



# DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

## INCIDENCE, PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY

Domestic and sexual violence are pervasive and life-threatening crimes affecting millions of individuals across our nation regardless of age, economic status, race, religion or education.

- Nearly 1 in 4 women are beaten or raped by a partner during adulthood<sup>1</sup>, and each year approximately 2.3 million people are raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape.<sup>3</sup>
- Every day in the United States, an average of 3 women are killed by a current or former intimate partner.<sup>4</sup>

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children are particularly vulnerable as both victims of and witnesses to domestic and sexual violence. In order to break the cycle of violence, we must intervene and provide services.

- Approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year.<sup>5</sup>
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys is sexually abused before the age of 18.<sup>6</sup> Incest accounts for half of all sexual abuse cases.<sup>7</sup>
- Young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence.<sup>8</sup>
- Children exposed to violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution, and commit sexual assault crimes.<sup>9</sup>
- Men exposed to physical abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic violence as children are almost 4 times more likely than other men to have perpetrated domestic violence as adults, according to a large study.<sup>10</sup>

## COSTS

Domestic violence and sexual assault severely impact not only victims, but our entire communities. In addition to the devastating damage suffered by victims and their families, these crimes also have huge financial costs.

- The cost of intimate partner violence annually exceeds \$5.8 billion, including \$4.1 billion in direct health care expenses.<sup>11</sup>
- In the U.S., rape is the most costly crime to its victims, totaling \$127 billion a year, which includes medical costs, lost earnings, pain, suffering, and lost quality of life.<sup>12</sup>
- Between one-quarter and one-half of domestic violence victims report that they lost a job, at least in part, due to domestic violence.<sup>13</sup> Women who experienced domestic violence are more likely to experience periods of unemployment, have health problems, and be welfare recipients.<sup>14</sup>
- Domestic violence has been estimated to cost employers in the U.S. up to \$13 billion each year.<sup>15</sup>

## PROGRESS FOR DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Congress's commitment to improving the response to domestic and sexual violence has made a significant difference in the lives of victims. The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), enacted in 1984, has been the foundation of the response to domestic violence victims, including shelters and outreach programs across the country. The landmark Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first authorized in 1994, has changed the way federal, tribal, state and local entities respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

- VAWA saved an estimated nearly \$14.8 billion in net averted costs in its first 6 years alone.<sup>16</sup>

- VAWA 2005 established the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), the first federal funding stream to support the critical work of rape crisis centers.
- More victims now report domestic violence to the police: There has been a 27% to 51% increase in reporting rates by women and a 37% increase in reporting rates by men.<sup>17</sup>
- The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 53%<sup>18</sup> and the number of women killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34%.<sup>19</sup>
- A 2008 study shows conclusively that the nation's domestic violence shelters are addressing both urgent and long-term needs of victims of violence, and are helping victims protect themselves and their children.<sup>20</sup>

### OVERWHELMING NEEDS REMAIN

While the United States has come a long way in meeting the needs of victims, there remains a significant gap between funding and the demand for services. As more and more victims courageously request services to escape from life-threatening situations, it is essential that their needs are met.

- In 2009, a 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs across the nation found that while over 65,000 victims were served in one day, there were over 9,000 unmet requests for services.<sup>21</sup>
- A 2009 survey of rape crisis centers indicated that 25% of centers have a waiting list for crisis services, 61% of centers have 3 or fewer staff and 56% have had to reduce staff due to funding cuts.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (July 2000). *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC. Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey." July 2000.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey (1998).

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Homicide Trends from 1976-1999*, (2001).

<sup>5</sup> McDonold, R et al. (2006). "Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner Violent Families." *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(1), 137-142

<sup>6</sup> Felitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F., Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P. & Marks, J.S. (1998) "Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study" *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4).

<sup>7</sup> Havelin, K. (2000). *Incest: Why Am I Afraid To Tell?* Minnesota; Capstone Press.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice and Statistics, "Intimate Partner Violence in the United States, 1993-2004." December 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Wolfe, D.A., Wekerle, C., Reitzel, D. and Gough, R. 1995. "Strategies to Address Violence in the Lives of High Risk Youth." In *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, edited by E. Peled, P.G. Jaffe and J.L. Edleson. New York, NY: Sage Publications.

<sup>10</sup> Whitfield, C.L., Anda, R.F., Dube, S.R., & Felitti, V.J. (2003). "Violent childhood experiences and the risk of intimate partner violence in adults." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 166-185.

<sup>11</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States.

<sup>12</sup> Miller, T., M. Cohen & B. Wiersema (January 1996). "Victims Costs & Consequences: A New Look." Washington, D.C.; National Institute of Justice Report, U.S. Department of Justice.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office. *Domestic Violence Prevalence and Implications for Employment Among Welfare Recipients* 19 (Nov. 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Lloyd, S., & Taluc, N. (1999). "The effect of male violence on female employment." *Violence Against Women*, 5(4), 370-392.

<sup>15</sup> Bureau of National Affairs, Special Rep. No. 32, *Violence and Stress: The Work/Family Connection* 2 (1990).

<sup>16</sup> Kathryn Andersen Clark et al., A Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, 8 *Violence Against Women* 417 (2002).

<sup>17</sup> "Intimate partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Jan 2008.; Cassandra Archer et al., Institute for Law and Justice, National Evaluation of the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program 14 (Nov. 2002).

<sup>18</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Jan. 2008.

<sup>19</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Jan. 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Lyon, E., Lane S. (2009). Meeting Survivors' Needs: A Multi-State Study of Domestic Violence Shelter Experiences. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and UConn School of Social Work. Found at <http://www.vawnet.org>.

<sup>21</sup> *Domestic Violence Count 09 A 24- hour census of domestic violence shelters and services across the United States*. The National Network to End Domestic Violence (Jan. 2010).

<sup>22</sup> National Alliance to End Sexual Violence 2010 internet survey of 644 rape crisis centers from all 50 states, Washington D.C. and two territories. Can be found at [http://naesv.org/2009/?page\\_id=212](http://naesv.org/2009/?page_id=212).