

Family Violence Prevention Fund

The Facts on Domestic, Dating and Sexual Violence

Domestic, dating and sexual violence are costly and pervasive problems in this country, causing victims, as well as witnesses and bystanders, in every community to suffer incalculable pain and loss. In addition to the lives taken and injuries suffered, partner violence shatters the sense of well-being that allows people to thrive. It also can cause health problems that last a lifetime, and diminish children's prospects in school and in life. The United States has made progress in the last few decades in addressing this violence, resulting in welcome declines¹ – but there is more work to do to implement the strategies that hold the most promise. These include teaching the next generation that violence is wrong, training more health care providers to assess patients for abuse, implementing workplace prevention and victim support programs, and making services available to all victims including immigrants and children who witness violence.

Prevalence of Violence in the United States

- On average more than three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States. In 2005, 1,181 women were murdered by an intimate partner.²
- In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published data collected in 2005 that finds that women experience two million injuries from intimate partner violence each year.³
- Nearly one in four women in the United States reports experiencing violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life.⁴
- Women are much more likely than men to be victimized by a current or former intimate partner.⁵ Women are 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend and about three-fourths of the persons who commit family violence are male.⁶
- There were 248,300 rapes/sexual assaults in the United States in 2007, more than 500 per day, up from 190,600 in 2005. Women were more likely than men to be victims; the rate for rape/sexual assault for persons age 12 or older in 2007 was 1.8 per 1,000 for females and 0.1 per 1,000 for males.⁷
- The United States Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 3.4 million persons said they were victims of stalking during a 12-month period in 2005 and 2006. Women experience 20 stalking victimizations per 1,000 females age 18 and older, while men experience approximately seven stalking victimizations per 1,000 males age 18 and older.⁸

Who Is at Risk

- Women of all ages are at risk for domestic and sexual violence, and those age 20 to 24 are at the greatest risk of experiencing nonfatal intimate partner violence.⁹
- Young women age 20 to 24 also experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, followed by those 16 to 19.¹⁰ People age 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking.¹¹

- American Indian and Alaska Native women experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.¹²

Violence and Teens

- 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.¹³
- One in five tweens – age 11 to 14 – say their friends are victims of dating violence and nearly half who are in relationships know friends who are verbally abused. Two in five of the youngest tweens, ages 11 and 12, report that their friends are victims of verbal abuse in relationships.¹⁴
- Teen victims of physical dating violence are more likely than their non-abused peers to smoke, use drugs, engage in unhealthy diet behaviors (taking diet pills or laxatives and vomiting to lose weight), engage in risky sexual behaviors, and attempt or consider suicide.¹⁵

Violence and Children

- 15.5 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year, and seven million children live in families in which severe partner violence occurred.¹⁶
- The majority of nonfatal intimate partner victimizations of women (two-thirds) in the United States occur at home.¹⁷ Children under age 12 are residents of the households experiencing intimate partner violence in 38 percent of incidents involving female victims.¹⁸
- In a single day in 2008, 16,458 children were living in a domestic violence shelter or transitional housing facility. Another 6,430 children sought services at a non-residential program.¹⁹

Consequences of Violence

- 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.²⁰
- In the United States in 1995, the cost of intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking totaled \$5.8 billion each year for direct medical and mental health care services and lost productivity from paid work and household chores.²¹ When updated to 2003 dollars, the cost is more than \$8.3 billion.²²
- Sexual and domestic violence are linked to a wide range of reproductive health issues including sexually transmitted disease and HIV transmission, miscarriages, risky sexual health behaviour and more.²³

Emerging Issues

- 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.²⁴

- One in five teen girls and one in ten younger teen girls (age 13 to 16) have electronically sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves. Even more teen girls, 37 percent, have sent or posted sexually suggestive text, email or IM (instant messages).²⁵
- 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 “pressured” to do so.²⁶

Prevalence of Violence Globally

- The United Nations Development Fund for Women estimates that at least one of every three women globally will be beaten, raped or otherwise abused during her lifetime. In most cases, the abuser is a member of her own family.²⁷
- A 2005 World Health Organization study found that of 15 sites in ten countries – representing diverse cultural settings – the proportion of ever-partnered women who had experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetimes ranged from 15 percent in Japan to 71 percent in Ethiopia.²⁸

¹ Catalano, Shannan. 2007. Intimate Partner Violence in the United States. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>.

² Catalano, Shannan. 2007. Intimate Partner Violence in the United States. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>.

³ Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. February 2008. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm.

⁴ Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. February 2008. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5705a1.htm.

⁵ National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2007. 2008. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>.

⁶ Family Violence Statistics: Including Statistics on Strangers and Acquaintances. 2005. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/fvs.pdf>.

⁷ National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2007. 2008. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>.

⁸ Baum, Katrina, Catalano, Shannan, Rand, Michael and Rose, Kristina. 2009. *Stalking Victimization in the United States*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/svus.pdf>.

⁹ Catalano, Shannan. 2007. Intimate Partner Violence in the United States. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>.

¹⁰ National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2007. 2008. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>.

¹¹ Baum, Katrina, Catalano, Shannan, Rand, Michael and Rose, Kristina. 2009. *Stalking Victimization in the United States*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/svus.pdf>.

¹² Catalano, Shannan. 2007. Intimate Partner Violence in the United States. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/intimate/ipv.htm>.

¹³ Davis, Antoinette, MPH. 2008. Interpersonal and Physical Dating Violence among Teens. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus. Available at <http://www.nccd-crc.org/nccd/pubs/Dating%20Violence%20Among%20Teens.pdf>.

¹⁴ Tween and Teen Dating Violence and Abuse Study, Teenage Research Unlimited for Liz Claiborne Inc. and the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline. February 2008. Available at <http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/pdf/Tween%20Dating%20Abuse%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

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