



PINELLAS COUNTY
INTIMATE
PARTNER
FATALITY
REVIEW
REPORT

2016



A tree lives by it's roots. Change the roots and you change the tree. Change the trees and you change the forest.

DEDICATION

We dedicate this report to those who have lost their lives as a result of intimate partner violence, their family members and friends who struggle without their presence, and to the silent victims who continue to fight each and every day to stay alive.

 **Christel Anderson** (age 34)
March 2016, St Petersburg

Christel was a loving mother to her 6 year old son. She was killed by her boyfriend Michael and found in the bedroom closet by police. Michael eventually shot and killed himself.

 **Marie Stempinski** (age 72)
April 2016, St Petersburg

Marie was an accomplished reporter, marketing specialist, and business owner. She dedicated herself to helping others in the community, especially women. She was shot in the head and killed by her husband Gerard who then shot and killed himself.

 **Maria Antonio** (age 62)
May 2016, Pinellas Park

Maria, fighting a terminal illness, lived at an assisted living facility, but would come home on the weekends to visit her husband whom she had been married to for 33 years. Neighbors said that in the past Maria and Florante would grow vegetables and share them. She was smothered by her husband Florante who later killed himself.

 **Edith Kamp** (age 87)
October 2016, Tarpon Springs

Edith was a sports enthusiast, loving step mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. She was shot by her husband Robert who later killed himself. They had been married for 56 years.

 **Lisa Wells** (age 47)
November 2016, Largo

Lisa was a mother and friend. She was strangled by her boyfriend Lawrence who has a lengthy criminal history.

 **Saniye Salahutdin** (age 22)
December 2016, Clearwater

Saniye was full of life, happy go lucky, and always the life of the party. She lived life to the fullest and was adventurous. She loved children, her family, traveling, and the beach. She was shot and killed by her boyfriend Jeremiah.

 **Donald Barnes** (age 58)
December 2016, Clearwater

Donald was a father, a brother, a hard worker, and someone who would always lend a hand to a friend in need. He was stabbed to death by his girlfriend Elise.

Intimate partner homicide can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, gender or socioeconomic background. We pay special attention to the fact that in 2016, a victim from each adult decade of life was killed, from their 20's to their 80's.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Read and remember

Thoroughly read the report, absorb it, and remember those who have died at the hands of the person who was supposed to love them. Honor their memories. Work to prevent any further senseless deaths.

Discuss with coworkers

Share a copy with your coworkers. Bring up the report over lunch and discuss its implications. Encourage your coworkers to share it with others. Encourage your coworkers to talk with their teens about healthy versus unhealthy relationships. Encourage your employer to do a lunch and learn about intimate partner violence (the local domestic violence center or the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force will provide presentations for free).

Share with others

Challenge service providers in your life to read the report and act. Include clergy, medical, dental, massage therapist, hair stylist, child care worker, etc. Challenge your friends and family to read the report. Open up discussions with friends and family. Encourage social and volunteer groups you are involved in to read the report, discuss, and act. Encourage discussions with teens and youth about healthy versus unhealthy relationships.

Implement recommendations

Review any recommendations that apply to your profession or work arena. Discuss how to implement them with coworkers, supervisors, board of directors, and strategic planning staff.

Use as a tool

Pull information from the report to use when screening in substance abuse, mental health, medical, and dental facilities. Utilize information on law enforcement scenes, in child protection investigations, and in state attorney investigative hearings.

For more information on intimate partner homicide or this report, please contact:
Frieda Widera, Chairperson, Fatality Review Team
Largo Police Department
727-586-7481 fwidera@largo.com

No one has to do everything but everyone has to do something.

- Max Lucado -

Definitions and Terminology: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is all too common in our community and takes many forms (to include physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse). Homicide is the worst and ultimate form of IPV. Although Florida State Statute defines "domestic violence" as occurring among family or household members and includes siblings, parent/child, and other family in the home, our team focuses on intimate partners only (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex partners, gay/lesbian couples). Therefore, throughout the majority of this document we use the term "IPV" to describe our cases, and use the term "domestic violence" when referring to the legal term.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY WHEEL

The wheel below represents an ideal vision of what a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) looks like. Community response programs work to create a network of support for victims and their families. They also fully utilize the community's legal system to protect victims, hold batterers accountable, and reinforce the community's intolerance of violence against intimate partners. An effective CCR works to reduce intimate partner homicide.



Developed by: Domestic Violence Institute of Michigan PO BOX 130107, Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0107 (313)769-6334
 Inspired and adapted from the "Power & Control Wheel" developed by the Domestic Violence Intervention Project,
 202 East Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802 (218)722-4134

COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE

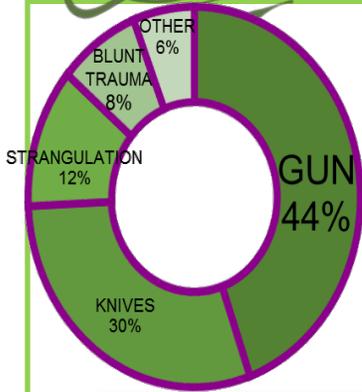
The Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force strives to create, inspire, and implement a Coordinated Community Response. Through various focused committees, members work to educate, challenge, guide, and support the community in preventing intimate partner violence, enhancing victim safety, and holding batterers accountable.



YOU can make a difference! Join the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force! We meet odd months of the year, the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 2-4 pm, in The Gathering Place at Suncoast Hospice, 5771 Roosevelt Blvd., Clearwater, FL 33760.

*Batterer Intervention Program Committee

LETHALITY FACTORS



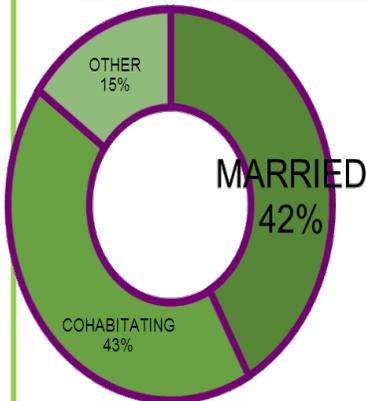
- Firearms continue to be the leading cause of death in Pinellas County cases (44%).
- The majority (89%) of the Pinellas County homicide/suicide cases reviewed involved a firearm.
- Nationally, research shows that the presence of a gun in a home where there is intimate partner violence significantly increases the risk of homicide. (Campbell, 2003)

Did you know that Federal Statute prevents anyone convicted of a domestic violence misdemeanor from possessing or purchasing a firearm but in Pinellas County, many people charged with domestic battery are placed in a diversion program which does not qualify as a conviction, thus allowing them to possess firearms?

- In an alarming 71% of cases, friends, family, co-workers, and/or neighbors knew about the violence.
- Family and friends often times have more insight than anyone else about the dynamics of the relationship, history of violence, and signs of escalating risk.



Did you know in the cases reviewed, those that knew violence was present in the relationship felt powerless or ill equipped to help the victim?



- The majority (85%) of victims and perpetrators were living together (married or cohabitating).
- We know that in 41% of the reviewed cases there was some indication of attempt to leave the relationship.
- Lethality increases when a victim makes moves to leave an abusive relationship.

Did you know the three main reasons women in violent relationships do not leave are fear, finances and/or children?

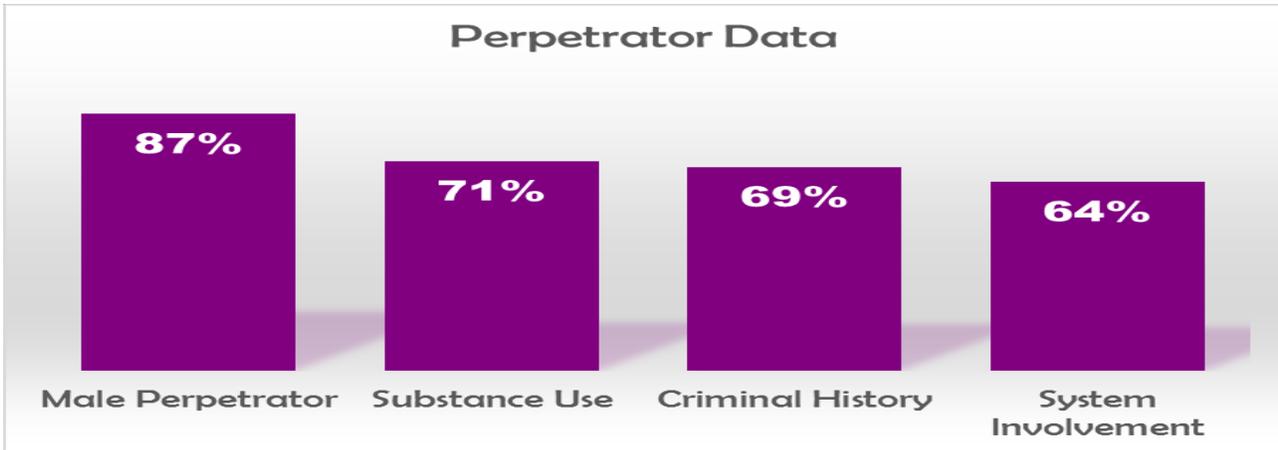
- In 86% of these cases, the victims had no prior contact with the local domestic violence center.
- Many incidents of violence are never reported to the police or kept secret from others which leads to a lack of information about resources that could help.
- Victims often believe that early violence is “not that bad” and therefore do not reach out for help.



Did you know the local domestic violence centers provide safety planning, relocation assistance, counseling, resources, and assistance with filing injunctions for protections as well as shelter?

BATTERERS AND LETHALITY

Recognizing the components of the profile of batterers is crucial to preventing intimate partner homicide. Here is what we know about perpetrators that were involved in intimate partner homicide in Pinellas from 2000-2016.



From 2000-2016, 90% of the cases reviewed did not receive a referral to a Batterer Intervention Program (BIP). Prevention begins with a community focus on accountability for batterers and the best practice requires perpetrator involvement in BIP. It is important that the community acknowledge:



◆ BIP does work.

Batterers completing at least three months of a program were 50% less likely to re-assault their partners in a 15 month follow up. (Gondolf, 2004)

The trends for re-assault showed a sharp de-escalation of abuse over time: at the 4 year follow-up of the multi-site study, fewer than 10% had re-assaulted a partner in the previous year. (Gondolf, 2000)

◆ Court ordered BIP reduces recidivism as opposed to voluntary or non-court ordered BIP.

Sheppard, Falk, and Elliott (2002) found that court ordered BIP (along with coordination from the criminal justice system and related agencies) significantly reduced recidivism rates for men who battered women as opposed to less involvement by the court system in other cases.

◆ BIP not anger management.

There are very important differences between anger management and batterer intervention programs.

BATTERER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS	ANGER MANAGEMENT
Works with issues specific to intimate partner violence	Focus is on anger management
26 Weeks (length reduces recidivism)	8-10 Sessions (can actually increase the violence)
Staff must be specifically trained and the program must be certified	No training required
Monitored bi-annually	Not monitored

RECOMMENDATIONS

We are at a critical juncture where the knowledge gained from fatality reviews must be turned into action.

- ◆ Domestic Violence Task Force (DVTF) meet with the Pinellas Police Standards Council regarding increasing victim advocate positions at law enforcement agencies, adding specialized law enforcement positions and/or units, and adding victim advocate positions within the State Attorney's Office domestic violence unit.
- ◆ Domestic violence centers seek funding to fully staff the injunction rooms at the Clerk of Court offices.

In the mid 2000's, changes in the economy resulted in staffing losses nationwide. Within Pinellas County we lost intimate partner focused police units, domestic violence center staffing in the criminal justice system, and a significant percentage of law enforcement victim advocates. It is time to rebuild resources to address intimate partner violence at law enforcement agencies, the State Attorney's Office, and domestic violence centers.

- ◆ State Attorney's Office tighten criteria for the domestic violence diversion program.
- ◆ Domestic Violence Task Force work with legislator(s) and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence to amend laws to mirror federal statutes regarding purchase of firearms, including closing the personal sale loophole.

Defendants who complete a diversion program are not considered "convicted" of a domestic violence crime; therefore, they can legally purchase and possess firearms. Unlike Federal Statute, Florida State Statute does not provide for removal of firearms from defendants convicted of a misdemeanor crime. While they cannot purchase a firearm, they are allowed to continue possessing one. Florida statute also does not prevent personal sales of firearms and gun show sales by non-dealers. And, dating abusers and stalkers who have an injunction for protection against them are not required to turn their firearms over to law enforcement. Since a woman is fatally shot by her partner every 16 hours in the US, intimate partner violence victims are 5 times more likely to end up dead if their abuser has access to a gun, 45% of Pinellas intimate partner homicides involve a firearm, and in 41% of Pinellas cases perpetrators had a domestic violence arrest or conviction, removing firearms from abusers is an important intervention toward protecting our citizens.

- ◆ Improve data collection to obtain quality, consistent and reliable information regarding intimate partner violence from all Criminal Justice and Civil Court entities.

The Domestic Violence Task Force has found that the statistics currently being collected are not accurate or specifically related to intimate partner violence. By collecting quality, consistent, and reliable data, the community will have a clearer picture of the problem which will likely lead to better solutions for intimate partner homicide prevention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Domestic Violence Task Force meet with the State Attorney's Office and civil and criminal judges to discuss the need to increase Batterer Intervention Program (BIP) referrals, consistency regarding the length of treatment, and ordering BIP instead of anger management.

In 2016, only 11% of the batterers who received injunctions against them were referred to BIP by the Civil Court. Currently, there are no easily accessible statistics regarding referral and completion of BIP within the entire Pinellas County Judicial System. The BIP program teaches batterers that their behavior is a crime. Increasing BIP referrals will decrease recidivism resulting in fewer victims.

- ◆ State Attorney's Office implement a domestic violence supervisor position to oversee felony domestic violence assistant state attorneys.

Currently the State Attorney's Office does not have a felony domestic violence division. They instead have one "specialized" domestic violence prosecutor in each division with supervisors who are not necessarily "specialized" in domestic violence issues. The 2009 National Institute of Justice Report states, if adequately funded, specialized domestic violence prosecution units increase domestic violence prosecutions and convictions, increase victim cooperation and satisfaction, and improve victim safety.

- ◆ Domestic Violence Task Force reach out to the media to request coverage regarding the prevalence of intimate partner violence in our county, ways to prevent it, and promote victim safety.

The media typically covers intimate partner violence when it is sensational such as a near death occurrence or fatality. Intimate partner violence happens on a daily basis and is pervasive. Reporting on the widespread personal and community impact of intimate partner violence may prevent the need to report on fatalities.

*We are all the leaves of one tree,
we are all the waves of one sea.*

-Thich Nhat Hanh

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is:

To honor victims and their loved ones.

To prevent future fatalities by educating the community about the warning signs and trends of recent intimate partner homicides reviewed by the team.

To identify necessary changes in order to prevent future intimate partner homicides.

To promote an enhanced coordinated community response to end domestic violence.

The Fatality Review Team reviews intimate partner homicides that have occurred within Pinellas County. We are a subcommittee of the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force whose vision is to have a peaceful and just community and whose purpose is to promote the prevention of domestic and sexual violence, to enhance victim safety, and to hold batterers accountable.

We review cases to learn, identify emerging and persistent trends, and apply what we have learned in an effort to prevent future deaths. We have reviewed 145 cases during the last 16 years and in 2016 we reviewed 7 of those cases. It is important to note our guiding standards regarding our reviews:

We review cases involving violence between intimate partners.

Cases reviewed include homicide, homicide/suicide, and near fatalities.

We review closed cases only (investigated and prosecuted with a resolution if appropriate).

The perpetrator is solely responsible for the homicide.

Reviews are limited to the availability of information accessed and shared by team members.

We operate with a high level of trust rooted in confidentiality.

We also want to say **thank you** to TARGIT US Inc. for your generosity in printing this report and for your commitment to our community. TARGIT is a Business Intelligence and Analytics software vendor local to the Tampa Bay community with offices in Boston, MA and Tampa, FL. Tommy Hilfiger, Giant Bicycles and local clients such as Monin and Lazy Days are examples of companies relying on TARGIT's Analytics software to help them make the right business decisions.

Let this report inspire you to look within yourself, your work, and your organization to make the changes needed to save lives in our community.

Doing the hard work will create the necessary change to prevent future deaths.

Tear Off Here

LETHALITY INDICATORS

There are national lethality indicators that have been established as signs of potential for domestic homicide. The national lethality indicators include:

Previous Threats to Harm or Kill ♦ Previous Strangulation ♦ Substance Use ♦ Criminal History ♦ Male Perpetrator ♦ Access to a Firearm ♦ Previous Incident of Forced Sex ♦ Jealous or Controlling Behavior ♦ Separation Issues

The Pinellas County Fatality Review Team has reviewed 145 cases and of those cases we have identified the following trends that can be used as lethality indicators. These trends mirror the national lethality indicators and should be considered as important factors when determining risk.

No Injunction

Only 12% of the victims had filed for an injunction for protection.

Others Knew

In 71% 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

87% of the cases involved a male perpetrator and female victim.

No Batterer Intervention

In 90% of the cases, the abuser had not been referred to or attended a batterer intervention program. In 59 (41%) of the cases, the perpetrators had been previously arrested for domestic violence crimes and 18 (12%) of cases had an injunction filed yet only 15 (19%) had been ordered to batterer intervention.

Firearm Used

45% of the cases involved a firearm as the weapon of choice.

Criminal History

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

No Contact with DV Center

Only 14% of the cases involved a victim having contact with a domestic violence center.

System

Involvement

In 64% of the cases, the couple had been involved in the system in some way.

RESOURCES

Tear Off Here

DV CENTERS

For more information regarding shelter services, support groups, safety planning and general information:

The Haven of RCS
www.rcspinellas.org/domestic-violence
727-422-2128 (24 hours)
727-441-2029 (outreach)

CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse)
www.casa-stpete.org
727-895-4912

FL DV Hotline
800-500-1119

SENIORS

For more information & support for seniors being impacted by crime and domestic violence

Area Agency on Aging
Victim Advocate Program
www.agingcarefl.org
727-570-9696 x259

CHILD ABUSE

Abuse Hotline: 800-96-ABUSE

Eckerd Community Alternatives
www.eckerd.org
727-456-0600

Child Protection Investigation Division
Pinellas County Sheriff's Department
www.pcsoweb.com
727-582-3800

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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

Westcare of Florida
866-720-3784

MENTAL HEALTH

Suncoast Center Inc.
www.suncoastcenter.org
727-388-1220

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

Gulfcoast Jewish Family and Community Services
www.gcjfps.org
727-479-1800

Personal Enrichment through Mental Health
Services (PEHMS)
www.pemhs.org
727-541-4628 (24 hour mental health assistance)
727-791-3131 (24 hour suicide hotline)

CRIMINAL HISTORY

To search criminal history records free of charge

Pinellas County Sheriff's Department—Jail Intake
<http://pcsoweb.com/inmatebooking/>

Pinellas County Clerk of Court
www.pinellasclerk.org

INJECTION FOR PROTECTION

File at one of these three locations:

315 Court Street, Room 170
Clearwater, FL 33756

14250 49th Street N. (2nd FL)
Clearwater, FL 33762

545 First Avenue N. Room 101
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

727-464-7000 or www.pinellasclerk.org

BATTERER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Contact the Pinellas County State Attorney's
Office at 727-464-6013

ANIMAL ABUSE

SPCA Animal Cruelty Investigation
727-586-3592 (24 Hour Hotline)