

Domestic Violence Victimization in the U.S.

- In a 2016/2017 national study, almost **1 in 2 women** in the U.S., and about **40% of men**, report having been subjected to contact sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Nearly a third of women and nearly a quarter of men report having been subjected to severe physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime.¹
- **Two in five women (41%) and 1 in 4 men (26%)** report experiencing at least one impact from intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Among women subjected to intimate partner contact sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking, 1 in 4 were fearful; 1 in 3 had PTSD symptoms; 1 in 3 were injured; and 1 in 8 needed medical care. Among men subjected to intimate partner contact sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking; 1 in 13 were fearful; 1 in 7 had PTSD symptoms; 1 in 5 were injured; and 1 in 23 needed medical care.²
- **1 in 8 high school students** reported being subjected to teen dating violence (physical, sexual, or both) within the last year. Among female high school students, 15% reported having been subjected to sexual dating violence and 10% reported having been subjected to physical dating violence within the preceding 12 months. Among male high school students, 4% reported having been subjected to sexual dating violence and 6.7% reported having been subjected to physical dating violence within the preceding 12 months.³
- Across 25 years, 92% of female homicide victims killed by a male offender were known to each other, 62% of whom were killed by an intimate partner.⁴

- 54% of **Black women** report having been subjected to contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁵
- 58% of **American Indian or Alaska Native women** report having been subjected to contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁶
- Over 40% of **Hispanic women** report having been subjected to contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁷
- 48% of **white women** report having been subjected to contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁸
- Bisexual, gay and lesbian people are subjected to intimate partner violence (including contact sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking) at higher rates than heterosexual people. **Bisexual women and men experienced the highest rates at 69% and 46% respectively.**⁹

History of The Movement

- There were very few organizations for survivors – the first shelter was Women’s Advocates in Minnesota (est. 1972). They started as a divorce rights information line and as laws changed, raised funds to establish a permanent shelter in 1974.¹⁰
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), U.S. federal legislation that expanded the juridical tools to combat violence against women and provide protection to women who had suffered violent abuses. It was initially signed into law in September 1994 by U.S. Pres. Bill Clinton.¹¹
- Advocacy is a primary direct service model used with survivors in traditional DV services. At their core, advocacy services represent a departure from traditional case management in social services to an empowerment-based approach to work with DV survivors on their defined goals rather than providing a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach.¹²
- Initial communication between the prosecutor and the victim is an important factor for victim cooperation in the prosecution process. Being informed of case decisions increased victim cooperation and also helped to obtain a conviction.¹³
- Advocates improve victim participation by providing tangible support, reducing ‘secondary victimization,’ ‘improving victims’ knowledge of and autonomy within the legal system, and linking victims to available services.¹⁴

Advocacy in Communities

- Women who had worked with advocates for 10 weeks continued to show improvement even two years later compared to women in the control condition. They reported more social support, greater effectiveness accessing resources, higher quality of life, and lower reabuse.¹⁵
- Advocacy services have been shown to lead to survivors experiencing less violence over time, less difficulty accessing community resources, increased social support, and higher quality of life.¹⁶
- Survivor-centered advocacy acknowledges the variety of needs of individual survivors and is sensitive to the diverse needs of survivors and their families. This approach allows survivors and advocates to shape services based on their own goals, with an emphasis on partnership between the survivor and advocate.¹⁷

Endnotes

- 1 Ruth Leemis, et al., The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Intimate Partner Violence (2022), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/documentation/nisvsreport-onipv_2022.pdf?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/NISVSReportonIPV_2022.pdf.
- 2 See fn 1.
- 3 Heather Clayton, et al. Dating Violence, Sexual Violence, and Bullying Victimization Among High School Students—Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2021. MMWR Suppl 2023;72(Suppl-1):66-74. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7201a8>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2021 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/>.
- 4 When Men Murder Women: A Review of 25 Years of Female Homicide Victimization in the United States (October 2023), Violence Policy Center, <https://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2023.pdf>
- 5 Ruth Leemis, et al., The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report on Intimate Partner Violence (2022), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/documentation/nisvsreport-onipv_2022.pdf?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/NISVSReportonIPV_2022.pdf.
- 6 See fn 5.
- 7 See fn 5.
- 8 See fn 5.
- 9 Jieru Chen, et al., The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) 2016/2017: Report on Victimization by Sexual Identity (October 2023), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/documentation/nisvsreportonsexualidentity.pdf?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/nisvsReportonSexualIdentity.pdf
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- 14 Gaines, D.C., and Wells, W. (2017). Investigators’ and Prosecutors’ Perceptions of Collaborating with Victim Advocates on Sexual Assault Casework. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 28(6), 555-569.
- 15 DePrince AP, Labus J, Belknap J, Buckingham S, Gover A. The impact of community-based outreach on psychological distress and victim safety in women exposed to intimate partner abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. 2012;80:211–221. doi: 10.1037/a0027224.
- 16 Allen NE, Bybee DI, Sullivan CM. Battered women’s multitude of needs: Evidence supporting the need for comprehensive advocacy. *Violence Against Women*. 2004;10:1015–1035. doi: 10.1177/1077801204267658.
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