PROTECTING OURSELVES FROM HIV

[adopted from "The New Our Bodies, Ourselves"]

HIV can live in the blood for at least ten years without creating symptoms. If we have unprotected sex or share needles with someone, we expose ourselves to everyone she or he has exchanged bodily fluids with in the past decade. Even if we are in monogamous long-term relationships, our lovers may be bisexual and not tell us or our lovers may use drugs and not tell us. Or they may have been infected by something they did long before they met us.only answer is to act as though one or both partners is HIV positive and use protection

There are barriers that are known to stop HIV transmission. Yet many of us are not protecting ourselves, or we do it sometimes and not other times. Why are we not building safer sex in our lives? Here are a few reasons that women have mentioned.

1. Our own attitudes. Who me??? I'm not a gay man or a junkie, so I'm safe...I have a good taste in men...or women...I can tell who's infected...If he had HIV he'd have oily hair and broken skin... I love him so much, he'd never do anything to hurt me...If I bring a condom, he'll think I'm a sleaze...I want sex to be romantic...I'm afraid he'll refuse...or get mad. With thoughts like this, who's going to pull a condom or a roll of plastic wrap our of her pocket book? As one woman said that condom seems to pour cold water on the romance by saying, 'OK, to be brutally honest, we've both slept with other people."The condom seems like a statement of distrust: You could give me a disease, you could kill me. Or you may want to have a baby, which means you don't want to use a condom or any birth control method.

2. Other factors. Expense and availability of safer sex supplies is a big factor for many women.

3. Our partner's attitude. Some men complain that condoms ruin sex. Some are afriad that they won't keep an erection while putting on a condom. Or they think its not really sex without penetration and insist on intercourse even if there's no protection. If they are used to being in charge sexually, they may resent a woman initiating safer sex. They may feel accused of sleeping around. A lesbian lover may believe there's no HIV risk for lesbians. A sex worker's client may refuse to pay for protected sex. Or there are cultural reasons. So we are against a lot when it comes to protecting ourselves from HIV.

Don't fool yourself:Challenge the myths. Remember that you can't tell by looking at someone if she or he is infected. Love does not protect you from HIV..

TALKING ABOUT SAFER SEX

[adopted from "Women, HIV and AIDS"]

The following comments are from a group of women brought together to talk about their feelings about sex and HIV:

'Most people think you've not had a proper sexual relationship if you don't have intercourse. You can do whatever you lik-oral sex, etc-but that's just petting as far as they're concerned. And when you work up to an orgasm, the main way you should wish to, is by penetration, actual intercourse. But it's quite interesting, because I think you can have orgasms in lots of different ways.

"That's right, as far as men are concerned there is a proper way to have an orgasm. I've had girls coming to me and saying, "I can't orgasm the proper way, what should I do?" When I say to them, 'Well, you tell me what the proper way is," they say: "My boyfriend says I should come when he's inside me." I say, "Well, isn't that his problem?" '

"Men think of different kinds of sex as having a repetition of different positions for intercourse." "They just want regular sex, basically."

'I think if men were allowed to get away with it, what they'd like is sex without commitment, even within a marriage, so its just a function, and I think women have to coach them and tell them its more than this quick physical gratification, you know, there's more to it than that, you actually want to be loved.'

'Often women are working to fixed times, especially if they're going out to work...most women don't value themslves. They think, I've got to cook dinner, look after the children, go shopping..." As a woman you've got to say, "I need some time for myself and what I want to do is make love." A lot of women make thime for everything else but themselves.'

'I use condoms as a method of contraception...I feel more in control using barrier contraceptives because I decide when I use a diaphragm and condoms, so we decide when we want to use one or the other and make a partnership of it. It doesn't matter if you drop the condom or whatever, that's part of it.

If your're embarrassed with your partner that you can't put a condom on his penis, how can you talk about sex or have sex with him effectivly or enjoy it properly?

WASTE MANAGEMENT

[adopted from "The National Environment Strategy"]

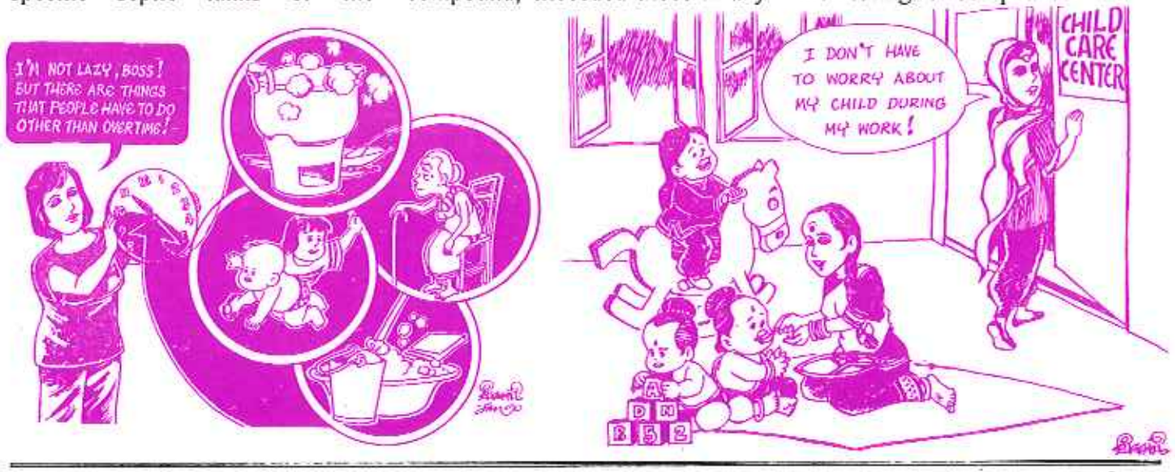
Refuse disposal and management of garbage dumps is a national dilemma which requires a firm new initiative. Not a single local authority managed refuse dump is managed to acceptable standards.

Fiji has no hazardous waste site or management infrastructure, even though there are hazardous chemicals and materials in common use. Unrestricted dumping of such wastes will require very costly 'clean up' in future years. One such site at Walu Bay would be classified as a 'hazardous waste area' in most developed countries and would be a high priority for cleanup. Although less than 2000 square metres in extent, current estimates indicate that this would cost between $50,000-$150-000.

In urban areas only 61% of dwellings discharge waste into specific septic tanks or the sewerage system. In such locations faecal coliform counts in creeks, rivers and nearshore areas are generally way above international standards. Suva's principal sewage treatment plants of Kinoya and Raiwaqa are frequently unable to function efficiently and effluents discharged to surrounding waters have often undergone incomplete treatment.

Industrial activities in Fiji are varied and quite robust for a small country in an isolated location. A surprising variety of toxic chemicals and materials are in common use, however, there is a serious lack of data on the types and extent of pollution present. Nonetheless preliminary surveys have shown that heavy metals in Suva Harbour are high and are similar to those in most polluted harbours in Australia. Levels of TBT's, an exceedingly toxic compound, exceeded those in any port worldwide as reported in the literature. Elevated biochemical oxygen demand, elevated nutrients (nitrates and phosphates), high suspended solids and high coliform bacterial levels were commonplace in discharges from a large number of light and medium industries.

Fiji has no national pollution or water quality standards and no usable pollution legislation. In consequence, with only one or two exceptions, such as the Emperor Gold Mine, which is monitored for compliance with set standards by the Mineral Resources Department, the control of polluters is effectively absent or minimal. Only in the case of new developments is there some control through development or licensing conditions, once in operation, however, there is effectively no monitoring for compliance.



THE POLITICS OF HIV/AIDS

[adopted from "The New Our Bodies Ourselves"]

Women - particularly women of color- are the invisible faces of AIDS and the fast growing HIV positive group. AIDS powerfully affects our lives as women. Yet in every aspect of the public response to AIDS, from research to drug trials, from health provider attitudes to insurance and disability practices, women's experience with HIV and AIDS has too often been overlooked.

It is important to consider the wider world context of AIDS. Nearly all who have been infected with AIDS have been so infected through heterosexual sex. In the world, then, AIDS is a disease of women and children, of people of color and of the poor. The politics of the AIDS epidemic is that people who get AIDS most frequently and who suffer most from lack of treatment are not the ones who control the resources for research and treatment.

Why do women tend to die twice as quickly as men after being diagnosed with AIDS or so frequently die of HIV complications even before an AIDS diagnosis? The answer lies in the persisting inequities of sex, race and class. Sexism within the health-care system often renders women invisible with regard to AIDS.

Instead of being viewed as persons who need health care, HIV positive women are often seen primarily as infectors of men and children. There is more public focus on prostitutes who may infect their clients and mothers who may infect their babies than there is on prevention and treatment for women.

Family responsibilities are expected to and often do take precedence over our seeking health care for ourselves, so that many women delay seeking care long after experiencing symptoms of HIV infection. Because women tend to make less money than men, and often as single parents have financial responsibility for more family members, we have fewer financial resources with which to care for ourselves.

Racism seriously affects the quality of health care options available to women of color in general and particularly to those who are HIV positive.

Racism and class discrimination also contribute to conditions in communities of color, which foster drug use, while impeding access to drug treatment programs. Even HIV positive women who are able to make it to a doctor or clinic may find our symptoms dismissed as not HIV related.

The tendency in sectors of the medical world to discount women's complaints becomes compounded by the still widespread belief that this is a men's disease. Women reporting HIV symptoms like weight loss, headaches or fatigue may be told that these are stress related, not HIV related.

Or we may report gynecological symptoms, which, because of insufficient research and inadequate definition, have taken a long time to be accepted as HIV or AIDS related.

It will continue to take persistent pressure from activists to achieve progress in combating HIV and AIDS.

THE ROLES OF LAW

[adopted from "Time To Act"]

The spread of HIV can be contained by community and national action. The first step is to eliminate the stigma of infection and the discrimination that further burdens people who must live with HIV and AIDS. The next step is to develop a supportive environment that addresses the problem of HIV transmission directly, by making safer behaviour easy, accepted and even routine. A supportive environment is one where there are no barriers to disseminating information on HIV prevention; no barriers to people effectively receiving and understanding this information; and no barriers to people acting on the information they receive.

The law has at least three possible roles in regard to the HIV epidemic. One is punitive. This is the most common function of the law in the Pacific at present, but it causes people to hide information rather than share it to help control the disease. Another is protective, where special provisions of the Constitution or other laws protect the rights of HIV-positive people.

Laws that protect confidentiality and prohibit discrimination against HIV-positive people encourage others to come forward for testing and treatment and help alleviate the hardship of people who are living with HIV and AIDS. A third role of the law is to change patterns of social interaction. For example, women's vulnerability to HIV stems in good part from their economic and social dependence which, in turn is entrenched by their inability to independently own property or by restrictions on their paid employment- restrictions that are sustained by laws, not necessarily by rigid cultural values. By changing the laws, we can remove these restrictions, and, with them, the barriers of disadvantage.

The law can play a role in supporting HIV and AIDS programs in several ways, in:

1. Monitoring the virus and requiring that HIV and AIDS cases be reported;

requiring that interventions be taken, such as counselling and educating; regulating conduct, such as prohibiting discrimination or some 'high risk' activities;

2. Setting standards, such as for blood screening, drug use, condoms, and privacy; developing administration, such as setting up institutions and allocating resources;

The law can be a powerful tool in creating a supportive environment, where it furnishes the legal and ethical base for social justice although it can also impede information, prevention, care and support efforts. The law can reduce vulnerability to HIV exposure by reducing the power imbalances between men and women and between the rich and poor. Creating an equitable and supportive legal environment is a practical action that government can take against the spread of HIV, to ensure that non-discrimination, human rights and ethical principles form an integral part of the response to the epidemic.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

[adopted from "The National Environment Strategy"]

It is now generally accepted in principle, but not necessarily in practice, that there are limits to the extent to which natural resources and environmental systems can be exploited. Growth cannot continue forever and there are limits to the levels of exploitation of such resources.

The Fiji Government is charged with the responsibility of promoting development to improve the quality of life of all citizens of Fiji. Fiji is fortunate in having a wide natural resource base, it is endowed with a rich variety of natural resources and ecosystems which have historically and which continue today, to form the basis of national development.

However, development is currently being promoted without due respect for the limits of renewal and replenishment of Fiji's natural resources. Fiji's 'natural capital' is being depleted while measures to manage this 'capital' are poorly developed and generally ineffective. There are several vivid examples of this depletion of 'natural capital':'soil mining, the accelerated loss of soil through erosion in the ginger industry and on the marginal hill lands within the sugar can perimeter;heavy metal pollution in Walu Bay exceeding the Bay's capacity of absorbtion and assimilation;
unsustainable rate and probably method of exploitation of natrual forest resources;the 'boom and bust' exploitation of sandalwood, and more recently beche de mer and clams;the extinction of at least two species of clam as a result of uncontrolled exploitation;
increasing scarcity of fish in certain inshore and lagoon areas;the almost complete loss of certain forest types, in particular 'beach' or 'littoral' forest through the widespread development of copra industry which is now in apparent terminal decline;
the loss of forest cover over much of the dry zone on the larger islands; and, the extinction of ground nesting birds and reptiles as a result of the introduction of the mongoose to 'assist' development of the cane industry.

Currently, sustainable development is considered in some quarters in Fiji, as a fashionable catch-phrase with little real substance.

However, it is clear that the developed nations and the major lending and development agencies have largely adopted the concpt and will be promoting it vigorously in the future, just as they promoted rapid economic development and unstrained growth in the past. For this reason, sustainable development policies will be high on the agenda of international relations, foreign aid and development assistance.

ALCOHOL USE IN FIJI

[adopted from "Crime, Deviance Delinquency in Fiji"]

If alcoholism is a disease then it is the only disease that is sold in bottles and is advertised in newspapers, magazines, radio and television. It is contracted by the will of man, has licensed outlets to spread it, produces revenue for the government. But it brings violent deaths on the highways. It has no germs or viral cause but leads people to self-destruction and destroys family life and increases crime.

Alcohol paralyses the senses, makes one lurch and vomit, extinguishes the feeble glimmer of reason which flickers in our poor minds. It soon overcomes the strongest man and turns him into a raging beast who with bloodshot eyes, bellows forth oaths and threats against his surroundings and insults imaginary enemies. Never in any animal species, is such ignominy to be found. The ugliest thing in creation is the drunkard, a repulsive being, the sight of whom makes one ashamed to belong to the same living species.

The effects of alcohol on the physical, mental and social health of Fiji's citizens have in recent years been the subject of considerable concern amongst health-care professionals and social scientists as well as ordinary citizens. The heavy consumption of alcohol contributes to health problems such as diabetes, heart disorders, obesity and hypertension. The social consequences of alcohol use is violent crime, domestic violence, and road fatalities.

Most individuals who consume alcohol, do so responsibly and suffer less physical, social or psychological harm from the use of the beverage. However, for a large number, alcohol consumption goes beyond the occasional use of the beverage to a fully fledged addiction.

For these persons, not only is time and attention diverted away from daily responsibilities for the indulgence of the alcohol habit, but the social and physical well-being of such persons is compromised as well.

The Liquor Act regulates the sale and use of alcoholic beverages in Fiji. The Act stipulates who can sell and purchase alcohol and when they may do so. According to the Liquor Act, the legal age limit for purchasing alcohol is 18 years. Liquor sales is permitted during certain hours every weekday and Saturday. The sale of alcohol is prohibited on Sundays. Additionally, those who sell alcohol beverages must have a license to sell them. It is also illegal to consume alcohol in such public places as parks, markets and sporting complexes.

In Fiji, alcohol use and misuse has been blamed for a myriad of criminal activities. The ingestion of alcoholic beverages, especially in copious amounts, is associated with many serious forms of deviance, including rape, defilement, domestic violence, assaults, robbery and breaking offences.

Alcohol consumption is a major contributing factor to social problems plaguing this society. To alleviate social problems emanating from alcohol abuse, requires stringent enforcement of liquor laws. Additionally, educational programmes aimed at informing the public about the harmful effects of alcohol abuse would certainly help to promote more responsible use of the beverage amongst the public.

PROTON WIRA

On Thursday morning 23rd January, with a cup of tea and the Fiji Times someone in our office came upon the latest advert for underwear, or so she thought until she realised it was an advert for a car! On analysis of this advert we could see that this clearly was a good way of catching people's attention but failed to see what relevance a woman's behind has to do with the quality or benefits offered by the new Proton Wira.

Reading this statement: **"Of course there's much more to the new Proton Wira than just a great rear end".**

The fact that 75% of the advert is taken up with photos of women's behinds indicates various things:

a) It is aimed at men. Do women not buy cars? Is there no need to advertise cars to women? Do women not use cars as well as men?

b) Men are not interested in any relevant information i.e. safety, but only looking at women's backsides which seems to be enough to convince them to buy the car.

c) Women's bodies are being used here to sell a car, in other words women are being judged on their bodies and seen as objects.

d) It seems from the advert they feel we need to import culturally insensitive, Western images of women to encourage people to buy.

Why has the Fiji Times allowed this advert in their paper? Are there no advertising standards?

Obviously Palas, who compiled this advert have little thought for women. As women this is not an advert that appeals to us so we will not be buying this car! What a shame your advert will only appeal to 50% of the population. Maybe you should do better market research next time.

[contributed by Kelera Elder, Shayne Sorby, Viniana Qalo, Jo Bryant]

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) writes in reference to the "Proton Wira" advertisement (FT23/1/97).

As avid readers of the *Fiji Times*, we at the FWRM are deeply disappointed to see such an offencsive and vulgar advertisement in such a reputable paper. After all, you are a reputable paper and not a cheap tabloid.

The FWRM fails to understand the correlation between the rear end of a Proton Wira and that of a human being.

One would expect potential buyers of any motor vehicle (including those of the Proton Wira) to be enticed by the mechanics of a car rather than how it compares with a human backside.

Advertisements such as these might be acceptable in countries where citizens have no objections to sexist, vulgar pot\rtrayals of women and men. But the citizens of Fiji have a high expectation of the society they are a part of, and a society where pornography in advertising is the norm, is not something we will ever embrace.

"Rear ends" mark good advertising for under garments but they certainly do not work with cars (unless of course the only good aspect of the car is how it looks from behind...driving away).

[Contributed by FWRM]

THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

[adopted from "The Women's Constitution"]

Article 11: Employment
Access to work, including recruitment, all aspects of employment, job training, job security, remuneration, benefits; protection against dismissal during pregnancy and support for parental duties of both women and men through social and child-care services.

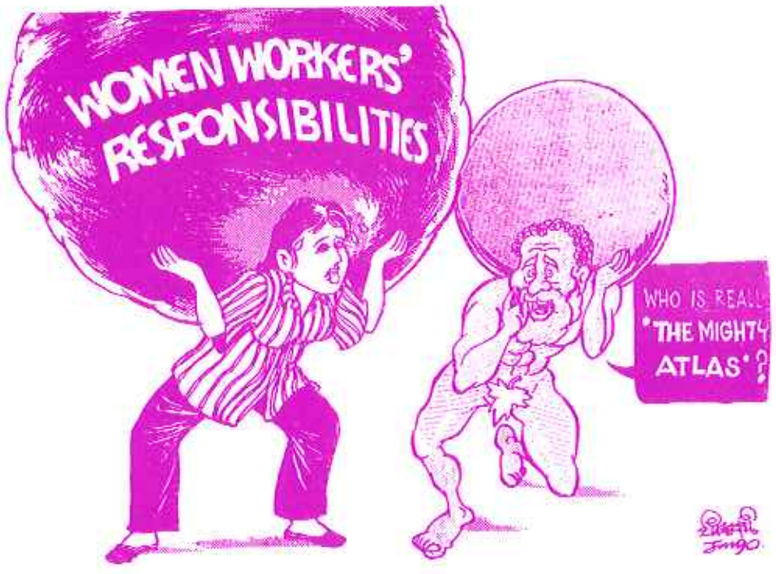
Article 12: Health Care And Family Planning
Access to health care, family planning, and appropriate pregnancy related services.

Article 13: Economic And Social Benefits
Participation in economic and social life, including equal access to family benefits, as well as loans and credit; and recreational activities, sports and cultural life.

Article 14: Rural Women
Full Participation in the development process, including the right to organise, access to credit, loans, appropriate technology and equal treatment in agrarian reform; to family planning and social security and adequate living conditions.

Article 15: Full Legal Capacity
Full legal capacity and equality before the law, including entering into contracts; administration of property; all stages of proceedings in courts and tribunals; freedom of movement and right to domicile.

Article 16: Marriage And Family
Ensuring women's equality with men in marriage and family relations; in entering marriage freely, choosing a spouse, in divorce, and in family planning decisions; with regard to guardianship, or any other transaction related to property.



WOMEN AND THE MEDIA- OBJECTS OR SUBJECTS?

[contributed by Jo Bryant]

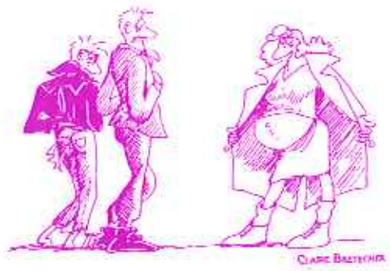
UNESCO identified 3 causes that perpetrate oppression and discrimination of women in the 20th century:

1) Law and Legislation
2) Religion and Culture
3) Education And The Mass Media

I just want to take a brief look at women and the media and emphasise how the many different forms of media can be used in a positive way for women and it's capacity for change as well as the need to check and monitor media of women and coverage of women.

What is the media?
Mass Media:TV, radio, cinema, newspapers, magazines and newsletters and later technology such as the Internet and E-mail as well as other media that may not be as obvious such as children's comics and cartoons, theatre, puppetry, dance and song.

What is the purpose of the Media?



The media is a vehicle used to inform as well as entertain the public.

Why should we be concerned with the media? The media is a carrier of information, ideas, thoughts and opinions.

It is a powerful source in influencing peoples perceptions on a variety of issues. The media can be both positive as well as negative in terms of the position and views of women as well as a powerful force of education and socialisation. The media has played an important role in highlighting women's issues but also a negative role in perpetrating violence against women through pornography and the images that views the female body as something that can be bought and sold. Overall the media's treatment of women is narrow and continually reinforces stereotype gender roles and assumptions that women's function is that of a wife, mother and servant of men especially in advertising. We need to remember the empowering ability of the media and its use in education and awareness raising to ensure that women's concerns are addressed. Media can also be fun.

Drama groups such as Women's Action for Change in Fiji and Wan Smol Bag in Vanuatu and use of videos can make information and ideas more interesting and accessible.

There are four main areas that women groups tend to be concerned within the media:

1) Images of women in the media. i.e. stereotypes and narrow images of women's position and role in society.

2) Who controls and creates those images. i.e. the media is owned by Western companies and mostly controlled by men.

3) The effects of violence in the Mass Media. i.e. there is no conclusive evidence on the relationship between violence and the media.

4) Getting women's voices heard.

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA-OBJECTS OR SUBJECTS?

[Contributed By Jo Bryant]

Some Questions and Issues we need to consider:

1) What media can we use to promote a positive image of women and make sure our voices are heard? Including song, dance and puppetry etc. in more rural areas.

2) How many of the programmes shown on TV are local (In Fiji it is less than 20%) Why is this? Can we begin to produce local programmes that will be shown? What is seen as "beautiful" in adverts?

3) What are the long term effects of TV, Video and Cinema on views of women? What effects have we noticed so far?

4) What problems are women in the media industry itself having?

5) What is the effect of glamorised rape scenes in films and pornography that show violence against women as normal and women with no sort of personality.

Suggestions for some practical things you can do within women's groups:

1) Let the press know about events that are happening within your women's groups.

2) Talk to teachers about gender free terminology in your children's books.

3) Include use of the media in any training, talks, discussions etc. that you might have.

4) Exchange ideas of how other women's groups have used the media.

5) Research effects of the media with surveys, etc.

6) Create your own posters.

7) Send in stories to the paper.

8) Host a film and discussion once a month on different topics.

9) Write letters to companies and advertising agencies.

10) Use group discussions over advertising, relevant articles, radio and so on to raise critical thinking.

11) Ask women what they want to hear and see in the media.

12) Arrange a visit to a local radio station to see how broadcasts are made.

13) Encourage women to write poems, songs, short stories and talk on the radio.

Examples of what has been done:

1) Fiji Women's Rights Movement in 1986 put in a five page submission to Fiji TV facilitation committee on portrayal of women in a positive manner and recommendations.

2) Research has been done by individuals at USP into effects of TV.

3) Fiji Women's Crisis Centre during the sixteen days of action put a short extract on domestic violence on TV between adverts.

4) Filing of relevant newspaper articles.

5) Contacts have been developed with sympathetic journalists so that women's groups are called on to comment on rape sentences and so on.

CARE ENOUGH TO LOVE FAITHFULLY

ARE YOU DRESSED FOR ANY OCCASION?

DON'T RISK AIDS

THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

[adopted from "The Women's Constitution"]

Article 1 : Definition Of Discrimination
Discrimination against women includes any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which may impair or deny women's enjoyment of their human rights on an equal basis with men.

Article 2 : Policy Measures To Be Taken To Eliminate Discrimination
To include principles of equality in consitutions and national legislation; to ensure that public authorities, institutions and individuals refrain from discrimination; to abolish discriminatory laws, customs, regulations and practices; to guarantee by law and in practice equality of rights between men and women and to protect women against discrimination.

Article 3: Basic Human Rights
To guarantee women's full enjoyment of their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men.

Article 4: Temporary Special Measures To Achieve Equality
To advance Women's equality until it is fully achieved, through special temporary measures.

Article 5: Sex Roles And Stereotyping
To modify social and cultural patterns to eliminate prejudice and customary practices discriminatory towards women, to include into family education equal responsibiltiy for the raising of children.

Article 6: Prostitution And Trafficking
To suppress all forms of trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution.

Article 7: Political And Public Life
Elimination of discrimination in public and political life, including the right to vote and be eligible for election in all elective bodies; participation in the formulation of governement policy; holding public offices; participation in NGOs.

Article 8: Participation At The International Level
Representation of their country at the international level and participation in the work of international organisations.

Article 9: Nationality
Acquiring, changing or retaining their nationality, regardless of marital status or nationality of the husband; and equal rights with regard to the nationality of their children.

Article 10: Education
Access to all forms of education and curricula, standards, scholarships, literacy programs, to health and family planning; elimination of stereotyping in text books and encouragement of co-education; full participation in sports.

FEELING LINKS

(adopted from "Why Did I Do It Again")

When you marry or make a serious commitment to a relationship, you must learn to share trust and vulnerability with your partner. When only one partner is trusting and the other is not, the relationship doesn't work. You may have grown up in environments where trust was used against you, or you were so untrustworthy that you projected those feelings and never trusted anyone else. When you never trust anyone your life is narrow and your options limited.

If you never learned about knowing who to trust or how to choose trustworthy people, it can be scary to start. One way that many try to keep from being scared and hurt is by not talking and not feeling, being "the strong, silent type." This kind of individual(s) keeps all emotions squashed up inside. When you first let yourself feel emotions you're not used to, you may feel out of control. You may think you are going a little crazy. This feeling soon passes as you get familiar with these new emotions.

When you go one step further and share your feelings, you are taking a risk that others will be supportive, or that they'll make fun of you and put you down. You may feel vulnerable to another's potential to attack you.

Maybe you have experienced sharing your feelings with someone who made fun of you and put you down. If it happened to you several times, you probably learned to hide your feelings so you were not open to attack. This is not an excuse. The real key is learning how to choose people that you can trust. If you have had bad experiences in the past, it means that you need to look at and probably change how you chose friends.

No one likes to be put down, made fun of, or taken advantage of. While the fear is genuine, in most cases, it is unrealistic. Unless you have chosen friends who regularly lie and cheat, most people do not take advantage of your situation or feelings. But feeling that way is a habit that reinforces your fear. You probably try to protect yourself by covering up your feelings. You become emotionally insulated and socially isolated as a result.

You probably think that blocking your feelings means you're in control. Outwardly you may seem strong, but inside you are not in control at all-you are scared, anxious and angry.

These inner feelings affect you and how you relate to the world around you. You are not free to act flexibly and respond to the changing circumstances of life. Instead you become rigid and inflexible. In dealing with life and feelings, the object is to be like a tree:when the tree is flexible, it can bend with the wind; when it is too rigid, it will be blown over in a storm.

Not being able to act flexibly is being out of control. When you cannot respond to the changes of life except with depression, anger and fear, you are out of control. When you are unable to choose how you will act and feel, you are being controlled by your defenses against others instead of acting for yourself. It is like a child who knows how to say "no" but is unable to say "yes". When you try to control yourself through depression, fear or anger, you are actually out of control because these emotions are controlling you. When you are in control, you can feel appropriate emotions and respond to life flexibly.

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA-OBJECTS OR SUBJECTS?

[Contributed By Jo Bryant]

6) Lobbying journalists to include gender sensitisation in their training.

What can I do in my everday life?

1) Discuss critically with family and friends articles in the newspaper or programmes on TV.

2) Write a letter to Fiji TV addressed to the head of programming (include your address for reply) if you want to question, comment, complain. They are interested in your feedback - positive and negative!

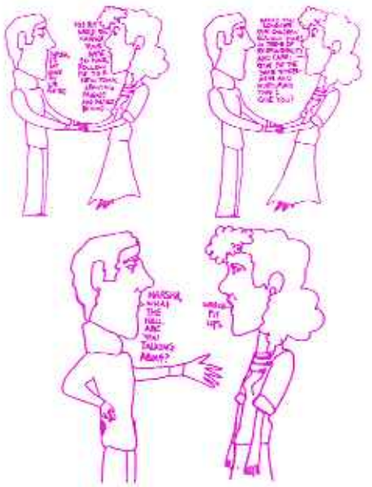
3) Write letters to the newspapers.

4) If you are in Fiji you can join media watch or even set up you own media watch group or women's media group.

5) Teach your children to be critical of the TV so that they realise the difference between fact and fiction.

Conclusion:

We can all do something to help create more positive images of women in the media. I have given some ideas but there are many more. Can we transform the "real world" by transforming the media which is supposed to portray "normal life" or is it the other way round?



Where can I get further information?

Fiji Media Watch, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

LETS CREATE POSITIVE IMAGES OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA AS ROLE MODELS! CREATE AND DEMAND REALISTIC PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN!

Thankyou to Fiji Women's Crisis Centre for the use of their library for this article. I acknowledge use of Koila Costello's paper.

PACIFIC REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION RESOURCE TEAM

RRRT is a project seeking to enhance the legal and social status of women in the Pacific by increasing the quality and quantity of womens human and legal rights programmes and activities undertaken by local Non Governmental Organisations and Government Departments.

REGIONAL (We work throughout the Pacific)

RIGHTS (We deal with women's legal and human rights)

RESOURCE (We are a resource to help any organisation in the region to promote women's legal and human rights)

TEAM (There are five permanent members of the team based in Suva who are happy to help)

SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES:

* *Workshops in legal literacy for women's groups.*
* *Gender training of judicial personnel, police, government law officers and legal practitioners Training of paralegals.*
* *Advice or support to particpating organisations on developing and implementing legal rights strategies for their own organisation or country.*
* *Undertaking, or supporting research and documentation on the interface between law and custom or non-law related obstacles to accessing legal rights.*

For Further Information Please Call (679) 305582 Or Fax 305177

Blow the whistle
on violence against women

FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT Jan-Feb Issue 1997

FWRM

Balance

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FEELING LINKS

(adopted from "Why Did I Do It Again:)

Feelings are part of your everyday life. Sometimes they are realistic and honest and sometimes they are distorted and blind. All of these feelings start with perceptions and thoughts. Feelings make up the link that builds a chain of behaviour. Often, thoughts and feelings occur together:sometimes a thought is connected to a feeling and sometimes a feeling is connected to a thought. Your behaviour is based on your thoughts and feelings and how they work together.

Like most people you probably become afraid of some of your feelings. You probably don't deal with them well or you try to avoid dealing with them at all. But there are three emotions you are very familiar with: depression, fear and anger. All of your feelings get covered over or hidden by these three emotions. The depression is usually the result of the mess in your life is in. The fear is usually of losing control and being emotionally hurt. The anger is often a feeling of righteous anger:when things don't go the way you want them to, you feel the right to get angry about them. This kind of anger often makes you feel as though you are not in control of your life and feelings. Since you feel as though you life is out of control, you often get angry because you feel controlled by others.

Depression, anger, and fear form a shield, a protective barrier that insulates you from feeling other emotions. With years of practice in your past, depression, anger, and fear become habits;other emotions seem unfamiliar and scary. Feelings like love, affection, patience, and peace are unfamiliar. When you do feel them, even a little, you feel vulnerable and out of control.

Trusting others requires being vulnerable. Being vulnerable means that you put yourself in a position of being receptive and possibly of being hurt in the process. Sometimes trust hurts;it's scary, but it won't kill you. Relating to people in ordinary, everyday life involves levels of trust and vulnerability. Life requires you be somewhat vulnerable, to trust others.

Love, intimacy, respect, friendship and companionship all come out of being trustworthy and trusting in a relationship. So trusting and being vulnerable can lead to great rewards! In any relationship, you have to decide whether the goal is worth the risk of being taken advantage of. Every time you trust someone you can grow in intimacy or you can be hurt. The ideal relationship is one where mutual trust works for both partners, allowing each person a sense of power and responsibility. When you marry or make a serious commitment to a relationship, you must learn to share trust and vulnerability with your partner. When only one partner is trusting and the other is not, the relationship doesn't work. You may have grown up in environments where trust was used against you, or you were so untrustworthy that you projected those feelings and never trusted anyone else.