



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT FACT SHEET

## INCIDENCE, PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY

Domestic violence and sexual assault are pervasive and life-threatening crimes affecting millions of individuals across our nation regardless of age, economic status, race, religion or education. Domestic violence and sexual assault not only severely impact victims but our entire communities and are linked to many other social ills.

- Nearly one in every four women are beaten or raped by a partner during adulthood.<sup>1</sup>
- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape.<sup>2</sup>
- Three women are killed by a current or former intimate partner each day in America, on average.<sup>3</sup>
- Over 22 percent of women and 7.4 percent of men surveyed, reported being physically assaulted by a current or former partner in their lifetime.<sup>4</sup>
- Approximately 2.3 million people each year in the United States are raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend. Women who were physically assaulted by an intimate partner averaged 6.9 physical assaults per year by the same partner.<sup>5</sup>
- Approximately 37% of women seeking injury-related treatment in hospital emergency rooms were there because of injuries inflicted by a current or former spouse/partner.<sup>6</sup>
- Women are at an increased risk of harm shortly after separation from an abusive partner.<sup>7</sup>

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children are particularly vulnerable as both victims and witnesses to domestic violence. In order to break the cycle of violence, we must intervene and provide services. Domestic violence shelters and programs provide children with a safe and caring atmosphere where they process their trauma and begin to heal. Children's services also help support the non-abusive parent as they deal with their own experience of abuse and begin to rebuild the family in an environment free from violence.

- Approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year.<sup>8</sup>
- Men exposed to physical abuse, sexual abuse, and adult domestic violence as children were almost 4 times more likely than other men to have perpetrated domestic violence as adults, according to a large study.<sup>9</sup>
- Incest accounts for half of all sexual abuse cases.<sup>10</sup>
- Children that are 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>11</sup>
- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence.<sup>12</sup>

## COSTS

In addition to the devastating physical and emotional damage domestic violence has on victims and their families, domestic violence also has huge financial costs.

- The cost of intimate partner violence annually exceeds \$5.8 billion, including \$4.1 billion in direct health care expenses.<sup>13</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>14</sup> Women who experienced domestic violence were more likely to experience spells of unemployment, have health problems, and be welfare recipients.<sup>15</sup>
- Domestic violence has been estimated to cost employers in the U.S. up to \$13 billion each year.<sup>16</sup>
- In the U.S., rape is the most costly crime to its victims, totaling \$127 billion a year including medical costs, lost earnings, pain, suffering and lost quality of life.<sup>17</sup>
- New research shows that intimate partner violence costs a health plan \$19.3 million each year for every 100,000 women between the age of 18 and 64 enrolled.

## PROGRESS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Congress's commitment to improving our nation's response to domestic violence has made a significant difference in the lives of domestic violence victims. The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) enacted by Congress in 1984 has been the lifeblood of core domestic violence programs, including shelters and outreach programs in communities nationwide. 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.

- Research estimates that VAWA saved nearly \$14.8 billion in net averted social costs in its first 6 years alone.<sup>18</sup>
- More victims 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>19</sup>
- The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 63%<sup>20</sup> and the number of women killed by an intimate partner has decreased 24%.<sup>21</sup>
- Staying at a shelter or working with a domestic violence advocate significantly reduces the likelihood that a victim will be abused again and improves the victim's quality of life.<sup>22</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 them protect themselves and their children.<sup>23</sup>

## OVERWHELMING NEEDS REMAIN

While our nation 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 2008, a 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs across the nation found that over 60,000 victims were served in one day. Unfortunately, due to a lack of resources, there were almost 9,000 unmet requests for services.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2008 the National Domestic Violence Hotline received 236,907 calls, but over 29,000 of those calls went unanswered due to lack of resources.

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

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Homicide Trends from 1976-1999*, (2001).

<sup>4</sup> Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000, July). Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. (NCJ 181867). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/181867.pdf>

<sup>5</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>6</sup> Rand, M. *Violence-Related Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Room Departments 5* (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Bachman, R. and Salzman, L., Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Violence Against Women: Estimates From the Redesigned Survey 1* (January 2000).

<sup>8</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>9</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>10</sup> Havelin, K. (2000). *Incest 'Why Am I Afraid To Tell?'* Minnesota: Capstone Press.

<sup>11</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>12</sup> Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice and Statistics, "Intimate Partner Violence in the United States, 1993-2004." December 2006

<sup>13</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States.*

<sup>14</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office. *Domestic Violence Prevalence and Implications for Employment Among Welfare Recipients 19* (Nov. 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd, S., & Taluc, N. (1999). "The effect of male violence on female employment." *Violence Against Women*, 5(4), 370-392

<sup>16</sup> Bureau of National Affairs, Special Rep. No. 32, *Violence and Stress: The Work/Family Connection 2* (1990).

<sup>17</sup> Miller, T., M. Cohen & B. Wiersma (January 1996). "Victims Costs & Consequences: A New Look." Washington, D.C.; National Institute of Justice Report, U.S. Department of Justice.

<sup>18</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>19</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>20</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Jan. 2008.

<sup>21</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Jan. 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Berk, R.A., Newton, P.J., & Berk, S.F. (1986). What a difference a day makes: An empirical study of the impact of shelters for battered women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48, 481-490; Bybee, D.I., & Sullivan, C.M (2002). The process through which a strengths-based intervention resulted in positive change for battered women over time. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30 (1), 103-132

<sup>23</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>24</sup> *Domestic Violence Count 07 A 24-hour census of domestic violence shelters and services across the United States*. The National Network to End Domestic Violence (Jan. 2008).