The Utah State University Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP), in conjunction with USU Extension, sponsors the virtual Spring Women’s Leadership Forum, “Stopping Violence Against Utah Girls and Women.” The free event is held **Wednesday, February 17, from noon to 1:15 p.m., and registration is required.**

Studies show that one in four girls is sexually abused before age 18 in the United States, which is an estimated 42 million girls/women. Unfortunately, Utah ranks well above the national average for violence against girls and women, and it remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it. Survivors often keep the abuse a secret for many years, and most don’t talk about it until adulthood.

Susan Madsen, founding director of the UWLP and moderator for the event, said survivors carry the weight of their abuse in different ways, but many have struggles.

“These can include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts, insomnia, panic attacks, addiction, learning difficulties, chronic pain and unhealthy relationships,” she said.

Madsen and other panelists will present research and data as they discuss the realities of this topic.

“Ending violence against women is everyone’s business,” she said. “Join us to learn how you can support survivors and how you can do your part to protect girls and women from violence and sexual abuse.”

[Click here](#) to register for the forum.