

# Seven Key Facts About *Domestic Violence*

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**Fact #1: Women are more likely than men to be the perpetrators of domestic violence.**

- According to the Centers for Disease Control, 4.2 million men and 3.5 million women experience some type of physical violence at the hands of their partners every year.<sup>1</sup>
- For severe acts of violence -- being hit with a fist or something hard, kicked, hurt by pulling hair, slammed against something, tried to hurt by choking or suffocating, beaten, burned on purpose, used a knife or gun – victimization rates were slightly higher among males: Male victims: 2.0%, Female victims: 1.9%

**Fact #2: Partner aggression is often two-way.**

- A comprehensive review of the research found 58% of all intimate partner violence is bi-directional.<sup>2</sup>
- 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%).<sup>3</sup>

**Fact #3: Domestic violence rates have fallen dramatically since the 1970s**

- Since the mid-1970s, domestic violence among intimate partners has fallen dramatically, whether violence is assessed by community surveys,<sup>4</sup> crime surveys of non-fatal violence,<sup>5</sup> or FBI homicide statistics.<sup>6</sup>
- These declines have continued during the past decade. In 2011, the CDC reported annual rates of 6.5% for male victims and 6.3% for female victims.<sup>7</sup> Several years later, the CDC reported these numbers: 3.8% for male victims and 2.9% for female victims.<sup>1</sup>

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

- By Sexual Orientation (*lifetime*):<sup>8</sup>

MALES	Gay	Bisexual	Heterosexual
Slapped, pushed, or shoved	24.0%	27.0%	26.3%
Any severe physical violence	16.4%	[Number too small to report]	13.9%
Total	40.0%	27.0%	40.2%

FEMALES	Lesbian	Bisexual	Heterosexual
Slapped, pushed, or shoved	36.3%	55.1%	29.8%
Any severe physical violence	29.4%	49.3%	23.6%
Total	65.7%	100.0%	53.4%

- Domestic violence is more common between partners who are lower income<sup>9</sup> or who are not in intact, married relationships.<sup>10</sup>

**Fact #5: Many factors contribute to domestic violence.**

- The Centers for Disease Control has identified over 25 different risk factors for domestic violence. These include individual, relationship, and community factors.<sup>11</sup>
- Substance abuse, marital instability, psychological disorders, and other factors are known to contribute to domestic violence incidents.<sup>12</sup>

**Fact #6: Many victims of domestic violence face barriers to getting help.**

- 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.”<sup>13</sup>
- The most recent Biennial Report to Congress documents large sex-based disparities in the provision of victim services:<sup>14</sup>
  - Legal Assistance: 6% male, 94% female (Page 162)
  - Rural Assistance: 10% male, 90% female (Page 174)
  - Sexual Assault Services: 4% male, 96% female (Page 184)
  - Transitional Housing: 1% male, 99% female (Page 204)
  - Indian Tribal Governments: 5% male, 95% female (Page 222)
  - Tribal Sexual Assault: 14% male, 86% female (Page 237)
  - Services to Underserved Populations: 14% male, 86% female (Page 248)

**Fact #7: Similar patterns are seen in domestic violence rates around the world.**

- Studies conducted in 85 countries around the world<sup>15</sup> provide 198 direct comparisons of male vs. female-perpetrated abuse, concluding that, “rates were higher for female perpetration/male victimization, or the same, in 118 comparisons, or 60%.”<sup>16</sup>
- The International Dating Violence Study of 13,601 university students in 32 countries found that the most common pattern of dating violence was bi-directional, followed by female-perpetrated violence.<sup>17</sup>

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release, Atlanta, Georgia. 2018. Tables 9 and 11. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> 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>
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.*
- <sup>5</sup> 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>
- <sup>6</sup> 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>
- <sup>7</sup> [http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/NISVS\\_Report2010-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/NISVS_Report2010-a.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> NISVS: 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation. Tables 6 and 7.
- <sup>9</sup> 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>
- <sup>10</sup> Catalano S. Intimate Partner Violence, 1993–2010. U.S. Department of Justice, 2012. Table 1. <http://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv9310.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control: Intimate Partner Violence: Risk and Protective Factors. <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>
- <sup>12</sup> Stith, S. M., et al. Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimization risk factors: A meta-analytic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 10(1), 65–98. 2004.
- <sup>13</sup> 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>
- <sup>14</sup> Biennial Report to Congress, <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/1292636/download>
- <sup>15</sup> Listing of Countries:
- Africa – 20 countries: Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
  - Asia – 15 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Japan, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam
  - Europe – 23 countries: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom
  - Latin America and the Caribbean – 19 countries: Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Curacao, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela
  - Middle East – 8 countries: Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey
- <sup>16</sup> Esquivel-Santoveña EE, Lambert T, Hamel J. Partner Abuse Worldwide. *Partner Abuse* Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013. <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/springer/pa/2013/00000004/00000001/art00004>
- <sup>17</sup> Straus, Murray A.,. Dominance and symmetry in partner violence by male and female university students in 32 nations, *Children and Youth Services Review*. 2008.