




## Basics

### How does it work?


*In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* is an experiential learning activity. Based on the experiences of real survivors, participants engage in a simulation in which they walk in the shoes of the various characters experiencing abusive and controlling relationships. Groups or individuals are given a card describing the background and current situation of a character. Different stations throughout the room contain color-coordinated plot cards that align with each character. As groups are led to different stations, they read through scenarios their character faces with their partner and various systems, and make choices about their character’s next steps. The most critical part of the simulation, however, is the debrief. Discussion helps participants answer lingering questions, give the facilitator the opportunity to dispel persistent myths and misunderstandings, and helps participants engage in the way they can make change individually and locally.

**What comes in each [kit](#)?** Below is a general outline of what comes in each version of the kit. However, the kits differ slightly depending on the year it was printed.



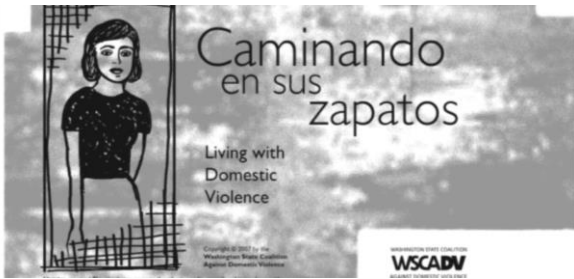
**In Her Shoes**  
Living With Domestic Violence

- **Station Cards:** 17 laminated cards that you use to designate where the stations are
- **Character Cards:** 8 laminated cards that give a short biography of each character
- **Index Cards:** 8 laminated cards that index the Story Cards for each character
- **Story Cards:** 168 cards that tell the characters’ stories
- **The Reference Guide:** The instruction booklet

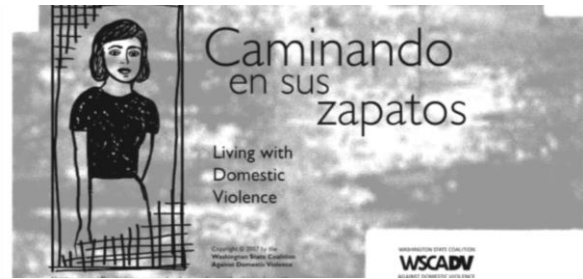


Living With Domestic Violence  
The Economic Justice Edition

- 12 laminated **station cards**
- 21 laminated **character cards** (There are 3 copies of each character)
- 205 **story cards**
- 1 **Facilitators Guide**
- 1 **Quick Start Guide**
- 1 **“What’s money got to do with it” handout** (to be copied)
- Not included but needed: 2 coins, 3 six-sided dice



- **Estaciones:** 19 tarjetas laminadas que se usan para designar donde están ubicadas las estaciones.
- **Personajes:** 6 tarjetas laminadas que proporcionan una breve biografía de cada personaje;
- **Índice:** 8 tarjetas laminadas que indican el orden de las historias de cada personaje;
- **Historias:** 144 tarjetas multicolores que narran las historias de los personajes.
- **Guía de referencia:** el manual de instrucciones que usted está leyendo.



- **Station Cards:** 19 laminated cards that are used to designate where the different stations are located.
- **Character Cards:** 6 laminated cards which describe a brief biography of each of the six characters whose stories develop throughout the simulation.
- **Scenario Cards:** 138 multicolored cards which narrate the character's stories.
- **Reference Guide:** The instruction booklet



**IN THEIR SHOES:**  
Teens and  
Dating  
Violence

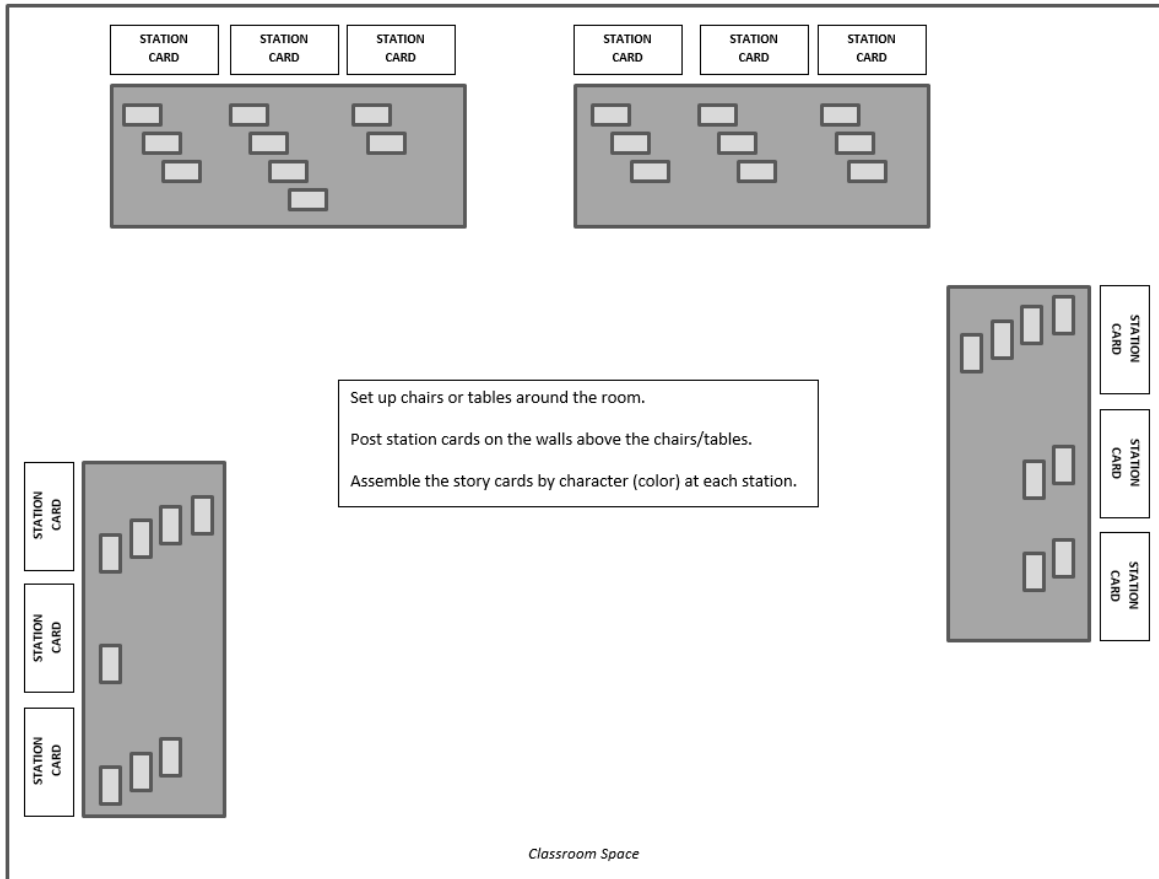
- 12 laminated **station cards**
- 18 laminated **character cards** (there are 3 copies of each character)
- 155 **story cards**
- **Facilitator's Guide**
- **How-to Guide**
- 15 "From Grief to Hope" **letters**
- "**Know This**" **sheet** (to be copied)
- 6 laminated **synopsis** and index cards



- 12 laminated **station cards**
- 18 laminated **character cards** (there are 3 copies of each character)
- 138 **story cards**
- **Facilitator's Guide**
- **Quick Start Guide**
- "**From Grief to Hope**" **letters** (15 copies)
- **Poster** for your classroom

## How do I set it up?

Below is a diagram representing one way to set up the experience. Participants start the experience together and the facilitator provides a basic overview of the activity. Then participants will move around to the various stations as they 'walk' in their characters' shoes. When individuals and groups are finished, they reconvene with the facilitator for the debrief.



## Who is this for?

Everyone! In striving to create a world where everyone experiences healthy, loving and safe relationships, we all have a role to play. While the *In Her Shoes* tool takes participants through the experiences of individuals in abusive relationships, it is our hope that by elevating the experiences of survivors, we start the conversation not only about what we don't want in relationships, but what we do. The activity gives participants the opportunity to practice interrupting abusive behavior they are a part of or witness and acknowledge the way in which people we love cause harm. *In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* is targeted to all community members, specifically adults and youth age 14 and older.

The *In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence Classroom Edition* is a version specifically geared towards young people in a classroom setting. However, all the simulations resonate with adult audiences and have been found to be useful in talking about domestic violence in a variety of communities.

### **Can this be used in public health settings?**

Yes! These tools aren't limited to just one setting. We've seen incredible conversations result from using *In Their Shoes* in a variety of settings and with an array of occupations and roles, including public health-oriented professions like home visitors, health care providers, and school counselors and safety officers.

### **How did *In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* come to be?**

Advocates and survivors noticed that when they went out into the community to do training and prevention work, statistics and facts didn't always connect with people, but when survivors told their stories, they would have a deep impact. Out of this, advocates and survivors sought to design a new training tool that would show people what it feels like to be in an abusive relationship. They created *In Her Shoes* based on the stories of real survivors. We hold deep appreciation for the Survivors in Service Network, and all domestic violence survivors who gave critical feedback throughout the project. We also are indebted to Dr. Karen Rosenburg, who wrote the original and teen versions. A variety of versions have since come out of the original *In Her Shoes* to address the different experiences of immigrant survivors, survivors experiencing poverty, and teens.



## Author Credit: Karen Rosenburg

*In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence*

*In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence*

*In Their Shoes: Classroom Edition*

### **Logistics**

#### **Do I need to be trained to facilitate?**

You do not need to be a "trained facilitator" in order to facilitate *In Her Shoes* or *In Their Shoes*. Each training kit comes with a facilitator's guide that anyone can follow. However, we suggest having a strong analysis of domestic and dating violence.

#### **How large of a group can this be facilitated with?**

It is best for groups of around 20-40 people but modifications can be made if groups are larger. For larger groups, you can have groups (instead of pairs) go through each character and debrief in small groups rather than one large group. In this case, it can be helpful to have more than one facilitator.

### **Can I preview *In Their Shoes* before ordering it to ensure it will be school appropriate?**

The kits are copyrighted and therefore we do not provide large amounts of text to preview. The facilitator's guide that comes with the kit includes information about the simulation as well as character synopses to give the facilitator an overview. We are happy to provide support in preparing for a school board meeting or discuss in further detail what the content entails. To do so you can contact Ilene Stohl at [ilene@wscadv.org](mailto:ilene@wscadv.org).

### **Do you have a version of *In Her Shoes* that focuses on \_\_\_\_\_?**

Knowing the ways domestic violence intersects with culture and identity, we ideally would have many versions of *In Her Shoes*, but currently only have the ones listed above. We are often asked if the kit can be adapted or modified to fit a specific population. Because of copyright infringement, changes can't be made without going through our legal permission process. You can find more information on adaptation, licensing and attribution [here](#).

### **Which version should I use?**

Each version provides a different experience for participants with different characters, stories and foci.

***In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence*** is the original simulation, which is great for educating a broad range of community and professional groups and can be facilitated in sessions of 1-2 hours.

***Caminando en sus Zapatos*** is entirely in Spanish and not a translation of the English versions. It contains all new characters and stories that illustrate the particular challenges facing Latin American immigrant women who are battered. This version is designed to be facilitated in 1-2 hours.

***Caminando en sus Zapatos: English Translation*** is a translation of the original *Caminando en Sus Zapatos*, which focuses on characters and stories that illustrate the particular challenges facing Latin American immigrant women who are battered. This version is designed to be facilitated in 1-2 hours.

***In Her Shoes: Economic Justice Edition*** is geared to increase awareness of the additional struggles battered women face when they are poor. The perspective of the person causing harm is also represented in the Economic Justice Edition. This version is most useful for longer training sessions where there are opportunities for group discussion, and is generally facilitated in a 2-hour session.

***In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence*** is for any group of adults who work with teens, such as teachers, counselors, youth group leaders, law enforcement or parents. This version also includes the perspective of the person causing harm. This version is designed to be facilitated in 1-2 hours.

***In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence—Classroom Edition*** is designed with the classroom in mind and provides an engaging way to talk about dating violence and healthy relationships with young people in one class period (apx 50 min).

### **Can you send me the PDFs of ITS/IHS instead of paying for the kit?**

While we know *In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* can feel expensive, purchasing the kit is a great investment. The cost from production provides a polished look, and the kit has endless uses. The *In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence—Classroom Edition* also includes National and Washington State Educational standards, two lesson plans, and classroom posters. Yet, we understand that the cost can be prohibitive and encourage you to reach out to your local state coalition, all of whom have their own copy of *In Her Shoes*.

### **Can I receive a non-profit discount?**

We do not have an official non-profit discount. If this tool is cost prohibitive, please contact [ilene@wscadv.org](mailto:ilene@wscadv.org) to discuss other possible financial options.

### **Is there an online version?**

We do not currently have an online version of *In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes*. We did collaborate with a professor from Arapahoe Community College in Colorado in 2015 but unfortunately that link is currently not working.

### **Can I modify *In Her Shoes*?**

*In Her Shoes* and *In Their Shoes* are both copyrighted, so any adaptation would be subject to a licensing agreement with WSCADV with an associated cost. Historically, we have done licensing agreements with entities who are interested in creating new characters based on our versions and those who want to do an online version. If you are interested in pursuing this, please contact us.

The concept of *In Her Shoes* is not copyrighted, so if you wanted to create a similar activity and not call it “*In Her Shoes*” or “*In Their Shoes*”, we would appreciate an attribution similar to the one below.

#### **Attribution**

[Title] is based on “*In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes*,” developed and owned by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Seattle, Washington, USA, [www.wscadv.org](http://www.wscadv.org)<<http://www.wscadv.org>>.

### **Is there an evaluation component?**

Originally, we did not have an evaluation to accompany the kit, but feel free to use one such as [this one](#) or make your own.

## **General Questions**

### **Is *In Her Shoes* evidence based?**

*In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* is evidence informed, but does not meet the strict definition of evidence-based. The tool was created based on real-life stories told to us by survivors, young people, their families and those who work with them. In creating *In Their Shoes*, we researched what young people needed around information and support for dating violence and based the character stories on what we learned.

### **At what age can I use the *In Their Shoes* training?**

The training is geared towards adults and youth ages 14 and up. *In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence—Classroom Edition* is mainly used with high school aged participants or older, yet the tool can be modified by the facilitator depending on the maturity and life experiences of the young people. If facilitating with younger participants, we recommend choosing one character, such as Elena, whose story involves issues such as sexting that may resonate with a younger audience, and walking through their story as an entire group.

## **Are the versions translated into other languages?**

*Caminando en sus Zapatos* is in Spanish, but not a translation of the English versions. This version contains characters and stories that illustrate particular challenges facing Latin American immigrant women who are battered in the United States. We haven't translated the other versions into other languages. In keeping with our philosophy that we want materials to be culturally relevant and upon talking with advocates and community members, we found that a strict translation wouldn't necessarily be helpful in capturing the experience of survivors in certain communities.

## **Can I take a character out and replace it with another?**

Each character intentionally represents different dynamics, barriers and identities of survivors and their relationships. Facilitators can pull a character out, but we recommend that this be done thoughtfully. Before doing so, we ask that you pause and ask how your biases might be at play in the decision to pull a character. Often this question is asked in reference to the LGBTQ characters of *In Their Shoes*. By omitting gay characters, the opportunity is lost to engage with participants about the realities of domestic violence and combat the very structures that enable it to thrive. Homophobia is a powerful tool that abusers can rely on to control, coerce, and violate their partners. When we are living and aiding in communities and societies that are homophobic, we are inadvertently aiding and abetting in the harm. We encourage facilitators to use this opportunity, when many people might be considering the dynamics of violence for the first time, to engage with participants around the way homophobia and other forms of oppression, such as racism, aid in the harm being done. Check out a webinar WSCADV and the Northwest Network did on this very topic [here](#).

## **Is this prevention?**

Facilitating a conversation using *In Their Shoes/In Her Shoes* can be a launching pad for your violence prevention efforts. It is a great first step in addressing risk factors for domestic and sexual violence in your community as well as supporting and increasing the protective factors that help people resist it.

*In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* provides an intensely emotional and real experience to participants, and can be a springboard for different conversations around healthy relationships. The tool includes issues of gender expectations, homophobia, and racism that are based on real ways people navigate their lives, and is a great place to begin to talk about social justice issues and the way they intersect with interpersonal violence. The characters and experiences from this tool can act as common ground to have further discussion about relationships with other people in your life. We have found it particularly compelling to facilitate with parents and their teens. Parents have then found it helpful in talking with their teens about relationships by using the characters as a shared playing field. We believe prevention happens in the conversations about healthy relationships that participants have with those in their lives as a result of experiencing *In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes*.





# Facilitation Tips

**Tailor** the debrief to fill in gaps by naming and raising certain issues and identities. The Facilitator's Guide provides specific questions and prompts to aid in the discussion.

**Engage** with participants from a place of openness. Challenging victim blaming by using statements such as "that has not been my experience" or "When I've talked to survivors, that has not been what I've heard..."

**Bring** characters into the room. "What would it be like if they lived here? What does our community have to offer? What might be lacking? What would you want to say to a character if they were with us?"

**Offer** food and drink...and a space to start a conversation about relationships in our lives and communities!

Our experience at the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence has shown us that experiencing *In Her Shoes/In Their Shoes* leads communities to shift their thinking about domestic violence and evolve their practices around what it really means to support survivors, hold those who cause harm accountable, and envision a world where violence and abuse don't flourish as they do now. We all want communities where people can live and love freely without fear. It is up to us to create conditions where violence does not thrive and where communities are safe, secure, and whole. We hope this tool helps you to do that.