



Frequently Asked Questions

What is *Women Take Back the Night*?

Women Take Back the Night (“WTBN”) is an international feminist tradition of marches and rallies that have been occurring around the world since 1976. That year, in Belgium, women attending the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women marched together in solidarity, holding candles to protest the ways in which violence permeates the lives of women worldwide.

What is Sacramento Women Take Back the Night?

Sacramento Women Take Back the Night is the informal name of Northern California Association for Women Take Back the Night (“NCAWTBN”). NCAWTBN was organized to conduct activities for the purpose of educating the public on issues of violence against women. One of its primary activities is the annual Women Take Back the Night rally and march held in Sacramento, California in October. Event organizing and planning occurs through an all volunteer Planning Committee consisting of a diverse group of individuals and community organizations.

NCAWTBN is a tax-exempt non-profit public benefit corporation governed by a Board of Directors. Donations and sponsorships from other organizations and individuals provide the funding needed to carry on the activities of NCAWTBN.

Our mission

NCAWTBN exists for the purpose of creating a zero tolerance for violence against women by:

- Increasing community awareness around issues of violence against women and its interrelationship with all other forms of oppression;
- Educating ourselves and others about the extent and the nature of violence that is systematically used against women to keep us from becoming powerful, autonomous individuals;
- Honoring the memory of the victims of violence and celebrating its survivors
- Serving as a collective voice for women to demand a world in which women's bodies, minds and spirits are not targets of violence;
- Empowering individual men and women to take direct action against violence through activism; and
- Providing the leadership to challenge organizations and other institutions to implement policies and initiatives which are effective in addressing issues of violence against women.

Why do women still need to take back the night?

Due to the sensitive nature of and social stigma related to sexual assault and domestic violence, severe underreporting of these crimes make it virtually impossible to gather complete data on the numbers of women and children affected. Nevertheless, reported cases, while only a part of the picture, illustrate the pervasive nature of the problem worldwide.

According to the Human Rights Watch, global abuses against women are relentless, systematic, and widely tolerated if not explicitly condoned. Combatants and their sympathizers in conflicts, such as those in Sierra Leone, Kosovo, the Congo, Afghanistan, and Rwanda have raped women as a weapon of war with near complete impunity. Men in Pakistan, South Africa, Peru, Russia, and Uzbekistan beat women in their homes, while these governments alternatively refuse to intervene or do so in ways that make women feel culpable. As a direct result of inequalities found in their countries of origin, women from Ukraine, Moldova, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, Burma and Thailand are bought and sold, trafficked to work in forced prostitution. According to the U.S. State Department's 2005 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Of that, approximately 80% are women and girls, and up to 50% are minors. Though real progress has been made through grassroots international efforts, violence and discrimination against women are global social epidemics.

Much work remains in order to break the silence and shame regarding the victimization of women and children, including misconceptions about the prevalence of the problem. Most of the time, despite its magnitude and global pervasiveness, violence against women is socially invisible, seen as individual, unrelated incidents. Even in the United States, private citizens, policymakers and funding agencies believe that the situation has markedly improved. In fact, violence against women has not decreased and still affects, in devastating ways, the daily choices which women make.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, one in every four women in the United States will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Each year, an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner. 30 to 60 percent of perpetrators who engage in intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household. According to the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault ("CALCASA"), sexual bullying among children can be a precursor to more advanced forms of sexual and relationship violence in adolescent and adult life. While the problems of violence affect all women and children, research suggests that low-income women and women of color are at potentially greater risk and face often insurmountable barriers in their efforts to find help for themselves and their families. Both CALCASA and the United Nations Development Fund for Women ("UNIFEM") call for campaigns that educate the public about the devastating impact that violence against women has on society. Sacramento WTBN is committed to answering these calls to action.

So, what does "take back the night" mean? Taking back the night means making the night a safe place for women. If nights were safe, women could go out by themselves without feeling like they were taking a dangerous risk. Unfortunately, the statistics confirm that this is not the case, even today, and despite the existence of domestic violence shelters, sexual assault and domestic violence crisis lines, laws on violence against women, and the like. Clearly, "take back the night" is not an outdated issue. In order to change any social condition, we must educate ourselves and others about its significance and impact. Part of our challenge is to keep the issue of violence against women on the "front burner" and create a nonpartisan groundswell for innovative policy approaches to the challenge of ending violence against women. This is why we still need to Take Back the Night.

How can I get involved with *Sacramento Women Take Back the Night*?

You can contact the Planning Committee by calling (916) 541-5869 or by e-mailing us at sacwtbn@yahoo.com. For more information, check out our website at www.womentakebackthenight.org.