

YWCA'S WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE | 2024

#WeekWithoutViolence2024 #YWCALeaders



FINANCIAL TRAUMA: FINANCIAL ABUSE TO SAFETY AND JUSTICE FOR WOMEN



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
USA

WELCOME TO THE WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE 2024

This Week Without Violence, World YWCA is partnering with the YWCA of USA to bring focus towards financial abuse as a form of violence.

This tool supports a deeper understanding of women and young women globally towards financial abuse. It provides actionable solutions to inform, protect and guide you toward achieving financial safety, independence and justice. This toolkit helps advocate for financial equity and raises awareness about how financial challenges disproportionately affect women's rights and gender equality worldwide. With a global, intergenerational focus, the tool breaks down key elements of financial trauma to generate awareness and critical thinking through a solution-oriented approach.

We have tried our best to include research studies and resources from around the world, acknowledging that many more resources exist that haven't been added. These are just some suggested framings, which can be explored from your unique perspectives in your country and community. As you deep dive, consider reflecting on the following question: "How might these experiences relate to financial dynamics in your country or community?"

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

Financial control is one of the most insidious ways abusers can exert power, often leaving survivors dependent and powerless. A survey by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) shows that 99% of domestic violence survivors also experience financial abuse. [1] [2] [3] [4] Across different regions, financial abuse manifests uniquely, but its impact on women remains universal:-

- Economic abuse is a global issue, as seen in the UK, where one in five women faced it in 2023, while in India, 59% of working women do not make their own financial decisions. [5][6]
- In Colombia, 31 percent of women reported experiencing economic abuse by an intimate partner, such as the partner spending money that was needed for the home, monitoring their spending or prohibiting them from working or studying. [7]
- In Bangladesh, 16 percent of men reported committing acts of economic abuse, including prohibiting a partner from working or withholding earnings from a partner for household expenses. [8]
- In Tanzania, two studies found that around 45 percent of women had experienced economic violence at some point in their lives. [9]
- In a survey of Hondurans' perceptions of gender-based violence, Hondurans estimate that five out of 10 women in their country face economic violence. [10]



Perpetrators can limit survivors' access to money, control their financial or basic living resources, coerce them into debt or prevent them from working or attending school. All of these have a tremendous impact on survivors' ability to gain independence.

Financial Abuse involves tactics that limit a partner's access to financial resources such as controlling bank accounts, concealing financial information or manipulating credit scores. Economic control, employment sabotage and coerced debt are some forms of financial abuse that are prevalent across the globe.

TURNING THE TIDE: INSPIRING STORIES AND TOOLS TO BREAK FREE FROM FINANCIAL ABUSE

Understanding Financial Abuse: Signs to Watch Out For

Financial abuse involves the control of a person's access to economic resources, restricting their ability to support themselves and forcing dependence on an abuser. This form of abuse can manifest through restricting access to money, employment or financial decision-making and it often accompanies other forms of domestic violence. Financial abuse transcends socioeconomic, cultural and geographic boundaries, making it a globally recognized issue. Understanding its nuances is critical to uncovering the often-hidden impacts it has on survivors, especially women.

The United Nations has noted that 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime, with financial abuse often accompanying these forms of violence.

CLICK



[Know Financial Abuse](#) by The Allstate Foundation (USA)

1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. Financial abuse often keeps them trapped. Learn the signs of financial abuse, start a conversation and join The Allstate Foundation to help end this form of domestic violence.

What is financial abuse? What are the signs to look out for?

Financial abuse is one form of domestic abuse. Different forms of financial abuse include:

- Withholding money
- Stealing money
- Restricting the use of Finances

To figure out if your partner is financially abusing you, think about how you are being treated by answering the following [questions](#).

CLICK



The True Cost of Financial Abuse by The Allstate Foundation (USA)

Financial abuse is a form of domestic violence that affects millions of Americans every year — so why don't more people know about it?

CLICK



Spent: Fighting Economic Abuse in India by Punita Chowbey funded by Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Sheffield Hallam University (India)

This documentary is part of the 'Impact of COVID 19 on women's employment and food insecurity in Bihar, India'. As part of the project, 50 women across a range of occupations, class, religious and caste categories were interviewed. This film is based on stories of five women who took part in this project. The film hopes to bring out these women's resilience and spirit in the face of economic abuse.

CLICK



Learning the signs of financial abuse by News10NBC (USA)

Kelli Owens, Executive Director of the New York State Office of Domestic Violence Prevention describes Financial Abuse

CLICK



Financial Elder Abuse - Detection, Intervention & Prevention by Financial Social Work (USA)

Financial Elder Abuse refers to a broad range of behaviours, including: taking money or property, forging an older person's signature, coercing or unduly influencing an older person to sign a financial document and defrauding/pulling scams to obtain money from an older person.

Does your partner:

- Steal money from you or your family?
- Refuse to work to help support the family?
- Force you to give them access to your bank accounts to make transactions without your input?
- Make you feel as though you don't have a right to know any details about money or household resources?
- Withhold physical resources from you including food, clothes, necessary medications or shelter?

If you have answered "yes" to more than one of these questions, your partner may be financially abusing you. Where there is financial abuse, there may also likely be other forms of abuse in your relationship. To see if you are being emotionally, physically or sexually abused, you can go to the following website: [Signs of Abuse](#) and [Forms of Abuse](#).

See the [full questionnaire, here](#).

FINANCIAL ABUSE & TEENAGE YEARS

Financial abuse can start early, targeting teens, particularly in intimate partner relationships or familial settings. It often involves manipulation related to money or employment opportunities, limiting independence and establishing long-term patterns of control. This day will highlight stories from young women across the world, illustrating how early financial abuse can shape economic insecurity later in life. It's essential to address this abuse during adolescence to prevent intergenerational cycles of financial trauma.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation's [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery report \(2022\)](#), approximately [50 million people globally are living in modern slavery situations](#), of which about [25 million are survivors of human trafficking](#). Teenagers, especially girls, are highly vulnerable to financial abuse within human trafficking, forced labour and sexual exploitation. [12]

In 2020, [1 in 2 of all survivors of trafficking in South America was a woman](#). [13]

Women are trafficked for sexual exploitation – they make up 87% of the survivors of sexual exploitation – as well as forced labour.

[Overlooked: Economic Abuse among Teen Dating Partners by Futures Without Violence \(USA\)](#)

In 2021, in partnership with The Allstate Foundation and in collaboration with University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Futures Without Violence launched a national survey better understand the academic, work and financial pressures teens experience in their relationships. This first-of-its-kind study assessed the prevalence of various forms of economic abuse among teens, determined the impact abusive behaviour has on their education, employment and finances and identified opportunities to enhance existing prevention efforts.

[Responding to Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls from Mexico and Latin America](#) by CCASA Colorado (Mexico and Latin America)

Every day in Mexico, young women and girls are preyed upon and recruited into human trafficking networks that sell sex in residential brothels, through escort services, and in cantinas across the U.S. Powerful networks concentrated in Mexico enslave tens of thousands of women in an underground sex economy in the U.S.

[Imported for my body: The African women trafficked to India for Sex](#) by BBC Africa Eye Documentary (Africa).

BBC Africa Eye uncovered an illegal network that lures women to India from Africa, where they are then forced into sex work to satisfy the demands of the many African men living in Delhi. The women are mostly from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania and Rwanda. One woman, Grace, who was trafficked from Kenya, agreed to go undercover.

CLICK [Child marriages in Afghanistan: The fight against selling underage girls](#) by FRANCE 24 English (Afghanistan)

In Afghanistan, girls are at increasing risk of child marriage. As hunger and poverty surge, families are offering their underage girls, some very young, to older men in exchange for money. Volunteers from Too Young to Wed are helping girls reunite with their parents.

CLICK [Child marriage: 'At 12, I was sold into marriage for \\$9'](#) by BBC World Service (Malawi, East Africa)

Around the world, more than 650 million women alive today were married as children. Each year 12 million girls are married before they reach 18. Although Malawi outlaws marriage for those under 18 years, cultural norms and poverty means the practice persists.

CLICK [India's Slave Brides](#) by Al Jazeera (India)

Human trafficking, slavery, decades of sex selection favouring male babies have left some Indian states with vastly more men than women, creating a lucrative and growing market for traffickers. In the patriarchal and feudal state of Haryana where there's a shortage of women to marry, it's normal for men to buy young girls trafficked from other states. Known as "paros", a term implying they can be purchased, they are regularly raped, forced into marriages and made to work as bonded labour.

CLICK [Child Marriages in South Sudan](#) by Human Rights Watch (South Sudan)

According to government statistics, close to half (48 percent) of South Sudanese girls between 15 and 19 are married, with some marrying as young as age 12. [14]

The country's widespread child marriage exacerbates South Sudan's pronounced gender gaps in school enrolment, contributes to soaring maternal mortality rates, and violates the right of girls to be free from violence, and to marry only when they are able and willing to give their free consent.

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT AT THE INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, 2023 projects that it will take 256 years to close the economic gender gap at the current rate of progress. [15]

Pay Disparity: On average, women earn 20% less than men globally, a figure that has remained relatively stable in recent years. [16]



This pay disparity is one of the starkest forms of economic inequality between men and women, further contributing to women's financial dependence and vulnerability to abuse.

Regional Variation: The gender pay gap varies significantly across regions. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Western Europe has made the most progress, with an average gender pay gap of 13%, while the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region lags behind, with a gap exceeding 40%. [17]

According to the NCADV, 8 million days of paid work are lost every year due to domestic violence and up to 60% of domestic violence survivors lose their jobs due to the abuse. [18] The impact of economic abuse is far-reaching, affecting survivors' ability to find a job, obtain a place to live and develop credit history.

CLICK [The Language Of Domestic Abuse in South Asian Communities](#) by Sangeetha Menon on TEDxCaryWomen (South Asia)

A startling look at the epidemic of domestic abuse in South Asian Communities highlighting the lack of language/translation for the term "domestic violence" and what this means for South Asian women living in the United States. In this compelling talk, community activist Sangeetha Menon seeks to lift the shame felt within this community by shining a light on the issue and inviting others to do the same. Sangeetha Menon is Kiran's Executive Director, immigrant woman of colour who serves the South Asian community in North Carolina through education on the cycle of gender based domestic violence.

CLICK [How to refer women survivors of violence to services by UN Women Asia & the Pacific \(Asia Pacific\)](#)

This video provides practical tips for essential service providers on how to refer survivors of violence to services including women migrant workers. This video was developed as part of the programme "Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018–2023)". Safe and Fair is part of the multi-year EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, funded by the European Union and implemented by ILO and UN Women in collaboration with UNODC.

Women facing domestic violence often encounter financial abuse, with their economic autonomy stripped away. Addressing financial empowerment within this context involves providing survivors with tools to regain control of their finances. Programs that combine financial literacy, access to safe banking options and legal support are critical. This section features global examples of initiatives that empower survivors by giving them economic independence as part of their journey to safety.



CLICK [Iraqi women struggle to escape abuse as domestic violence rises](#) by Al Jazeera (Iraq)

Domestic violence has been on the rise in most countries since the start of the coronavirus pandemic last year. In Iraq, rights groups say women there often have no choice but to remain with abusive partners because Iraqi law restricts the help support groups can offer.

CLICK [Australia's Dowry Deaths; 101 East](#) by Al Jazeera (Australia)

It's the day many families in India spend their lives dreaming of and saving for: their daughter's wedding. But behind the veil of the big Indian wedding lurks a hidden menace - dowry deaths. This video reveals that this deadly tradition has arrived on Australian shores.

CLICK [Financial abuse against women with disability](#) by Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (Australia)

Women with disability are at greater risk of experiencing financial abuse than those without disability. This video shows only one example of the risk factors for women with disability. Disability is also recognised as an additional risk factor for financial abuse in the context of Domestic and Family Violence.


FINANCIAL TRAUMA

Financial trauma results from prolonged economic abuse or instability, leading to anxiety, fear and a distorted relationship with money. For many women, the effects of financial abuse extend far beyond immediate monetary loss—they impact mental health and overall well-being. This section will examine the psychological impacts of financial trauma and how it affects decision-making, self-worth and future financial stability. We'll explore generational impacts, especially in families where financial control has been exerted over multiple generations.

Financial trauma, particularly from financial abuse, has a profound impact on women's mental health, often leading to chronic stress, anxiety, depression and PTSD. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), women are nearly twice as likely as men to experience mental health disorders like depression and anxiety, with 264 million women worldwide affected by depression, compared to 151 million men (2020). Financial trauma exacerbates these challenges, leaving women more vulnerable to mental health struggles due to the compounding effects of economic insecurity and financial dependence.

CLICK [The meaning of money and financial independence titled 'HER - Women in Asia' \(Season 1 & 2\)](#) by DW Documentary (Asia)

Three women from three Asian countries tell us about their relationship to money, such as, Filipina actress and philanthropist Angel Locsin. Tutiana Jusat from Malaysia works in the male-dominated world of Islamic banking. And Shikha Mittal from India helps educate women in savings, insurance and

 **[Healing Financial Trauma: Empowering Undervalued Communities](#)** by Tiffani Sharp for TEDxFolsom (USA).

Financial trauma can be inherited across generations. In this emotional and insightful talk, Attorney and Financial Advisor Tiffani Sharp explores the hidden scars of financial oppression on undervalued communities and offers a transformative approach to building wealth. By integrating generational trauma-informed financial psychology and culturally competent financial education, Tiffani empowers these communities to break free from the cycle of financial trauma and build a brighter, more equitable future.

 **[‘How Can Female Financial Freedom Shape Iraq's Economy?’](#)** by Zainab Faisal Kufaishi on TEDxBaghdadWomen (Iraq)

Note: Video is in Arabic language, choose subtitles in preferred language.

In a world where economic empowerment is a key driver of progress, the financial independence of women is not just a personal milestone but a societal imperative. This is especially true in a country like Iraq, which has endured decades of war, economic stagnation, and over-dependence on oil. Zainab argues that the key to overcoming these challenges is women's participation in the private sector, crucial for rebuilding a more progressive Iraqi economy and society.

 **[How one woman turned trauma into inspiration: Ending Gender Based Violence](#)** by BRAC (Bangladesh)

"He would hit me in the head with a brick and said this is how it is. Stay, or leave" - Khaleda Begum was forced to get married at 13 and was tortured by her husband.

She went on to leave her marriage, graduate from poverty and get elected as a local government member. She uses her trauma as inspiration to support other women to overcome the same challenges she did.

 **[Women and Financial Independence](#)** by CA Rachana Ranade (India)

Mrs. Rachana starts her speech by giving a brief introduction on the minority of women in Financial fields with the help of an example of an ad, She then shares how she started investing after being motivated by her family for the same, She suggests that it should be the duty of the parents to motivate children to invest. Next she describes Investing as not a short term profit plan but rather a long term plan, there are definitely risks but it is beneficial for the long run. Also there is no age limit to start investing, she concludes by giving an example on the same.

TAKING ACTION

Addressing financial abuse requires a multi-faceted approach, recognizing the need to tackle gender inequality and the barriers that women face in achieving financial independence. Taking action involves both systemic changes and personal and community-driven initiatives.

This initiative will focus on actionable steps for women confronting financial abuse, including legal recourse, identifying financial allies, and accessing resources to regain financial control. Additionally, it will explore global efforts and movements advocating for policy change, legal protections, and economic empowerment for survivors. Case studies will highlight how communities and countries are mobilizing to advance justice and ensure financial security for women, particularly those affected by financial abuse.



'Our Spaces, Power Spaces: YWCA's Safe Spaces Guide by World YWCA

As you practise the YWCA Safe Spaces, reach out with any challenges or questions. This Guide is a living document and is designed to be inclusive of all abilities, identities, and ages.



Virtual Safe Spaces by World YWCA

A World YWCA virtual safe space provides an environment online and/or offline that encourages all people present to share experiences, opinions, and views without fear or threat of political, economic or personal harm. They are characterised by a culture of respect, equality and accountability, ensuring that everyone can actively participate and meaningfully contribute to the best of their ability. They are designed to facilitate trust, confidentiality, dignity and respect.

Here are five actionable tips for women facing financial abuse, aimed at fostering safety and justice:

1. Build Your Business Skills

Explore Microenterprise Programs: Connect with organizations that support underserved entrepreneurs.

2. Create a Budget Plan

Utilize Financial Education Resources: Engage with financial literacy programs such as "Hope & Power for Your Personal Finances," developed by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). This workbook helps survivors understand budgeting, managing expenses and planning for a stable financial future.

3. Connect with Women's Rights Organizations

Organisations such as World YWCA, UN Women and local women's rights organizations or domestic violence shelters that can provide guidance, resources and emotional support.

4. Establish Financial Independence

Open Your Own Bank Account: If possible, open a separate bank account in your name only.

5. Access Legal and Financial Assistance

Explore Legal Aid Services and look for legal advice that specialize in domestic violence and financial abuse cases. They can help you understand your rights regarding financial matters, such as child support and division of assets and assist you in navigating any legal challenges you may face.

If financial resources are not accessible in your region, consider starting a local initiative or support group. Collective efforts can create safe spaces for sharing, learning and empowering each other.

SELF-CARE AND RECOVERY

Recovering from financial abuse is not just about regaining control over money but also about emotional healing. Self-care plays a vital role in rebuilding confidence and financial autonomy. This section emphasizes the importance of psychological and emotional recovery, offering resources and techniques to help survivors rebuild their sense of worth and financial competence. Global stories of women who have found strength through financial independence and self-care will serve as powerful examples of resilience.

CLICK



[Self-Care](#) by National Black Leadership Commission on Health (Black Health)

Columbia University and The New York Public Library have launched a public health initiative—in partnership with the National Black Leadership Commission on Health (Black Health)—to bring free education and resources to New York City residents who face lack of access and cultural barriers to behavioural health care.

CLICK



[Self-Care For Survivors Of Abuse](#) by Survivor Revive

Survivors of abuse - Derricka, Nayoché, Nicole and Melissa - to have an in-depth discussion about their experience in developing a self-care plan after abuse.

Each day in this tool is designed to aid understanding, inspire change and provide tangible resources that can help deepen understanding on how to break the cycle of financial trauma, offering a pathway to safety and justice for diverse women, young women and girls.

Bibliography/ Links to Resources

<https://nnedv.org/content/about-financial-abuse/>

Building A Safety Net Against Economic Abuse - This article discusses the systemic changes needed in financial institutions to better support survivors

"What is Economic Abuse?" - A comprehensive overview of the different forms of economic abuse and their impacts

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_abuse

<https://nnedv.org/content/economic-justice-policy/>

<https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/economic-abuse-awareness-day-2023/>

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/teendv/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZskhV_jS84A

<https://theconversation.com/financial-abuse-from-an-intimate-partner-three-ways-you-can-protect-yourself-225302>

"Economic Abuse From Child and Youth Perspectives" – A review that explores how economic abuse affects children and young adults, emphasizing the need for more research in this area

"Signs of Financial Abuse Beginning in Teen Relationships" – A report detailing survey findings on how many teens experience early warning signs of financial abuse

<https://www.womenslaw.org/about-abuse/forms-abuse/financial-abuse>

<https://www.gsif.it/human-trafficking-latin-america/>

<https://fccfoundation.org/domestic-violence-awareness-month-blog/>

<https://www.thehotline.org/stakeholders/domestic-violence-statistics/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN STAY CONNECTED:

- Subscribe to the monthly [World YWCA Movement Newsletter](#)
- Follow us on social media [@worldywca](#) ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#))
- Register for [YWCA Social](#), our dedicated social network for the movement
- Check out our websites ([World YWCA](#) and [SheSpeaks](#))
- Write to us at worldoffice@worldywca.org

Use these social media templates to engage and promote [#WeekWithoutViolence2024](#) [#YWCALeaders](#)



This toolkit was developed with the support from the Norwegian Church Aid

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