

## **The American University of Kuwait hosts Anti-violence Forum**

On Wednesday November 3rd, 2010, The Office of Student Life at the American University of Kuwait on the occasion of the Anti-violence day of its 5th Annual Social Awareness Week organized “Anti-Violence Forum”. The forum involved AUK’s Student Success Center and Division of Social Sciences professors and students. Introduction about Violence, Intimate partner violence, family and violent behavior in children and adolescents, recognizing structural violence, and individual practices toward reducing violence in society were the main topics discussed.

**Mr. Jason Sullivan** - SCC mental health counselor, M.A. in Counseling, RTS Orlando. B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Tennessee in his Introduction about Violence highlighted why Violence Awareness is necessary, as violence appears in many forms. It can be an expression of how we feel, it can be an event acted out on us. It can also be the effect an event has on us, based on our perception of that event (i.e. Violent Storm), Hurricane Katrina and the aftermath...

Sometimes we use violence as a means of escape. We use video games, movies, etc. Violence, whether we are acting from it or reacting to it has a large impact on how we see ourselves and how we are seen.

**Dr. Juliet Dinkha**, Associate Professor of Psychology at the American University of Kuwait, licensed clinical Psychologist, and member of the American Psychological Association, holder of Doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology from Illinois School of Professional Psychology (ISPP), and Masters degree in Clinical Psychology also from (ISPP), in presenting Intimate partner violence identified domestic abuse which is also known as spousal abuse, that occurs when one person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person. Domestic abuse that includes physical violence is called domestic violence. It could be physical, psychological, emotional, economical, or sexual. She shared with the audience types and facts of Domestic Violence/Abuse, and how Domestic Violence/Abuse develops or the “Domestic Violence Cycle”, highlighting the Characteristics that might identify a potential batterer. In her respond to audience questions about how to respond to Intimate partner violence Dr Dinkha said that women who face abuse should not wait until unacceptable behavior is ingrained into the abuser's unconscious mind and is treated as being 'normal.' Victims should seek counseling immediately.

**Dr. James Rose**, Assistant Professor of Psychology at the American University of Kuwait., holder of a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Virginia, and a M.A. degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Chicago. In discussing research on the effects of parenting on aggressive behavior in children and adolescents, Dr. Rose explained that highly aggressive children are more likely to become adults with histories of physical aggression and

criminality. Moreover, both the family environment and genetics influence the likelihood of criminal and aggressive behavior in children.

**Dr. Pellegrino Luciano**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the American University of Kuwait. Holder of a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the City University of New York, discussed the importance of Recognizing Structural Violence, highlighting understanding how the concept of structural violence helps us explain the social causes of physical harm. In addition, decisions made at the societal level that either indirectly result in physical harm to people or foster a social condition that promotes direct physical harm. Dr. Luciano concluded that Recognizing Structural Violence leads to Greater Social Awareness.

**AUK Student: Monica Matta** minor in Psychology, who with Dr. Juliet Dinkha as a research and teacher assistant, presented individuals' common practice towards reducing violence in society by helping yourself first, do not be ashamed to seek support, and report violent behavior. In addition, help our next generation by Eliminate violent language from your vocabulary, Refrain from punishing children, and do not use violence as a reaction to violence.

**Mr. Ayman Shouman** the Student Engagement Office organizer of the Annual Social Awareness Week, adjourned the forum by presenting to the Discussion Panel Certificates of Appreciation as acknowledgment for their valued participation in this interactive learning activity that aimed to raise awareness about the violence and its different typologies and emphasize on the individuals practices that would reduce violence in society.