



Domestic and Sexual Violence Fact Sheet

Incidence, Prevalence, and Severity

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

- ★ More than 1 in 3 women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.¹
- ★ Nearly 8 million women are raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked by a current or former intimate partner each year.²
- ★ 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have 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
- ★ Survivors of color and immigrant survivors face increased barriers to accessing safety and services. A 2019 survey found that 3 out of 4 advocates reported that immigrant survivors fear accessing legal services related to their abuser.⁵

Economic Barriers

Personal safety and economic security are inextricably linked for victims of domestic violence. For many victims, concerns about 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 one's life after abuse.

- ★ One study showed that 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 those who did not experience food or housing insecurity.⁶
- ★ 51.5% of female lifetime victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner who identified a need for housing services did not receive them.⁷

- ★ 83% of survivors of intimate partner violence reported that their abusive partners disrupted their ability to work.⁸

Children and Youth

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

- ★ Approximately 26% of children under the age of 18 are exposed to domestic violence in their lifetime.⁹
- ★ 8.5 million girls and 1.5 million boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.¹⁰
- ★ Children exposed to violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, become victims of trafficking, and commit sexual assault crimes.¹¹
- ★ 12.9% of male victims of stalking reported that the stalking happened prior to age 18.¹²

Costs

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

- ★ A study shows that the lifetime economic cost of intimate partner violence to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion.¹³
- ★ In the U.S., rape is the costliest crime to its victims, totaling \$122,461 per victim in medical costs, lost earnings, pain, suffering, and lost quality of life. For the country's 25 million victims of rape, this totals \$3.1 trillion in lifetime costs.¹⁴

Progress for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims

Congress's 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.¹⁵ Additionally, the Kentucky Civil Protective Order Study found that Kentucky saved \$85 million in one year alone through the issuance of protection orders and the resulting reduction in violence.¹⁶
- ★ From 1994 to 2017, the rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 67%.¹⁷
- ★ A 2010 study demonstrated that an increase in the availability of legal services is associated with a decrease in intimate partner homicide.¹⁸
- ★ A number of studies show that the nation's domestic violence shelters and programs are addressing victims' urgent and long-term needs, and are helping victims protect themselves and their children.¹⁹
- ★ A 2006 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.²⁰

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 2019, a 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs across the nation reported that 74,226 adults and children found refuge and help on the survey day, while there were an additional 11,336 requests for services on the survey day that were unmet because of a lack of resources.²¹
- ★ According to a 2019 survey by NAESV, almost half of the nation's sexual assault service providers have a waiting list for counseling services and wait times up to 6 months.²²

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- ⁴ Bureau of Justice Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence: Attributes of Victimization, 1993-2011 (Special Report NCJ243300). Retrieved from: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipvav9311.pdf>
- ⁵ May 2019 Findings: Immigrant Survivors Fear Reporting Violence. Tahirih Justice Center. Retrieved from <https://www.tahirih.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Advocate-Survey-Final.pdf>.
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