



California Domestic Violence Fact Sheet

Prevalence

Nationally, 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 While domestic violence is experienced by all segments of society, certain communities are disproportionately impacted.

- Approximately 4 out of every 10 non-Hispanic Black women, 4 out of every 10 American Indian or Alaska Native women, and 1 in 2 multiracial non-Hispanic women have been the victim of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. These rates are 30%-50% higher than those experienced by Hispanic, White non-Hispanic women and Asian or Pacific non-Hispanic women.³
- Nation-wide, 54% of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming people reported physical or coercive violence from a partner in 2015.⁴
- According to the American Psychological Association, women with disabilities have a 40 percent greater risk of intimate partner violence than women without disabilities.⁵

1 in 3 teens ages 14 to 20 have experienced dating abuse and about the same number say they have committed dating abuse themselves.⁶ LGB teens reported higher rates of physical and emotional abuse compared to heterosexual youth,⁷ and 50% of Transgender youth reported experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lives;⁸

Costs and Consequences

At its deadliest extreme, domestic violence leads to the death of over 80 Californians every year. There were 82 domestic violence fatalities in 2021. 60 of the victims were female and 22 were male.⁹

Nationwide, domestic violence costs \$8.3 billion in expenses annually, a combination of higher medical costs (\$5.8 billion) and lost productivity (\$2.5 billion). An estimated 8 million days of paid work are lost as the result of intimate partner violence.¹⁰ The lifetime economic burden of domestic violence in California is nearly \$400 billion.¹¹

Victims of teen dating violence and sexual assault are more likely to: suffer from psychiatric disorders and drug and alcohol abuse in adulthood, drive after drinking, engage in sexually risky behaviors, become pregnant, and attempt suicide.¹² They are also 3 times more likely to score more D's and F's in school than A's.¹³ Adolescent dating violence is also highly predictive of dating violence victimization and perpetration in young adulthood.¹⁴

Responding to the Need

In FY 2020-21, domestic violence programs in California answered 213,674 hotline calls, provided 608,658 bed nights for survivors and their children. There were 29,498 unmet requests for shelter. Programs provided services to 2,161 LGBTQ individuals, and 401 youth victims of dating violence.¹⁵ On just one day in 2021, 4,553 survivors received services, and there were 1,071 unmet requests for services. 42% of unmet requests were for housing or emergency shelter.¹⁶ In 2020, California law enforcement agencies received 164,608 domestic violence-related calls, 76,987 of which included a weapon.¹⁷

Housing & Homelessness

The need for safe housing and the economic resources to maintain safe housing are two of the most pressing concerns among abused women who are planning to or have recently left the person causing that harm.¹⁸ Nationally, 57% of unhoused women reported domestic violence was an immediate cause of their homelessness.¹⁹ The experience of domestic violence is not unique to just one portion of our homeless population, but rather cuts across many categories. Women, men, trans and gender non-conforming individuals, youth and veterans all experience domestic violence. According to the Center for Social Innovation's SPARC report, domestic and intimate partner violence was prevalent amongst the individuals surveyed, across all genders and ages.²⁰ Research has found that "women and men who experienced food and housing insecurity in the past 12 months reported a significantly higher 12-month prevalence of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner compared to women and men who did not experience food and housing insecurity."²¹

Economic Justice

Financial abuse occurs in 99% of domestic violence cases and can include stealing money, credit, property, or identity from a partner.²² Survivors and families experiencing domestic violence need the economic security provided by a solid financial foundation including access to benefits and paid leave. Research shows that access to economic resources is the most likely predictor of whether a survivor will be able to permanently separate from their abusive partner.²³

Impacts of the Criminal Legal System

The domestic violence movement has long focused on criminal legal system responses, and yet we must recognize that the criminal legal system does not serve all communities well, especially communities of color. Ending domestic violence requires an array of approaches reflecting varied perspectives and responding to the voices of all survivors.

Of the 695,060 known incidents of intimate partner violence in 2019, only 58% were reported to police, according to a Bureau of Justice Statistics report.²⁴ In April 2015, the National Domestic Violence Hotline conducted a survey about law enforcement responses, and found that both the women who had called the police and the women who hadn't called the police shared a strong reluctance to turning to law enforcement for help: 1 in 4 reported that they would not call the police in future; more than half said calling the police would make things worse; two-thirds or more said they were afraid the police would not believe them or do nothing.²⁵

"They believed him every time because he didn't leave marks, but this time he did and they accused me of hitting myself in the face. Before they would tell me I need[ed] to leave, and since I had nowhere else to go, I should sleep in my car. He had cuts on his knuckles from hitting me and they said I could be charged with assault." – Anonymous

Immigration Impacts

Immigrant women often feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources.²⁶ It is common for a person who harms to exert control over their partner's immigration status in order to force her to remain in the relationship.²⁷ In a 2017 survey of victim advocates and attorneys, 78 percent of advocates reported that immigrant survivors expressed concerns about contacting the police; 75 percent of service providers reported that immigrant survivors have concerns about going to court for a matter related to the abuser/offender; and 43 percent of advocates worked with immigrant survivors who dropped civil or criminal cases because of fear.²⁸

"I am afraid that my husband will talk his way out of trouble, and I will end up in a dangerous situation or will get deported." – Anonymous

Prevention

To create a world where individuals and communities are free from violence, we must continue to prioritize prevention efforts. A growing body of evidence points the way towards strategies and approaches that can prevent domestic violence, and build towards this future we seek.²⁹ Recent investments in California are supporting programs in their work to teach safe and healthy relationship skills, improving school climates and safety, shift culture by engaging boys and men in gender equity, and promoting racial justice with culturally responsive solutions. Thriving communities and healthy relationships can prevail over sexual and domestic violence if we sustain these efforts.

"Prevention is...finding new, innovative ways to engage our community. It's having conversations about the issues we're seeing, then empowering them to 'be the change'." – Rubi Gutierrez, YWCA Silicon Valley¹

For more information and to get involved, visit www.cpedv.org and email info@cpedv.org.

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