CHAPTER 1

Global Violence Against Women
Chapter Objectives

• Define the term *violence against women*.  
• Explain the most common form of violence that women around the world experience.  
• Discuss specific forms of violence occurring globally.  
• Differentiate between female foeticide and femicide.
Global Violence

- Family violence affects millions of women, men, and children worldwide.

- Our response is based on cultural, economic, social, and political contexts.

- Women are the most frequent targets of intimate partner violence.

- Violence against women is a global crisis of staggering proportions.
Global Violence

• Acts of violence include threats of violence, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

• Violence can include physical, sexual, or psychological violence within the family, community, or condoned by the state.
Combating Violence

• In 2012 the U.S. released its first ever strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally with four key objectives:
  ▪ Increase coordination of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts.
  ▪ Enhance integration of gender-based violence prevention.
  ▪ Improve collection, analysis, and use of data and research to enhance gender-based violence and prevention efforts.
  ▪ Enhance or expand U.S. government programming that addresses gender-based violence.
United Nations

- The UN leads the effort to protect vulnerable women and girls worldwide and adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993.

- The UN General Assembly accepted a resolution in December 2012 on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons without any health benefits.
European Countries

• There are two common points of law in European countries:
  ▪ All acts of intimate partner violence are recognized as crimes and fall under the provisions of the penal code.
  ▪ Victims are allowed to request measures of protection from the state, and vary from financial assistance to restraining orders.
Afghanistan

- Legal reforms have been made but there is no official reporting on violence against women.
- **Honor killings** are common and have spread to other countries through immigration. This is a traditional practice in which men kill a female relative who is believed to have brought dishonor upon the family or community.
- Amnesty International reports alarming numbers of females attempting suicide by dousing themselves with gasoline and setting themselves on fire.
Australia

- Legislative changes have been made to give police more authority to act in cases of suspected partner violence.
- Aboriginal women are overrepresented as victims of violence.
- Appropriate intervention designed to improve access to legal services for aboriginal females has been instituted.
Canada

• Violence against women is a persistent and ongoing problem.

• There is no specific criminal code for violence against women.

• Codes that most commonly apply are assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, threats of violence, forcible confinement, and homicide.
India

- **Dowry** is a payment of money or articles during, before, or after marriage by a girl’s parent to her in-laws. The cash and presents given must be linked to the actual marriage in order to be considered illegal.

- **Bride-burning** occurs when in-laws consider the dowry to be inadequate. Women are killed each year when the husband or his family douses the wife with flammable liquid and set her on fire.
India

- **Female foeticide** is the act of aborting a fetus because it is female.

- Hundreds and perhaps thousands of newborn girls are murdered each year simply because they are female. Little value is given to adult women.

- The ratio of girls to boys has been decreasing due to these practices.
India

- India has been proactive in passing laws to protect women, but the laws are routinely not enforced.

- Very few women seek help from anyone outside their family, such as from the police or social service organizations.
Malaysia

- Malaysia has a dual legal system of Sharia law and civil law, and they act independently to protect the diverse population that is predominantly Muslim.

- In 1994 the One Stop Crisis Centre was formed but lack of funding has called into question its current effectiveness and existence.
Societal acceptance of violence against women is a pervasive problem in Mexico. One in five women live in a relationship of physical and/or sexual abuse where domestic abuse is considered to be the most prevalent form of violence in the country. Legal reforms have been made but do little to challenge the patriarchal, macho, and misogynistic structure of its society. **Femicide** is the killing of women because of their gender and has been made a crime.
Polygamy is a common practice.
Not until 2009 were domestic violence and marital rape recognized as crimes. The police have been given more power to act on these complaints.
Domestic violence continues to be a serious and widespread problem, more than half of women are believed to be victims.
It is also illegal to engage in sexual activity while knowingly infected with a contagious disease.
People’s Republic of China

- Legal provisions on domestic violence are too general and lack criminal justice response measures.
- Sexual abuse is rarely studied and incest is not acknowledged.
- In 2005, a “peaceful family” plan was launched and more than 27,000 organizations and 400 shelters have been set up across the country.
Peru

- Domestic violence laws were passed in 1997 and 2011, but violence is still a serious problem.

- Enforcement is considered weak and few men are ever prosecuted. The legal system is slow to respond to complaints and does not take them seriously.
Peru

- In 2011 there were more women killed by family violence abusers than those who were prosecuted.

- The WHO has ranked Peru as having one of the highest rates of physical or sexual violence by a partner in the world at 70%.

(World Health Organization/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2010)
Philippines

- Philippine law criminalizes physical, sexual, and psychological harm against women and children from family members but enforcement is not given high priority.

- Corruption by police to include abuse of females in custody is common.

- Divorce is not legal and this leaves women with no real options to leave a spouse other than a legal separation or annulment.
Republic of Iraq

- Honor killings are widespread.
- Over half of the population is under the age of 19 and they hold strong patriarchal attitudes.
- A majority of Iraqi men believe they have the right to beat their own wife, to prevent her from going to a medical center, to control the type of dress code she follows, and to force a female child into marriage before she is of legal age to marry.

(UNFPA, 2010)
Republic of Iraq

- The government generally ignores or trivializes violence against women, and the abuse is rarely reported.
• Aggressive relationship behavior is considered normal. Many victims are unaware that domestic violence is illegal.
• A medical-legal approach has developed, which requires a certificate of injuries to be presented to prove victimization, which rarely occurs. Even if the certificate is obtained, chances are slim the case will be brought to justice. Funding for domestic violence initiatives is considered a luxury.
• Marital rape is not against the law.
Russian Federation

- Approximately 20-30% of all murders take place within the family and are increasing each year.

- Russian police do not treat these cases as serious and tell victims they will not respond until there is a corpse.

- Women are frequently beaten to death, shot, or thrown out of windows in Moscow.

(Drake, 2007)
Scotland

- There are several legal orders and increased funding for domestic violence victims.

- LGBT victims are equally protected.

- Also protected are partners who are married, cohabitating, or otherwise, or are ex-partners, regardless of marital status or gender.

- A domestic violence case is reported to the police every 10 minutes. 15% of victims are male with a female perpetrator.

  (Scottish Government, 2009)
Thailand

• Passed domestic violence legislation in 2007. Any person can report the abuse in addition to the victim.

• Crisis centers operate in some state-run hospitals along with hotlines, temporary shelters, and counseling services.

• A family violence law manual was put out by the government and judges and police officers across the country have attended gender sensitivity training.