

## Topic: Rights and Responsibilities

### Activity: Changing Gender Roles and Domestic Violence: A Critical Incident for Refugees

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#### Objective

- ✓ Participants will consider the potential impact of resettlement on gender roles
- ✓ Participants will consider the definition and consequences of domestic violence in the United States

#### Lesson Time

30 minutes

#### Materials

- ☐ Critical incident (included)
- ☐ Optional: Flipchart paper, markers, tape

#### Introduction

Resettlement drastically impacts many aspects of daily life, and this often includes gender roles in the family. Some families adjust to these changes positively. Others experience spousal disagreements, destructive behavior (such as alcohol or drug use), or violent behavior (such as domestic violence). The American concept of domestic violence is new to some refugees who may not understand that domestic violence is illegal in the United States and is considered a very serious matter.

#### Practice

(Note: Feel free to change names to reflect your participants.)

1. Put participants into small groups of 2-4 and ask each group to choose a spokesperson.
2. Read “Changing Gender Roles and Domestic Violence: A Critical Incident for Refugees” aloud, pausing after each set of reflection questions.
3. In small groups, participants discuss the reflection questions. Listen in on the discussions to check for understanding.
4. After the last set of reflection questions, bring the large group together and ask the spokesperson from each group to summarize the main ideas from their group discussions. Discuss as necessary, being sure to review the definition and legal consequences of domestic violence in the United States.

#### Reflection Questions

- What happened in this critical incident?
- What does “domestic violence” mean in the United States?
- What would you do if you were Ahi? If you were Ven?
- What could Ahi and Ven have done differently?

#### Variations

- Give flipchart paper to each small group and have groups draw and present the highlights of their discussion.
- If literacy levels allow, prepare flipchart paper with reflection questions for each small group and have groups write and present their answers.

## Changing Gender Roles and Domestic Violence: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Ven\* and Ahi\* are a married couple who resettled in the United States six months ago. Ahi earns money as a housekeeper, but Ven cannot find a job. Every day he takes care of their young children at home, but he does not do any housekeeping. Ahi asks Ven to help cook and clean because she works all day, but Ven refuses. Ven and Ahi begin to quarrel.

### Stop and reflect:

- What happened so far?
- Why might Ven be refusing to cook and clean?
- Who could Ven and Ahi go to for help?

Ven is disappointed with his life in the United States. He starts drinking alcohol with his neighbors because it helps him forget about his problems. However, Ahi is angry at Ven for using their family's limited money for alcohol. One day, when Ven is very drunk, Ahi tells him that because she earns the money, he should not spend it on alcohol. Ven hits Ahi and says she should respect him.

A neighbor hears their fight and calls the police to complain about the noise. A police officer arrives and tells Ven that it is illegal to hit your spouse in the United States. The officer says that if Ven hits Ahi again, he could go to jail.

### Stop and reflect:

- What does "domestic violence" mean in the United States?
- What would you do if you were Ahi?
- What would you do if you were Ven?
- What could Ahi and Ven have done differently?
- How should they handle this situation?