

# Statistics About Intimate Partner Violence (“IPV”), Domestic Violence (“DV”), and Orders of Protections (“OPs”)

## National Statistics

1. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, the annual number of acts of Intimate Partner Violence (“IPV”) in the United States exceeds ten million.<sup>1</sup> 3.2 million children are estimated to witness such acts every year.<sup>2</sup> Data collected by the National Institute of Health indicate that nearly 11 million people every year are victims of domestic violence.<sup>3</sup>
2. The National Crime Victimization Survey estimates that only 10% of all domestic violence incidents are reported.<sup>4</sup> An extensive study in Great Britain showed that, on average, victims live with domestic abuse for several years before seeking assistance.<sup>5</sup> That same study showed that, on average, victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before contacting authorities.<sup>6</sup>
3. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) reports that in the U.S., 36.4% of women and 33.6% of men experience sexual or physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.<sup>7</sup> These percentages are even higher for black and transgender individuals.<sup>8</sup> Lesbian women suffer at a higher rate as well.<sup>9</sup> The rate of teen IPV is extremely high.<sup>10</sup>
4. According to the CDC, roughly 20% of homicide victims in the United States are killed by an intimate partner. More than half of female homicide victims are killed by a current or former male intimate partner.<sup>11</sup>
5. Separation creates huge challenges for IPV victims and many return to their relationships. One recent survey found that it takes on average, seven attempts for a survivor to leave their abuser and stay separated for good.<sup>12</sup>
6. Experts agree that abusers are most dangerous when they realize that they are losing control of their intimate partners.<sup>13</sup> 75% of domestic-related homicides occur upon separation.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., *et al.*, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report (from the National Coalition against Domestic Violence’s Domestic Violence Fact Sheet 2020.).

<sup>2</sup> Carlson, B.E., *Children’s Observation of Interparental Violence*, Office of Justice Programs (1984).

<sup>3</sup> Martin R. Huecker; Kevin C. King; Gary A. Jordan; William Smock. *Domestic Violence*, National Center for Biotechnology Medicine (2023). Note that the use of the term “Domestic Violence” (“DV”) is used here too – but DV is a broader term that includes parental and sibling violence.

<sup>4</sup> The National Crime Victimization Survey. 2004. Another prominent survey indicated that only 25% of all physical assaults and only 20% of all rapes are reported to law enforcement officers. Tjaden and Thoennes, *National Violence against Women Survey*, National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage, 2000. One study found that older adults are much less likely to report their abuse. Benitez, C.T., McNiel, D.E., and Binder, R.L., *Do Protection Orders Protect?*, 38(3) *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 376-385 (2010).

<sup>5</sup> That study showed that, on average, victims live with domestic abuse for 2.6 years before seeking assistance. *Insights Independent Domestic Violence Advisor National Dataset 2020*.

<sup>6</sup> Walby, S., and Allen, J., *Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey*. (London Home Office. 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Smith, S.G., *et al.*, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release*, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, 2018. The numbers are somewhat lower, according to *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence*, The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2021: “About 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported some form of IPV-related impact.”

<sup>8</sup> Black women and men are victimized at rates of 45% and 40%, respectively. Ujima Community’s “Intimate Partner Violence in the Black Community,” The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community.” The numbers are even worse for “trans or gender non-conforming” individuals: 54% will experience DV in their lifetimes. *U.S. Transgender Survey 2015*, *The National Center for Transgender Equality*.

<sup>9</sup> Approximately 44%. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report at 30. The same survey indicated that 26% of gay men have experienced rape, physical violence or stalking during their lifetimes.

<sup>10</sup> “About 11 million women and 5 million men who reported experiencing contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime said that they first experienced these forms of violence before the age of 18.” Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., *et al.*, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*. 2018.

<sup>11</sup> *Violence Prevention – Fast Facts*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage.

<sup>12</sup> *DV Facts and Stats*, a newsletter from Respond, Inc.

<sup>13</sup> The Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness’s *Education and Awareness* page. See also Bernard, M.L., and Bernard, J.L., *Violent Intimacy: The Family as a Model for Live Relationships*, *Family Relations* 32 (1983): 283-286; Daly, M., and Wilson, M., *Evolutionary Social Psychology and Family Homicide*, *Science* 242 (1988): 519-524.

<sup>14</sup> “The reality is that the most dangerous time for a survivor is when they leave the abusive partner; 75% of domestic related homicides occur upon separation and there is a 75% increase of violence upon separation for at least two years. These concerns are very real and must be addressed with safety planning...” The Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness’s *Education and Awareness* page. Interviews with men who have killed their wives indicate that either threats of separation by their partner or actual separation are most often the precipitating events that lead to murder. Bernard, M.L., and Bernard, J.L., *Violent Intimacy: The Family as a Model for Live Relationships*, *Family Relations* 32 (1983): 283-286; Daly, M., and Wilson, M., *Evolutionary Social Psychology and Family Homicide*, *Science* 242 (1988): 519-524.

## **St. Louis and Missouri Statistics**

7. Domestic violence (“DV”) is pervasive in the St. Louis community. In St. Louis County Circuit Court, approximately 5800 petitioners file petitions for orders of protection each year.<sup>15</sup> The problem is especially significant in north St. Louis County.<sup>16</sup> In St. Louis City Circuit Court, approximately 3000 petitioners file petitions for orders of protection each year.<sup>17</sup> Advocates in St. Louis County and St. Louis City answered 14,721 DV hotline calls in 2021.<sup>18</sup>
8. Such numbers are misleading, however, as they fail to capture the extent of the problem, as most acts of IPV and DV go unreported.<sup>19</sup> According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, estimates suggest that only 10% of all domestic violence incidents are reported.<sup>20</sup>
9. In St. Louis County, 80 to 90 percent of petitioners at order of protection hearings are unrepresented while in St. Louis City, 92% of litigants are unrepresented at full hearings.<sup>21</sup>
10. Resources in Missouri for IPV victims are extremely insufficient. The same is true for the St. Louis region.<sup>22</sup>

## **Co-Existing Conditions Statistics**

11. Women who live in poverty have a significantly higher chance of being abused. Statistics from the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice showed that women in the lowest income households experience seven times the rate of abuse than those women from the highest income households.<sup>23</sup> As battered women’s economic opportunities improve, they are better able to exit violent relationships.<sup>24</sup>

## **Benefits of OPs Statistics**

12. The legal system provides procedures that can drastically reduce IPV. Orders of protection (“OPs”) have been found to be the most effective tool.<sup>25</sup> However, only 20% of U.S. women who have been physically abused, raped or stalked by intimate partners obtain OPs.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> The St. Louis County Circuit Clerk reports that the total number of adult and child orders of protection that were filed in the past three years were as follows: 6291 in 2019; 5167 in 2020; and 5833 in 2021.

<sup>16</sup> According to St. Louis County Circuit Court statistics for 2017 through 2019, the total number of petitions for orders of protection that were filed was 19,391. Of that total, 12,517 (i.e., 64.5%) were filed by petitioners who resided in North County (which is the geographic location in St. Louis County that incorporates all zip codes north of Olive Blvd.)

<sup>17</sup> The St. Louis City Circuit Clerk reports that the total number of adult and child orders of protection that were filed in the past three years were as follows: 3390 in 2019; 2661 in 2020; and 2793 in 2021.

<sup>18</sup> *Domestic Violence Statistics*, Missouri Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence webpage. 2021.

<sup>19</sup> The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s website, *citing Violence in Marriage* by I.H. Frieze and A. Browne, 1989.

<sup>20</sup> The National Crime Victimization Survey. 2004. Another prominent survey indicated that only 25% of all physical assaults and only 20% of all rapes are reported to law enforcement officers. Tjaden and Thoennes, *National Violence against Women Survey*, National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage, 2000. One study found that older adults are much less likely to report their abuse. Benitez, C.T., McNiel, D.E., and Binder, R.L., *Do Protection Orders Protect?*, 38(3) *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 376-385 (2010). Smith, S.G., et al., *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release*, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, 2018. The numbers are somewhat lower, according to Preventing Intimate Partner Violence, The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2021: “About 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported some form of IPV-related impact.”

<sup>21</sup> Data collected by Court Watch “via two years of observing weekly dockets in Division 14 (2018-2019).”

<sup>22</sup> In 2021, 8260 individuals in St. Louis County and St. Louis City received domestic violence services; 5479 requests were unmet. Id. According to the director of Lasting Solutions, the domestic violence department of Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (which represents most of the indigent petitioners in the St. Louis metropolitan area in Missouri), LSEM must turn away 75% of the qualified petitioners who seek legal representation. (Petitioners qualify for their services if their household incomes are at or below the federal poverty guidelines.)

<sup>23</sup> The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report at 2. And without access to economic resources, women are less likely to leave their abusive partners. Stark, E. and Buzawa, E., *Violence against Women in Families* (2009); Pagelow, M., *Women Battering: Victims and Their Experiences* (1981).

<sup>24</sup> Tauchen, H., et al., *Domestic Violence: A Non-Random Affair*, 32 *Int’l Econ. Rev.* 491 (1991).

<sup>25</sup> Survivors of domestic violence have rated the filing of a protective order as one of two of their most effective tools for stopping DV – second only to leaving the abuser. Hailskaci, J., *Aftermath of Seeking Domestic Violence Protective Orders: the Victim’s Perspective*. 10 *J. of CONTEMP. CRIM. JUST.* 204 (1994). Experts indicate that only the availability of legal services in the county of the woman’s county of residence was found to reduce her likelihood of abuse. Farmer, A., and Tiefenthaler, J., *Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence*, 21 *Contemporary Econ. Pol’y* 158, 159 (2003). “Increased funding to enhance the availability of civil legal services to low-income families can lower the societal costs of domestic violence, generating substantial economic benefits.” Rosenberg, J. and Grab, D., *Supporting Survivors: the Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence*. *Institute for Policy Integrity – New York University School of Law*. (July 21, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Holt, V., et al., *Do Protection Orders Affect the Likelihood of Future Partner Violence and Injury?* 24 *Am. J. Preventive Med.* 16, 18-21 (2003).

13. Approximately half of victims do not experience protective order violations.<sup>27</sup> Of those who did experience violations, significant reductions were noted in overall abuse, fear of future harm, distress due to the abuse, and costs.<sup>28</sup>
14. While the OP process is accessible to parties without legal representation, petitioners who have representation are much more likely to have favorable outcomes at their OP hearings.<sup>29</sup> One study found that 83% of victims represented by attorneys successfully obtained protective orders, as compared to just 32% of victims without representation.<sup>30</sup> Unlike most other services available to victims (such as shelters, safe homes, batterer programs and counseling), the provision of legal services drastically reduces the incidence of domestic violence.<sup>31</sup>

(MBD 09/08/23)

---

<sup>27</sup> Spitzberg, B., The Tactical Topography of Stalking Victimization and Management, *Trauma Violence Abuse* 3:261-88, 2002. Logan, T.K., Walker, R., Hoyt, W., The Kentucky Civil Protective Order Study: a Rural and Urban Multiple Perspective Study of Protective Order Violation Consequences, Responses, and Costs, University of Kentucky Dept. of Behavioral Science (Sept. 2009), p. 165. Keilitz, S., et al., Civil Protection Orders: the Benefits and Limitations for Victims of Domestic Violence (1997).

<sup>28</sup> Holt, V., et al., Do Protection Orders Affect the Likelihood of Future Partner Violence and Injury? 24 *Am. J. Preventive Med.* 16, 18-21 (2003): O.P.s "appear to be one of the few widely available interventions for victims of intimate partner violence that have demonstrated effectiveness." Logan, above footnote. Benitez, C. T., McNiel, D.E., Binder, R.L., Do Protection Orders Protect? *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 38:376-85, 2010. Logan, T.K., Walker, R., Civil Protection Order Outcomes: Violations and Perceptions of Effectiveness, 24 *J. Interpersonal Violence* 675, 677-78, 682-83 (2009).

<sup>29</sup> Am. U.J Gender Soc. Pol'y & L 499, 511-12 (2003). The National Network to End Domestic Violence conducted a census of their 1762 shelters and found that domestic violence survivors without legal representation are frequently further victimized and endangered. 11th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report, The National Network to End Domestic Violence webpage (2017).

<sup>30</sup> Murphy, J., Engaging with the State: the Growing Reliance on Lawyers and Judges to Protect Battered Women.

<sup>31</sup> Farmer, A. and Tiefenthaler, J., Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence, 21 *Contemporary Econ. Pol'y*, 158, 167 (2003). "Women living in counties with (such programs) are not significantly less likely to be victims of intimate partner abuse than women who live in counties without these services. However, women who live in counties with legal assistance programs to help battered women are significantly less likely to report abuse." Allen, N.E., et al., Battered Women's Multitude of Needs: Evidence Supporting the Need for Comprehensive Advocacy, 10 *Violence against Women* 1015 (2004). See also, Supporting Survivors: The Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence, Institute for Policy Integrity (July, 2015).