToo movement**

In 1855, the YWCA (one of the oldest and largest feminist, faith-based organizations) first provided safe housing to young women arriving in London in search of employment. This marked the earliest idea of YWCA Safe Spaces. Today, YWCAs in local communities in over 100 countries around the world continue to provide safe spaces, serving over 25 million women, young women, and girls of all ages. While the idea behind YWCA Safe Spaces first came to life as an actual, physical space, the practice has evolved into any space where women, young women, and girls come together.

Regardless of what brings women, young women and girls together, the act of gathering is powerful. When in dedicated spaces surrounded by ongoing support and safety, something magical happens. Women, young women and girls begin to bloom as individuals and expand their collective capacity as agents of change. But everyone remains to have one or many safe space stories that they share with smiles, pride and joy, celebrating how that one story has become an integral part of their life and identity.

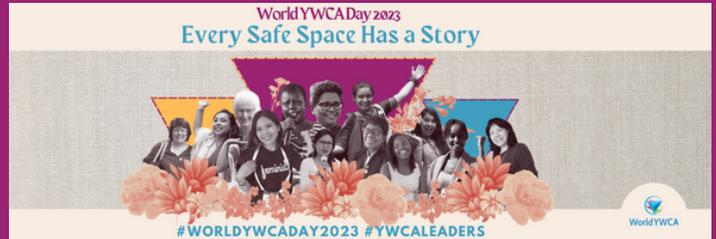
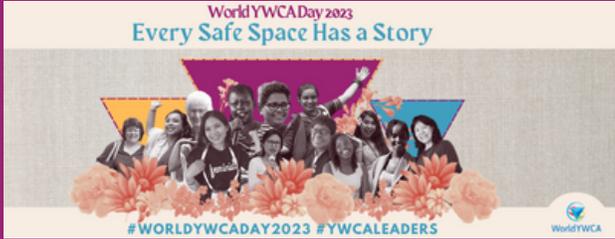
## What is your safe space story?

# Templates for download and easy use:

The below templates can be easily downloaded and adapted based on your needs. Feel free to add your YWCA's logo on the imagery.

Facebook header:

Twitter header:

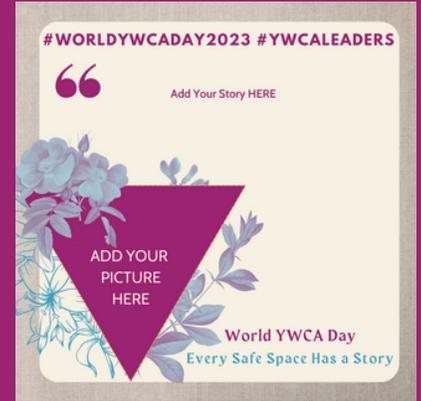
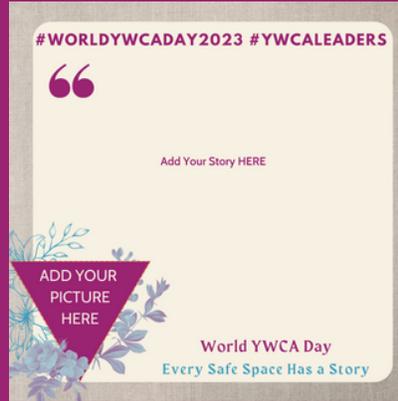
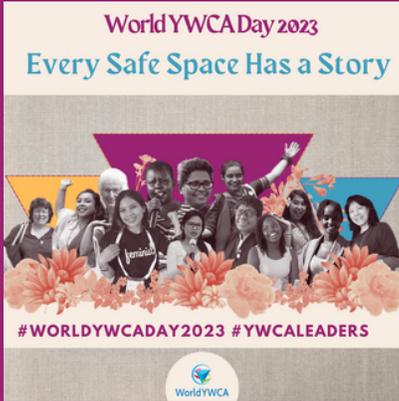


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Instagram image and story templates:



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## Here is how you can stay connected:

- Subscribe to the monthly World YWCA Movement Newsletter.
- Join our YWCA Social Network and stay connected to leaders around the world.
- Join the World YWCA Leaders Get Involved Whatsapp Channel for more formal and informal updates.
- Follow us on social media @worldywca (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn)
- Check out our websites (World YWCA and SheSpeaks)
- Write to us at worldoffice@worldywca.org.
- Donate to World YWCA and support our work.



@worldywca



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