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FACTS FOR

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2016

May 22, 2017, marks the 80th Anniversary of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

For nearly a century, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) mission to “improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice” has been a guiding principle in our work for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. For our annual 2016 Domestic Violence Fact Sheet, the **Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody** (a project of the NCJFCJ) seeks to honor survivors from different communities and backgrounds while also underscoring the impact domestic violence has on all victims.

The 2016 Domestic Violence Fact Sheet highlights the impact domestic violence has on victims, with special emphasis on domestic violence as it relates to communities of color, individuals who are disabled or affected by mental illness, children, LGBTQ victims, and tribal communities.

If you have any questions about these facts or domestic violence, please visit our website at rcdvpc.org or call us at **1-800-52-PEACE**. Also, please use the links at the end of this fact sheet to visit our partners within the Domestic Violence Resource Network (DVRN).

On behalf of the staff of the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody, and all of the members of the NCJFCJ, we hope this fact sheet is helpful to your ongoing work with survivors and their families.



For training and technical assistance call **1-800-52-PEACE**.
RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: CHILD PROTECTION AND CUSTODY



01

Domestic violence is a gendered phenomenon. Women are victims in the majority of intimate partner violence incidents. More than 90% of female intimate partner rape and sexual violence victims reported their perpetrators are male. Although male victims must be treated with the same concern and respect as female victims, women are statistically more likely to be abused, and the consequences of the violence are more severe.

02

Survivors of domestic violence are often involved in child custody cases with their abuser. Legal representation for survivors is associated with better and safer court outcomes for families, including court-mandated treatment for an abusive parent and/or safety conditions on child visitation with the abusive parent. Visitation conditions and mandated batterer intervention treatment can prevent an abuser from using custody proceedings, visitation, and exchanges as opportunities for coercion or abuse.

03

Survivors of domestic violence often experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by their abuse. In addition to being one of the first lines of legal protection, civil protection orders can actually have a healing effect on survivors. As a survivor's feelings of safety increase, they may experience fewer symptoms of PTSD and anxiety.

04

Survivors often have misperceptions about confidentiality and mandated reporting when asking for help. One in three participants in a survey of survivors contacting the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) in two months during 2015 said they had not asked someone for help when they experienced intimate partner violence for fear the person would be legally required to report what they had shared.



05

More than 1 in 4 gay men (26%) and more than 1 in 3 lesbian women (43.8%) will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime. One in five transgender individuals (19%) experience domestic violence because of their gender identity or non-conformity. However, when transgender individuals experience domestic violence their negative outcomes increased sharply, with four times the rate of homelessness, four times the rate of sexual victimization by prostitution, and double the rate of suicidality and HIV.

06

Forty-four percent of youth reporting physical teen violence also reported a history of child maltreatment; and 2 out of 3 had witnessed an assault between other family members.

07

Intervention with perpetrators of family violence can improve the quality of father-child relationships if it addresses attitudes and skills. Interventions that build fathers' tolerance of challenging behaviors and increase positive engagement with their children help reduce the risk factors for child maltreatment.

08

The number one resiliency factor in helping children heal from exposure to domestic violence is the presence of a consistent, supportive, and loving adult, most often their non-abusive parent.



09

Batterers do not limit their controlling behaviors to verbal and physical assaults. Different forms of coercive control such as cyber-abuse can have a profound effect on teen and adult survivors. Many batterers utilize digital technology, including smart-phones, tablets and laptops to stalk, coerce and harass survivors.

10

Although they are different forms of victimization, some of the main features of domestic violence, including emotional, financial and physical isolation, coercive control and physical abuse, are also components of exploitation in domestic child sex trafficking.

Communities of Color

For more information on domestic violence in specific communities, visit the [Institute for Domestic Violence in the African-American Community](#), [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#), [Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence](#), or the [National Latin@ Network](#).

11

In addition to struggling against higher rates of poverty, resource-limited communities, and cultural barriers to both services and justice, American Indian/Alaska Native, African American, and Hispanic women are more likely than non-Hispanic white women to be victimized by an intimate partner, regardless of that partner's ethnicity.

12

Although all cultures have values which condemn gender violence, some cultural and traditional norms may explain why survivors choose not to report domestic violence. For example, certain Asian American survivors may experience cultural barriers to reporting abuse grounded in values emphasizing self-sacrifice and stoicism (the perseverance through trauma or injury); similarly some African American women may choose not to disclose sexual assault because of discriminatory historical stereotypes surrounding sexuality or patriarchal roles.



13

Teens care about what their parents think. In fact, protective parenting and increased parental alertness can help prevent teen dating violence victimization in Black and Latino youth. Parental alertness includes knowing where a teen is, what they are doing, and with whom. Protective parenting includes reasonable concern about a teen's sexual activity and relationships.

14

Identifying domestic violence in immigrant communities can be difficult because of the fear associated with disclosure, such as deportation or loss of sponsorship. Immigrant Latina women may be more open to speaking about abuse if an interviewer such as a social worker, victim advocate, or health-care practitioner is attentive, shows concern about their life, actively listens, and helps connect them with services for domestic violence.

15

Intimate partner homicide is a dimension of domestic violence that disproportionately affects minority communities. African American women are nearly four times as likely to be murdered by a boyfriend and twice as likely to be killed by a spouse than white females regardless of the ethnicity of the murderer.

16

Higher domestic violence levels are correlated with African American communities experiencing higher rates of poverty. In part, this higher level of victimization may deal with African American survivors living at the intersection of stressors including racial bias and economic disadvantage.

17

Cultural barriers surrounding sexual violence disclosure in Asian American communities can be particularly destructive. More than 1 in 2 Filipinas, Indian, and Pakistani women have experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner.



Mental Illness

For more information on the intersection of domestic violence and mental illness, contact Domestic Violence Resource Network partner, the [National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Illness](#).

18

Studies indicate that youth with multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including being exposed to domestic violence, face a greater risk of experiencing mental health problems, behavioral problems, substance abuse, and delinquency. Compared to children who grew up with no domestic violence, children who witness violence are at greater risk of having serious adult health problems, including substance abuse, obesity, cancer, heart disease, depression, and higher unintended pregnancy rates.

20

Domestic violence has severe consequences on mental health. More than half of women who are victims of intimate partner abuse suffer post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health condition that can include severe symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares, hypervigilance, insomnia, and intrusive thoughts.

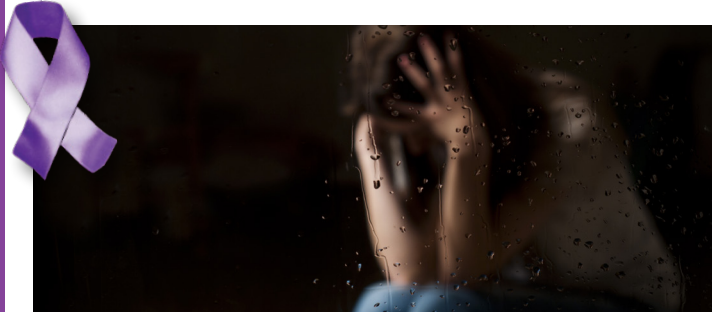
19

Mental illness does not cause or excuse domestic violence or abusive behavior. Although mental illness and abuse can coincide, abusive behavior is a choice, whereas mental illness is an involuntary condition.



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Mental health services for children in the foster care system who have been exposed to domestic violence are critical components of care. However, despite experiencing similar mental health needs, African American and Latino youth in the child welfare system may not receive the same mental health services as their white counterparts.



22

Survivors with mental illness can benefit from trauma-informed services. Ensuring that advocates understand that trauma symptoms like anger, shouting, and emotional reactivity are often adaptations to abuse can help survivors with mental health needs.

Disability

23

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act apply to child protection and family court proceedings including custody and visitation, in-home services, case-planning, and foster care. Both statutes ensure reasonable accommodations while interacting with the legal system. Parents with disabilities who must complete court-mandated services, or parent-survivors who need to provide information on abuse to the court, have a critical need for equal access to court facilities and services. For more information on equal access for survivors with disabilities in court proceedings, visit [VERA Institute of Justice](#).

24

Women with disabilities are more likely to be abused by an intimate partner and have a higher severity level of intimate partner violence than women without disabilities. Both women and men with physical disabilities are more vulnerable to sexual violence and coercion; and men with a disability are more likely to be the victim of sexual violence.

25

Deaf survivors rely on American Sign Language interpreters or a video relay service to access domestic violence services. However, an equally important component of responding to abuse of Deaf individuals is knowledge about Deaf culture, including how closely knit Deaf communities can be, the importance Deaf individuals place on collectivism, direct communication styles, and transparency.



26

Individuals with disabilities are exposed to the risk of sexual violence in many physical spaces not traditionally associated with sexual assault. This can include hospitals, physician's offices, or while being transported by caregivers. This wide range of locales where a disabled individual may be victimized can be related to an individual's disability or their need for treatment.

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Tribal Communities

For more information on domestic violence in tribal and indigenous communities, visit the Domestic Violence Resource Network partner [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#).

27

Native American women have one of the highest rates of domestic violence among all ethnic groups. In many cases, the trauma of victimization in communities may be magnified by inherent *historical trauma*, a term used to describe "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding" of American Indian/Alaska Native survivors caused by centuries of inflicted violence, colonization, and genocide.



28

Domestic violence in tribal communities has devastating consequences for children. Children from American Indian/Alaska Native communities often have extraordinarily close relationships with their relatives and community, and removal for domestic violence can be particularly traumatic. This acute trauma of removal is, in part, the subject of the Indian Child Welfare Act.

29

In a sample of 100 girls adjudicated as delinquent: 69% reported experiencing caregiver violence; 42% reported dating violence; 81% experienced sexual violence; and 90% witnessed violence. For Native American/Alaska Native youth involved in the juvenile justice system, interventions which include traditional culture, family involvement, community bonding, and resilience are highly effective.

30

Thirty-nine percent of American Indian/Alaska Native women will be subjected to violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes, compared to 29% of African American women, 27% of White women, 21% of Hispanic women, and 10% of Asian women. As noted by Associate Attorney General Tom Perrelli in 2011, "On some reservations, Native women are murdered at more than 10 times the national average."

31

In 2013, Congress approved the Safety for Native Women Act within the 2013 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. This allowed tribes, for the first time, to prosecute non-Native abusers of women and children through the tribal court system. This provision closed a loophole that prevented many tribes from protecting Native adult and teen victims of domestic violence, and prevented tribes from prosecuting the vast majority of violent offenders against Native victims. More than 80% of Native victims of rape and sexual assault reported their offender as non-Native, and a majority of Native victims of violent crime report that their offender is also non-Native.



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