

National Statistics

Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Fact Sheet: **Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline has received more than 700,000 calls for assistance since February 1996. – *National Domestic Violence Hotline, December 2001*
- Nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. – *Commonwealth Fund Survey, 1998*
- It is estimated that 503,485 women are stalked by an intimate partner each year in the United States. – *National Institute of Justice, July 2000*
- Estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend each year to 4 million women who are physically abused by their husbands or live-in partners each year. – *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1998*
- Studies show that child abuse occurs in 30-60 percent of family violence cases that involve families with children. – *"The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering." J.L. Edleson, Violence Against Women, February, 1999*
- While women are less likely than men to be victims of violent crimes overall, women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner. – *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1998*
- Violence by an intimate partner accounts for about 21 percent of violent crime experienced by women and about 2 percent of the violence experienced by men. – *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1998*
- In 92 percent of all domestic violence incidents, crimes are committed by men against women. – *Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, January, 1994*
- Of women who reported being raped and/or physically assaulted since the age of 18, 76 percent were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabitating partner, date or boyfriend. – *U.S. Department of Justice, November, 1998*

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- In 1994, women separated from their spouses had a victimization rate 1 1/2 times higher than separated men, divorced men, or divorced women. – *Sex Differences in Violent Victimization, 1994, U.S. Department of Justice, September, 1997*
- In 1996, among all female murder victims in the U.S., 30 percent were slain by their husbands or boyfriends. – *Uniform Crime Reports of the U.S. 1996, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1996*
- 31,260 women were murdered by an intimate from 1976-1996. – *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1998*
- A child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. – *Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family, APA, 1996*
- Forty percent of teenage girls age 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend. – *Children Now/Kaiser Permanente poll, December, 1995*
- Females accounted for 39 percent of the hospital emergency department visits for violence-related injuries in 1994 but 84 percent of the persons treated for injuries inflicted by intimates. – *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends, U.S. Department of Justice, March, 1998*
- Family violence costs the nation from \$5 to \$10 billion annually in medical expenses, police and court costs, shelters and foster care, sick leave, absenteeism, and non-productivity. – *Medical News, American Medical Association, January, 1992*
- Husbands and boyfriends commit 13,000 acts of violence against women in the workplace every year. – *Violence and Theft in the Workplace, U.S. Department of Justice, July, 1994*
- The majority of welfare recipients have experienced domestic abuse in their adult lives and a high percentage are currently abused. – *Trapped by Poverty, Trapped by Abuse: New Evidence Documenting the Relationship Between Domestic Violence and Welfare, The Taylor Institute, April, 1997*
- One in five female high school students reports being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. – *Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), August 2001*

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Domestic Violence and Impact on Children

Domestic violence can affect children in many ways. Young people may witness terrible acts of violence against their parents or caregivers. Some children may never see the violence, but they may feel the tension, hear the fighting, and see the injuries left behind. Young people may be physically injured themselves if they try to intervene to stop the violence. Children may be asked to call the police or to keep a family secret. No matter the details of a family's situation, children and young people bear the burden of domestic violence, too.

Children react in many different ways to violence in their homes. Individual children may respond differently even within the same family. Some children may become violent themselves, while others may withdraw. Some may "act out," while others constantly try to act like the perfect child. In virtually all cases, these children are at much higher risk for substance abuse, mental illness and juvenile delinquency.

Although domestic violence impacts children tremendously, it is only recently that domestic violence has been taken into account when determining child custody in families where domestic violence has occurred. The laws regarding child custody in families with domestic violence histories are still different from state to state. Even when a violent relationship has ended, the abuser may continue to have contact with the children. It is important to plan for the safety of the children and adults in the family at all times.

Stalking and Cyber-Stalking

Stalking

Stalking, harassing behavior or threatening behavior that happens repeatedly is a large problem in America. It is believed that 1.4 million victims are stalked each year. Stalking behaviors can include following the victim, threatening or repeated phone calls, coming to the victim's place of employment, leaving written messages or objects, and vandalizing the victim's property. In domestic violence situations the family court system can also be used to stalk or harass the victim.

There are warning signs and safety measures that a victim should learn. Warning signs include an escalation of behavior- are they following you more or calling 50 times instead of two or three a day, is there a change in the pattern, for example the stalker leaves nice notes and now they are threatening? If you receive any threats towards you or your family you should notify the police. Also, has there been recent

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in-person contact? These are signs that the situation is worsening and you need to notify the police, and those around you including co-workers, friends, or family. A safety measure that should begin from the first signs that this may be stalking is a diary of events including any in-person contact, letters, phone calls, escalation of behaviors, contact with family, and if possible printed e-mails and answering machine messages. Change your locks if the stalker is an ex-partner, change your phone number and only give it to those who really need it. If possible keep the old phone to keep track of how many times they call or what messages are left. You do not need to listen to these messages, but keeping them will help with any possible prosecution or with obtaining a restraining order or order of protection. Be aware of your surroundings, and it is advised to not have contact or confront your stalker.

Cyberstalking

As more and more people gain access to the Internet, there is an increasing awareness of a new form of stalking called "cyberstalking." Cyberstalking is the use of the Internet, and other forms of electronic communications, to harass or threaten someone repeatedly. This can involve e-mail, harassment in live chat situations, and using the victim's code name or e-mail address after leaving inappropriate messages on message boards or guest books, sending viruses, or electronic identity theft.

By using e-mail the stalker can send spam (large volumes of unsolicited junk mail) harassment may involve "flaming," or on-line verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and repeated attempts at "private chats." Electronic identity theft is use of the Internet to gain personal information. There are on-line services that will give your social security number, financial history, personal information, and a detailed map to your house.

Cyber stalking can be as terrifying as real life stalking, but is often harder to prove and more difficult to control. The anonymity of the Internet works for the stalker, but there are safety procedures to help anyone on-line and those being cyber stalked. Do not give out personal information on-line, do not use your real name or nickname on-line, and be very careful about meeting on-line acquaintances in person. If you are being cyber stalked change e-mail accounts, and, if possible, keep old accounts open to document on-going abuse and only give new information those who really need it. If you cannot change accounts look in to filter programs. Within a chat room use gender-neutral nicknames, do not use real e-mail addresses, be careful with profiles, use ignore options, and do not answer individual chat requests. Notify the chat administrator or room moderators of abuse. If you are being harassed through e-mail or through a chat room, notify the Internet provider.

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Sexual Assault

Acquaintance/Date Rape

Acquaintance rape is sexual assault by someone known to the victim. The offender can be anyone from the person who sacks your groceries to a relative or boyfriend. Date rape is, by definition, sexual assault that occurs while on a date or between persons who expect to have (or already have) an intimate relationship. According to a study done by Mary Koss (1987), more than 84 percent of the rapes reported in this country are committed by someone known to the victim: a husband, boyfriend, relative, friend, friend of a friend, brief acquaintance, date, neighbor or fellow worker. Fifty-seven percent of these sexual assaults occurred on dates.

Marital Rape

Marital rape is the term used to describe nonconsensual sexual acts between a woman/man and her husband/wife, ex-husband/wife, or intimate long-term partner. These sexual acts can include: intercourse, anal or oral sex, forced sexual behavior with other individuals, and other unwanted, painful, and humiliating sexual activities. It is rape if one partner uses force, threats, or intimidation to get the other to submit to sexual acts. There are three types of marital rape:

Battering Rape - This involves forced sex combined with battering, motivated primarily by anger toward the victim. The sexual abuse is either part of the entire physical abuse incident or is a result of the husband later asking his wife to prove she forgives him for the beating by having sex with him.

Force-Only Rape - The husband uses only as much force as necessary to coerce his wife into sexual activity. This type of sexual assault is primarily motivated by the need for power over the victim. In his mind, he is merely asserting his right to have sex with "his" wife on demand. This is the most common type of marital rape.

Obsessive Rape - The husband's sexual interests run toward the strange and perverse, and he is willing (or even has a preference) to use force to carry these activities out. This is the least common, yet arguably the most physically damaging, type of marital rape.

Although battered women are more at risk for marital rape than their non-battered counterparts, some men will rape their wives and never beat them; others will beat them, but not rape them. These issues may be inter-linked or seemingly unrelated.

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Health-Care Statistics

One of four women with incomes above \$50,000 reported domestic abuse in her lifetime by a spouse or boyfriend, as did 37 percent of women with incomes of \$16,000 or less. Rates varied little for women when comparing by race/ethnicity, educational level, or geographic location.

Half of women with a history of any type of violence or abuse reported high levels of depressive symptoms, compared with a third of women with no history of abuse.

Additionally, one fifth of women with a history of violence or abuse reported having a disability or illness that limits their work or daily activities, compared with 15 percent of women without a history of violence.

One of three women with a history of violence or abuse faced problems with access to health care in the past year. While three-quarters of women exposed to domestic abuse had discussed these incidents with a friend or relative, only 29 percent had discussed them with a physician or health care professional.

(Health care statistics provided by the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a project of the Texas Council on Family Violence)

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