



18th Annual Bergen County Clothesline Project 2011 Guide for Students and Teachers

Thank you for your interest in the Clothesline Project! This guide has been created to assist you in developing ideas or projects to educate youth and others in Bergen County. Through this project, we aim to help others understand the effect and impact that violence has on individuals, families, and the community.

- Ask students to walk through and look at the t-shirts, then document which shirt had the greatest impact and why. If students are allowed to have cell phones with them, make this even more interactive by asking them to take pictures of t-shirts for use in a later discussion. (Remind students not to take pictures of people at the event. They may be survivors and we respect their privacy.)
- Ask students to take note of how many shirts were created by men. How are they similar to the other shirts? How are they different? List and discuss.
- What are some of the themes they see amongst the shirts? (These themes can be types of violence, feelings, etc.)
- Prior to attending the Clothesline Project, ask students to research services available in their community for victims and survivors of all types of violence. When present at the event, ask them to pick out brochures to match their resources, or document ones they saw there that they didn't find in their research.
- Prior to the event, ask students to list types of violence in order of the impact it has on them, from most impactful to least. Ask them to do this again after attending the event, noting any differences in the list and explaining what made them change their minds.
- During the event, invite students to seek out different statistics about violence and present them in class later.
- Create scenarios and ask students what they would do in each situation. How would they help a friend? A stranger?
- In addition to the t-shirts, what are some other things taking place at the event that they can describe? (Things such as the Silent Witnesses display, presentation, etc.)
- Contact the Rape Crisis Center to provide follow-up presentations to help process the impact of the Clothesline Project and to provide further education.

What is the Clothesline Project?

The Clothesline Project has been running for over 21 years in the United States, and was started in Bergen County in 1993 by the YWCA Bergen County. Eighteen years later, the YWCA Bergen County's Rape Crisis Center partners with organizations such as Shelter Our Sisters, Alternatives to Domestic Violence, National Council of Jewish Women, and the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office to help raise awareness about the impact of violence on women, men, and children.

- The Clothesline Project is a powerful display of t-shirts created by survivors of all types of personal violence, including sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, child abuse, and murder.
- The shirts provide survivors with a unique opportunity to find a creative way to break the silence of their victimization, while allowing others insight into that person's experience and healing process.
- The Clothesline Project helps remind us all as a community about the devastating impact violence can have.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Speakers and special performances during the day.
- Shirts and art supplies will be available so visitors can make their own shirts.
- Visitors can also pledge their support by taking a Stand Against Violence in everyday life.
- Empowering Women of Tomorrow information table will provide education for young people.
- Several pieces from the Silent Witnesses project will be on display. The Silent Witnesses, created by Arts Action Against Domestic Violence, are silhouetted figures that represent women who were murdered in acts of domestic violence.
- Reflections, an improvisational theater group associated with the Bergen County Department of Human Services, Division of Family Guidance, will perform.

FAST FACTS

- Since the early 1970s, the anti-violence movement has been working tirelessly on behalf of survivors. Although better systems of response for survivors have been in place, more programs exist and better laws have been enacted, the sad fact is that rates of sexual and domestic violence continue at an all-time high.
- It is estimated that someone is being sexually assaulted every 2 minutes and beaten every minute of every day.
- Nearly one-third of American women (31%) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives.
- In the year 2001, more than half a million American women were victims of nonfatal violence committed by an intimate partner.
- 17.7 million American women have been victims of attempted or completed sexual assault.
- 9 of every 10 sexual assault survivors are female.
- Approximately 20% of hotline calls received by the YWCA Rape Crisis Center are from male survivors of sexual violence, and more male survivors are utilizing support/legal/medical services.

- We live in a culture that has shown a great deal of acceptance of violence, particularly towards women and children. This is evidenced by the high rates of violence perpetration, of sexual and intimate partner violence, and the increasing degradation of women in the media.
- Our community is working together to focus more systematically on primary prevention. The Sexual Assault Free Environment Coalition (or S.A.F.E. Coalition), comprised of the YWCA Bergen County Rape Crisis Center and a host of committed partners, is actively engaged in a long-term, primary prevention plan aimed at curbing the tide of violence perpetration BEFORE it happens.

To learn more about the history of the Clothesline Project, [click here](#). For more information on the Clothesline Project, how you can participate, or any other aspect of the Rape Crisis Center, please contact us at 201-487-2227.