Domestic Violence Awareness Month
October 2012

1. Women are much more likely than men to be victimized by a current or former intimate partner.

2. More than one-third of women in the United States (35.6 percent or approximately 42.4 million) have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.*

3. Women are 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend. Three-fourths of the persons who commit family violence are male.

4. Many batterers’ motivation to intimidate and control their victims through the children increases after separation, due to the loss of other methods of exerting control.

5. Children exposed to domestic violence often show greater behavioral, emotional, attitudinal, and cognitive difficulties compared to those who are not so exposed, but these impacts vary depending on a host of protective and risk factors in each child’s life.

6. More than half of teen girls (51 percent) say pressure from a guy is a reason girls send sexy messages or images, while only 18 percent of teen boys say pressure from a girl is a reason. Twelve percent of teen girls who have sent sexually suggestive messages or images say they felt “pressed” to do so.

*Although both men and women can be victims of domestic violence, the majority of victims of abuse and coercive control are women. Therefore, this fact sheet reflects that reality. See Bureau of Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Family Violence Statistics: Including Statistics on Stranger and Acquaintances 1 (2005) http://bjs.ojp.usdoj/content/pub/pdf/fvs02.pdf (finding that females were 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse by a boyfriend or girlfriend and that males were 83 percent of spouse murderers and 75 percent of murderers who killed a boyfriend or girlfriend).

This document was developed by Grant Number 90EV0415 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.
African American females experience intimate partner violence at a rate 35 percent higher than that of white females, and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races. However, they are less likely than white women to use social services, battered women’s programs, or go to the hospital because of domestic violence.

Technology has become a quick and easy way for stalkers to monitor and harass their victims. More than one in four stalking victims reports that some form of cyberstalking was used against them, such as email (83 percent of all cyberstalking victims) or instant messaging (35 percent). Electronic monitoring of some kind is used to stalk one in 13 victims.

Separation often signifies the end of a relationship; but for many adult victims of domestic violence, separation marks an escalation of the batterers’ violence and manipulative tactics. These tactics often continue at significant rates post separation, may become even more severe, and children can be targets of or witnesses to this violence.

American Indian and Alaska Native women experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.

Compared to homes without guns, the presence of guns in the home is associated with a 3-fold increased homicide risk within the home. This risk connected to gun ownership increases to 8-fold when the offender is an intimate partner or relative of the victim and is 20 times higher when previous domestic violence exists.

Compared to those who grew up with no domestic violence, children who witness domestic violence are at greater risk of having serious adult health problems including tobacco use, substance abuse, obesity, cancer, heart disease, depression, and a higher risk of unintended pregnancy.

More than one third of battered women are subjected to severe psychological abuse or threats during visitation and exchanges.
In a 2010 study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected intimate partner violence, researchers found that only 45.6 percent of LGBTQH intimate partner violence survivors received orders of protection.

In a sample of 100 girls adjudicated delinquent, 69 percent reported experiencing caregiver violence; 42 percent reported dating violence; 81 percent experienced sexual violence; and 90 percent witnessed violence.

Supervised visitation for fathers who use violence offers protection for a child while at the same time maintaining the relationship at an intensity and frequency that is developmentally appropriate.

Forty-four percent of youth reporting physical teen dating violence also reported a history of child maltreatment; two out of three had witnessed an assault between other family members.

Allegations of domestic violence have no demonstrated effect on the rate at which fathers are awarded custody of their children, nor do such allegations affect the rate at which fathers are ordered into supervised visitation. Abusers win unsupervised custody and visitation at the same rate as non-abusers.

A statewide study of 2,000 randomly selected child protection referrals found that domestic violence was present in almost half (47 percent) of cases accepted for investigation and assigned a moderate to high level of risk.

Women who have experienced domestic violence are 80 percent more likely to have a stroke, 70 percent more likely to have heart disease, 60 percent more likely to have asthma, and 70 percent more likely to drink heavily than women who have not experienced intimate partner violence.
Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner—a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth.

Nearly one in four Latinas will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and one in 20 in the previous 12 months. Latinas prefer to tell family members, female friends, or neighbors about intimate partner violence, while non-Latinas are more likely to tell health care workers or clergy.

Of pet-owning victims entering domestic violence shelters, 71% reported that their batterer had injured, maimed, killed or threatened family pets as a means of punishment or coercive control.

An estimated 30 percent of second generation Filipina women experienced physical violence and an estimated 18 percent of second generation Indian/Pakistani women experienced sexual violence at 16 years old.

Due to factors including lack of insurance and controlling partner behaviors, children of mothers experiencing abuse are less likely to complete immunizations compared to children whose mothers do not report abuse.

Of all females killed with a firearm, almost two-thirds were killed by intimate partners.

Seventy-six percent of femicide victims (85 percent of attempted femicide victims) were stalked by intimate partners prior to their murder.
The majority of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. Sixty-six percent of female victims and 41 percent of male victims of stalking are stalked by a current or former intimate partner.

While both adolescent boys and girls perpetrate physical violence in dating relationships, the emotional and physical consequences differ significantly. When asked about the worst incident of victimization, the majority of boys (56 percent) report not being hurt at all and laughing about the violence, whereas only 9 percent of girls report not being hurt at all. For girls, the most common reactions were to cry (40 percent) and to fight back (36 percent).

The presentation of victims can make it difficult for courts to accurately assess their competency as parents in child custody proceedings. Many victims suffer from a variety of trauma symptoms likely related to their abuse and may present as angry, distrustful, and suspicious with all professionals related to the custody proceedings.

Positive engagement of fathers to change their negative behaviors and attitudes can enhance the well-being of their children, partners, and ex-partners; this engagement is a key component to ending family violence.
RESOURCES BY FACT


