

Seven Key Facts About *Domestic Violence*

Prepared by:
Stop Abusive and Violent Environments
www.saveservices.org

Everybody has heard about domestic violence. But do you know how common it is? Who is most affected? And whether we are making progress in the national effort to curb partner abuse?

Fact #1: About one in 10 American couples engages in intimate partner violence each year.

About one in 10 intimate partner relationships experience some form of partner aggression (slap, shove, punch, etc.) each year.¹

Fact #2: Men and women engage in domestic violence at similar rates.

- According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, more than five million *men* and nearly five million *women* experience some type of violence at the hands of their partners every year.²
- If an incident escalates, the female partner is more likely to be injured. Nonetheless, of all victims who require medical attention, one-third are male.³
- Female initiation of partner violence is the leading reason for the woman becoming a victim of subsequent injury. Dr. Sandra Stith has called it “a dramatically more important factor than anything else.”⁴

Fact #3: Partner aggression is often two-way.

- A comprehensive review of research conducted with large population samples found 58% of all intimate partner violence is bi-directional.⁵
- A Centers for Disease Control survey found that injury was more than twice as likely when the violence was reciprocal (28.4%), compared to unidirectional violence (11.6%).⁶

Fact #4: Although all segments of society are affected, domestic violence is concentrated in certain groups.

Domestic violence is more common among certain groups such as:

- Lower income couples.⁷
- Couples who are not in intact, married relationships.⁸
- Lesbian and gay partners⁹

Fact #5: Many factors contribute to domestic violence.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has identified over 25 different causes of domestic violence. These include individual, relationship, and community factors.¹⁰ Substance abuse, marital instability, psychological disorders, and other factors are known to often lead to domestic violence incidents.

Fact #6: America is making steady progress in the national effort to curb intimate partner aggression.

Since the mid-1970s, domestic violence among intimate partners has fallen dramatically, whether violence is assessed by community surveys,¹¹ crime surveys of non-fatal violence,¹² or FBI homicide statistics.¹³

Fact #7: Many victims of domestic violence face barriers to getting help.

Many victims of domestic violence encounter discrimination and other barriers to receiving assistance:

- One analysis concluded, “the exclusion of men appears to be the norm.”¹⁴
- One survey highlighted the discriminatory practices of many domestic violence shelters, concluding that lesbian and gay victims “still did not have consistent access to culturally competent services to prevent and address the violence against them.”¹⁵

References

¹ For example, the 1992 National Alcohol and Family Violence Survey found 9.5% of men and 9.1% of women in married or cohabiting relationships had experienced inter-partner violence in the previous year.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. Atlanta, GA. 2011. Tables 4.7 and 4.8. http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/NISVS_Report2010-a.pdf

³ Archer J. Sex Differences in Aggression Between Heterosexual Partners: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Psychological Bulletin* Vol. 126, No. 5, 2000.

⁴ Stith S, Smith DB, Penn CE, et al. Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors: A meta-analytic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* Vol. 10, 2004. pp. 65-98.

⁵ Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling. Rates of bi-directional vs. uni-directional intimate partner violence: A comprehensive review. *Partner Abuse* Vol. 3, No. 2, 2012. <http://www.springerpub.com/content/journals/PA-KnowledgeBase-41410.pdf>

⁶ Whitaker DJ et al. Differences in frequency of violence and reported injury between relationships with reciprocal and nonreciprocal intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 97, No. 5, 2007.

⁷ Department of Justice. Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2007. February 2010. NCJ 227669. Table 35. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1743>

⁸ Catalano S. Intimate Partner Violence, 1993–2010. U.S. Department of Justice, 2012. Table 1. <http://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv9310.pdf>

⁹ Zahnd E, Grant D, Aydin M et al. Nearly Four Million California Adults are Victims of Intimate Partner Violence. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2010. <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/96070.pdf>

¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control: Intimate Partner Violence: Risk and Protective Factors. <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>

¹¹ From 1975 to 1992. Male victims: From 11.6% to 9.5% of couples. Female victims: From 12.1% to 9.1% of couples. *Source of 1975 data:* National Surveys of Family Violence. *Source of 1992 data:* National Alcohol and Family Violence Survey.

¹² From 1993 to 2001. Male victims: From 1.6 to 0.9/1,000 persons. Female victims: From 9.8 to 5.0/1,000 persons. Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001. Table 2. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1001>

¹³ From 1976 to 2000. Male victims: From 1,357 to 440 murders. Female victims: From 1,600 to 1,247 murders. Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1001>

¹⁴ Stop Abusive and Violent Environments. Domestic Violence Programs Discriminate Against Male Victims. Rockville, MD. 2010. <http://www.saveservices.org/downloads/VAWA-Discriminates-Against-Males>

¹⁵ National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. Why it Matters. 2010. <http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbName=DocumentViewer&DocumentID=47632>