



24-HOUR STATEWIDE HOTLINE: 1 (800) 33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836)

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Regarding Gender Language in this Report

According to the Bureau of Justice, women account for 85% of victims of intimate partner violence and men account for the remaining 15% (Bureau of Justice Special Report, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010, November 2012). The majority of domestic violence homicides in Georgia tracked by the Project involve men killing women in heterosexual relationships. The language we use in this report reflects these realities. However, it should not be construed to suggest that all victims are women and all perpetrators are men. We acknowledge that men are abused by women in intimate partner relationships and are sometimes killed by them. Domestic violence also impacts same-sex relationships at the same rate (or higher) as heterosexual relationships, and lives are also lost.

WE DEDICATE THIS REPORT TO VICTIMS, THEIR CHILDREN,
AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES AS A
RESULT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; TO THEIR SURVIVING
CHILDREN, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND FRIENDS WHO MUST
GO ON WITHOUT THEM; AND TO THE BATTERED WOMEN
WHO STRUGGLE TO STAY ALIVE EVERY DAY.



TOOLS FOR CHANGE

HOW TO USE THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW

- 1. Read and Remember.** Read the fatality review reports and remember the stories of those who have lost their lives to domestic violence. Share victims' names and stories at events that honor domestic violence victims and survivors.
- 2. Share with Others.** Copies of this report and prior reports are available at www.gcfv.org and www.gcadv.org. Email the link to co-workers, advocates, judges, police officers, mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, attorneys, health care workers, religious leaders, teachers, family, and friends. Print the sections you think are relevant to others' work and share these sections with them. Print handouts and use them in community presentations.
- 3. Discuss with Co-Workers.** Discuss the report during a staff meeting at your workplace. Identify which findings and recommendations are most relevant to your agency, and work toward their implementation. Identify specific steps forward.
- 4. Incorporate into Strategic Planning.** Use the findings and recommendations as a tool for strategic planning. If you work in a nonprofit agency, share the fatality review reports with your board of directors. Identify other agencies with which you want to collaborate, and discuss specific goals you can work toward together.
- 5. Develop Task Force Initiatives.** As a group, identify areas in which the community is doing well and areas in which improvement is needed. Identify two to four recommendations that are priorities for your community and work toward them. Create a subcommittee for your priority areas and report your progress to the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.
- 6. Increase Community Awareness.** Create discussion groups in your community to talk about the fatality review reports and recommendations for change. These groups can be interdisciplinary groups of professionals or groups of community members interested in making their communities safer and healthier. As a group, identify action steps toward implementing the recommendations in this report. Contact the Fatality Review Project coordinators for further conversations and presentations.
- 7. Alert the Media.** Alert the local media about fatality review findings, recommendations, and local work being done to help victims of domestic violence. For additional suggestions about working with the media, see page 71.
- 8. Implement Recommendations.** Identify fatality review recommendations that apply to the work you are doing and implement them. Contact the Project coordinators for more information.
- 9. Write a Grant.** Use fatality review findings, statistics and recommendations in grant proposals.

Adapted from Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2010 Fatality Review Report, *Up to Us*, available at <http://www.wscadv.org/docs/FR-2010-Report.pdf>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past 10 years, the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project (the Project) has honored the lives of 126 domestic violence homicide victims and six near-fatality survivors by learning valuable lessons from their stories.

Since 2004, the Project has worked with 22 communities across the state of Georgia to look critically at the circumstances leading up to the homicides, identify areas where our efforts were not successful, and acknowledge our responsibility to make changes and prevent the loss of more lives. By including professionals from a wide range of disciplines in the reviews, we have been able to identify problems in community responses to domestic violence, and gaps in services, policy, practice, training, information, communication, collaboration, and resources.

In our 10th Annual Report, we offer 10 Key Findings repeatedly identified as significant in reviewed cases. These findings include: Children Exposed to Domestic Violence; Teen Dating Violence; Economic Abuse; The Role of the Criminal Legal System; Civil Protective Orders and the Courts; Firearms & Domestic Violence Fatalities; Family, Friends and the Faith Community; Detachment, Separation and the Risks of Leaving; The Suicide-Homicide Connection; and Barriers to Accessing Services.

Every finding in this report is prompted by details of a specific homicide in Georgia and includes a discussion on the challenges and barriers faced by victims from reviewed cases.

This report focuses on areas needing improvement and excludes many incidents reflecting exemplary responses to domestic violence, both inside and outside the criminal legal system. Focusing our energy to make changes in these 10 key areas will have a huge impact on the lives of domestic violence victims and reduce the number of domestic violence-related deaths in Georgia.

Woven throughout this report are the stories of victims whose cases we have reviewed in the last 10 years. Every story is unique, but they all share common elements: a complex history of suffering and abuse, attempts to get help, attempts to leave, interactions with friends and family and contacts with various institutions and organizations. What cannot be easily conveyed in this report is the pain and fear these domestic violence victims suffered prior to their deaths or the loss felt by their families and communities. In an effort to remind us all that this report reflects real stories of loss and not just statistics, we have included an in-depth story of a teen victim of homicide, and poetry by both a homicide victim and a survivor of domestic violence.

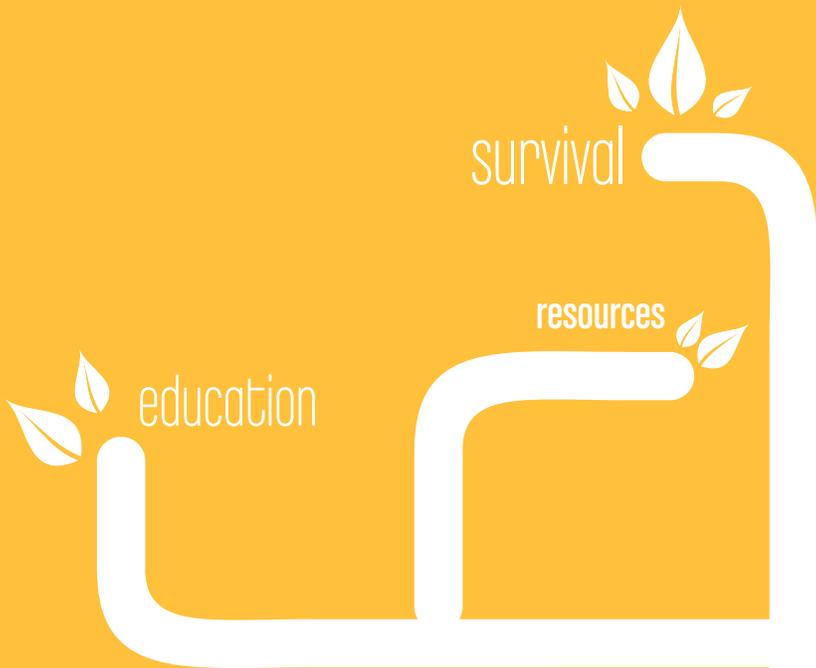
The problem of domestic violence cannot be solved by one system, one agency, or one person alone; however, there is much to be done together, with each of us drawing from our respective personal and professional knowledge.

Each key finding in this report is followed by carefully crafted recommendations for change, resulting from much hard work by the review teams. We have grouped the recommendations by system for the reader's convenience. However, to understand the scope of the work remaining for all of us, please read all of the recommendations made in this report while paying close attention to the recommendations specific to the system(s) you represent.

As we consider the future of Georgia and the goal of ending family violence in our state, the recommendations made in this report are a roadmap for change.

These recommendations can no longer remain simply words on a page.

As a state, as a community, and as individuals, we have an opportunity to reflect on the key findings from 10 years of fatality reviews, to embrace the tragedy of the lives that have been lost, and to harness our grief to make a difference for victims and their children who are still alive today. By doing the hard work to implement the recommendations made in this report, we hope each year will bring fewer and fewer deaths to mourn.



1 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED DEATHS IN GEORGIA 2013

COUNTY	NUMBER OF DEATHS
Appling	1
Barrow	2
Bartow	3
Ben Hill	2
Bibb	2
Chatham	3
Clayton	4
Cobb	12
Colquitt	2
DeKalb	7
Douglas	2
Effingham	1
Emanuel	1
Fayette	1
Floyd	1
Franklin	1
Fulton	19
Gordon	1
Gwinnett	9
Habersham	1
Hall	2
Haralson	1
Houston	1
Jackson	3
Jasper	2
Lanier	1
Laurens	1
Meriwether	1
Miller	2
Muscogee	4
Paulding	1
Pulaski	2
Richmond	5
Stephens	2
Terrell	1
Thomas	1
Toombs	2
Troup	1
Turner	2
Twiggs	1
Union	1
Walker	2
Whitfield	2
TOTAL	116

3 AGENCIES AND SERVICES KNOWN TO BE INVOLVED WITH VICTIMS OR PERPETRATORS IN THE FIVE YEARS PRIOR TO THE FATALITY 2004-2013

	AGENCY / SERVICE / PROGRAM	VICTIMS		PERPETRATORS	
		#	% total cases	#	% total cases
 JUSTICE SYSTEM AGENCIES	Law enforcement	73	78%	77	83%
	Prosecutor	34	37%	49	53%
	Superior court	28	30%	35	38%
	Magistrate court	26	28%	34	37%
	Civil court, including juvenile court	22	24%	21	23%
	State court	21	23%	21	23%
	Protection order advocacy program	15	16%	1	1%
	Court-based legal advocacy	13	14%	2	2%
	Probation	9	10%	33	35%
	Municipal court	6	6%	9	10%
	Legal aid	4	4%	0	0%
	Parole	1	1%	9	10%
 SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES	Child protective services (DFCS)	11	12%	11	12%
	Child care services	5	5%	2	2%
	TANF or Food Stamps	5	5%	2	2%
	WIC	5	5%	0	0%
	Medicaid	4	4%	1	1%
	Homeless shelter	2	2%	1	1%
	PeachCare	1	1%	0	0%
 HEALTH CARE AGENCIES	Hospital care	22	24%	19	20%
	Private physician	19	20%	15	16%
	Emergency medical care	19	20%	8	9%
	Emergency medical service (EMS)	14	15%	8	9%
	Mental health provider	10	11%	21	23%
	Substance abuse program	2	2%	5	5%
 FAMILY VIOLENCE AGENCIES	Community-based advocacy	16	17%	4	4%
	Domestic violence shelter or safe house	15	16%	0	0%
	Family violence intervention program (FVIP)	2	2%	11	12%
	Sexual assault program	1	1%	1	1%
 MISCELLANEOUS AGENCIES	Religious community, church or temple	30	32%	20	22%
	Immigrant resettlement	2	2%	1	1%
	Anger management	2	2%	5	5%
	English as a Second Language (ESL) program	1	1%	0	0%

KEY POINTS (chart 3)

Law enforcement had the most contact with both victims (78%) and perpetrators (83%) five years prior to the homicide. A much smaller number of victims were in contact with a domestic violence program (16%) five years prior to their death. Domestic violence programs should take proactive steps to ensure their full range of services are known to the community, accessible to victims from marginalized communities, culturally relevant, and inviting to all victims. Continued law enforcement training on the dynamics of domestic violence and how and where to refer domestic violence victims for services is needed. Find out more with the Roll Call Training Manual available for law enforcement on page 32.

A significant number of victims (32%) and perpetrators (22%) interacted with a religious community, church, temple or mosque five years prior to the homicide. Faith communities have great potential for offering resources, referrals, and safety to congregants. Find out more about what the faith community can do on page 53.

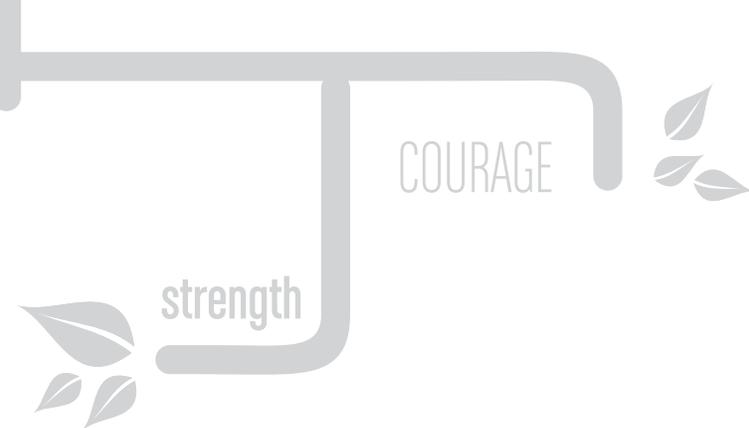
MY NAME!

Poem written by Glory Kilanko, Women Watch Afrika, Inc. 2002

He did not call me by my name, no not by the name my mother gave me, or one that I was known with. He called me by another name, a word I have never heard before, but yet I knew it was I. For I must answer any name he calls me, if I do not was to be beaten. Some times I even answer when he coughs.

I get new names all the time, some good, and some bad. Some time I am foolish woman, bitch, witch, useless and good for nothing woman. Other times I am Mama Biola, Sweetheart or Darling Wife, who gets flowers and is taken to dinner or parties. But this does not last for too long. I must return to that dirty, nasty, kitchen maid who lived in fear for nine and the half years.

No matter how much I try to please him, he must find an excuse to hit me and call me names. He blames me for



everything; including for hitting me. My many names even confused my children. Some times they do not know my real name, from the many names. I lost the count myself, because I get an average of nine names every other day for nine and the half years.

Yes, it took that many years for me to take the decision to be free like every other person. But this was not before he tried to strangle me with the telephone wire in front of my two children who cried loud daddy please don't kill mommy.

Today, I am my real self with my name; the name that I was born with. I no longer live in fear. I do not have to ask if I can eat, take a shower or call or visit my family and friends anymore. My name today means love for myself.

Inspired by a survivor of domestic violence who immigrated to the United States from Africa, an advocate wrote this poem (above) to capture the emotional and physical abuse suffered by domestic violence victims and their journey to freedom and a violence-free life. We have included the poem in this report because it closely mirrors the experiences of a victim whose death we reviewed this year.

While the woman in the poem told a journey of survival and freedom, the journey of the woman whose case we reviewed ended too soon. She suffered abuse throughout her 12-year marriage to her husband. Six years prior to her death, they immigrated to the United States from Kenya with their two young children. Her husband was very controlling; she was not allowed to talk to other people or use the family computer. He monitored all phone calls made to and from the house and isolated her from her family who lived in her home country; he beat her anytime one of her family members called her. Her family knew he was a violent man and he told them at least

once he was going to kill her. Her family felt helpless because they were so far away and were scared of him. He was also abusive and controlling with their children. About a year prior to her death, she began regularly attending church. She sought counsel from the pastor who placed her on the prayer list. It is not known how much of the abuse, if any, she confided in him. She became friends with a woman at church in whom she did confide about the abuse. She called her friend for help after an incident where her husband was particularly violent. She tried to leave the relationship several times and sought shelter from the local domestic violence program. However, she faced multiple barriers including being disabled from a car accident, which prevented her from working full-time, and her husband would not allow her to leave with the children. About a month prior to her death, she reconciled with her husband for the last time. He beat her to death in front of their children, who attempted to intervene. They barricaded the door after their father fled the house and tried to resuscitate their mother.

1 CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FINDING: CHILDREN ARE OFTEN THE SILENT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, A FACT WHICH CAN PERPETUATE THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

1. CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 18% of reviewed cases, children witnessed the homicide of their parent or caregiver and in 40% of reviewed cases they were in the vicinity of the homicide but did not witness it.

We can assume that, prior to the homicide, these children witnessed or were subjected to acts of violence in their home. Children are exposed to domestic violence in the following ways:

- overhearing the abuse;
- witnessing or being forced to watch the abuse;
- observing injuries and bruises on a parent;
- being held hostage in order to force their mother's return home;
- being forced to participate in the abuse;
- being interrogated by the abuser about their mother's activities;
- intervening in an assault to protect a parent;
- being intentionally or unintentionally harmed in the course of a domestic violence assault; and
- witnessing homicides, attempted homicides and/or sexual assaults.

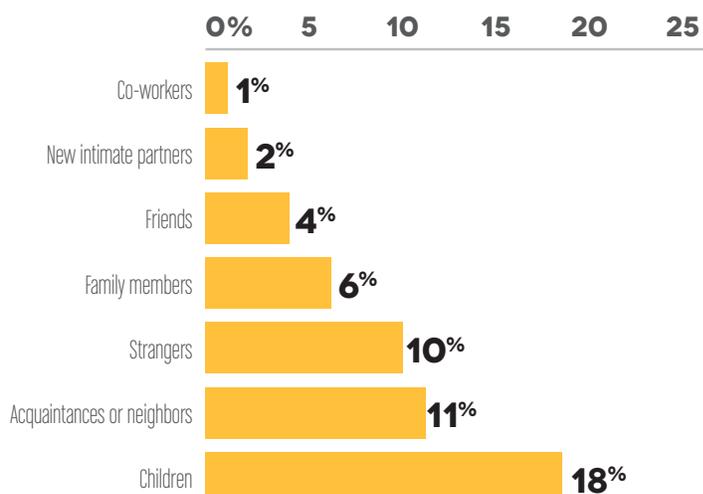
Although estimates vary greatly, research indicates that as many as seven million children are exposed to domestic violence each year in the U.S. This is approximately one out of every ten children, based on 2013 U.S. Census Data. Often, children exposed to domestic violence are the unseen victims of domestic violence because they are not always the direct victims.

A 12-year-old was in the car with her parents when her father held a gun to her mother's head and ordered her to take off her clothes so she would not be able to escape from the vehicle. The child begged her mother not to report the incident to the police because "Daddy would go back to jail." Six weeks later, the child woke up to her parents arguing. She heard her mother say, "Call 911"; her mother shot her father in their bedroom. The child entered their bedroom to get the telephone and called 911. While on the phone, she heard several more gunshots. Her father shot her mother and then shot himself. Her mother died on the scene; her father later died at the hospital.

The varying levels of exposure impact children differently, depending upon their own individual characteristics and the level of trauma resulting from their experience.

Even if children do not directly observe the violence, living in an environment with domestic violence can result in serious emotional and behavioral issues.

4 PERCENTAGE OF CASES WHERE OTHERS WITNESSED THE HOMICIDE 2004-2013



KEY POINTS (chart 4)

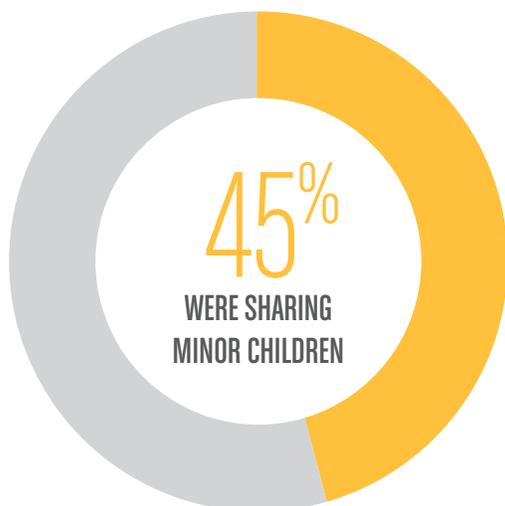
In 18% of cases, children witnessed the homicide. Often, if the child(ren) did not directly observe the homicide, they were the first to find their deceased parent(s) or caregiver(s). There is a critical need to assist children dealing with the traumatic effects of witnessing a homicide, losing one or both parents or caregivers, and witnessing domestic violence.

FINDING: CHILDREN ARE OFTEN THE SILENT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, A FACT WHICH CAN PERPETUATE THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACROSS THE LIFESPAN ⁱⁱ ⁱⁱⁱ ^{iv}

	INFANTS	PRESCHOOL AGE	SCHOOL AGE	ADOLESCENTS
BEHAVIORAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being fussy • Decreased responsiveness • Trouble sleeping • Trouble eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Behavior problems • Regressive behavior • Yelling, irritability • Trouble sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Conduct problems • Disobedience • Regressive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dating violence • Delinquency • Running away • Truancy • Early sexual activity
SOCIAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble interacting with peers • Stranger anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer and low quality peer relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dating violence (victim or perpetrator) • Increased risk for teen pregnancy
EMOTIONAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment needs not met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear/anxiety, sadness, worry • PTSD • Negative affect • Feeling unsafe • Separation anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somatic complaints • Fear and anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, shame • PTSD • Limited emotional response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse • Depression • Suicidal ideation • PTSD • Feeling rage, shame • Unresponsiveness
COGNITIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-blame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-blame • Distracted, inattentive • Academic problems • Pro-violent attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short attention span • Pro-violent attitude • Defensiveness

5 PERCENTAGE OF CASES WHERE THE PERPETRATOR AND VICTIM SHARED MINOR CHILDREN 2004-2013



KEY POINTS (chart 5)

In 45% of cases, the perpetrator and victim had at least one minor child together. Sharing children can significantly increase a victim’s barriers to safety, including a victim’s decision to leave the relationship, their ability to support themselves and their children away from the abuser, and continued interactions with the abuser regarding custody arrangements. In some cases, the homicide or murder-suicide occurred in the presence of the children during a custody exchange. Supervised visitation and safe exchange locations are important for maintaining the safety of victims and their children.

1. CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

An immigrant mother and her three children endured years of abuse at the hands of her husband in both their home country and in Georgia. The mother and the oldest son, age 18, received the worst of the abuse while the youngest daughters, ages 16 and 12, were often forced to listen. The 16-year-old daughter shared with investigators the lasting impact it had on her: “Every time we heard them screaming, it felt like he was hitting us also.” Their father often told the children his plan for killing their mother. One day, the 12-year-old daughter woke up to her mother and father fighting in the kitchen. When she no longer heard her mother’s voice, she went to the kitchen where she found her on the floor with several stab wounds. Her father was screaming he had killed her mother because she ruined his life. While a visiting pastor called 911, the 12-year-old threw the knife in the trashcan and cleaned her mother’s face off with a towel before the police arrived.

Witnessing domestic violence and experiencing child abuse can have devastating effects on children. Children who are exposed to domestic violence have a higher risk of becoming a victim of child abuse.^v In 28% of reviewed cases, the perpetrators of homicide also had a history of abusing children. Fathers who are abusers are often authoritarian, neglectful, and verbally abusive in their parenting style.^{vi} In reviewed cases, there were many examples of abusive fathers and caregivers being both physically and emotionally abusive towards children. Often, threats of violence toward the mother were used to instill terror in children. For example, a stepfather took the victim’s 13- and 15-year-old daughters to the backyard to show them a hole he dug in which to bury their mother.

A 15-year-old called 911 when she saw her father put his hands near her mother’s face in a threatening manner after they returned home from a party. She told officers her father had been arrested once before for hitting her mother and she was afraid he would do it again. The officer spoke to the mother, using her daughter as the interpreter because she did not speak English. The mother told the officer no physical violence occurred and her husband only yelled at her. Her husband was not at the scene when the officers arrived, so they checked the yard and wooded area around the house; they advised the

mother of Temporary Protective Order procedures and left. An hour later, the neighbors called the police after the 15-year-old and her 13-year-old sister came to their house, hysterical, and said their father had shot their mother. The 13-year-old suffered a gunshot wound through her arm. Police were finally able to coax the youngest two siblings, ages 8 and 3, out of the house. Their father was found deceased in the home from a self-inflicted gunshot wound and their mother was transported to the hospital, where she later died from a gunshot wound to the neck.

As seen in this story, some children were used as interpreters for limited English proficient (LEP) parents. The practice of using children to interpret instead of using qualified interpreters exposes children to information that is age-inappropriate, is potentially traumatic, and possibly puts them at further risk for harm. The abuser may threaten to harm the child and the mother if the child accurately interprets the mother reporting the abuse. Children may also be instructed to lie by the abuser, or the victim may sensor herself in order to protect the child. Please see page 66 for more information on barriers faced by victims who are immigrants and refugees.

Child Survivors of Domestic Violence Homicide

From 93 reviewed cases:

- 65 victims were parents of minor children;
- Seven victims were grandparents; and
- 129 minor children were left without a parent or caregiver.

Beyond exposure to domestic violence, many children experienced the loss of one or more parents or caregivers due to domestic violence homicide. Children who survive a domestic violence homicide may lose both parents simultaneously — losing the abusive parent to suicide or incarceration. In 16 reviewed cases, both parents were killed through murder-suicide (see page 61 for more information on murder-suicides).^{vii}

FINDING: CHILDREN ARE OFTEN THE SILENT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, A FACT WHICH CAN PERPETUATE THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

A 17-year-old took the family's two dogs for a walk one night while her parents argued in their home. When she returned 30 minutes later, she went straight to bed. The following morning, she went to work. When she came home for lunch, she found her mother deceased from a gunshot wound in her parent's bedroom and found her father in the basement, deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

A victim was meeting her estranged boyfriend to exchange their 6-year-old child for a visit. The boyfriend was court ordered to have no contact with the victim except by phone regarding the child; no visitation was ordered. While sitting in the front seat of the car, the victim and her estranged boyfriend were fighting when he shot and killed her before fatally shooting himself. The child was in the backseat of the car. He ran to a neighbor's house, who called 911.

Children who survive the death of a parent must often deal with the trauma of the violence, the grief associated with the loss, and the anger and confusion around comprehending how one parent or caregiver could take the other's life. This can result in surviving children feeling alone, lost, and invisible. In the chaos of the homicide scene, they may be overlooked by responding law enforcement officers, emergency medical providers, family members and neighbors. Children may overhear conversations regarding what happened, causing more trauma, anger, and confusion. It is also possible they are a primary source of information because of their proximity to the event and need to be interviewed during the investigation which, if not done effectively, can be traumatic for the child. Interviews with family members have revealed children also play a key role in a family's decision to support a plea deal for the perpetrator. If children witnessed the abuse or homicide, family members and new caregivers may not want the child to have to relive what happened by providing testimony during a criminal trial.

A 13-year-old answered the door to find a law enforcement officer looking for his mother. He informed the officer his mother was sleeping and it would take him a few minutes to wake her. He returned to tell the officer he was unable to wake

his mother. The officer attempted to wake her but found she had no pulse; she had been strangled before being shot six times by her estranged boyfriend.

Surviving children are often placed with a family member or friend who is also deeply emotionally impacted by the homicide. While it is important to keep children connected with these familiar adults, the new caregivers may have challenges wrapping up the affairs of the deceased, including funeral planning and costs. They may also be impacted by the stress of the upcoming trial, unexpected emotional and financial child rearing responsibilities, and the unique parenting challenges of caring for a child exposed to domestic violence. While the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program is available for most families to assist with the financial costs of funeral expenses and counseling, the application process can be overwhelming for individuals who are grieving the death of a loved one. Also, most expenses are payable by reimbursement only, meaning finances must first come out of the new caregiver's pocket.

A week after moving off the military base, the abuser shot his wife, who was an active military member, and their 2-year-old child, in front of their 4-year-old child. He later dropped the 4-year-old off at a friend's house and told them he would never see them again. After leaving, the friend noticed blood on the little girl's clothes moments before she said, "Daddy shot Mommy in the face and shot my brother."

Surviving children are also usually uprooted from their home, causing anxiety and insecurity regarding where they will live and with whom. Adjusting to a new home, school, neighborhood, and friends is a challenge for most children, particularly for those who have survived such a tragedy. Some children may be subjected to additional confusion when they are taken by their family members to visit the perpetrator in prison, are taken into Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) custody, or are adopted by a family member who is unfamiliar. Some may even become embroiled in a bitter custody battle between the surviving extended family members.

1. CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A mother of three finally reached an uncontested divorce agreement with her abusive husband. Two days later, she was in the car waiting to meet with her husband for a custody exchange. Her new partner and her youngest child, age 10, were also in the car; the other two children, ages 16 and 14, were in the truck with her husband. The husband pulled up next to the victim's car and shot and killed her and severely injured her new partner. The abuser then left, with the oldest two children still in the back of his truck. He dropped them off at his house. He was later found in his truck deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Children exposed to domestic violence need increased access to services. Interviews with family and friends have revealed that surviving children (and other family members impacted by the homicide) are not receiving adequate follow-up services. Insufficient financial resources have most often been cited for the reason why these children were not receiving counseling. The lack of connection to helping professionals is particularly problematic in murder-suicides because these cases do not require any additional follow-up for the purposes of prosecution. In most communities, there is no established protocol for connecting surviving families and children of murder-suicides to resources since advocates from prosecutors' offices are not usually in touch with the families.

A victim filed for a TPO and a divorce on the same day. The 30-day ex parte order was granted but the court denied her request to extend the order at the 12-month hearing. Two months later, the victim filed for child support for their 6-year-old daughter. On the day of the rule nisi hearing, the abuser showed up at the family home. The victim's 18-year-old son begged his stepfather not to take his mother in the car with him. The abuser held a gun to the victim's head, forcing her to drive away. The 18-year-old stood in front of the car and flattened the tires in an effort to stop them and tried to stand in front of the car to prevent them from leaving; he then called 911. The mother attempted to escape a few miles away while waiting at a red light, but was shot in the back several times. The abuser got back into the car and drove to another location where he died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Children who survive domestic violence homicides may suffer extensive trauma, even with professional and regular counseling. Through interviews, caregivers shared that surviving children continue to struggle with the loss of their parent and experience anger, confusion, depression, and anxiety years after the death. One grandparent shared that a surviving child asked, "Why did daddy kill mommy?" Some children struggle with blaming other family members for the death of their parent: an aunt shared that a 13-year-old said, "If grandma hadn't have been sick, we could have stayed with her and mommy would still be alive." Some children struggle with blaming themselves for the death of their loved one: an 11-year-old felt immense guilt for not telling anyone the extent of the abuse going on in the home before his grandfather killed his grandmother. Other children have acted out in their new homes, both physically and sexually, in response to the trauma they experienced.

A 3-year-old child whose mother was killed by her boyfriend refused to get his immunization shots because "shots kill people." This same child did not want to move to a new home because his mother wasn't there. He told his grandmother, "I don't see my mom here."

One 5-year-old child witnessed the homicide of her grandmother and great-grandmother; they were shot by her step-grandfather. He then took his grandchild from the scene of the crime and abandoned her on the steps of a public transportation station. She was later found by a commuter and taken to the police.

Frequent exposure to domestic violence – including seeing, hearing, or experiencing the violence – normalizes violence for children and increases their risk of becoming family violence victims and abusers.^{viii}

Connecting children who have been exposed to domestic violence and/or survived domestic violence homicides to services is imperative to breaking the cycle of domestic violence and preparing children to have healthy relationships. Proactive responses to children exposed to domestic violence require significant commitment from

FINDING: CHILDREN ARE OFTEN THE SILENT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, A FACT WHICH CAN PERPETUATE THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

the community and service providers. Every sector of our communities can play a role in assisting children exposed to domestic violence, from law enforcement officers to volunteer mentors, to advocates and counselors.

i Additional Resources

Armour, M. (2011). Domestic fatalities: The impact on remaining family members. *International Perspectives in Victimology*, 5(2), 22-32.

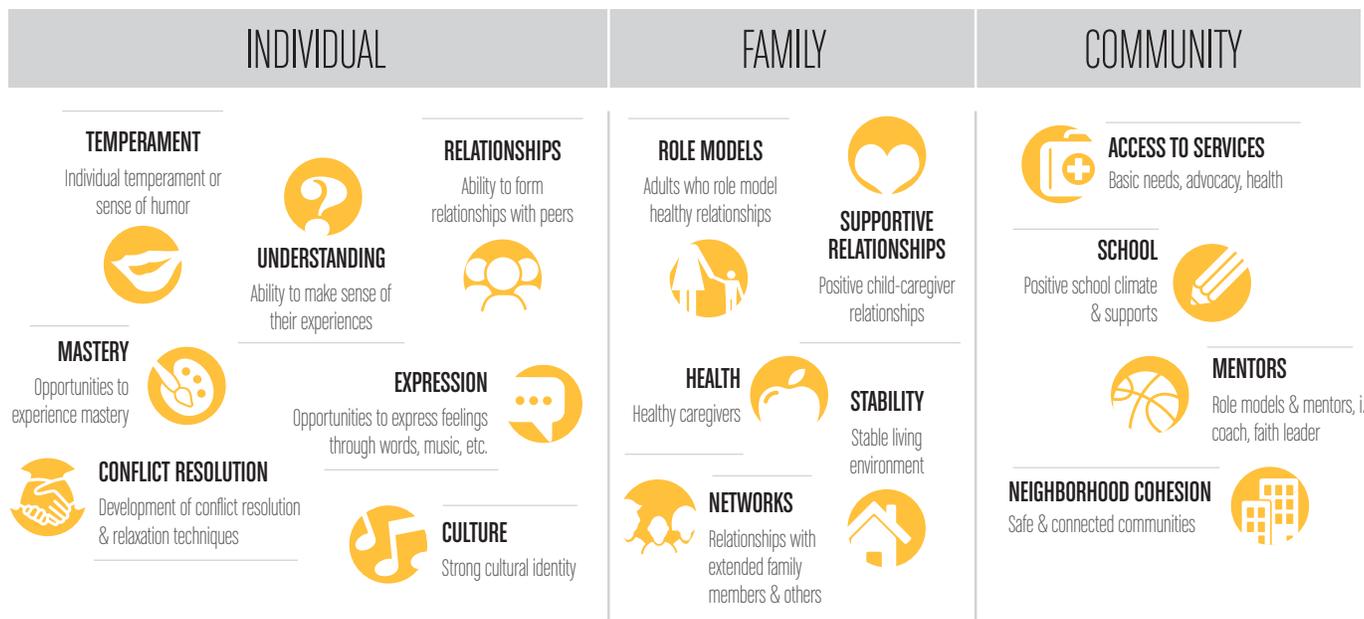
A mother of four was sitting outside her home, talking on a cellphone to her estranged boyfriend, who was angry their children were calling her new partner "Daddy." Unbeknownst to her, he was in her neighborhood, talking to her from his car. He pulled up to the house and struck her with his vehicle, pinning her to the ground. He stood over her and shot her multiple times in front of their children, who begged him not to kill their mother. She later died at the hospital.

Resiliency Factors in Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

Children exposed to domestic violence are each unique and, despite the fact many may be adversely affected by their exposure, many display great resiliency. Each child must be assessed carefully and on an individual basis to accurately determine the impact and consequence of their exposure and the level of trauma they experienced. The protective factors listed below promote resiliency in children and youth, helping them heal and supporting prevention efforts.

Research indicates the No. 1 protective factor in helping children heal from the experience is the presence of a consistent, supportive, and loving adult – most often their mother.^{ix} According to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the most effective way to protect children is to keep their mothers safe.^x

PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT PROMOTE RESILIENCY IN CHILDREN



Adapted from Futures Without Violence, available at www.futureswithoutviolence.org.

1. CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

i Vermont’s Model Protocol: *Law Enforcement Response to Children at the Scene of a Domestic Violence Incident* was developed by Vermont’s Criminal Justice Training Council in partnership with the Vermont Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services and the Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to assist law enforcement officers to respond effectively to children at the scene of a domestic assault. The protocol provides an outline for an effective response and includes directives on assessing whether children have been physically harmed, minimizing the impact and repercussions to children who are present, and empowering children as much as possible in the process, all while maintaining victim safety and

batterer accountability. The protocol includes the following topics: determining if children are present, welfare checks on children, how to talk to children about the incident, who should interview the children and what questions to ask, separating children from the parents, and considerations when arresting someone in the presence of a child. While Georgia does not currently have a protocol similar to Vermont’s, communities can download the protocol and begin to incorporate it into their local law enforcement’s response. Download the protocol here: http://www.bwjv.org/files/bwjv/articles/Vermont_Model_Protocol.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS: CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



FAMILY VIOLENCE TASK FORCES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- Evaluate the community resources available to families who have lost a loved one to homicide and the process for making families aware of them. Specifically, assess how families are connected to helping agencies when a murder-suicide occurs, including the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program.
- Develop relationships with and build capacity of local school boards, teachers, faith agencies with youth groups, after-school program, camp counselors, coaches, and teen parent program staff to provide resources and programs on children witnessing abuse at home.
- Coordinate efforts and build rapport between law enforcement and service providers to serve children exposed to domestic violence.



THE DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES AND NEW CAREGIVERS

- Prioritize the emotional and mental health of surviving children following the homicide. All surviving children should receive professional counseling with therapists who specialize in grief and trauma.
- Regularly update DFCS Child Abuse Protocol in collaboration with domestic violence advocates.



PROSECUTION-BASED ADVOCATES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- Implement partnerships so that prosecution-based advocates are notified when there is a domestic violence murder-suicide in your community. Reach out to family members to provide them with information on the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program and other services available to them.
- Partner with Child Advocacy Centers to provide forensic interviewing to greatly reduce the level of trauma experienced by children during interviews.



STATEWIDE

- Develop a statewide outreach program to link homicide survivors to the many services they will need: financial services, the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program, advocacy and case management, grief counseling, parenting support, etc.
- Develop a specific project to respond to children who are present at or witness a domestic violence homicide or who lose one or both parents to domestic violence homicide.
- Dedicate resources to effectively serve children exposed to domestic violence.
- Develop a statewide policy for law enforcement response to children at the scene of domestic violence incidents.

2 TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

FINDING: MANY RELATIONSHIPS ENDING IN HOMICIDE STARTED WHEN THE VICTIM WAS IN THEIR TEENS.

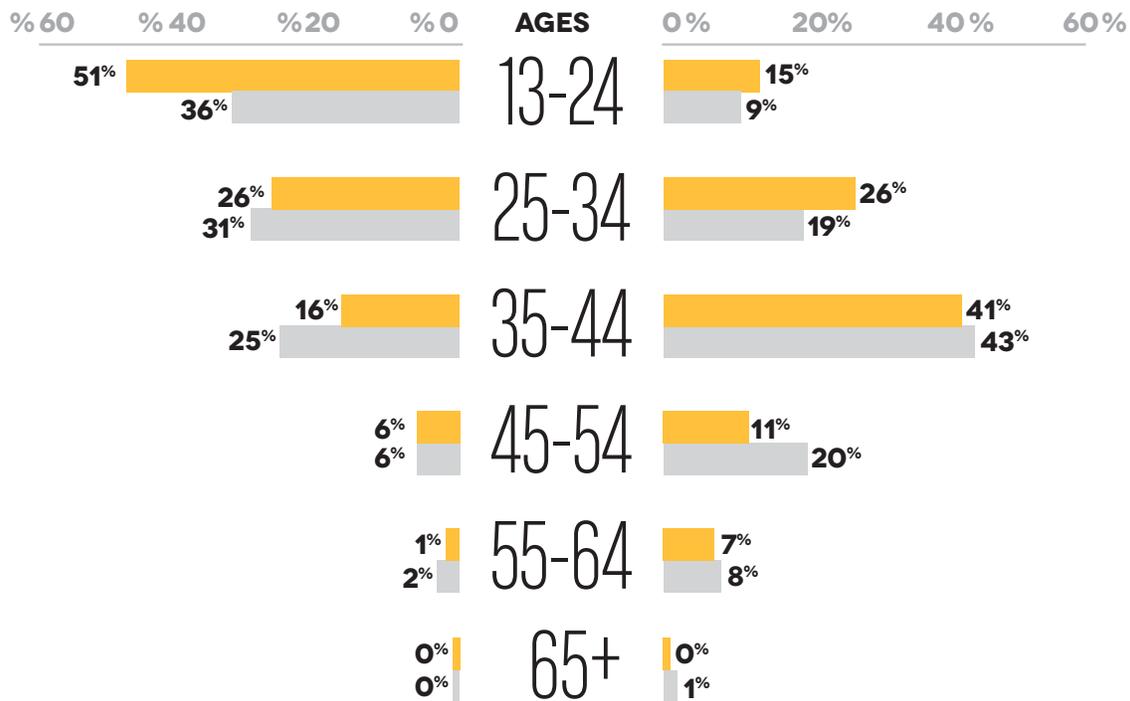
2. TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

6 WHAT AGES WERE THE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS IN REVIEWED CASES? 2004-2013

Victim Perpetrator

AGE WHEN RELATIONSHIP BEGAN

AGE WHEN HOMICIDE OCCURRED



KEY POINTS (chart 6)

In reviewed cases, the majority of victims (51%) began their relationship with the person who eventually killed them when they were between the ages of 13 and 24. Four of the victims were just 15 when their relationships began, one victim was only 14, and another victim was only 13; 26% of victims were between the ages of 13 and 19.

While a large number of relationships started when the victim was young, many of these relationships spanned several years; 41% of victims were killed when they were between the ages of 35 and 44.

These numbers demonstrate how many of these relationships lasted well beyond 10 years and highlight the need and opportunity for early intervention for teens experiencing dating violence. Moreover, a majority of these victims were making emotional and physical preparations to leave the relationship when they were killed. See page 56 for more information on separation.

FINDING: MANY RELATIONSHIPS ENDING IN HOMICIDE STARTED WHEN THE VICTIM WAS IN THEIR TEENS.

Teen dating violence is widespread and affects young people across gender, sexual orientation, race, and culture. Unfortunately, according to the latest CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS), Georgia's percentage of teenaged girls who self-reported experiencing dating violence (16.6% of teen girls surveyed) was larger than any other of the 43 states included in the data. One in six YRBS respondents indicated he or she had experienced some form of abuse in their relationship.^{xi}

Like domestic violence, teen dating violence is based on one partner gaining and maintaining power and control over the other person. This includes a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, financial, verbal, and emotional abuse; sexual and reproductive coercion; social sabotage; and sexual harassment perpetrated against a current or former dating partner. While the tactics of power and control in abusive teen dating relationships echo adult domestic violence, there are many differences regarding the barriers to safety that exist.

Unique Barriers for Teens

- Teens may have a lack of control over their personal safety at home, school, work, after-school activities, and social outings.
- Teens may attend the same school and classes as the abuser, providing many opportunities for abuse.
- Teens may use social networking websites, emails, texting, and cell phones, which provide unlimited opportunities for abuse and monitoring behaviors.
- Teens may avoid talking about their relationship or asking for help because they fear disapproval of adults and they do not want to get their partner in trouble.
- The places teens go, the things they do, and the people with whom they associate may be dynamic and continuously changing.
- Teens may lack access to money, transportation, or stable housing.
- The media normalizes many of the abusive behaviors that qualify as domestic violence, so teens may have a hard time recognizing their relationships as abusive.

- Teens can be heavily influenced by their peers: if a teen's friends are accepting of dating violence, an adolescent is more likely to be involved in a violent relationship in the future.^{xii}

Compounding Issues

Fourteen victims had their first child with the person who later killed them before they were 21-years-old; six were under 18-years-old.

ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS ARE APPROXIMATELY **5X** MORE LIKELY TO BECOME PREGNANT THAN GIRLS IN NON-ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS.^{xiii}

Teen victims may be coerced into unprotected sex or raped by their abusive partner, which can lead to unplanned pregnancy as well as increased trauma and feelings of shame and guilt. Teen pregnancy can increase a victim's level of entrapment in an abusive relationship and can have a lasting impact on economic security. Teen mothers are less likely to complete the education necessary to qualify for a well-paying job. Research indicates that about one-fourth of teenage mothers have a second child within 24 months of the first birth, which can further impede their ability to finish school or keep a job, and to escape poverty (see economic abuse section on page 26).^{xiv} Furthermore, teen victims of domestic violence are three times more likely to become infected with an STD, and there is an increased risk for substance abuse, smoking, eating disorders, sexual risk-taking, suicidality, and adult re-victimization.^{xv, xvi}

Lack of legal remedies increased vulnerability for teen victims.

In 2010, Break the Cycle, a national nonprofit working to end teen dating violence and abuse, graded dating violence laws in the United States: Georgia received an "F" along with 8 other states.

2. TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

According to Break the Cycle, our state's failing grade is due to the following:

- Georgia's law excludes people in dating relationships from accessing TPOs under the Family Violence Act unless they share a child or live or have formerly lived in the same household.
- Teens and people in dating relationships can be referred for Stalking Orders. However, these require more evidence of a pattern of stalking or harassment.
- Georgia state law does not allow minors to petition for a TPO on their own behalf. A person who is not a minor must petition for the order on the minor's behalf. This requires teen victims to disclose the abuse to a parent or other adult who must believe them and want to assist them in getting the TPO.
- Georgia law does not specify whether the parent or guardian of the minor respondent will be notified about the TPO, possibly leaving parents of teens who are perpetrating abuse unaware of their child's behaviors.
- Georgia law does not specify that TPOs can be granted against minor abusers.^{xvii}

A 16-year-old victim was dating a 19-year-old; they lived on the same street in their respective parents' homes and had known each other since childhood. One day, he saw a picture of her with another man and became jealous. He grabbed her by the neck, placed her in a choke hold and forced her into his vehicle. He drove her to a nearby community center where he continued to choke her, tearing her bra and blouse. She was able to free herself and run home. He was arrested and charged with battery, disorderly conduct, and kidnapping. His bond was set for \$10,000 for kidnapping, \$500 for battery, and a \$250 fine. No special conditions were set because the case did not qualify as family violence. Two days later, the victim and her brother were in her car when the abuser attempted to run them off the

road with his vehicle. When she got home, she told her father, who called the police. The victim, her mother, and father drove to the abuser's home to speak with his mother. The abuser was dropped off at a nearby house by a friend when he noticed the victim's vehicle parked in his driveway. He approached the driver's side of her vehicle and fired at the driver, who happened to be the victim's mother, shooting her in the chest and head; she survived her injuries. The victim exited the passenger side of the vehicle, running. He shot her in the back and chest and then proceeded to beat her with his revolver, killing her in front of her parents.

A lack of knowledge about teen dating violence and access to appropriate services created additional barriers for teens and their families. Review teams consistently found schools are not providing adequate education or resources to address teen dating violence. Georgia law requires the Board of Education to develop a program for preventing teen dating violence for grades 8–12. However, implementation is left up to local school boards. Some communities have been successful in getting teen dating violence curriculum into their local schools, usually through developing relationships with the local school board and incorporating teen dating violence into anti-bullying curriculum. In addition, parents were often unaware of the serious danger their teen was in and the resources available to help. While many tried to arrange meetings with the parents of the abuser, this action was often unsuccessful and sometimes put parents and other family members in danger, too.

Parents, teachers, faith leaders, other caring adults, and friends should watch for warning signs that a teen is experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence. Also see what friends and families should do on page 54.

FINDING: MANY RELATIONSHIPS ENDING IN HOMICIDE STARTED WHEN THE VICTIM WAS IN THEIR TEENS.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE WARNING SIGNS^{xvii}

EXPERIENCING DATING VIOLENCE IF	PERPETRATING DATING VIOLENCE IF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspicious bruises or other injuries; • failing grades; • loss of interest in activities or hobbies they once enjoyed; • excusing their dating partner's behavior; • needing to respond immediately to calls or texts from their partner; • fearfulness around their partner; and • sudden changes in school attendance or routine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insulting their partner; • trying to control how their partner dresses and acts; • constantly texting or sending instant messages to monitor their partner; • losing their temper and being unable to control their anger; and • threatening to hurt themselves or their partner in the case of a break-up.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

 <p>SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BOARDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the local domestic violence program to incorporate nationally recognized teen dating violence curricula into school programming. Three suggested curricula include Safe Dates, Love Is Not Abuse, and The Fourth “R”. • Partner with a local domestic violence program to educate teachers, administrators, counselors, and health care providers on domestic violence, dating violence, and the warning signs of abuse (see chart above). • Develop and implement policies and protocols for responding to domestic and dating violence among students, families, and staff. • Provide adequate funding to ensure at least one part-time social worker is available at each school. • Provide parents and guardians with information on teen dating violence warning signs and resources for help.
 <p>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with and build capacity of local school boards, teachers, faith agencies with youth groups, after-school programs, camp counselors, coaches, and teen parent program staff to provide resources and programs on healthy dating relationships.
 <p>JUVENILE COURTS AND STATEWIDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop creative, non-criminal, community-based solutions for teens who use violence and for teen victims. • Regularly assess teens for dating violence and link them with helping resources. • All adults in Georgia should model and positively reinforce mutual respect, equality, good communication, and healthy relationships for teens.
 <p>GEORGIA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GEORGIA COMMISSION ON FAMILY VIOLENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the Department of Education to integrate teen dating violence information into existing bullying and health curriculum, and school climate initiatives as suggested in the 2012 GCFV Georgia State Plan to End Family Violence.

2. TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

KEISHA'S STORY

Keisha and Thomas met at their church youth group when she was 11 and he was 15. They began “talking” at first and eventually started dating. Family members said that Keisha was Thomas’ first love and their relationship was good in the beginning. Her family quickly considered Thomas a member of their family, and Keisha’s sister called Thomas her brother. However, Thomas was very controlling of Keisha. They fought a lot and he constantly called her when they were not physically together. If she didn’t answer his calls, he texted her repeatedly.

Keisha lived with her mother and father. Keisha’s family said she was well-behaved and “under control” until she was around 13. Keisha’s father was known to use physical discipline with Keisha, and Thomas was scared of him; he would not come over to the house if Keisha’s father was there. Thomas was raised by his maternal grandmother. He struggled in school but excelled on the football team. He received a certificate of completion from high school for finishing his coursework and worked odd jobs after completing high school.

When Keisha was 14 and Thomas was 18, Keisha gave birth to their first child. Around this time, Thomas was charged with statutory rape against a 15-year-old girl who became pregnant. A judge ordered Thomas to have no contact with the victim; however, Thomas continuously violated the order by calling her and having his friends call her. Thomas eventually pled guilty to the charges as a first offender and was ordered to pay \$350, complete 40 hours of community service, and to have no contact with the victim. Thomas completed his first offender conditions within a year. It is unknown if Keisha was aware of these charges.

When Keisha was 15 and Thomas was 19, she gave birth to their second child. DFCS provided Keisha and her mother with a car seat and a crib. Two months later, the children

were removed from Keisha’s custody by DFCS due to allegations of abuse after their youngest child suffered a fractured skull. Police were never able to determine who was responsible for the injury, although Thomas was suspected.

A few months after the children were removed from Keisha’s care, Keisha called 911 during an argument with Thomas. She told the dispatcher Thomas stole her bike and he was mad she didn’t meet him at the bus stop; he pushed her slightly with his hands before snatching the phone line out of the jack. She wanted the police to bring her bike back. When officers arrived, they found Thomas on the bike; he refused to stop and talk to them. The officers arrested Thomas and charged him with family violence battery and obstruction of an officer. In her written statement for law enforcement, Keisha made a point to write that Thomas was going to jail because he refused to stop for police and not because of anything she had done. Thomas bonded out of jail on \$5,000 with special conditions to stay away from Keisha, have no communication with her, and to not harass her or anyone in her family.

A month later, Keisha went to the Solicitor’s Office and completed a “Victim’s Wishes” form. She wrote that this was the first incident of family violence between her and Thomas and that they lived together with Thomas’ grandmother. She wrote she wanted to have contact with Thomas and she wanted the case dismissed because “it was never anything serious, he does not hit me and we do not fight at all.” The next month, Thomas pled guilty to both charges. He was ordered to pay \$600, perform 80 hours of community service, not to consume drugs or alcohol, not to have contact with Keisha, to complete a Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP), to complete an evaluation for a sexual predator, and receive follow-up counseling. Thomas enrolled in FVIP within two weeks and completed the program six months later. It is unknown if he ever completed the sexual predator evaluation.

FINDING: MANY RELATIONSHIPS ENDING IN HOMICIDE STARTED WHEN THE VICTIM WAS IN THEIR TEENS.



FAMILY

At the DFCS worker’s suggestion, Keisha signed over guardianship of her children to Thomas’ maternal grandmother for a short time before a judge ruled she was not old enough to make that decision. The children were placed in foster care briefly before being placed with Thomas’ grandmother again. DFCS informed Thomas’ grandmother that Thomas could not live in the home while the children were placed with her. While the grandmother agreed to this requirement, Keisha disclosed to the DFCS worker that Thomas still lived at the house with the children.

Within six months of Thomas’ grandmother obtaining guardianship, Keisha was charged with aggravated assault against Thomas; they were fighting and she stabbed him with a box cutter. According to records, Thomas came home and went to bed after the incident. The next day, his grandmother took him to the hospital. Thomas told law enforcement he was jumped by unknown individuals. He later admitted to his grandmother that Keisha had stabbed him but, since she was on probation for a prior offense, he did not want her to go to jail. The juvenile court judge sentenced Keisha to up to two years on probation for the incident and told her she could not be around Thomas. However, after six months, Keisha’s probation ended and she believed the restriction on her being around Thomas had ended, too.

Keisha actively worked her case plan to be reunited with her children. Her family said she was taking full advantage of the resources and classes being offered to her. She attended parenting classes and learned how to be a better mother. Keisha spent most of her money buying her children matching clothes sets and toys. However, Keisha was conflicted about leaving Thomas “for good” because they shared children together. She was ready to move on with her life and was considering moving out of state to live with her sister but did not want to leave without being reunited with her children first. DFCS was ready to reunite Keisha with her



hope

2. TEEN DATING VIOLENCE KEISHA'S STORY



children, but, because the guardianship was still in place with Thomas' grandmother, they had to wait for a judge to dissolve the guardianship before they could give custody back to Keisha.

Text message records show on the night of the murder, Thomas texted Keisha and begged her to come over to his house. They had been fighting in the previous days about him seeing another woman. Keisha texted Thomas when she arrived at the back door of the house. He came outside so they could talk. His grandmother was inside with a bible study group and the children. While fighting in the backyard, Thomas held Keisha by her arms and wrists after she told him she was leaving him to be with another man, whom she had dated a year prior while they were broken up. Thomas struck Keisha with a tire iron and she fell and hit her head on a brick wall, causing her to lose consciousness. When he listened to her chest and couldn't hear a heartbeat, he decided to bury her. He tied a cord around her neck and dragged her behind a shed and dug a hole to bury her. The autopsy report revealed Keisha was still alive when she was buried and the cause of death was determined to be strangulation and asphyxiation; dirt was found in her esophagus and lungs. In Thomas' statement to police, he said he was "hurt" when Keisha said she was leaving him. While unverified, it is suspected the two children witnessed or heard the homicide from inside the house.

At the time of her death, Keisha was 17 years old, had a part-time job, and had completed her GED. She wanted to become a nurse and own her own daycare. Thomas was 21 years old, unemployed, and looking for work. Thomas accepted a plea deal and is serving 20 years in prison for voluntary manslaughter. The advocate from the prosecutor's office linked Keisha's parents with the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program; they received funds for her funeral expenses. Her children received counseling and are currently being raised by adoptive parents.

3 ECONOMIC ABUSE

FINDING: LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES CAN BE THE SINGLE GREATEST BARRIER TO LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.

3. ECONOMIC ABUSE

7 EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND SOURCES OF INCOME 2004-2013



KEY POINTS (chart 7)

At the time of their death, 74% of victims were employed; 58% of perpetrators were employed at the time of the homicide. Employers and co-workers have the potential to increase victim safety through training on recognizing signs, supporting victims, and making referrals. See page 53 for more information on what employers and co-workers can do.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	VICTIM	PERPETRATOR
	%	%
Employed	74	58
Unknown	10	12
Unemployed Student	1	7
Retired	2	1
Disabled	4	3
Unemployed	9	18

Many victims' options were limited due to economic abuse and lack of economic security. Victims trapped by economic abuse and those with limited financial resources face seemingly impenetrable obstacles to escaping an abusive relationship. By maintaining control of a victim's access to financial resources, an abuser ensures the victim will face economic hardship if they leave the relationship.^{xix} While protecting victims from physical violence is necessary, providing them with opportunities for long-term financial stability is imperative to achieving lasting safety, whether they leave or stay in the relationship. Often, our genuine and well-intentioned efforts as a community to end domestic violence focus on physically separating a victim from an abuser, but do not guarantee that they will be able to have access to affordable housing, food, or healthcare once they leave. This often results in the victim staying with or returning to the abuser.^{xx}

Domestic violence abusers employ a variety of different techniques to gain and maintain power and control over the victim through economic abuse, including:^{xxi}

- compromising credit;
- disrupting employment or school;
- destroying items that are essential for the victim to find or keep her job (keys, badges, phones, uniforms, cars);
- destroying property;
- claiming victim's possessions as one's own or misusing the victim's property;
- non-payment of debt when the abuser fails to pay or hides bills;
- undisclosed or forced bankruptcy;

FINDING: LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES CAN BE THE SINGLE GREATEST BARRIER TO LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.

- commercial sexual exploitation, such as forced prostitution;
- appropriation of personal possessions by the abuser; either stolen, pawned, hidden or misused;
- refusing to pay child support; and
- coercing the victim to commit financial crimes, such as shoplifting.

The impact of economic abuse is experienced by victims in the following ways:^{xxii}

- job loss or lost wages;
- unfinished education or training;
- eviction and damaged tenant history;
- foreclosure or inability to pay off debt;
- damaged credit;
- loss of personal property or assets;
- inability to safely collect child support;
- dependency on abuser for basic needs; and
- dependency on abuser for health insurance.

Economic abuse is powerful; for some victims, it was the most pervasive form of coercion used by the abuser to gain and maintain control over them. Often, this type of abuse is not seen as domestic violence, leaving victims of economic abuse unable to see themselves as victims and disconnected from helping resources.

Economic abuse in one victim's life was used as a subtle but powerful form of control in conjunction with rigid traditional gender roles. On several occasions, her husband called and harassed her at work if they were out of something at home; one day, he was furious they were out of milk and dog food and called her at her job. She immediately told her boss that she needed to leave and went to the store on the way home. After enduring similar instances a few more times, the victim learned to adjust her behavior to comply with his demands to prevent him from "exploding." When they didn't have enough money to afford his requests, she pawned her own items. Many years later, she killed him. In prison, she attended

a program on domestic violence and, as she learned more about the dynamics of domestic violence, she came to realize she was a victim of emotional and economic abuse in her marriage.

Many victims delayed leaving or were unable to leave abusers because they lacked the financial means to support themselves and their children.

ONE LARGE-SCALE SURVEY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS REVEALED THAT **74%** OF VICTIMS REPORTED HAVING STAYED WITH AN ABUSER LONGER BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL REASONS.^{xxiii}

For victims with children, the impact of economic abuse can be even greater; victims may stay and endure abuse in order to provide shelter and food for their children. In reviewed cases, many abusers were not paying child support, either because the risks were too high for the victim to request it, the judge did not include it in the temporary protective order, or the abuser was not compliant with orders.^{xxiv}

While domestic violence does not discriminate based on income, low-income women are more vulnerable to its effects because of a lack of resources and opportunities; experiencing domestic violence can make the journey out of poverty impossible.^{xxv} At the time of their death, 74% of victims from reviewed cases were employed; despite that employment, many felt unable to support themselves outside the abusive relationship. For victims who were employed, they were usually not allowed to be in control of their finances. One financially abusive boyfriend would "hang around" the victim's shoulder when she cashed her paychecks; he became violent when she would not give him her money. It is important to note that in our reviewed cases, more victims than perpetrators were employed at the time of the homicide. The stress that unemployment or underemployment may have caused in perpetrators' lives could have escalated their use of violence.

3. ECONOMIC ABUSE

One victim met her abuser at their workplace. They dated on and off for three years. She had three children from previous relationships (ages 4, 9, and 13) at the time of the homicide. Her boyfriend frequently lost jobs when he missed work to be with her to prevent her from leaving him; she lost jobs when he called her and showed up to see her. On two occasions, he destroyed and sold her belongings out of jealousy and anger while she was out of town with friends. In a fit of rage during an argument, he ran their car off the road and totaled it, leaving the family with only one vehicle. He then drove her to and from work. A few months later, the car was repossessed and they had to borrow a car from a friend. He cut off the power to the house on at least two occasions because he paid the power bill with his unemployment check and he felt like she was mocking him by leaving lights on in unoccupied rooms. She considered smuggling cell phones into a state prison in order to have more money for her family. A few days before the homicide, she asked her sister for a few hundred dollars so she could get some school supplies for her children. She also told several family members she wanted to leave him but she couldn't because she did not have a job or savings or anywhere to go. She was fatally stabbed two days later. He was charged with murder, aggravated assault, and aggravated battery. Her sister believes she was going to leave him with the money she sent her.

Abusers sabotaged victims' employment and threatened their economic independence. Specific examples of this behavior include abusers who stalked, harassed, and threatened victims at their place of employment. One victim's employer stated the abuser often visited her at work and called her constantly, causing the victim to request that the receptionist screen her phone calls. Another victim's co-worker shared that the abuser often called the workplace and harassed the victim (see page 53 for more information on how employers and co-workers can best assist victims). Further, some abusers disabled and destroyed vehicles, effectively preventing the victim from leaving and forcing her to rely on him for transportation or to fix the vehicle. Abusers also destroyed other items of value that belonged to victims. One victim lived in a rooming house with her abuser; he would often sell their items to pay for his addiction to alcohol and drugs.

Resources for Law Enforcement and Prosecutors

Law enforcement and prosecutors can play a key role in helping victims of domestic violence experiencing economic abuse regain some financial security. Economic Security for Survivors, an initiative of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), provides resources, education, training and technical assistance to transitional housing programs, direct service providers, state and local governments, and the Services Training Officers Prosecutors (STOP) Grant Program of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). They offer two free, user-friendly guides to provide specific suggestions and tools to address economic security within the existing job responsibilities of law enforcement and prosecutors at all levels.

- i** The Law Enforcement Guide to Safety and Economic Security explores the role of officers in helping victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking both recover from violence, and be safer in the future through economic security. This guide highlights how officers can improve victim economic security in their work, both individually and in collaboration with other STOP sectors. The guide contains checklists for specific actions officers can take and questions for officers to ask victims related to their economic security, such as looking for red flags of economic abuse or dependency at the scene; assessing if the offender destroyed any property needed for immediate safety; and documenting evidence of stolen or damaged property. It also provides training guidelines, policy recommendations, and a Law Enforcement Pocket Guide.

<http://www.wowonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/WOW-ESS-Law-Enforcement-Sector-Guide.pdf>

- i** The Prosecutor's Guide to Safety and Economic Security explores the role of the prosecution in assisting victims of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking recover from violence and find future safety through economic security. It highlights how prosecutors can help victims rebuild their economic security both individually and in collaboration with other STOP sectors and their

FINDING: LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES CAN BE THE SINGLE GREATEST BARRIER TO LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.

communities. Checklists offer specific actions prosecution staff can take and questions for prosecutors to ask victims about their economic security, such as collecting and presenting evidence of the offender’s economic impact, charging the offender for economic-based victim-witness intimidation, and requesting economic relief that is

enforceable and specific. It also provides training guidelines, policy recommendations, and a pocket guide to accompany trial notebooks.

<http://www.wowonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/WOW-ESS-Prosecutors-Sector-Guide.pdf>

RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC ABUSE

	PROSECUTORS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a local domestic violence program to connect victims with the economic support they need in order to keep them from having to return to their abuser for financial support. Learn how economic stability is connected to a victim’s ability to stay away from the abuser and how economic stability makes for a more cooperative witness. • Review materials and incorporate the recommendations and tools from the Guides to Safety and Economic Security provided by WOW (see above).
	FUNDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program. • Support and replicate innovative local programs involving domestic violence advocates, landlords, and housing authorities collaborating to create permanent affordable housing specifically for domestic violence programs.
	FUNDERS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase emphasis on services and strategies supporting long-term economic stability and well-being beyond temporary emergency funds.
	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training to local landlords, property managers, and housing authorities about domestic violence and relevant state and federal laws protecting domestic violence victims’ housing rights. • Learn about new and existing VAWA housing protections, which now include Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties, and work with local public housing authorities, local HUD Continuums of Care, and landlords to help them understand their obligations under VAWA. • Learn about and advocate for victims to obtain the full range of services and exemptions for domestic violence victims in economic assistance programs.
	EMPLOYERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies to help employees who are domestic violence victims safely maintain their employment.
	GEORGIA STATE LEGISLATURE AND EMPLOYERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolster wages and support the creation of new jobs for the unemployed and underemployed in Georgia. • Adequately fund programs supporting working parents, including subsidized childcare and transportation.
	BANKS AND LENDING INSTITUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with domestic violence advocates to develop programs offering opportunities for victims to rebuild their credit.

4 THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

FINDING: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OFTEN HAVE CONTACT WITH THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM, A FACT WHICH HOLDS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING SAFETY. UNFORTUNATELY, HOMICIDES STILL OCCUR WHEN LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COORDINATION AMONG SYSTEMS LEAVES VICTIMS AT INCREASED RISK.

Initial Contact: The Vital Role of Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is often a victim's initial contact with the criminal legal system. Because of this distinctive position, officers have a unique opportunity to significantly impact a victim's safety and continued use of the legal system for help. It is crucial for law enforcement officers to respond to domestic violence calls and make effective referrals and appropriate arrests on scene. This will influence the victim's willingness to call the police or contact another system in the future. One way law enforcement officers can best support victims is to let victims know – every time they interact with them – that domestic violence is never the fault of the victim and there is help available through local programs. In order for law enforcement to provide victims with this information, officers must know it themselves.

i A list of services provided by all state-certified domestic violence programs can be found on page 59.

Sometimes, when a victim continues to reach out to law enforcement for assistance, it may indicate the intervention is working – meaning perhaps the law enforcement intervention stops the violence from escalating. However, multiple calls from one residence may indicate the victim is in increased danger. We have learned many officers responding to domestic violence calls were unaware of the history of calls to that address, which increased danger for them, the victim, and their children. Often, victims from reviewed cases called law enforcement for non-chargeable offenses. For example, one victim called 911 after her boyfriend shut off power to the house through the circuit breaker. If a victim has called law enforcement but there are no allegations of physical abuse, officers should investigate why the victim was fearful enough to call for law enforcement intervention.

i Lethality assessments can assist officers in establishing the level of risk a perpetrator may pose to a victim. The Maryland Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) consists of 11 questions officers can ask victims at the scene. Depending on the victim's answers, officers call the local domestic violence program from the scene for advice on how to best assist the

victim. Officers also encourage the victim to speak to the advocate to develop a safety plan. More information about this program can be found at <http://mnadv.org/lethality/>.

A victim may not be cooperative with law enforcement for a variety of reasons, from fear of retribution from the abuser to fear the abuser may lose their job, possibly leaving their family without an income. Because the victim does not act in a cooperative manner does not mean the victim is safe – nor does it mean the victim has forsaken the right to protection by law enforcement. Officers can assist in removing economic barriers to safety by helping victims regain financial security. More information on the Law Enforcement Guide to Safety and Economic Security can be found on page 29. Please see page 33 for more reasons why victims may not cooperate with the criminal legal system.

Law enforcement also has an opportunity to have a significant impact on children exposed to domestic violence. Officers can play a pivotal gatekeeper function in referring children exposed to domestic violence to services. Departments should consider implementing a protocol directing officers to determine and document whether there were children present in the residence (or present during the incident); their names, ages and demeanor; their relationship to the parties; and whether the children have been physically harmed. Officers should also let any children on the scene know the violence is not their fault and they can always call 911 for help. More information on Children and Domestic Violence begins on page 10 of this report. A model protocol created for the state of Vermont can be found on page 17.

Developing relationships between officers and local domestic violence advocates is crucial to mending gaps in services intended to keep victims safe.

i Connecting Community Resources with Law Enforcement Roll Call Training Manual, available through www.gcfv.org, is an effective tool developed by the Project for local service providers to inform officers of resources and other important topics, such as mandated family violence response, primary physical aggressor identification, stalking, and TPOs.

WHEN VICTIMS RECONT OR RETURN TO THEIR ABUSER

Many people expect victims of domestic violence to leave the abusive relationship, cooperate with the criminal legal investigation, and testify against their abusive partner. However, the actual behavior of many victims is quite different from these expectations. Often, victims stay with or return to their abusive partners and minimize the abuse. They also recant their testimony or request the dismissal of charges against their abusers. Furthermore, they may refuse to testify for the prosecution, or they may even testify on behalf of their abusive partner.

Victims return to their abusers an average of seven times before leaving the relationship for good.^{xxvi} Many victims do not want to leave; they just want the violence to stop. This can be very frustrating and confusing for law enforcement officers, prosecution-based advocates, prosecutors, judges, domestic violence advocates, family members, and friends.

While frustration is an understandable reaction to the seemingly irrational ways a victim may act, these actions are actually reasonable responses to trauma and to the barriers many victims face when leaving an abusive relationship.

Common reasons why a victim may return to an abuser or not cooperate with law enforcement or prosecution:^{xxvii}

- a sense of loyalty towards their abuser;
- feeling ashamed or responsible for the abuse;
- believing that they can change the abusers' behaviors;
- an inability to reach out for help due to isolation and fear of disbelief;
- a fear for their own safety or the safety of friends, family members, or pets;
- as an attempt to gain control over the severity or frequency of the abuse;
- a dependency on the abuser for economic support; and
- sharing children with the abuser.

Due to the likelihood a victim will recant or return to their abuser, it should be expected victims will not cooperate with the investigation and will not want to pursue charges.

In response, law enforcement should collect evidence to make the case as if the victim will not be available at the time of trial, as is required in homicide cases. Collecting evidence beyond testimony of the victim should be a regular practice for officers. Victims should also be given safety planning at each stage of their involvement in the criminal and civil legal system (see page 59 for more information on the importance of safety planning with victims).

Similarly, prosecutors should not rely on the participation of victims in order to prosecute domestic violence cases and they should work with local law enforcement agencies to ensure enough evidence is gathered at the crime scene to allow for victimless prosecution. Regular communication between prosecutors and local law enforcement agencies is recommended regarding report writing, evidence collection, arrest decisions, and testimony expectations.

FINDING: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OFTEN HAVE CONTACT WITH THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM, A FACT WHICH HOLDS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING SAFETY.

Key Findings for Law Enforcement

In 93 reviewed cases, the Project identified 235 calls made to law enforcement regarding a domestic incident prior to the homicide. It is important to note there may have been more calls made to law enforcement for which review teams were not able to locate records. Twenty-six percent of victims called law enforcement regarding a domestic violence incident only once. Many victims called law enforcement more than once; on average, victims made two calls to law enforcement prior to their homicide. However, some victims never called law enforcement at all. We have learned many reasons why a victim never reached out to law enforcement, including fear, denial, language barriers, prior criminal history, distrust of law enforcement, or because other barriers existed (see page 65 on Barriers to Access).

Of the 235 documented calls to law enforcement, the Project was able to locate outcomes for 76% of them. Fatality reviews revealed a gap between written policy and practice in many law enforcement agencies regarding officers writing family violence reports. O.C.G.A. 17-4-20.1 states that whenever a law enforcement officer investigates an incident of family violence, whether or not an arrest is made, the officer shall prepare and submit to the supervisor or other designated person a written report of the incident entitled "Family Violence Report." In many instances, a Family Violence Report was not written after the dispatch for a domestic violence incident, or we were unable to confirm an officer responded to the call.

In the 178 known outcomes, 49% showed no arrest was made by law enforcement or there was no record of charges against the accused abuser. Many times, law enforcement officers did not make an arrest or apply for a warrant because the perpetrator fled the scene. In some cases, the perpetrator remained on the scene but the officer did not find probable cause to make the arrest. In others, the officer advised the victim to apply for a warrant.

A victim called 911 after her boyfriend grabbed her and pushed her head through a window in their apartment. The responding officer observed glass scattered along the ground outside the room and heavy swelling to the right side of her face. The abuser was no longer at the scene and the officer did not apply for an arrest warrant. Instead, he advised the victim of warrant procedures and left. The next known contact with police was when she was arrested for stabbing the same boyfriend a year and a half later. She told investigators he became physically violent and attacked her when she refused to have sex with him. She alleged he chased her with a knife and he was injured when she pushed him off of her. The aggravated assault charges were later dropped by the prosecutor for insufficient evidence to prove the charges beyond a reasonable doubt. Three years later, she stabbed and killed her boyfriend and was later exonerated of the charges.

Of the victims in contact with law enforcement regarding the abuse, 32% were advised to apply for an arrest warrant themselves instead of an officer applying for a warrant.

ADVISING A VICTIM TO TAKE OUT A WARRANT PLACES THE BURDEN OF PROSECUTION ON THE VICTIM AND CREATES A DELAY IN THE PROCESS.

Some magistrate courts require probable cause hearings when a victim seeks a warrant. The perpetrator is given notice of the hearing to present their side before an arrest warrant is issued, which increases risk for victims. For victims without child care, transportation, or other barriers to accessing the court, this practice virtually stops the criminal legal process. It also sends the message to both perpetrator and victim that the state will not intervene in the violence on its own. Law enforcement not taking a warrant may influence a judge's perception about the severity of the crime and need for prosecution. Moreover, when the victim is made responsible for engaging the criminal legal system, perpetrators may believe only the victim objects

4. THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

to the violence and that the victim, not the community, is responsible for any consequences. This places the victim at further risk of injury and increases the likelihood the victim will not follow through with the warrant process.

The victim and her boyfriend lived in a rooming house together for four years. A neighbor called 911 after witnessing the abuser hit the victim on the head and being unable to get the abuser to stop. The officer observed a “severely visible wound to the left side of her head.” The victim was transported to the hospital for treatment and the abuser was brought to the city’s detention center. The crime was charged as an ordinance violation for “Disorderly Conduct – Action Violent with Another;” no arrest records were found and the county did not receive any paperwork regarding the incident. A month later, the abuser stabbed her after she told him she was leaving him; he put duct tape on the stab wound and she died of complications at the hospital.

Systemic barriers dissuaded some officers from appropriately charging family violence crimes. In several cases, officers undercharged qualifying family violence crimes as disorderly conduct. Review teams have speculated that some municipalities may encourage this practice in order to increase city revenue. In other cases, officers did not make an arrest or seek a warrant for a family violence crime because they believed the charges would not be prosecuted or because they did not think the judge would sign an arrest warrant for certain crimes. Other influencing factors for some communities included officers having to come to court on their days off with no pay for family violence hearings and some law enforcement leadership fearing disapproval from their community when their domestic violence crime statistics rise (at least temporarily) as a result of increased warrants and arrests.

The practice of undercharging family violence crimes or not making arrests for qualifying family violence crimes sends the message to both perpetrators and victims that the crime is not taken seriously by our communities. Attaching family violence to a crime allows the criminal legal system to provide increased mechanisms of safety for the victim, such as a No Contact Order as a condition of bond, and increased ways to

hold the perpetrator accountable, such as having to go before a judge before being released from jail.

Abused women were arrested in both dual and single arrests. Proper investigation of a domestic violence crime should reveal who is the primary physical aggressor and result in only that person being arrested, as outlined in O.C.G.A. 17-4-20.1.

THE PRIMARY PHYSICAL AGGRESSOR IS THE PARTNER WHO IS THE DOMINANT PHYSICAL AGGRESSOR, NOT THE PERSON WHO FIRST INITIATED THE VIOLENCE.

A portion of the women who were killed in reviewed cases had called law enforcement for help and had instead been arrested after what appeared to be flawed primary physical aggressor assessments. When law enforcement is not attuned to the complex dynamics of domestic violence, including victims’ use of violence and the effects of systemic isolation, officers may misread the situation and arrest the victim or both the victim and the perpetrator. Victims of domestic violence who are arrested may become more isolated and distrusting of the criminal legal system, thus reinforcing the perpetrator’s control. Often, victims no longer have access to victim advocates within the criminal legal system because they have been labeled as “perpetrators.”

Future Violence: The Impact of Prosecution Decisions

Of the cases where law enforcement was called, and an arrest was made or a warrant was taken, the prosecutor pursued a majority of family violence arrests (80%). However, of those cases where charges were filed by prosecutors, more than half (61%) were later dismissed or pled down.

In some cases, felony family violence aggravated assault charges were pled down to misdemeanor disorderly conduct or funneled through diversion programs, usually pre-accusation. Family violence is a recidivist crime and there are

increased penalties authorized by state statute if perpetrators reoffend. However, in some instances when a perpetrator has a previous record of misdemeanor family violence offenses, prosecutors are not indicting felony charges when the law authorizes them to do so. When cases are dismissed, diverted, or otherwise allowed to proceed without a family violence conviction on the perpetrator's record and there are no consequences for their violence, the safety of the victim and her children is further compromised, as is her future ability to document her status as a victim of domestic violence. Furthermore, victims are deterred from reaching out to and cooperating with the criminal legal system in the future when they perceive no meaningful action was taken by the criminal legal system.

In the cases studied over the past 10 years, 94% of calls to the police prior to the homicide had no major injury documented in law enforcement reports. In 75% of prior calls, no visible injuries to victims were documented.

This suggests that while serious and visible injury is a predictor of future and possibly lethal violence, it will not always be present in all cases where victims are later killed. For instance, non-fatal strangulation often does not leave visible injuries or the injuries may appear days later. According to a study reviewing police records of 300 strangulation cases in California, victims did not have any visible injury in 50% of the cases, and in 35% of the cases the injuries were too minor for the police to photograph.^{xxviii} However, victims of prior attempted strangulation are eight times more likely to be killed by the same abuser.^{xxix}

Acts of lower-level violence provide an opportunity for the system to prosecute and sanction perpetrators and provide support to victims with the goal of de-escalating the violence and preventing future homicides.

If responders wait for a more aggravated crime or a serious injury to occur before they intervene, they do so at the risk of loss of life. While criminal prosecution is not always possible and not always the safest option for victims, it is important to understand the messages victims and perpetrators receive about the system's willingness or capacity to intervene when there is a history of failed intervention.

The Atlanta Police Department Domestic Violence Unit

In 2011, the Atlanta Police Department (APD) created a specialized unit dedicated solely to domestic violence incidents comprised of one lieutenant, one sergeant and eight investigators. The APD Domestic Violence Unit handles all domestic incidents with visible injury as well all aggravated assaults and robberies. When no visible injury exists, the domestic violence investigators consult with officers to help them determine the primary aggressor. Unit members receive specialized domestic violence training and conduct roll call trainings for all police officers in the zone precincts. Training covers how to determine the primary aggressor through comprehensive evidence collection and effective interviews and interrogations. Domestic violence training is offered annually to all officers in collaboration with the Atlanta Police Training Academy. As a result of these efforts, APD has reduced dual arrests of all types by 5% and reduced dual arrests of aggravated assault by 7% from 2011 to 2013.

Stopping The Cycle: Opportunities for Judges

Some judges continue to send domestic violence offenders to anger management programs, although Georgia statute requires offenders be sent to certified Family Violence Intervention Programs (FVIPs). Such orders allow perpetrators to evade addressing their core problems, which do not – according to a broad sampling of research – relate to the management of anger.

4. THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANGER MANAGEMENT AND FVIPS

	ANGER MANAGEMENT CLASSES	FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS
TARGET POPULATION	Perpetrators of stranger or non-intimate violence	Family violence offenders and protective order respondents.
RELEVANT STATUTES	None	O.C.G.A. 19-13-16(a) O.C.G.A. 19-13-10 et al O.C.G.A. 19-13-1
CERTIFICATION AND MONITORING BY STATE AGENCIES	None	Certified by the Georgia Commission on Family Violence and the Georgia Department of Corrections
INTERVENTION EMPHASIS	Anger as the impetus for violence. Violence is seen as reactionary behavior as a result of a triggering factor.	Violence is a learned behavior motivated by a desire, whether conscious or unconscious, by the abuser to control the victim. Violence is seen as one of many forms of abusive behaviors chosen by an abuser to control their intimate partner.
PROGRAM DURATION	6-20 classes	24 classes
PROGRAM COST	Unknown	\$28 average per class
VICTIM CONTACT BY PROGRAM	No	Yes. FVIPS contract with state-certified domestic violence programs to contact victims to provide referrals and safety planning.
TRAINED ON FAMILY VIOLENCE	Subject to agency discretion	Certification requires facilitators to have 80 hours of domestic violence training and 84 hours experience facilitating or co-facilitating FVIPS.

Some domestic violence offenders were ordered by the court to attend FVIPS but never attended and no follow-up hearings were set to ensure they were compliant. Even though the vast majority of domestic violence crimes were never prosecuted, when cases are successfully prosecuted, many perpetrators leave court with minimal to no sanctions, increasing their sense of license to re-offend, and decreasing the chances the victim will seek help from the court in the future. In the 93 cases reviewed, only 20 perpetrators who later killed their partners were convicted of a family violence charge. Eleven of these convicted perpetrators were convicted after July 2002 when the law mandating FVIP went into effect. Of those 11 perpetrators, only seven were ordered by a judge to attend FVIP. Of those seven, review teams were only able to confirm one perpetrator actually completed FVIP.

A victim moved to Georgia seeking better employment opportunities. Her ex-boyfriend stalked her to her new residence and she eventually reconciled with him. He performed maintenance for a hotel in exchange for a room in which the couple could live. Residents of the hotel were aware of the abuse as they regularly overheard what was happening and observed bruises, cuts, and bald spots on the victim's head. Two of the victim's friends from the hotel said that they heard at least 30 violent disputes between the couple during the two months they lived in the hotel. On one occasion, he dragged her on the ground behind a building. She was able to escape and ran to a gas station to call 911. Her friend went behind the gas station to see if he was still there, and he was attacked by the abuser with a brick. The responding officer did not make an arrest because the abuser was no longer at the scene and he did not write a report. Later that day, the victim called 911

FINDING: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OFTEN HAVE CONTACT WITH THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM, A FACT WHICH HOLDS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING SAFETY.

from the hotel because the abuser was in their hotel room. The same officer responded and required the victim and her friend to sign the warrants. The abuser was arrested for simple battery against them both; while in the back of the officer’s car, he told the victim, “When I get out of jail, I am going to kill you.” She applied for a TPO while he was in jail. A week later, the abuser went before the judge; his bond was set for \$3,500 for battery against the victim’s friend and \$2,500 for battery against the victim. The judge modified the bond to \$5,000 Sign Own Recognizance and the abuser was released on his own signature without paying bond less than three hours later.

He was ordered to stay away from the victim’s friend and have no violent contact with the victim. Within two hours of his release, he ambushed the victim and her friend while they were walking home to the hotel. He stabbed her in the stomach with a screwdriver and twice in her head, leaving the weapon embedded above her eyebrow. She was five months pregnant with their child and, while in a coma, gave birth to her son through cesarean section 100 days later. Two months later, still in a coma, she succumbed to her injuries and died as a result of the stabbing. He evaded police and escaped to another state but was later apprehended.

RECOMMENDATIONS: THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM



LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- Document complete reports for all family violence calls, including calls during which officers determine there is no probable cause to arrest, as mandated.
- Regardless of the classification of the offense, treat each call as if responding to a crime scene. Document key observations such as the state of the scene, the demeanor and physical appearance of the victim and the perpetrator, and the identity and contact information for any witnesses. Whenever possible, take photographs and seize evidence such as damaged property, torn clothing, and any weapons.
- When an officer is unable to determine who the primary (dominant) physical aggressor is, they should include in their report why they were unable to do so.
- Ensure all parties involved have a private interview and suspects and victims are separated for questioning to ensure neither party can see or hear the other.
- Review policies and practices for monitoring the accuracy and completeness of family violence incident reports. Institute offense report reviews on an ongoing basis to monitor adherence to policy, and to reduce liability and danger to officers and victims.
- Monitor the level of dual arrests and female arrests, and consider implementing training and accountability mechanisms.
- Review policies and protocols to ensure responding officers, upon finding probable cause for domestic violence, immediately prepare arrest warrants for the perpetrator. Policies should direct officers to complete warrants rather than directing victims to take their own warrants.

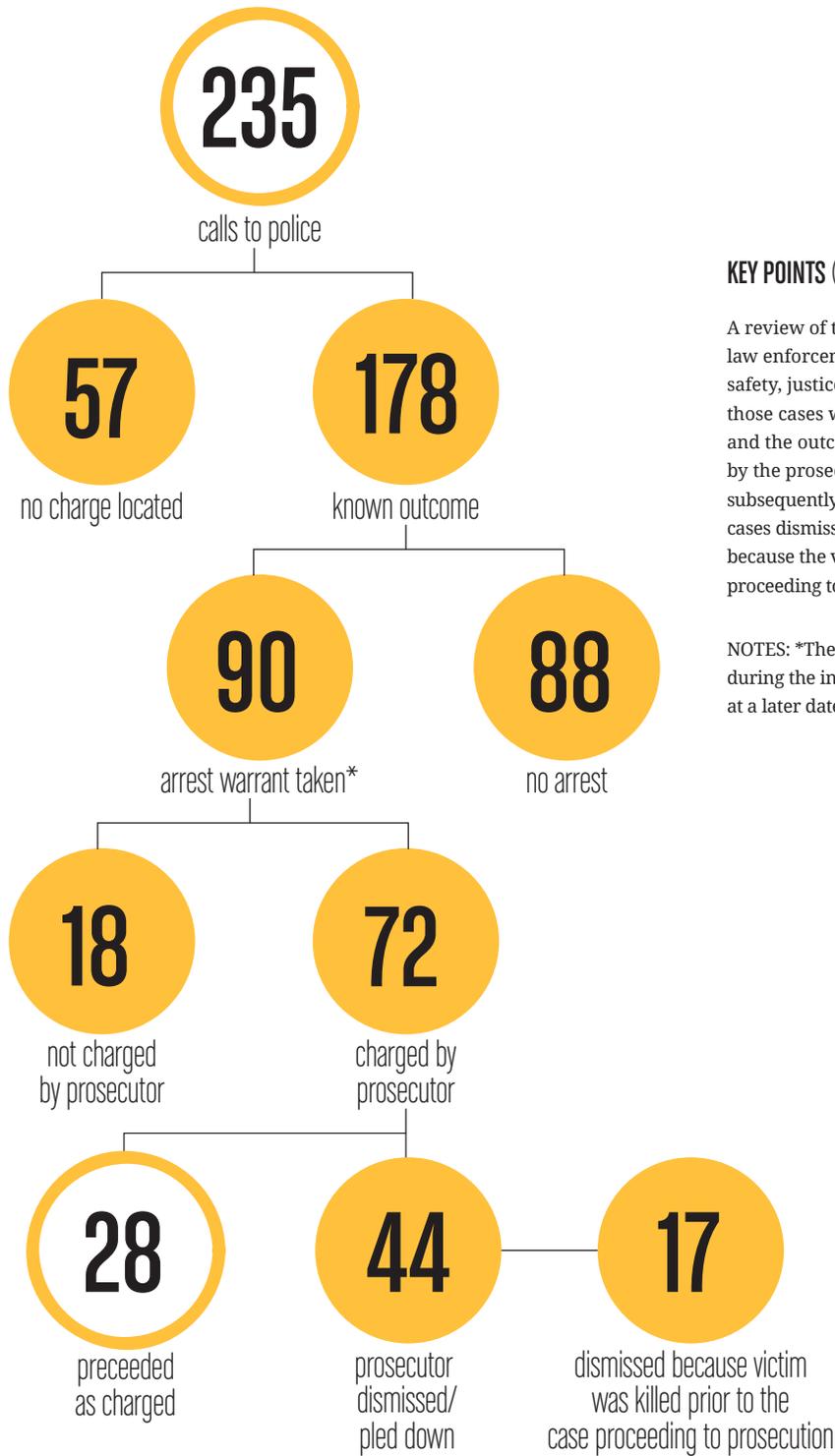


LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, PROSECUTORS, AND COURTS

- In communities where the caseload is large enough to warrant it, specialized units and dockets should be created using national models for detectives, prosecutors, and judges. This approach should focus expertise, improve interagency cooperation, and provide a system better prepared to hold offenders accountable.
- Treat seriously that which appears to be low-level violence as a means of potentially limiting the future escalation of the violence.

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8 DETAIL OF INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OUTCOMES



KEY POINTS (chart 8)

A review of the case histories reveals that calling law enforcement does not always result in increased safety, justice, or perpetrator accountability. In those cases where law enforcement was called and the outcome is known, only 40% were charged by the prosecutor, and 61% of those charges were subsequently either dismissed or pled down. 38% of cases dismissed by the prosecutor were dismissed because the victim was killed prior to the case proceeding to prosecution.

NOTES: *The arrest warrant is either taken on-site during the initial call or may be instigated by the victim at a later date.

RECOMMENDATIONS: THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM



PROSECUTORS

- Make appropriate charging decisions based on what the law requires. If a felony charge is authorized by law, do not undercharge, particularly in recidivist family violence battery cases and in cases involving the use of a deadly weapon. Carefully review history of law enforcement calls and TPO filings.
- Avoid minimizing the seriousness of a case where no injuries are apparent, where the victim has sought out the warrant, or where the case originates as a lower-level charge.
- Consider victims' opinions on disposition, but avoid general policies that automatically dismiss cases upon victim request.
- Approach pleading down family violence charges with caution and careful consideration of the victim's safety, perpetrator's accountability, and evidence.
- Approach pre-trial diversion for domestic violence cases with caution and careful consideration of the victim's safety and perpetrator's accountability.
- Attend training on domestic violence dynamics, risk indicators, evidence-based prosecution, and appropriate and ethical charging decisions.
- Evaluate all domestic violence cases – regardless of charge classification – for victim safety and include any risk factors in recommendations to the court.
- Use evidence-based prosecution techniques to increase the ability to move forward with a case, even when a victim recants, minimizes, or otherwise does not participate.
- Work collaboratively with community-based victim advocates to hold offenders accountable and increase victim safety.
- Develop specialized units to handle domestic violence cases in jurisdictions where there is a substantial caseload. For communities that are not able to aggressively prosecute all domestic violence cases, strategies must be implemented to prioritize high-risk cases in a manner that does not rely solely on the level of injury to the victim.
- Recommend sentences including FVIP when required by law.
- Consider expedited bond and probation revocations in cases where the perpetrator re-offends.



PROSECUTORS, COURTS, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- Collaborate to establish best practice guidelines for courts considering whether or not to rescind No Contact Orders in criminal domestic violence cases.
- Form a collaborative group to assist with information sharing, cross training, and transitioning of cases through the legal system.



JUDGES

- Attend training on the dynamics of domestic violence and high-risk indicators.
- Carefully consider the private, repetitive, and escalating nature of domestic violence when setting bond and bond conditions, rendering sentences, and imposing post-sentencing sanctions. Look for risk indicators in every case, including those appearing at first glance to be lower-level violence.
- Pursuant to the statute, order domestic violence offenders to certified FVIPs, recognizing the expertise of these programs and the benefit of program regulation. Schedule compliance hearings or similar monitoring mechanisms when ordering FVIP.
- Hold frequent post-sentencing reviews and impose meaningful and timely consequences for domestic violence offenders who do not comply with sentences and sanctions.
- Ensure access to the defendant's prior criminal history when setting bond. Bond amounts and conditions should reflect the serious nature of the crime committed and the potential risk a perpetrator poses to a victim.
- Develop and use a variety of sentencing options for abusers, including FVIP programs, timely court review, jail time, work release, electronic home monitoring, and intensive probation.
- Consider ordering No Contact as a condition of bond versus No Violent Contact based on the victim's safety and wishes.

5 CIVIL PROTECTIVE ORDERS & THE COURTS

FINDING: IN MANY CASES, HOMICIDE VICTIMS ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE CIVIL COURTS AT THE TIME OF THEIR DEATH.

Civil protective orders have the potential to provide safety for families in ways no other remedy can. The effectiveness depends on the specificity and comprehensiveness of the relief granted and on how well the orders are enforced.^{xxx}

In the 93 cases reviewed by this Project, 15% of domestic violence homicide victims had a Temporary Protective Order (TPO) in place at the time of their death.

Some victims had no TPO in place at the time of their death because the judge dismissed the petition. In one case, the judge dismissed the domestic violence victim's TPO petition at the second hearing two months before she was killed, claiming she failed to establish a preponderance of the evidence. Several other victims had TPOs at some point prior to their deaths that were not in place at the time of the homicide.

The victim and her husband were married for eight years and had one daughter together. She also had a teenaged son from a previous relationship. About two years after their daughter was born, she filed a TPO petition and a divorce petition. In her petition, she alleged her husband had an anger problem and had hit her son several times. She described him as "intimidating and hostile" and was afraid that next time he would seriously hurt someone. A month later, she dismissed both actions stating they were receiving counseling and all matters had been resolved. Three years later, she filed for divorce again and dismissed the petition two months later. Two years after that, she filed for divorce and a TPO petition. The ex parte TPO was granted. The presiding judge listened to a voicemail in which her husband told her she should take him seriously and "stop playing games because women have gotten killed or hurt." A week later, the TPO was dismissed by the judge at the second hearing for the petitioner's failure to prove her allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. Two months later, on the same date a child support hearing was to be held, her husband kidnapped her and forced her to drive away. When she attempted to flee from the car at a busy intersection, he gunned her down. He then drove to another location and killed himself.

Some victims applied for TPOs but eventually dropped them, either before the ex parte hearing or before the 12-month hearing. One reason this happened was because the victim and the respondent reconciled (see section on page 33 on common reasons why victims return/recant). Victims reconciled with abusive partners for a variety of reasons. Some wanted the relationship to work but wanted the violence to stop; they believed their partner's promises to change their abusive ways. Some were threatened and harassed into dismissing their orders.

Further, some victims requested their TPO petitions be dismissed because they were not awarded the relief necessary to stay safe away from the abuser. Family Violence TPOs permit the court to provide additional economic relief that promotes victim safety, such as child support, possession of a residence, and possession of a car. This kind of relief is critical, especially for victims who have minor children. However, judges are sometimes reluctant to order child support. When victims were also considering a divorce action, judges sometimes told them to deal with child support through the divorce or the overburdened Office of Child Support Services. This left many victims without desperately needed financial support for their children and may have heavily influenced their decision to request the dismissal of the order (see page 26 on economic abuse).

Sometimes victims were not connected with a legal advocate to provide guidance on TPO procedures, conduct a risk assessment, and provide safety planning. Lack of advocacy and safety planning for TPO petitioners is a critical gap in the protections available to victims. TPOs can be an important element in a safety plan, yet victims of domestic violence can be in grave danger during the process of obtaining a TPO, service of the order, and subsequent court dates (see page 59 for safety planning resources). For some, a perpetrator's violence may escalate after the respondent is served with the TPO. An advocate can help the petitioner anticipate the abuser's reaction and plan accordingly. Attorney representation at the ex parte hearing and access to a community-based or legal advocate can have a major impact on

5. CIVIL PROTECTIVE ORDERS AND THE COURTS

a victim fully understanding the TPO process and being awarded the support necessary to stay safely away from the abuser.

COMMUNITIES IDENTIFIED GAPS IN COMPLIANCE MECHANISMS RELATING TO TPOS, WHICH LED TO A LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OFFENDERS.

In reviewed cases, seven perpetrators were ordered to complete FVIP as a condition of a TPO after 2002, when the law mandating FVIP went into effect. However, records indicate only one completed the FVIP requirement. When judges included orders for FVIP (please see page 37 for more information on FVIP) or mental health evaluations when issuing a 12-month TPO, neither compliance hearings nor other accountability mechanisms were set in most jurisdictions. Therefore, the courts remained unaware when offenders were non-compliant. For one victim, as part of the 12-month TPO order, a judge required her husband to complete a mental health evaluation before he could have contact with their children. He had recently attempted suicide. However, the court did not specify how the respondent was to prove completion of the requirement. Five weeks later, he stalked her to work and shot and killed her before shooting himself.

In 16% of cases there was a divorce pending at the time of the homicide.

Many of the victims either filed a divorce action pro se or sought counsel from a family law attorney. In these instances, the victim was rarely connected with a domestic violence advocate to discuss safety planning. It was even more complicated for those seeking a TPO and a divorce simultaneously. Often, the court combined the divorce action and the TPO petition rather than handling them as two separate cases. The practice of combining these two actions often overlooks the safety concerns of the victim. Typically, restraining order language was entered into the divorce action as a way of combining the cases but these orders lacked

the same statutory enforcement mechanisms as a TPO. This type of order does not get entered into the Georgia Protective Order Registry and is not enforceable through preventive criminal stalking procedures. If the victim needs to call the police, she will not have a family violence order to show them so that they may arrest the respondent when a violation has occurred. Additionally, this type of order is not entitled to full faith and credit enforcement in other states and does not invoke the firearms prohibition under federal law.

Two months before her death, she filed a petition for a TPO. She said her husband pushed her, slapped her, and pulled the phone out of her hands three times when she tried to call 911. He was arrested for the incident and she noted this was the third time he was arrested for assaulting her. The court granted the ex parte TPO and awarded her temporary possession of the marital residence. Her husband leased an apartment in another city. A week later, her husband filed an answer to the TPO petition alleging she was the primary aggressor and requested for the court to deny her petition and grant him possession of their home. A week later, she filed for divorce on the grounds that the marriage was irretrievably broken, and there was adultery and cruel treatment. Both of them retained private attorneys and they reached a temporary consent agreement. The court combined the divorce and the TPO, and the protective language of the TPO was not in the final decree. Her husband was allowed to retrieve some of his belongings from the home with a law enforcement escort. It was stated he was not allowed to retrieve his firearms but it is unclear how this matter was addressed. A month later, the victim moved out of state to be closer to family but she still traveled back and forth to Georgia to wrap up her affairs. After she moved, her husband was allowed to take possession of the marital residence, which was for sale. Before the final consent agreement was signed by the judge and officially filed in the clerk's office, her dentist's office called to remind her of an upcoming appointment and left a message on the answering machine at the marital residence. Her husband stalked her to the dentist's office where he shot her and them himself in front of multiple witnesses. While unverified, it is presumed the firearms were left in the marital residence where he gained access to them once he moved back.

FINDING: IN MANY CASES, HOMICIDE VICTIMS ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE CIVIL COURTS AT THE TIME OF THEIR DEATH.

Additional systemic barriers impeded the ability of many victims to file for a TPO. In some cases, service providers referred victims to the wrong location to file a TPO. In other communities, the location itself was a deterrent for some victims. For example, a magistrate court located inside a jail may have been a deterrent for an immigrant victim seeking to file for a TPO. For immigrant victims who did not speak English, interpreters were not always provided by the court,

although state law O.C.G.A. 15-6-77(e)(4) says one shall be provided. In other jurisdictions, petitioners were directed to the prosecutor’s office to discuss the nature of their relationship and abuse before being allowed to file for a TPO. In some rural jurisdictions, judges were not available in a timely manner to sign ex parte orders. In some cases, there was a critical gap in safety due to a delay in service of the TPO.

RECOMMENDATIONS: CIVIL PROTECTIVE ORDERS AND THE COURTS



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- Provide an adequate number of legal advocates to assist victims who wish to file a TPO and conduct survivor-centered safety planning and risk assessment with them.
- Establish a relationship with the local legal services/legal aid office to refer victims to a lawyer for the 12-month hearing.
- Approach the local bar association about providing private attorneys continuing education training on domestic violence and TPOs.



JUDGES AND COURTS

- See recommendations on firearms on page 48.
- Never require or suggest the victim file for divorce or combine a divorce with a TPO.
- Consider as paramount the safety concerns of the domestic violence victim and children when deciding custody.
- When presiding over TPO cases, consider all economic relief that is available under the Family Violence Act including child support, temporary housing, and car possession.
- In accordance with O.C.G.A.15-6-77(e)(4) and Title VI, ensure qualified interpreters are available for TPO hearings. Develop a list of contract interpreters who are well-trained in domestic violence.
- Ensure all victims of domestic violence seeking relief from the courts under the Family Violence Act have access to community-based advocates to complete a survivor-centered safety plan.
- Set timely compliance hearings for TPO respondents. Refer to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges’ “Checklist to Promote Perpetrator Accountability in Dependency Cases Involving Domestic Violence”, available at www.ncjfcj.org.



LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- Provide training to all officers on where victims can obtain a TPO and on procedures and safety considerations to know when serving and enforcing them.
- Ensure officers are aware of the breadth of local domestic violence resources.
- Prioritize service and enforcement of TPOs.
- Ensure all officers know that any sworn officer can serve a TPO.

6 FIREARMS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES

FINDING: THE PRESENCE OF A GUN IN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATION SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES THE RISK OF HOMICIDE.

Abusers' access to firearms increases lethal risk for victims, abusers, first responders, and bystanders.

In Georgia, firearms are the leading cause of domestic violence fatalities and were the means of death in:

- 72% of all recorded domestic violence fatalities in 2013;
- 56% of reviewed fatalities from 2004-2013; and
- 98% of domestic violence-related murder-suicides recorded in Georgia from 2010-2013.

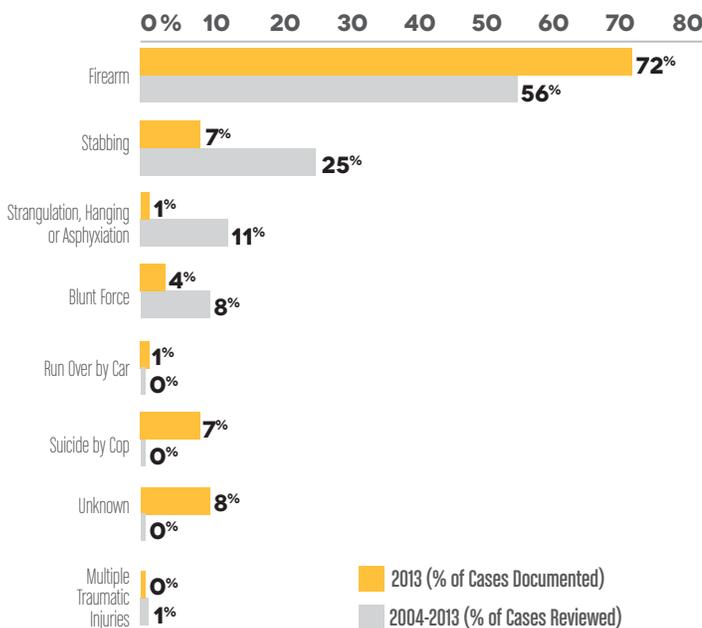
Federal law prohibits those convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors and those subject to a qualifying TPO from possessing firearms and ammunition. A violation of either of these provisions of the Gun Control Act carries a maximum prison term of 10 years. While federal law requires enforcement

at the state level, several states have passed clarifying legislation that assists in the implementation of the Gun Control Act and issues surrounding the collection, storage, and release of firearms.

However, Georgia is not one of these states, and law enforcement and some courts may not consistently enforce the federal law to the fullest extent possible.

After filing for a divorce and a TPO (which she later dismissed), the victim moved into a new apartment complex. She left her vehicle in the garage overnight at the martial residence. Her husband damaged it before she returned for it the next morning. The next day, he applied for an apartment in her new complex. She filed for a TPO within the next few days and a 12-month TPO was granted the next month. However,

9 CAUSE OF DEATH 2004-2013



KEY POINTS (chart 9)

Greater than all other methods combined, firearms have been the leading cause of death for victims in both cases we tracked statewide (72%) and cases that were reviewed (56%). This finding indicates the urgent need to use all legal means possible to remove firearms from the hands of domestic violence perpetrators.

Note: In 2013, the Project began including deaths in which perpetrators were killed by law enforcement officers after acting in a threatening way, often when officers were responding to a domestic violence call. This is often referred to as "suicide by cop".

6. FIREARMS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES

no FVIP or removal of guns was ordered by the judge. Three weeks after the 12-month TPO was granted, he stalked her, her 14-year-old daughter, and her daughter's father to a local shopping complex. He shot the victim and fired at the daughter and her father as they ran away, fortunately missing them. He then stood over the victim and shot her multiple times before running away. He was captured and charged with murder, aggravated assault, aggravated stalking, possession of a firearm, and cruelty to children.

During sentencing in family violence cases, or as a condition of probation, there was a lack of consistency by judges in ordering firearm removal when issuing TPOs. Failure to order the removal of firearms from the abusers leaves victims vulnerable at a dangerous time — when they are separating from abusers and the abuser's control is challenged by the court.

When a judge did order the removal of guns, the policy and procedure for collecting weapons was unclear regarding who was responsible for collection, what follow-up was required, and where they were to be stored. Without a clear protocol and a mechanism in place to enforce firearm restrictions and monitoring, perpetrators of domestic violence are relied upon to surrender the weapon voluntarily. Also, perpetrators are sometimes asked to surrender firearms and they are given over to family members of the perpetrator, either by the asking entity or by the perpetrator. One perpetrator was forced to turn over his guns, which were then locked in the trunk of his family member's car. He was able to gain access to his firearms, which he then used to kill his wife and daughter before killing himself. Furthermore, when perpetrators are offered diversion through the prosecutor's office, they are not subject to the firearms prohibition; hence, the firearms cannot be removed.

However, review teams have speculated the threat of firearm removal due to a family violence charge or the issuance of a

TPO deterred judges, prosecutors, and victims from holding an abuser accountable because the consequence could invoke the firearm prohibition. Review teams shared that sometimes judges refused to order the removal of a firearm because they did not want the abuser to have his gun removed. Along these same lines, sometimes prosecutors were reluctant to move forward with a domestic violence conviction. In some cases, victims requested to have the charges dismissed because they learned their abuser would have to surrender his firearm. We assume some of the victims did not want their abuser to lose his firearm, while others were scared of the repercussions of him losing his firearm.

THE PRESENCE OF A GUN IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATIONS — NO MATTER WHO TECHNICALLY OWNS IT — INCREASES THE RISK OF HOMICIDE BY 500%.^{xxxii}

Several weapons used to kill victims were stolen by perpetrators from friends and family members. One abuser stole a gun out of the glove box of his co-worker's truck a few days before the homicide.

i Training on firearm removal, storage, and return under existing law for law enforcement and the courts:

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, DV Division: www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/domestic-violence

National Center on Protection Orders and Full Faith & Credit: www.fullfaithandcredit.org

AEquitas, The Prosecutors' Resource on Violence Against Women: www.aequitasresource.org

RECOMMENDATIONS: FIREARMS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES

	<p>JUDGES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide domestic violence offenders with notice of federal firearms prohibitions upon issuance of a protective order and at the time of sentencing in criminal cases. • Ensure protective order forms include language explicitly requiring the removal of firearms and ammunition from the perpetrator. • Routinely order the removal of firearms and ammunition from respondents when issuing a TPO. • Set compliance hearings to ensure respondents in TPO cases have surrendered firearms and ammunition. • In TPO cases where weapons are seized, notify offenders of the process for retrieving them upon expiration of the order. In protective order proceedings, sign the provision confirming the case meets federal firearm prohibition requirements. • When determining bond, take into account a perpetrator's possession of firearms and consider ordering surrender of weapons and ammunition as a condition of release. Set compliance hearings to ensure perpetrators have surrendered firearms and ammunition.
	<p>COURTS, PROSECUTORS, PROBATION DEPARTMENTS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop countywide protocols to establish how each agency will cooperate to restrict access to firearms by domestic violence offenders and protective order respondents. • Prioritize removing firearms from abusers who have made homicidal or suicidal threats.
	<p>LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a TPO prohibits the possession of a firearm and a respondent is found in possession of a firearm, arrest on either an aggravated stalking charge, if it qualifies, or a violation of a Family Violence Order. Seize the weapon and notify the U.S. Attorney's Office. • If an officer finds a perpetrator to be in possession of a weapon after being convicted of a qualifying misdemeanor family violence offense, seize the weapon and notify the U.S. Attorney's Office.
	<p>COURTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely provide TPO petitioners with a Petition for Surrender of a Weapon, and establish procedures to ensure orders are forwarded to law enforcement. • Ensure criminal judgments are entered into the Georgia Crime Information Center and that protective orders are entered into the Georgia Protective Order Registry.
	<p>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely ask victims about abusers' access to firearms and help victims understand the court's ability to restrict access to firearms. • Consider the additional risks associated with firearms when safety planning with victims.
	<p>GEORGIA STATE LEGISLATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align state firearm forfeiture laws with federal law to clarify law enforcement's authority to remove weapons and establish penalties for the possession of firearms by TPO respondents and those convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors.
	<p>PROSECUTORS AND PROBATION DEPARTMENTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate to initiate contempt of court proceedings upon an offender's refusal or failure to surrender firearms and ammunition.
	<p>PROBATION DEPARTMENTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure firearms restrictions and surrender are specifically incorporated into the terms of probation and enforced. • File a petition to revoke probation when an offender refuses or fails to surrender firearms or ammunition, or is found with a firearm or ammunition in his possession. • Collaborate with prosecutors to initiate contempt of court proceedings upon an offender's refusal or failure to surrender firearms and ammunition.
	<p>PRIVATE ATTORNEYS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform clients about the possibility of filing a contempt action if the abuser fails to surrender firearms and ammunition as ordered in a TPO. • Request for judges to specifically address the respondent's possession or use of firearms or ammunition and ask judges to set compliance hearings to follow up with any order they issue concerning firearms.
	<p>LAW ABIDING FIREARM OWNERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure all weapons so only you can gain access to them. • Support efforts to limit access to firearms for domestic violence offenders and protective order respondents.

7 FAMILY, FRIENDS, & THE FAITH COMMUNITY

FINDING: IN MOST CASES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS TURN TO THEIR FAMILY, FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS, OR MEMBERS OF THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY WHO AREN'T PREPARED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES TO RESPOND MOST EFFECTIVELY.

9 PERPETRATOR'S HISTORY AS KNOWN BY THE COMMUNITY 2004-2013

		% of cases where this factor was present
VIOLENT OR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR	History of DV against victim	87
	Threats to kill primary victim	55
	Violent criminal history	51
	Stalking	43
	Threats to harm victim with weapon	38
	History of DV against others	28
	Child abuse perpetrator	28
	Inflicted serious injury on victim	27
	Sexual abuse perpetrator	23
	Strangulation	22
	Threats to kill children, family, and/or friends	17
	Harmed victim with weapon	14
	Hostage taking	10
CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR	Monitoring and controlling	56
	Isolation of victim	37
	Ownership of victim	28
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE	Alcohol and drug abuse	53
	Suicide threats and attempts	35
	Depression	32

KEY POINTS (chart 9)

There are two specific behaviors that we see predominantly perpetrated by men that indicate an increased risk of lethal violence: sexual abuse and strangulation.

1. Homicide perpetrators were known to have a history of committing sexual abuse in 23% of cases. It is likely that the actual percentage of victims sexually abused by perpetrators is much higher, because victims seldom disclose sexual abuse to family and friends and even less so to the systems engaged through the review process. Sexual abuse is a powerful tool used by an abusive partner to gain and maintain power and control over their intimate partners. It is estimated to occur in 40-45% of battering relationships. Women who killed their male partners reported higher rates of sexual abuse by the men they killed. Please see the 2012 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Annual Report for more information on sexual abuse and women's use of violence.
2. Strangulation has been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence; unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes. In 11% of cases reviewed, perpetrators killed the victim by strangling her or causing asphyxiation. Non-fatal strangulation is a significant risk factor for homicide. In 22% of cases, perpetrators were known to have strangled the victim prior to the homicide, although this percentage is likely higher due to underreporting. These findings support existing research that most perpetrators strangle victims to demonstrate they can kill them and later use a firearm or other methods to commit the homicide. All victims of strangulation should be encouraged to seek medical treatment immediately and alerted that the next 24-48 hours could be critical. More information and training on strangulation can be found at the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention, www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com.

CHART NOTES: We define perpetrator as the individual who committed the homicide and the victim as the individual who was killed. Eight female perpetrators killed male partners; one female perpetrator killed a female partner. One male perpetrator killed a male partner. All remaining homicides were men killing women.

7. FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND THE FAITH COMMUNITY

People experiencing domestic violence often turn to their informal support systems — their friends, family members, faith community, co-workers, etc. — before they ever turn to law enforcement, the courts, or even an advocate. This informal network of support is vital to the victim, but it can be difficult to know how best to support someone. Domestic violence is overwhelming for those surviving the abuse, and it can be just as complicated for those watching their loved one suffer from abuse. In reviewed cases, interviews with members of the victim’s support system revealed the challenges they faced when trying to support their loved one.

Those closest to the victim were aware of the abuse in the relationship and knew the most about the history and dynamics of the relationship. However, they did not always identify what they observed as domestic violence. Frequently, interviews began with family members telling us they did not know about a history of abuse but then went on to describe behaviors the Project considers to be domestic violence, such as emotional abuse, control of finances, and sexual abuse. Many realized only in hindsight “how bad things were” in the relationship. In almost every reviewed case, there were signs the violence was escalating in the weeks and months prior to the homicide, but most did not recognize the seriousness of the situation and certainly did not think it would escalate to murder.

The victim and her husband were married for 17 years and shared two children. They were both from the same town in another state and moved to Georgia where they established a life together. Despite the distance, family and friends knew her husband to be physically and verbally abusive and described him as controlling, jealous, and possessive. He stalked and monitored her by following her and hanging out in the parking lot of her job. He controlled who she was friends with and she certainly was not allowed to have male friends. A couple of weeks before her death, she began telling her family and friends she wanted to leave him but felt trapped. She told one friend, “If I stay, he will kill me. If I leave, he will kill me.” Her friends observed she was very sad and tired in the weeks before her death. One week before her death, she began sleeping in her son’s bedroom because her husband no longer allowed her

to sleep in their bed. He took the bedroom door off the hinges so she would not have any privacy. He also removed all of the phones from the house and emptied out the bank accounts. He repeatedly told her he would kill her. One night, they left the house together in her car so they could talk. She pulled the car off the side of the road and he shot her several times before exiting the car and calling the police from his cell phone.

Regardless of the situation, in most cases the victim turned to people who did not have all of the knowledge or resources they needed to best assist them.

Victims experienced different responses from their support network when they turned to them for help. Sometimes their response was helpful. For example, after learning of the abuse her daughter was experiencing, one mother accompanied her daughter to the local domestic violence agency for help. Another mother allowed her daughter to stay with her periodically and was helping her daughter write a letter to her landlord requesting to break the lease on the apartment she shared with her boyfriend. While most family members, friends, and co-workers seemed to genuinely want to help, most did not know what to do and were not aware of the existence of the local domestic violence program.

Despite well-meaning intentions, there were times when family members and friends said and did things that may have inadvertently increased the victim’s isolation and risk. Family members and friends often thought they were exhibiting support or “tough love” when they gave the victim ultimatums regarding the relationship with the abuser, such as refusing to speak to them if they returned to their abusive partner. While the intention was to keep a loved one safe, cutting off a valuable line of communication and support actually increased isolation and severed connections with her support system.

A victim was described as coming from a close-knit family. Her siblings, including her twin sister, lived in another state but she was close with one cousin in Georgia. Despite the closeness of the family, they were not aware of the abuse she

FINDING: IN MOST CASES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS TURN TO THEIR FAMILY, FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS, OR MEMBERS OF THEIR FAITH COMMUNITY WHO AREN'T PREPARED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES TO RESPOND MOST EFFECTIVELY.

was experiencing by her young son's father. Her cousin believes she was embarrassed and ashamed of the abuse and therefore did not reveal completely what was going on. The family observed her child's father talking to her as if she was a child and noticed she seemed afraid of him. The family was so put off by his behavior they told her he was no longer invited to family gatherings. This only served to increase the victim's isolation from her family. One week after the court granted her petition for a six-month TPO, she was found stabbed to death outside of her apartment building. A copy of her TPO was in her purse.

Abuse and isolation of victims eroded ties with victims' support systems. Isolating the victim from those they are closest to is a hallmark of power and control tactics. Sometimes the victim's loss of connection to her support network happened through the direct efforts of the abuser. This included the abuser preventing her from having regular contact with her family. For one woman whose family lived in another country, her husband would beat her every time one of them called her. For some victims, their shame or desire to keep the abuse a secret kept them from keeping in touch with family members and friends. One woman, who endured 20 years of abuse, kept it a secret from her family because she knew they would try to help her and she feared they would be at risk if they did. And for some victims, their support system did not understand or agree with their decisions — such as to stay in the relationship — and they withdrew their support because of this.

Co-workers were frequently aware of abuse. At the time of their death, 74% of victims from reviewed cases were employed outside the home. Reviewed cases revealed several examples of co-workers offering support to victims. For example, one woman re-entered the workforce after years of supporting her husband's home-based business. After intense isolation, her co-workers became her friends. One night her husband stalked her to a restaurant where she was having dinner with her co-workers. He pounded on the window and accused her of cheating on him. Her friends told her, "This is scary — this is not normal." In her mind, the abuse she was experiencing had become normal, and she found it very helpful to have people tell her otherwise in a caring and non-judgmental way. For another young woman, her friends

at work offered her rides and a place to stay when she needed it. Co-workers were often not aware of the domestic violence program or the remedies available through the criminal legal system, which led to missed opportunities for intervention and co-workers unknowingly putting themselves at risk.

WITHIN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE HOMICIDE, 32% OF VICTIMS WERE CONNECTED TO A PLACE OF WORSHIP.

In some instances, victims sought guidance and counseling from faith leaders prior to their homicide or near-fatal attack, but they did not always disclose the abuse. In other cases, clergy or fellow congregants were aware of the violence due to concerns voiced by others close to the victim. Sometimes victims were connected with their faith communities but were unwilling or unable to disclose the abuse there. There were also multiple cases in which the abuser held a prominent position in his congregation. If prepared, leaders or members of these religious organizations might have played an important role in holding those abusers accountable and intervening.

While there were examples of faith communities responding to domestic violence in an effective way, many clergy and lay leaders were unprepared, untrained, and unable to provide safe and effective guidance. Moreover, many review teams and Family Violence Task Forces have found it difficult to involve faith groups in the work of stopping abuse. There are a variety of reasons why this collaboration has often proven challenging. Many faith leaders lack awareness of the scope of the problem within their congregation, or what their role might be in addressing it. Additionally, intervening in domestic violence situations presents a challenge to the commonly held belief that faith leaders must remain neutral in family conflicts. For powerful examples of how the faith community can respond more effectively to domestic violence, please see the 2010 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report.

7. FAMILY, FRIENDS, & THE FAITH COMMUNITY

One couple was receiving weekly couples counseling with their pastor. Their pastor knew they verbally fought often because they called him when they fought. He also knew the boyfriend threatened to kill the victim and himself if she ever left. He suspected the boyfriend was suicidal when he intentionally ran the car off the road and blew out the tires while they were having a verbal argument in the car. Once after they broke up, the pastor told the victim if she reconciled with him she would be dead in

a year. The couple reconciled and because of the comment the pastor made, they did not see him for several months. Eventually they began receiving counseling from the pastor again. He continued to tell the victim he did not want to see her with her boyfriend because they did not belong together. The pastor never referred the victim to the domestic violence program in their community. The pastor's warning came true when the boyfriend fatally stabbed the victim a year after they reconciled.

RECOMMENDATIONS: FAMILY, FRIENDS, & THE FAITH COMMUNITY



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATES AND FAMILY VIOLENCE TASK FORCES

- Include messages in public education and outreach efforts directed to family members and friends. Incorporate tips for how to support a victim, where to call for help, and recognizing signs of escalating danger. (See the box on page 55 for suggestions)
- When speaking with family members, friends, and other supporters of a domestic violence victim, either on the crisis line or in a community outreach setting, assist them in the following ways: help them identify their own risks and safety plan accordingly, provide information about appropriate ways to support the victim, and help them link the victim to appropriate resources.
- When it is safe to do so, help survivors rebuild connections with their support system. Evaluate programmatic policies and practices that may hamper the victim's ability to stay connected or reconnect with these key supporters, especially when she is utilizing shelter services.
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to sponsor Domestic Violence in the Workplace Trainings for employers. Request the Domestic Violence in the Workplace Toolkit available from GCADV.
- Provide domestic violence training to faith leaders and engage them in the work to end domestic violence. See the Safe Sacred Space Curriculum available for download at www.gcfv.org.



FAITH LEADERS

- First, get to know your community's domestic violence advocates and create a resource referral network.
- Then, let congregants know it is safe to discuss domestic violence-related issues by providing information through sermons, newsletter articles/bulletins, and in premarital counseling.
- Work with domestic violence advocates to train staff about domestic violence and make an organizational plan for responding to abuse within congregations, prioritizing victim safety, and abuser accountability.



EMPLOYERS

- Develop a relationship with your local domestic violence program.
- Conduct regular, mandatory domestic violence training for managers, supervisors, HR professionals, and Employee Assistance Programs.
- Routinely offer information to employees about domestic violence community resources via company newsletters, intranet sites, and lunch-and-learns.
- In collaboration with experts, develop a plan for addressing domestic violence that makes sense for your company. This plan may include the development of a model domestic violence in the workplace policy. Model policies can be found here: www.workplacesrespond.org.



GEORGIA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE GEORGIA COMMISSION ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Implement the Public Awareness Campaign initiative as suggested in the GCFV 2012 State Plan for Ending Family Violence.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOW CAN I HELP SOMEONE WHO IS BEING ABUSED?

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of ethnicity, race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, education, or sexual orientation. Domestic violence involves one person in a relationship using specific tactics to gain and maintain control over the other person. This includes physical violence such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and slapping. However, a relationship can be abusive even if there is no physical violence. Other tactics may include name calling, put downs, extreme jealousy, controlling where the victim goes and who she talks to, not allowing her to spend time with friends and family, and controlling the finances. It includes making threats to those that the victim holds dear including children, pets, family, and friends.

How do I recognize domestic violence?

Does your friend or family member...

- Turn down social invitations or miss work or social engagements often?
- Seem more withdrawn or isolated or seem to have lost confidence?
- Become anxious or unusually quiet when their partner is around?
- Have unexplained injuries or injuries that do not fit the explanation for how they happened? Are they wearing unusually heavy make-up or covering up by dressing heavily for the season?



7. FAMILY, FRIENDS, & THE FAITH COMMUNITY

- Receive an unusually high number of calls or text messages from their partner? Does it seem as though they have to check in with their partner frequently?
- Seem sensitive about home life or hint about trouble at home?
- Have a partner who publicly degrades or uses verbal put downs?

Signs that could signal increased danger.

Research shows these behaviors may indicate a growing risk of danger. If your friend or family member tells you the following are happening, encourage them to contact a domestic violence advocate to create a safety plan.

- Abuser has a weapon;
- Victim is trying to end the relationship or take steps to gain independence (filing a protective order, breaking up);
- Abuser has threatened or attempted suicide;
- History of abuse and/or abuse is getting worse or happening more often;
- Abuser threatens to kill the victim; and
- Abuser is stalking victim, perhaps with repeated phone calls, texting, emails, showing up unexpectedly where the victim is working or socializing, or seeming to know the victim's whereabouts and what the victim has been doing.

If your friend reveals something, or you have seen or heard about things going on in their relationship that concern you, don't be afraid to speak up. Below are some suggestions for how to best support someone who is being abused.

- Start the conversation by saying "I care about you" or "I am worried for your safety."
- Point out specific behaviors or incidents that concern you. For example, "I saw your partner grab your arm very hard and march you across the room."
- Don't make blaming statements, such as "Why don't you just leave?" or "I would never let someone put their hands on me."
- Don't give advice. Instead say, "What do you think you should do?" or "You are the one who knows your situation best."

- Don't tell others what your friend or family member has told you unless you have permission. Instead encourage her to talk to others that may be able to help her: advocates, neighbors, co-workers, faith leaders, other family and friends, etc.
- Remain calm. If you react strongly and insist your friend call the police immediately, for example, she may shut down.
- Offer to help connect her with resources; let her know calling a domestic violence program (commonly referred to as a "shelter") does not mean she has to go to a shelter or leave her partner immediately unless she chooses to. Offer the number for Georgia's 24-Hour Statewide Hotline 1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836) V/TTY.

Leaving an abusive relationship can be extremely dangerous.

- Creating a safety plan with a domestic violence advocate is essential to leaving an abusive relationship safely.
- Your friend may not be ready to leave the relationship. Say, "I will be here for you even if I don't understand all of your decisions."
- Do not push printed materials on your friend or family member. These can be found by the abuser and can increase the victim's difficulty or danger.
- Taking a non-judgmental position as a reliable resource is your best defense against the abuser's efforts to separate your friend or family member from your support.

Resources available for public awareness

- "What You Can Do" poster available in Spanish and English. This poster provides suggestions for how to talk to someone who is being abused or being abusive.
- "Our Faith Community Does Not Support Abuse" is a small poster highlighting the state domestic violence hotline. It is designed for community bulletin boards or restrooms.

Contact GCADV or GCFV for these resources.



8 DETACHMENT, SEPARATION, & THE RISKS OF LEAVING

FINDING: WHEN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM IS LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, SHE IS AT A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RISK FOR SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH – EVEN BEFORE SHE TAKES OBVIOUS ACTIONS TO LEAVE.

LADY DREAMER

This poem was written by Brittany Nicole Wade shortly before she was killed by the father of her children.

*Looking towards my future,
I have to forgive and forget
about what people have done
to me.

I'm my own person and a
blessing is coming my way.

So this time, I'm starting over
with a new life.

Cause change has come for
me and my children.*



FINDING: WHEN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM IS LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, SHE IS AT A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RISK FOR SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH – EVEN BEFORE SHE TAKES OBVIOUS ACTIONS TO LEAVE.

In almost all reviewed cases, the victim was either contemplating ending the relationship, making preparations to leave the relationship, or had already taken obvious steps signaling a desire to end the relationship.

It is a commonly recognized fact that when a domestic violence victim is leaving an abusive relationship, she is at a significantly higher risk for serious injury or death. When thinking about behaviors indicating someone is leaving an abusive relationship, it is a natural inclination to think in very obvious terms, such as a victim filing for a protective order or divorce, moving out, or breaking up. However, in the first year of the Project, and every year since, we have noted patterns in victims' behaviors indicating it is not just the "obvious" steps that victims take that can increase risk. Leaving and separation happens in more subtle ways, such as a victim emotionally detaching from their abusive partner and the preparations and planning that occur prior to leaving.

The victim and her boyfriend had been dating off and on for seven years. At the time of the homicide, he was dating another woman with whom he had a child. Both women probably knew about each other. He was described by her family and friends as controlling and jealous; he hid a baby monitor under her bed to listen to her phone conversations. Even though they did not live together, he came and went from her house as he pleased despite her attempts to stop him. Three weeks prior to her death, he strangled her and threatened to kill her. A downstairs neighbor heard her banging her feet on the floor and called the police. She had maintenance change the locks on her apartment again. She called her mother crying and said she was afraid of him. Her mother instructed her to take out a warrant, but she was reluctant. Neighbors, family, and friends witnessed the marks on her neck from the strangulation. The day before she was found strangled to death in a park, she told her co-worker he had "choked her out" again and he "was really starting to trip."

In almost all of the reviewed cases, victims were taking steps in the months and weeks prior to the homicide indicating an increasing desire to separate from their abusers. Many victims talked with family members and friends about

ending the relationship. Just days before she was murdered by her boyfriend in front of their child, one young woman told her mother she was ready to leave him and "get her life together." Moving on and wanting to "get her life together" were common themes in victims' lives. Several victims were making plans to stay with family members or friends. Many victims were doing things to increase their ability to provide for themselves away from the abuser, such as saving money, rejoining the workforce, and furthering their education. One woman received a highly sought-after promotion at work that would have required her to move out of state. We assume this positive change in her life threatened her husband's sense of control over her. Even these more subtle preparations and internal changes in how the victim was thinking and feeling may have signaled a loss of control to the abuser and prompted an escalation in violence.

Because leaving an abusive relationship can be a dangerous process requiring planning and preparation, the importance of conducting comprehensive, survivor-centered safety planning at every contact with victims cannot be overstated. The findings discussed above have implications for advocates and others who safety plan with domestic violence victims. Specifically, all steps toward separation should be considered in terms of their potential safety implications. Even if the abuser is not aware of a concrete plan to leave, safety planning must begin during the first contact with victims and continue with each subsequent contact. Many victims in reviewed cases were navigating very dangerous situations without the benefit of talking with an advocate to discuss survivor-centered safety planning and risk assessment.

The Importance of Safety Planning with Victims

In many cases it seemed obvious that risk assessment and a comprehensive safety plan could have significantly altered the outcome of the situation.

Safety planning with domestic violence victims is possibly one of the most important services that advocates provide.

8. DETACHMENT, SEPARATION, & THE RISKS OF LEAVING

Two weeks before her death, the victim moved out of the house she shared with her husband. It is not known if there was any physical abuse in the relationship, but her closest girlfriend described him as jealous and controlling. She was not allowed to have friends over to the house and he was jealous of her male co-workers. He was unemployed, depressed, and an alcoholic. He shot the family computer with a shotgun he kept in the house. On the night she informed him she wanted a divorce, she attempted to leave but he would not allow it. She and her son left on foot in the snow. The next day, the police escorted her home to collect some of her belongings. She told them she was afraid to go there by herself. She stayed at a friend's house, and he called their house everyday looking for her and left "nasty messages" on their answering machine. He also stalked her at her job and called her repeatedly while she was at work. During this time, she called the local domestic violence program seeking assistance with a divorce. Assistance with a safety plan was not offered. He convinced her to come by the house to talk about the divorce where he shot her to death and then attempted suicide.

Further complicating this issue is the fact that only 16% of victims were known to have had contact with a domestic violence program or "shelter" in the five years prior to their death. One key reason for this is that victims and their support systems are often either not aware a domestic violence program exists in their community or are not aware of the full range of services these programs provide. There are several other possible reasons for this gap. The victim:

- may not identify as a "victim;"
- may not think what she is experiencing is "bad enough" to be considered abuse;
- might think "shelter" is the only service and may not want or need it;
- could have a criminal history, substance abuse issue, or untreated mental health issue;
- is afraid the abuser will find out;
- had negative past experiences with helping agents or has a negative perception of helping agents; and

- has cultural beliefs about relationships and gender roles that create barriers to reaching out for help.

i There are approximately 65 domestic violence programs in Georgia; 51 of these offer safe and confidential shelter. These programs provide services free of charge. Services are confidential, and you do not have to leave your relationship to access these services. Below is a list of services that most domestic violence programs offer:

- Emergency Shelter
- Crisis Line (24/7)
- Child Advocacy
- Legal Advocacy
- Support Groups
- Financial Assistance
- Safety Planning
- Information/Referrals
- Individual Counseling

i You can reach your local domestic violence program by calling 1(800) 33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836). A list of the state-certified domestic violence programs can be located here:

<http://children.georgia.gov/dv-crisis-assistance>

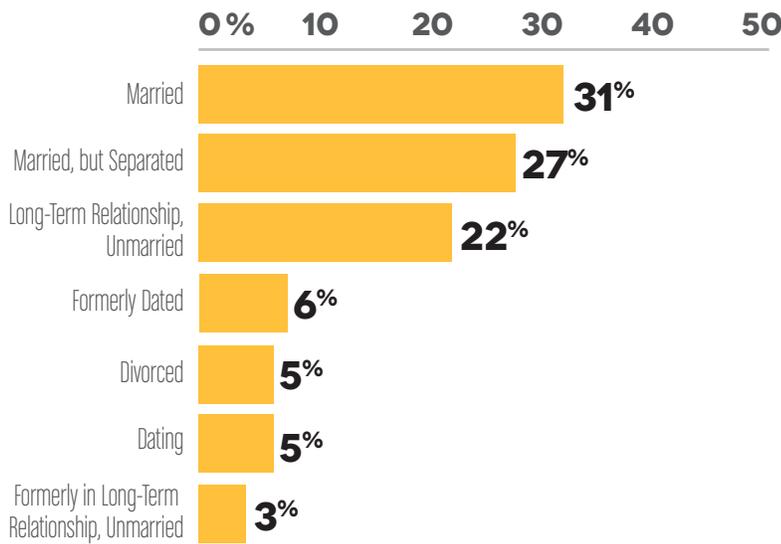
i **Safety planning resources available for domestic violence advocates:**

Davis, J., Lyon, E., & Monti-Catania, D. (1998). *Safety planning with battered women: Complex lives/difficult choices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Davies, J. (2009). *Advocacy beyond leaving: Helping battered women in contact with current and former partners: A guide for domestic violence advocates*. Family Violence Prevention Fund.

FINDING: WHEN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM IS LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, SHE IS AT A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RISK FOR SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH – EVEN BEFORE SHE TAKES OBVIOUS ACTIONS TO LEAVE.

10 RELATIONSHIP STATUS AT THE TIME OF THE HOMICIDE 2004-2013



KEY POINTS (chart 10)

This chart does not reflect the fact that almost all reviewed victims were contemplating leaving the relationship or taking steps to do so. Victims are at the highest risk of being killed by their abusive partners when they separate from them; both rates and seriousness of physical abuse increase during periods of separation and divorce. Even when a victim’s desire to leave is not spoken aloud, any increase in their behaviors or steps to gain independence may signal loss to their partner. Many victims had mentioned to a family member, friend, or co-worker they were considering leaving their abusive partner. Taking a new job, increasing social activities, saving money, and changing locks on doors can all signal to a domestic violence perpetrator that the victim is serious about leaving and is actively taking steps to separate from them.

RECOMMENDATIONS: DETACHMENT, SEPARATION, & THE RISKS OF LEAVING



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- Offer comprehensive, survivor-centered safety planning strategies to all victims and their friends and families who contact your program. Engage in safety planning every time you talk with a victim.
- When conducting risk assessment and safety planning, think broadly in terms of separation.
- When conducting community education and outreach activities, articulate a clear message about what your program does that can be easily understood by anyone in the community.
- Evaluate how agency policies and practices may prevent victims from reaching out or create barriers to them receiving the services they need when they do reach out.
- Evaluate the use of the word “shelter” and how it does not accurately convey the full range of services provided.
- Include messages in public education and outreach efforts directed to family members and friends and incorporate tips for how to support a victim, where to call for help, and recognizing signs of escalating danger.



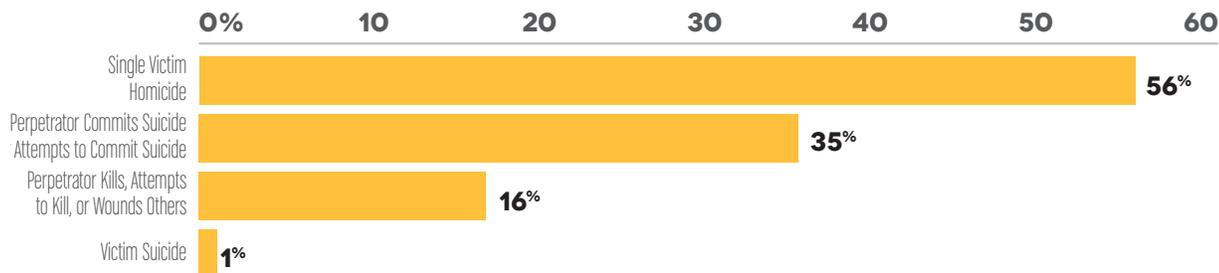
JUDGES, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, COURTS, ALL SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Familiarize yourself with your local domestic violence programs, including how to reach them and what services they provide.
- Refer all domestic violence victims you come into contact with to the local domestic violence program for confidential safety planning and risk assessment.

9 THE SUICIDE- HOMICIDE CONNECTION

FINDING: AN ABUSER'S DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS
ARE HIGH RISK FACTORS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE.

11 TYPES OF INCIDENTS IN REVIEWED CASES 2004-2013



KEY POINTS (chart 11)

Depression and suicidal thoughts on the part of the perpetrator are risk factors for lethal violence, yet this fact is often not known to service providers. Training first responders, advocates, attorneys, parole officers, court personnel, social services, and health care personnel on increasing vigilance and recognition of this risk factor is imperative to victim, bystander, and perpetrator safety.

Perpetrators do not limit their violence to their intimate partner. Often, other people close to the victim are targeted either because they are with the primary victim at the time of the attack or because the perpetrator intends to cause additional anguish to the primary victim by harming her friends or loved ones.

In 35% of reviewed cases, the domestic violence homicide perpetrator either attempted or completed suicide at the homicide scene or soon thereafter. The research on domestic violence risk indicators concludes that an abuser's depression and suicidal thoughts are high risk factors for homicide. Our findings suggest the same conclusion. It is important to note that while screening for depression and suicidal ideation among abusers does not appear to be routine for the service providers who most often interact with them, we nonetheless found significantly high rates of both in the reviewed cases.

In fact, in 35% of reviewed cases the domestic violence homicide perpetrators were known to have either threatened or attempted suicide prior to the homicide, indicating a possible opportunity for intervention before the homicide.

Additionally, in the cases tracked by the Project via media monitoring from 2010-2013, we found the following related to murder-suicides in Georgia:

- 85 lives were lost due to murder-suicide, which accounted for 23% of all domestic violence-related deaths;
- 93% of murder-suicides were perpetrated by men;
- In 26% of cases, the perpetrator and/or the victim were over the age of 60;
- 11 children and eight bystanders were also killed during the course of an intimate partner murder-suicide; and
- In an additional 19 cases, the perpetrator either attempted or committed suicide after killing or attempting to kill someone else.

Clearly, we see murder-suicides account for a significant portion of domestic violence-related fatalities, both in reviewed cases and in all of the Georgia deaths tracked by the Project. Yet, many people (including those professionals who have frequent contact with batterers and victims) remain unaware that suicidal threats and depression are linked with homicide in cases of domestic violence. This lack of recognition leaves many service providers ill prepared to address the risk in a constructive, appropriate way.

9. THE SUICIDE-HOMICIDE CONNECTION

One day while her husband was away from home, a woman and her friend moved her belongings from the marital residence. Later that same month, her husband was admitted to the hospital for treatment of depression and suicidal ideation. Just one month later the husband attempted suicide by overdosing on Trazadone. He told the first responders he had nothing to live for because he lost his wife, his job, and his home was in foreclosure. Two months later, her husband called her and said he needed her to pick him up from the extended stay hotel where he was living because he needed a prescription refilled. The staff at the hotel witnessed them arguing and saw him follow her back to her car. While she was driving away, he shot her twice with a shotgun.

Most people think of suicide as a solitary act, affecting only one person. Yet, suicidal domestic violence abusers pose increased risk to their intimate partner, other family members, bystanders, and first responders. Sometimes children are also killed during a murder-suicide (a phenomenon called familicide), but this is rare. Instead, children are usually left parentless after a murder-suicide. Refer to page 14 for further discussion on the specific challenges faced by child survivors of murder-suicide.

Another important intersection between suicide and domestic violence is the suicidality of abused women. Domestic violence victims often feel trapped, powerless, and isolated. They may become clinically depressed and may not receive treatment for their depression. This can lead to a victim believing suicide is the only way out of an abusive relationship. In fact, a significant number of the

6,000 women who commit suicide in the United States each year likely do so because of being abused by an intimate male partner.^{xxxii} One study found that among the medical histories of the 176 women who attempted suicide, 29.5% were battered and 22.2% had at least one documented incident of domestic abuse in their records.^{xxxiii} Suicides of abused women are rarely considered by review teams; the Project has reviewed one case of an abused woman committing suicide and one case of a woman killing her husband and then killing herself. However, this research strongly suggests a need to take a closer look at these cases to see what lessons can be learned.

One woman committed suicide after enduring years of well-documented abuse at the hands of her husband. She suffered sexual, emotional, and physical abuse during their 12-year marriage. As a result of his abuse, she had contact with multiple systems, including the Division of Family and Children Services, law enforcement, the civil courts for Temporary Protective Orders and divorce proceedings, the criminal courts, and a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Her husband was arrested multiple times for his violence against her and others and for drug and driving-related offenses. Six months before her death, she received threatening letters from him while he was in jail. These letters expressed his intent to continue to make her life miserable, and she filed a Temporary Protective Order that was still in place when she committed suicide. Her family believes she committed suicide because the accountability measures that were put in place by the criminal and civil legal systems did not seem to deter her husband's violence against her. They believe she felt ending her own life was the only way to end his violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS: THE SUICIDE-HOMICIDE CONNECTION



MENTAL HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- Collaborate to develop model screening tools for mental health and health care providers to routinely assess depressed and suicidal men for abusive and dangerous behaviors, and protocols for referrals, treatment, and disclosure to family members.



SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROVIDERS

- Routinely screen participants for domestic violence. Refer abusers to certified FVIPs and victims to domestic violence programs.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

- When working with victims and their support systems, actively screen for indicators of depression and suicide in perpetrators. Talk with them about how these factors may impact their safety and conduct safety planning accordingly.



LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND 911 DISPATCHERS

- Routinely ask about depression and suicidal ideation of domestic violence perpetrators to increase officer and victim safety.



FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

- Review and follow the FVIP Suicide Protocol available through the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

i 1-800-715-4225

The Georgia Crisis & Access Line is staffed with professional social workers and counselors 24 hours a day, every day, to assist those with urgent and emergency needs. Those callers who need more routine services are directly connected with the agency of their choice and given a scheduled appointment.



RESOURCES

10 BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

FINDING: MANY VICTIMS FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES FACE
ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING RESOURCES AND ACHIEVING SAFETY.

While nearly all victims of domestic violence face overwhelming barriers to finding safety, victims from historically marginalized and underserved communities face increased hurdles when trying to access safety, services and justice. These communities include people who are immigrants; victims of color; victims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ); the elderly; those with disabilities; those who are poor; and those with criminal backgrounds.^{xxxiv} Victims from these communities often face discrimination which influences the way they see safety, understand services, and interpret justice. Some victims from historically marginalized communities may be reluctant to approach professional systems, as those systems may act in ways that perpetuate the discrimination they experience. Highlighted in this section are barriers to safety identified for victims who were immigrants and refugees, victims who were LGBTQ, and victims who had criminal backgrounds. The Project intends to explore barriers faced by other marginalized and underserved communities in our future reports.

WHEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL VICTIMS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE FROM HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES, ALL VICTIMS BENEFIT AND EVERYONE IS SAFER.

Immigrant and Refugee Victims

In-depth homicide reviews showed that some immigrant and refugee victims faced increased barriers to safety. Ten reviewed cases involved victims and perpetrators with limited English proficiency. Immigrant women often feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources. Lack of language access and inadequate interpretation for victims who spoke limited English led to TPOs being denied

because victims were unable to fully express their fears in court; victims and perpetrators not being able to access critical information that was provided in English only, such as court date notices and TPO forms; reliance on young children as interpreters; incomplete investigation of domestic violence crimes resulting in a lack of criminal accountability for abusers; and service providers not conducting thorough assessments or interviews. Additionally, fear of deportation, a lack of information on legal rights, and uncertainty about the U.S. court system deterred victims from calling law enforcement. Moreover, culturally relevant services outside of their communities did not always exist or were not known to the victim or their support system.

The victim and her husband immigrated to the United States two years prior to the murder-suicide. They shared two children. She worked two part-time jobs and attended vocational classes. Her English speaking skills were described as moderate but she was attending ESOL classes. He worked in the hotel service industry and his English speaking skills were described as poor to moderate. The only person the family was close with was a rabbi who worked with the immigrant community. He helped them learn how to drive, obtain their driver's licenses, and purchase a car. Two months before her death, the victim confided in the rabbi she could no longer tolerate the abuse by her husband. She had left him twice before they immigrated to the U.S. and at least six times in the two years since. She was afraid of him. The rabbi advised her she needed to leave her husband. She told him she had been saving money and had a plan to establish herself and the children in a new apartment. After she left, the rabbi spent a great deal of time with the husband and described him as extremely depressed and suicidal. Even though they were living separately, the family attended synagogue together. After the service, they all drove together to the husband's apartment to pick up some more of the children's belongings. While the children were inside the house, the husband stabbed the victim repeatedly in her neck and chest before fatally stabbing himself several times in the neck. The parents were discovered deceased in the car by their two children.

10. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

The cultural beliefs and practices of victims and their families created additional barriers and were not always understood by service providers. Often, immigrant and refugee victims live in small, close-knit communities. This can hinder a victim's ability to find safety within their community or to stay connected to their community if they must relocate. Many survivors may also fear losing their connection to their community and family if they leave their abuser. In some cultures, divorce is not accepted or there are cultural consequences such as alienation from one's community. It is important to note when working with immigrant and refugee victims that intimate partner violence and violence against women overall may look different than it does in the United States. For example, the leading cause of domestic violence-related deaths in the U.S. is firearms, but in other cultures deaths may be caused by stoning, kitchen "accidents," or acid burnings. Sometimes the values and beliefs about women that drive violence, while similar to Western culture, may manifest themselves in different ways. For instance, honor killings, a practice that occurs in various cultures, is the homicide of a family member or member of a social group when the perpetrator believes the victim has brought shame or dishonor to the group. Women are usually the targets of these killings for reasons such as refusing to enter an arranged marriage, being in a relationship that is disapproved by their relatives, having sex outside marriage, being a victim of rape, and dressing in ways which are deemed inappropriate.

i Additional Resources

1. National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project. (2013). *Breaking barriers: A complete guide to legal rights and resources for battered immigrants*. Available at <http://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/reference/manuals/domestic-violence-family-violence>
2. Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2002). *Model protocol on services for limited English proficient immigrant and refugee victims of domestic violence*. Available at http://www.wscadv.org/docs/protocol_LEP_victims.pdf
3. Office on Violence Against Women Culturally Specific Services Program (CLSSP) Technical Assistance Providers:
 - Casa de Esperanza: www.casadeesperanza.org
 - Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community: www.idvaac.org
 - Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence: www.apiidv.org

LGBTQ Victims

Reviews of two same-sex relationships revealed barriers to safety faced by victims from the LGBTQ community. In both of these cases, the information collected by the Project was scarce due to the victims' limited involvement with the systems from which we usually collect information, such as law enforcement, the courts, and domestic violence agencies, and the unique considerations of the Project when reviewing cases of LGBTQ victims. For example, Project coordinators and review teams have carefully considered whether or not to reach out to victims' friends and family members for interviews in an effort to prevent accidental disclosure of a victim's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, even after death. Nonetheless, these limitations were findings in themselves: victims who are LGBTQ often do not reach out to traditional systems for help, and their sexual orientation and/or gender identity can influence disclosure of abuse to friends, family members, and co-workers.

Domestic violence is often understood as something that men do to women. However, the rate of domestic violence in LGBTQ relationships is roughly the same as heterosexual relationships (25%), although rates for both of these groups is likely underreported. Regardless of the gender of the victim and abuser, domestic violence is ultimately about power and control and includes physical or sexual violence, emotional and verbal abuse, and economic abuse. However, LGBTQ victims face increased barriers to leaving abusive relationships and may be extremely isolated.

**FINDING: MANY VICTIMS FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES FACE
ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING RESOURCES AND ACHIEVING SAFETY.**

LGBTQ victims face barriers due to biased treatment. Victims who are LGBTQ often do not feel safe disclosing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to traditional systems or helping agents (i.e. law enforcement or victim advocates) due to fear of biased treatment. LGBTQ victims may face a range of responses from helping agents, from beliefs and language that assume every victim is in an opposite gender relationship, to homophobic and transphobic remarks and behavior. In response to their experiences or fear, LGBTQ victims may refer to their abusive partners as roommates or friends, as we can see in the story below. Victims who are LGBTQ may not even reach out for help for fear of repercussions due to revealing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. For example, if a victim is not “out” at work or to friends and family, the abuser may use the threat to “out” them as a powerful tactic to maintain control over them. Fear of losing one’s job due to disclosure of one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity can have a significant impact on decisions to disclose abuse and maintain economic security outside of the relationship, as discussed on page 26. And, even if a victim is “out,” they may still fear the criminal legal system’s response to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The first known incident of abuse was documented when the victim went to the emergency room following a violent attack. The patient representative called the police and they spoke with the victim in the ER. The victim told the officer his “roommate” became enraged when he entered the victim’s bedroom and found him with another man. The “roommate” hit him in the arm and the forehead with a wooden railing. When the victim and his date attempted to leave the home, his “roommate” pointed a gun at them and threatened to kill them. The officer advised the victim to go to Magistrate Court to obtain a warrant. That same day he went to the Magistrate Court and the matter was set for a probable cause hearing to be held two weeks later. The judge noted on the warrant application that the victim had visible swelling on his arm. A notice of the hearing was mailed to the perpetrator at his work address. Less than two weeks later, the victim went back to the Magistrate Court and requested to dismiss the warrant application. He stated he wished to dismiss it because “all issues had been resolved.” The

next known system contact happened a year and half later at the same shared home when the perpetrator shot the victim in the chest and committed suicide.

Moreover, victims who are LGBTQ may not think there are services available for them, a fear that is often realized as local resources for victims in the LGBTQ community are sometimes scarce and many traditional domestic violence agencies lack the training, sensitivity, and expertise to adequately recognize and address abusive LGBTQ relationships. For example, using language that assumes the gender of the victim or the abuser when working with victims and answering crisis lines instead of using the word “partner” and other gender-neutral language can end a conversation before it begins.

LGBTQ victims face barriers within the LGBTQ community. LGBTQ victims may live in small, close-knit communities with cultural beliefs that do not acknowledge or recognize domestic violence or support victims when they disclose or seek help. Some LGBTQ individuals may believe that domestic violence within LGBTQ relationships is “mutual combat.” Generally in the LGBTQ community, there is a lack of understanding and awareness about domestic violence, the resources available to help victims of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and the legal assistance available for LGBTQ victims, including TPOs.

i Additional Resources

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2010). *Why it matters: Rethinking victim assistance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer victims of hate violence and intimate partner violence.*

Victims with Criminal Histories

Victims with criminal histories faced additional barriers to safety and resources. Female victims in reviewed cases had criminal histories for a variety of offenses. Most often, past arrests were directly connected to the abuse they were experiencing and were the result of dual arrests or single

10. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

arrests where the primary aggressor assessment either was not completed or was not completed correctly (see page 35 to learn more about the importance of primary aggressor assessments). Regardless of how it happened, being arrested and entering the system as an “offender” caused detrimental, long-term consequences for victims. Once the victim was arrested, she was usually reluctant to call the police again and may not have been able to access domestic violence services.

also reluctant to call the police when they were on probation for fear of being arrested again. Additionally, when victims were involved in criminal behavior, such as drug use or distribution, or were part of a community with a historically problematic relationship with law enforcement, they may not have seen law enforcement as a helping agency. It is even more complicated for women who may fear losing their children.

When a victim had a criminal history, whether or not it was from a domestic violence-related offense, we saw increased barriers to accessing services. The abuser sometimes used the victim’s criminal history or probation status against her as part of the abuse. Abusers threatened to call the police to have her arrested again for a probation violation, or sometimes he actively sabotaged her probation compliance. One abuser spiked a victim’s drink with cocaine the night before she was scheduled to report for a drug screen. She failed the drug screen and her probation was revoked. Victims were

i Additional Resources

1. Michigan Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. (2011). Best practice toolkit for working with domestic violence survivors with criminal histories. Available at http://www.mcadsv.org/projects/Toolkit/Files/Best_Practice_Toolkit_Entire_Document.pdf
2. National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health: www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org

RECOMMENDATIONS: BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES



LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, PROSECUTORS, AND COURTS

- Develop a language access plan ensuring Title VI is being followed and language services are provided for all Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons during 911 calls, initial law enforcement response, follow-up investigations, prosecution-based preparations and decisions, court proceedings, court- and prosecutor-based victim advocacy services, and in written materials (outreach letters, TPOs).
- For adequate translation, use “I Speak” booklets to help identify which languages the victim and perpetrator speak. Screen to make certain victims can read their own language and make sure that materials are written for a lower reading level. Have a backup plan for when victims are unable to read their language.
- Provide ongoing culturally specific training and information to all staff addressing the intersection of domestic violence and marginalized and underserved communities.
- Develop policies for handling cases where it is later believed a victim of domestic violence was arrested for a domestic violence-related crime. Engage domestic violence advocates to assist with this.
- Ensure safety planning is available to all victims at every point of contact.
- Collaborate with faith-based cultural leaders to ensure they know how to connect survivors to safe options and resources.
- Ensure proper primary aggressor assessment identification and charges for all family violence crimes.
- Provide resources to and refer all victims, not just victims of physical violence, to local domestic violence programs.



FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

- Implement FVIP curriculum specific for women’s use of violence.
- Work with your local Family Violence Task Force to address the issue and reduce the number of domestic violence victims being sent to FVIP programs.

FINDING: MANY VICTIMS FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES FACE ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING RESOURCES AND ACHIEVING SAFETY.

 <p>CULTURALLY SPECIFIC AND LGBTQ COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with the local domestic violence program. Engage in cross training and build relationships with one another. Collaborate when advocating for victims of domestic violence from marginalized communities.
 <p>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with culturally specific and LGBTQ community organizations. Engage in cross training and build relationships with one another. Collaborate when advocating for victims of domestic violence from marginalized communities. • Examine agency policies and practices that may prevent members of underserved populations from accessing your services. • Examine agency policies and practices that may prevent a culture of acceptance and equality for staff and victims from marginalized communities. For example, ensure agency benefits are inclusive for LGBTQ employees and their partners. • Include culturally specific and LGBTQ-specific materials and resources in community outreach presentations and events, including teen dating violence. • Ensure photos and language on agency literature and websites are reflective of all victims of domestic violence, including LGBTQ relationships. Ensure information is accessible to limited English communities or communities with low literacy levels. • Consult census data and collaborate with local centers and schools to identify all of the languages spoken in your community. Make sure services and brochures are available in your community in all needed languages. • Learn about immigration relief available to survivors and educate immigrant survivors about their rights (including immigration relief for survivors), the U.S. court system, and available services. Support their connections to their cultural community and ensure their safety plan includes safety planning around immigration status and potential deportation. • Be aware of culturally relevant forms of violence impacting teens, e.g. forced marriages, honor killings/honor violence, and views on pre-marital sex or rape. • Ensure accessibility of services to victims with criminal histories, particularly when they have been identified as perpetrators or are being prosecuted.
 <p>FAMILY VIOLENCE TASK FORCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally assess the barriers to interpreters being provided as required by law and develop plans to bring the community into compliance. • Distribute domestic violence brochures at vocational schools and in ESL/ESOL classes. Organizations such as Caminar Latino, Tapestri, Raksha, and Refugee Family Services should be consulted to provide training to task forces about assessing community needs and initiating relevant outreach to multi-cultural communities. • Develop partnerships to meet interpretation and translation needs. This could be with businesses employing refugees and immigrants or with local universities or hospitals. • Conduct outreach and provide presentations to ESL Teachers and classes. • Invite LGBTQ-specific agencies and groups to participate in the task force. For example, contact the local chapter of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (www.pflag.org).
 <p>EMPLOYERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide culturally relevant domestic violence awareness training to managers, supervisors, and employees. • Provide multi-language and other culturally relevant domestic violence brochures in HR offices and in common areas.
 <p>THE GEORGIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW PROJECT AND FATALITY REVIEW TEAMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagement with marginalized and underserved communities, and continue to include members of these communities on review teams, in making decisions about which cases to review, as reviewers, and as participants on all levels.

DV & THE MEDIA

Media reports often minimize the complexity of domestic violence and unwittingly perpetuate domestic violence stereotypes. The following outline can be helpful for journalists covering domestic violence crimes in order to further explore the dynamics of domestic violence and the impact domestic violence has on the family and community at large.

1. Ask Law Enforcement

Establish if the homicide or assault is legally considered family violence in Georgia. Ask if there are any previous documented instances of domestic violence in the current relationship or previous relationships. Know that prior documented history of violence is not needed to establish a crime as domestic violence.

2. Engage Local Domestic Violence Experts

Local and state experts can provide you with local trends in domestic violence and services available to assist victims.

3. Establish the Scope of the Problem

Domestic violence is not a private problem. Include background data to establish the scope and dimension of domestic violence in the local community. For example, include how often law enforcement officers respond to domestic violence calls. Address how this homicide or assault relates to other domestic violence homicides and assaults in the local community and in Georgia.

4. Interview Relevant Sources

Victims' friends, family members, and co-workers can often provide significant insight into the history of controlling and

abusive behaviors exhibited by the abuser. However, it is best to wait a few days after a homicide to interview them due to possible trauma. When interviewing a domestic violence survivor, consider the safety and confidentiality needs of the interviewee. Avoid using sources emotionally connected to the abuser or sources that do not have significant information about the crime or those involved.

5. Illustrate the Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship and Increased Danger When Leaving

Cover common patterns of violence in abusive relationships and common barriers for a victim leaving the relationship. Convey that domestic violence is a pattern of behavior that often escalates when a victim is trying to leave or has left the relationship.

6. Highlight Patterns of Domestic Violence

Discuss recurring patterns of abusive behavior which put the more vulnerable members of families — particularly women, teens, children, and elders — at risk. Explore why many abusive relationships are not seen by law enforcement.

7. Be Aware of the Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

When the media covers domestic violence homicides, phrases such as, “the child at the scene was unharmed,” do not accurately convey the trauma experienced by the child. In fact, many of the children who were present on the scene of the homicide witnessed the homicide, discovered their deceased parent(s), called 911, or attempted to resuscitate their parent – involvement that inflicts some level of harm, if only emotionally. Read more about the Impact of Domestic Violence on Children on page 10 in this report.

8. Always Provide Domestic Violence Resources

Include information for the local domestic violence program at the end of all domestic violence-related articles and cover the services they provide beyond shelter. A list of state-certified domestic violence programs can be located here <http://children.georgia.gov/dv-crisis-assistance>, and the statewide hotline number is 1(800) 33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836). Include what family and friends can do if they suspect abuse (see page 54).

9. What to Avoid When Covering Domestic Violence Crimes

- Avoid calling domestic violence a “relationship problem,” “lover’s quarrel,” “love triangle,” etc.
- Avoid saying “no motive has been determined;” the motive in domestic violence is almost always power and control.
- Do not focus on the victim’s behavior or engage in victim-blaming.
- Do not assume some cultures or economic classes are more violent than others.
- Avoid treating domestic violence crimes as an inexplicable tragedy beyond the reach of community action.
- Avoid focusing only on the life and position of the perpetrator.

Adapted from: Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Telling the full story: An online guide for journalists covering domestic violence. Available at <http://dvonlineguide.org>.

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (2008). Covering domestic violence: A guide for journalists and other media professionals. Available at http://www.wscadv.org/docs/Media_Guide_2008.pdf

awareness

education

COMMUNITY



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Fatality Review Project Staff

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The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) brings together member agencies, allied organizations, and supportive individuals who are committed to ending domestic violence. Guided by the voices of survivors, we work to create social change by addressing the root causes of this violence. GCADV leads advocacy efforts for responsive public policy and fosters quality, comprehensive prevention and intervention services throughout the state. Being a coalition means working together for a common cause. We know that now and in the years to come, we will be up against enormous challenges that promise to test our capacity for conviction and perseverance. It is as vital as ever that we remember that the foundation for the future success of this coalition lies in our hands, all of us, collectively. As we coalesce around our common cause, we do so with the voices of domestic violence survivors and their needs for safety always in the forefront of our minds. To learn more or get involved, please visit www.gcadv.org.

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) is a state agency created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1992 to develop a comprehensive state plan for ending family violence in Georgia. GCFV works throughout the state to help create and support task forces made up of citizen volunteers

working to end domestic violence in their communities. In addition, GCFV conducts research and provides training about domestic violence, monitors legislation and other policies impacting victims of domestic violence, certifies all of Georgia's Family Violence Intervention Programs, and coordinates the statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project with GCADV. Please visit www.gcfv.org for more information.

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Review Teams

We acknowledge the commitment of the Fatality Review participants from around the state who devoted their time, energy, and expertise to work toward creating safer communities over the past 10 years. Below is a complete list of communities that have reviewed a case in the Fatality Review Project, listed by Judicial Circuit. In the instance that the entire Judicial Circuit did not participate, the primary participating county is listed.

Appalachian

Atlanta

Augusta: Richmond County

Bell-Forsyth

Blue Ridge

Chattahoochee: Muscogee County

Clayton

Cobb

Conasauga

Eastern

Griffin: Fayette County

Gwinnett

Houston

Southern: Lowndes

Macon

Mountain

Northeastern: Hall County

Piedmont

Rockdale

Rome

Stone Mountain

Tifton

The teams listed below are those who reviewed a case this year.

Cherokee County Fatality Review Team

Linda Banik, Anna Crawford Children's Center

Cheryl Carmody, Sheriff's Office

Tommie DeGonzague, Cherokee Family Violence Center, *Chair*

Sylvia Freeman, DFCS

Megan Hirsch, GA Probation Management

Niki Lemeshka, Cherokee Family Violence Center

Benjamin Miller, Shallowford Free Will Baptist Church

Josh Nation, Ascension Counseling

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June G. Sullenger, Solicitor-General's Office

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Lisa Williams, District Attorney's Office

Clayton County Fatality Review Team

Susan Bass, District Attorney's Office

Veda Brown, Sisters Empowerment Network, *Chair*

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Denise Frierson, Turning Point

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Tracy Jakes, Clayton County Police Department
Becky Kouns, Rainbow House
Ladyjoy Love, Touching Thy Heart International, Inc.
Pat Randolph, Healing the Hurt
Carolyn Smith, Healing the Hurt
Monique Smith, District Attorney's Office
Linda Torrence, Divine Faith Ministries
La Donna Varner, Georgia Commission on Family Violence
Currie Ward, Solicitor-General's Office
Isaiah Zimmerman, Jr., Department of Juvenile Justice

Cobb County Fatality Review Team

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Kate Gaffney, Legal Aid of Cobb County
Amanda Gulli, District Attorney's Office and Cobb County
Police Department
Cassi Haberler, YWCA of Northwest GA
Kim McCoy, District Attorney's Office
Josh Nation, Ascension Counseling, *Chair*
Jonathan Sampson, Acworth Police Department
Holly Tuchman, YWCA of Northwest GA

Fulton County Fatality Review Team

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Julia Black, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
Sikeria Caldwell, Judicial Correction Services
Brienne Erwin, Atlanta Legal Aid Society, *Co-Chair*
Victoria Ferguson-Young, The Kindred Moxie Network
Lunye Geter, Partnership Against Domestic Violence

Debbie Gibson, Solicitor-General's Office
Bridget Harris, Sisters Against Domestic Violence
Shannon Hervey, District Attorney's Office
Jenella Hill, Sisters Against Domestic Violence
Daniella Jackson, Judicial Correction Services
Glory Kilanko, Women Watch Afrika, Inc.
Vanessa Kinsey, Sisters Against Domestic Violence
Wendy Lipshutz, Jewish Family and Career Services, *Co-Chair*
Carolyn Mayer, Judicial Correction Services
Amanda Planchard, Solicitor-General's Office
Mark Shumate, Atlanta VA Medical Center
Jonathan Spurlock, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Wade Wheeler, Georgia Corrections and Parole Board
Liz Whipple, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
Vanessa Wilkins, Promise Place

Lowndes County Fatality Review Team

Stacey Bass, Sentinel Offender Services
Virginia L. Boswell, DFCS
Frances Elmore, Moody Air Force Base
Ronell Kromko, Sentinel Offender Services
Helana Liux, Valdosta State University
Ebonique Martin, LMFT
Karen H. Newsome, Solicitor-General's Office
Cindy Odum, The Haven
Teresa Plymel, Task Force Chair and Community Volunteer
Kyle Salter, Valdosta Police Department
Jynada Sermons, District Attorney's Office
Cynthia Walker, State Court Judge's Office
Kim Washington, DFCS
Carla D. Williams, District Attorney's Office
Karen Yawn, The Haven, *Chair*

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Disclaimer: The views, opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in the Georgia Domestic Violence Annual Report do not necessarily reflect the views of individual GCFV Commission members, all GCADV member programs, funders, or individual team members, and are the product of analysis by the joint GCFV and GCADV Project Team.

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