

UPstanders

Take Action:

Don't stand by –

Stand



UP

2013 Fatality Review Team Annual Report
A committee of the Pinellas County
Domestic Violence Task Force

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For more information, please visit
www.dvtf.org

What is an UPstander?

We each play a role in spreading the message that there is no excuse for intimate partner violence and it should never be tolerated. As a witness or bystander to a violent crime, what message do we send when we stand by and let a crime occur and do nothing? What can we do to stop it from happening? The answer is quite simply that we, as a society, must become UPstanders and stand up against intimate partner violence*. UPstanders stand up to injustice and what one does as an UPstander is based on a continuum of courage and risk.

UPstander

noun

A person who takes action, particularly when the easiest or most acceptable course is to do nothing

There are many ways to be an UPstander. Safety of the UPstander and the victim of violence should always be considered first. UPstanders can act by calling 911, either anonymously or by identifying themselves. Perhaps this is the most obvious, yet overlooked action one can take. UPstanders can create a brief distraction such as honking a horn or yelling when they witness violence. UPstanders can use their cell phones to capture the violence as it occurs. UPstanders respond with action to ensure the safety of those around them.

UPstanders lift victims up and out of stigma and guide them towards becoming a survivor. UPstanders embrace truths and dispel myths. UPstanders are aware of how victims are misperceived and work towards removing those misconceptions, thereby assisting in empowering survivors.

UPstanders include men who step up and unite with women to end violence. They do not stay silent, they work towards equality and they influence change in their peers.

UPstanders speak up by using language that is kind and free of violent connotations. They understand that language matters and use words that empower. Using safe and respectful language creates a shift towards non-violence in those around them. The ripple effect of this small change can lead to a more peaceful and compassionate society.

UPstanders also listen up by paying attention to patterns and trends in their community as a warning about potential threats that could lead to intimate partner violence. They reach out to victims and others in the community to share resources and offer support.

*Throughout this document we refer to intimate partner violence (IPV) versus domestic violence. Florida statutes define domestic violence as occurring among family or household members and includes siblings, parent/child, and other family in the home. Our Fatality Review Team focuses on intimate partners only-husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex partners, and gay/lesbian couples. Intimate partner violence takes many forms to include physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse. Homicide is the worst and ultimate form of IPV.

I am an UPstander

I offered to drive my friend to her domestic violence support group and when she was ready, I went with her to start the paper work to file for dissolution of marriage and injunction for protection. We also sat together and made a budget to start her new life.

-UPstander from St. Petersburg

I reached out to an employee who was abused by her boyfriend. The employer arranged to have a domestic violence advocate meet with the employee in the office to provide safety planning and information about services.

-UPstander from Largo

My sister called and asked for help to leave her abuser. We planned a weekend visit that was really an opportunity for her to leave safely. Once here, she was offered shelter at the domestic violence center for her and her two children. I went with her to file the injunction for protection and continue to offer my support.

-UPstander from Tarpon Springs

A neighbor heard the screams of her friend and entered the home to find the abuser strangling her friend. The neighbor pulled the abuser away allowing her friend to escape. Other neighbors heard the struggle and apprehended the abuser until law enforcement arrived.

-UPstander from St. Petersburg

Our church had invited a speaker to come talk about intimate partner violence. Later, in our bible study group, one of the members shared her story and asked for help. I went with her to the pastor and we asked for help from the local domestic violence center.

-UPstander from Dunedin

We were walking in the park and witnessed a young woman being stabbed repeatedly by her abuser. We ran toward them. I pulled him off of her while my girlfriend called 911.

-UPstander from Clearwater

Take the pledge to become an UPstander:

I pledge to become an UPstander by standing up to intimate partner violence whether I'm at school, at home, at work, in my house of worship, or out with friends, family, colleagues, or teammates.

I pledge to work to make others feel safe and included by treating them with respect and compassion.

I pledge to not use violent or offensive language, whether homophobic, racist, sexist or other derogatory terms in person or while using technology.

I pledge to encourage my peers, family members, and colleagues to do the same and will speak up when they use violent or offensive language.

Lift UP

**UPstanders lift up and out of old thinking.
UPstanders lift up and embrace evolved ideas and
change with the growth of a society.**

Victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) often feel stigmatized by the people in their lives and this stigmatization shames victims and impedes their ability to leave. An array of myths about victims of intimate partner violence have led to harmful stereotypes and misconceptions about who they are and the realities of their abuse. Dispelling these myths and stereotypes will Lift UP victims of IPV.

Stigma

noun

A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.

Myth: Why doesn't she* just leave?

Fact: There are a multitude of reasons why women don't leave. Domestic violence includes high levels of manipulation, power, and danger. "Leaving" isn't always the safest option at any given time. The safest strategy is to provide empowerment and support to the victim at all times. UPstanders would ask "How can I help her?"

Myth: Only poor, uneducated women are victims of intimate partner violence.

Fact: Victims of abuse can be found in all social and economic classes. They can be wealthy, educated, and prominent as well as uneducated and financially destitute.

Myth: Victims provoke the violence they experience.

Fact: Perpetrators often use the manipulation tactic of accusing their partner of "making" them violent. The perpetrator reinforces this tactic by telling other people she deserved the abuse. As a result, the victim remains in the abusive relationship because she believes the violence is her fault. She then makes repeated attempts to change her behavior in order to avoid the next assault. Unfortunately, no one, including the victim, can change the abusive behavior except for the perpetrator. The perpetrator is accountable for the behavior and responsible for ending the violence.

Myth: Victims of intimate partner violence are weak and suffer from low self-esteem and psychological disorders.

Fact: There is little evidence that low self-esteem is a factor for initially becoming involved in an abusive relationship. What is often seen as "weakness" is a self-preservation strategy related to survival. In reality, victims develop low self-esteem and symptoms of trauma-related disorders as a result of intimate partner violence. The expected outcome of exposure to degradation, humiliation, criticism, and/or physical violence may include Anxiety Disorders, Depression, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

*Statistics show that 85% of victims of IPV are women. Therefore, throughout this report we will refer to victims as women. This does not discount male victims but instead acknowledges that the overwhelming majority of victims are women.

Step UP

UPstanders are men who step up and join with women to solve the problem of violence in our society.

Historically, the behavior of masculinity has been filled with powerful actions and inactions by men. Men have been witnesses to violence and turned a blind eye because they have been taught that violence demonstrates masculinity. They have been taught to hide or mask who they really are through their posturing and protection of self. Dr. Joseph Marshall, Educator and Youth Advocate, recently said, "If you are told from day one 'don't let anyone disrespect you' and 'this is the way you handle it as a man', then respect is linked to violence." This masking prevents men from appearing weak to other men. And as a result, empathy is not valued. This socialization has left men out of the movement towards ending intimate partner violence.

Now, men are stepping up and engaging in the movement, making social change possible. Men become UPstanders when they are empowered to show themselves as caring, compassionate people and to be a part of the solution to end intimate partner violence.

According to A Call to Men (www.acalltomen.org), men can:

- ◆ Challenge inappropriate comments about boys/men not being "manly" enough and let people know that they are offensive and limiting.
- ◆ Talk with other men and boys about healthy manhood and the importance of respecting women and girls.

According to Men Engage (www.menengage.org), men can:

- ◆ Create opportunities for shared decision-making and the sharing of power.
- ◆ Speak out about violence in their community and have the strength to ask for help.

According to Men as Peacemakers (www.menaspeacemakers.org), men can:

- ◆ Foster and develop peacemakers through modeling, mentoring, storytelling and dialogue.

According to Male Athletes Against Violence (<http://umaine.edu/maav/>), men can:

- ◆ Be a positive role model in their community.
- ◆ Be prepared and have the courage to challenge the actions and words of others regarding violence.
- ◆ Be an ally to those who have been or are being victimized.

"Social change is a messy process. We need more men with the guts to stand up and say abusive behavior is abusive behavior, and it's not right, and it doesn't make me less of a man to point that out."

~Jackson Katz, Mentors in Violence Prevention

Equality

noun

The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.

Speak UP

UPstanders know the language of a society matters. They know words are powerful and can be used to heal and help.

Words have power. They can inform us, excite us, warm us. They can also rattle us, offend us, attack us. So often people say “they’re just words”, yet language is one of the single most powerful tools that influence societal attitudes. Word choice also impacts how we come to see ourselves and others. Language can create the shift that is needed to build a community that is safe for everyone. Reflect on how you felt when someone spoke in a derogatory way towards you. Now think about the impact of positive words and language.

<h2>UP</h2> <p><i>adverb</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To rise to a higher place or position</i> <i>Into a better or more advanced state</i>
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We can choose to use non-violent language, just as we choose to be non-violent.

Instead of using phrases such as:	UPstanders choose phrases like:
Shoot me an email	Send me an email
I love you to death	I love you with all my heart
Hit me up on my cell	Call me

Evaluating our language about violence can help better communicate the truth about IPV and hold abusers accountable for their actions. By changing the way we talk about IPV, we continue to create a more peaceful and compassionate society.

Instead of using phrases such as:	UPstanders choose phrases like:
She provoked him	He made a choice
He has an anger issue	He uses abuse to gain power and control
Why does she stay	Why does he batter
She is a battered woman	He is an abuser

Words and language impact a survivor every time she is challenged or questioned by family, friends or community. How we speak to survivors can help or hurt. As they come to make choices about safety and leaving, the psychological impact of what is said to them can influence their perceived options. To support and empower survivors, UPstanders must begin to speak in a way that can validate their experience and help them clarify their options.

Instead of using phrases such as:	UPstanders choose phrases like:
I can't believe _____ would do that	I believe you
What did you say or do	You do not deserve this - it is not your fault
That is not my problem	I care - how can I help

Tear Off Here

Listen UP

UPstanders listen to the facts and pay attention to the patterns in order to prevent continued violence in the community.

In 2013, five community members were killed by their intimate partners in Pinellas County. The Pinellas County Fatality Review Team, who are all UPstanders in our community, analyze IPV homicides in an effort to learn from each case and prevent such deaths in the future. Since 2000, we have reviewed 124 cases* and uncovered several trends. These trends can help all of us recognize red flags of lethality/danger. Not all cases with these trends lead to homicide but in the majority of homicide cases they are present. UPstanders pay attention to these trends, make mental checklists in their heads when they see or hear them, and reach out to victims to share concerns about safety, resources, and support. UPstanders learn from every life lost and commit to preventing future deaths. UPstanders Lift UP, Step UP, Speak UP, Listen UP, and Follow UP. They act, they support, they empower, they assist, and they STAND UP.

No Injunction

Only 13% of the victims had filed for an injunction for protection.

Others Knew

In 69% of cases, friends, family, coworkers, and/or neighbors knew about intimate partner violence.

Substance Use

Abuse of substances was a contributing factor in 71% of the cases. Substance use includes alcohol, marijuana, prescribed medication and synthetic drugs.

Male Perpetrator

In 88% of the cases a male perpetrator killed the female victim.

No Batterer Intervention

In 90% of the cases, the perpetrator had not been referred to or attended a batterer intervention program. Fifty (50) of the perpetrators had been arrested for domestic violence crimes and only 12 (24%) of them had been ordered to batterer intervention.

Firearm Used

In 49% of the cases a firearm was the weapon of choice.

No Contact with DV Center

Only 10% of the cases involved a victim having contact with a domestic violence center.

Criminal History

In 69% of the cases reviewed, the perpetrator had a criminal history.

System Involvement

In 62% of the cases, the victim and/or the perpetrator had been involved in the system (legal, child protection, social services, etc) in some way.

Other national trends or red flags for homicide are: Previous threats to harm or kill, previous strangulation, previous forced sex, jealous or controlling behavior, and separation issues. The danger level for a victim is heightened when any of these indicators is present.

*Reviewed cases met the following criteria: 1. Violence between intimate partners. 2. Homicides, homicide/suicides, and near fatalities. 3. Closed cases that have been investigated and a resolution reached. 4. Cases that occurred since 1996. In 2013 we reviewed 10 of the cases.

Follow UP

UPstanders follow up in their community to create change and help others.

For more information regarding **shelter services, support groups, safety planning and general information** about intimate partner violence, there are two domestic violence centers:

North of Ulmerton Road:
The Haven of RCS: www.rcspinellas.org/haven
PH: 727-442-4128 (24 hours)
PH: 727-441-2029 (outreach)

South of Ulmerton Road
CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse)
www.casa-stpete.org
PH: 727-895-4912 (24 hours)

FL DV Hotline: 800-500-1119

For **information and support for seniors** who are being impacted by crime and intimate partner violence, please contact:

Senior Victim Advocate Program
Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.
www.agingcarefl.org
PH: 727-570-9696 ext. 259

For **information and assistance with substance abuse treatment**, please contact:

Operation PAR: www.operationpar.org
PH: 888-727-6398

For assistance regarding **mental health issues and support**, please contact:
Suncoast Center Inc.: www.suncoastcenter.org
PH: 727 388-1220

Directions for Living: www.directionsforliving.com
PH: 727-524-4464

Gulfcoast Jewish Family and Community Services
www.gcjfc.org
PH: 727-479-1800

Personal Enrichment Through Mental Health Services (PEHMS)
24 hour mental health assistance line:
PH: 727-541-4628
24 hour suicide hotline: 727-791-3131

To request a **speaker at your child's school**, Pinellas County has two programs with staff who can come and speak about intimate partner violence, its effect on children and to provide education to students on how to prevent abuse:

North of Ulmerton Road
Youth Advocate
Peacemakers Program
PH: 727-441-2029 ext. 220

South of Ulmerton Road
Peacemakers Program
PH: 727-895-4912

Injunctions for protection can be filed at one of three court buildings in Pinellas County, based on the address of the victim. You may also call them at 727-464-7000 or visit their website at www.pinellasclerk.org

Civil Court Records
315 Court Street, Room 170
Clearwater, FL 33756

County Justice Center
14250 49th Street North, 2nd FL
Clearwater, FL 33762

St. Petersburg Branch Office
545 First Avenue North, Room 101
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

To **search criminal history records free of charge**, Pinellas County has two ways to access information: Pinellas County Sheriff's Department-Jail Intake <http://pcsoweb.com/InmateBooking/> Pinellas County Clerk of Court www.pinellasclerk.org

For **information about Batterer's Intervention Programs** contact The Haven of RCS, CASA or your local Victim Advocate associated with your law enforcement agency.

For more information on intimate partner homicide or this report, please contact:
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