DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

INCIDENCE, PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY

Domestic violence and sexual assault are pervasive and life-threatening crimes affecting millions of individuals across our nation regardless of age, economic status, race, religion or education.

- More than 1 in 3 women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.¹ and approximately 7 million women are raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former intimate partner each year.²
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 77 men has experienced rape in her or his lifetime.³
- Nationwide, an average of 3 women are killed by a current or former intimate partner every day.⁴
- Female victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner experienced impacts such as fear, concern for their safety, need for medical care, injury, need for housing services, and missing work or school.⁵

ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Personal safety and economic security are inextricably linked for victims of domestic violence. For many victims, concerns over their ability to provide for themselves and their children are a significant reason for staying in or returning to an abusive relationship. Access to resources that increase economic stability are essential in rebuilding a life after abuse.

- Women and men who experienced food insecurity or housing insecurity in a 12-month period had a significantly higher prevalence of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in that same time period, as compared to women and men who did not experience food insecurity or housing insecurity.⁶
- 51.5% of the victims who identified a need for housing services did not receive them.⁷
- 1 in 10 women and nearly 1 in 25 men who have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner missed work or school as a result of the abuse.⁸

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children are particularly vulnerable as both victims of and witnesses to domestic violence and sexual abuse and assault. In order to break the cycle of violence, we must intervene and provide services.

- Approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year.⁹
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.¹⁰
- Young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence and sexual assault.¹¹
- Children exposed to violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution and commit sexual assault crimes.¹²
- Men exposed to physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or domestic violence as children are almost 4 times more likely than other men to perpetrate domestic violence as adults.¹³

COSTS

Domestic violence and sexual assault severely impact not only victims, but the entire community. In addition to the devastating damage suffered by victims and their families, these crimes also have huge financial costs.

- A 2009 study found that the costs associated with murder are staggeringly high: the average victim costs exceed $6.5 million, with more than $426,000 in justice system costs.¹⁴
- In the U.S., rape is the most costly crime to its victims, totaling $127 billion a year, which includes medical costs, lost earnings, pain, suffering and lost quality of life.¹⁵
- Domestic violence has been estimated to cost employers in the U.S. up to $13 billion each year.¹⁶ Between one-quarter and one-half of domestic violence victims report that they lost a job, at least in part, due to domestic violence.¹⁷
PROGRESS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

Congress’ commitment to improving the response to domestic violence and sexual assault has made a significant difference in the lives of victims. The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), enacted in 1984, has been the foundation of the response to domestic violence victims, supporting shelters and outreach programs across the country. The landmark Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first authorized in 1994, has changed the way federal, tribal, state and local entities respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

- VAWA saved an estimated $12.6 billion in net averted costs in its first 6 years alone. Additionally, a 2009 Department of Justice Study, The Kentucky Civil Protective Order Study, found Kentucky saved $85 million in one year alone through the issuance of protection orders and reduction in violence.
- More victims now report domestic violence to the police: there has been as much as a 51% increase in reporting rates by women and a 37% increase in reporting rates by men.
- The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 63% and the number of women killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34%
- A 2008 study shows conclusively that the nation’s domestic violence shelters are addressing victims’ urgent and long-term needs and are helping victims protect themselves and their children.
- A recent study found that when sexual assault victims have the support of an advocate in the aftermath of an assault, they receive more helpful information, referrals and services, and experience less secondary trauma or re-victimization by medical and legal systems. They also fare better in the short and long term and are more likely to file a police report than those without such support.

OVERWHELMING NEEDS REMAIN

While the United States has come a long way in meeting the needs of victims, there remains a significant gap between funding and the demand for services. As more and more victims courageously request services to escape from life-threatening situations, it is essential that their needs are met.

- In 2013, a 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs across the nation discovered that 66,581 adults and children found refuge and help on the survey day, while there were an additional 9,641 requests for services that were unmet because of a lack of resources.
- A 2013 survey of rape crisis centers indicated over 1/3 of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for services with victims often waiting list services. The waiting lists were reported to be as high as 53 survivors with waiting times, in some cases, exceeding 2 months. Also, 35% of rape crisis centers said that survivors in their service area were unable to receive a full range of services they need to resolve their experience of sexual violence.