

Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution

Violence Against Women Act (1994) and Take Back The Night Marches

View Online: www.cliohistory.org/click/classroom/body-health/vawa

Grade Level: Grades 10-12

Estimated Time: One class period

Introduction

In 1972, feminists in Washington, D.C. founded the nation's first rape crisis center. Other centers were soon established across the country. In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The act was created in response to the nation-wide, grassroots work of activists concerned with domestic violence, sexual assault, date rape, and stalking. This lesson introduces students to the history of efforts to stop violence against women.

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how grassroots efforts led to the passage of the Violence Against Women Act.
- Students will be able to understand the connections between local and national efforts to end violence against women.

Essential Questions

- How is violence against women rooted in gender discrimination and inequality?
- Why is violence (against women or any violence) a community problem and not a private problem?

Materials

- Computer with Speakers and Internet Access

Warm Up Activity: Film Viewing and Discussion

1. Show a clip from the film [Breaking the Rule of Thumb](#) (6:11 min.)
2. Ask students to discuss the saying "Rule of Thumb."
3. Subsequent discussion can concentrate on establishing key terms: violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence.
 - a. Students can use dictionaries to enhance their knowledge of these terms.

Main Activity: Research, Summaries, and Discussion

1. Divide the students into pairs. Have each pair go to Click and read the section "[Grassroots Activism and Coalition Building](#)" in the chapter Politics & Social Movements.
 - a. Have the students write definitions of "grassroots" and "coalition building." Then ask them write down examples of grassroots activism and coalition building efforts.
2. Combine pairs to make groups of four. Have these groups share their definitions and examples. Then have the groups return to Click and locate the link for "Violence Against Women Act." This link will take them to the Department of Justice website.
 - a. Have the students read the section "Areas of Focus."
 - b. Each group is responsible for summarizing one of the four areas of focus. The summary should include a definition of the focus area and the available resources.
3. Bring the class back together and have the students present their findings. Follow with a discussion that returns the focus to the history of Violence Against Women Act and community activism today. Guiding questions include:
 - a. Have you heard about Take Back the Night marches? What about Rape Crisis Centers/Domestic Violence Shelters? How would you research their histories?
 - b. Why is it important to have the federal government involved in combating violence against women?
 - c. Why do you think it took twenty-two years after the founding of the first rape crisis center for Congress to pass the Violence Against Women Act?

Extension Activity on Native American Women

The Office on Violence Against Women in the U.S. Department of Justice provides specific support for Native American communities.

1. Have students return to the Department of Justice website and search for sources there.
2. Have students go to the timeline in the Click chapter [Body & Health](#) and have them click on "2007: Maze of Injustice." This 100-page report (PDF) is filled with beautiful illustrations and moving quotations that students can easily access to learn more about violence against women in Native communities and what is being done to stop it.

Common Core Anchor Standards

Speaking and Listening

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4](#)

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Language

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6](#)

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.