

COVID 19 and Domestic Violence- impact, breadth, and effective intervention

ooo

Margo Lindauer, Domestic Violence Institute
January 14, 2021

Agenda

Characteristics of Domestic Violence/ Intimate Partner Violence prior to March 2020

What changed during COVID-19 Lockdown

DVI/NuLawLab Response

Digital Technology Components - Intake Website & Court Form Automation

Shelter Component

Impact of Access to Gun

Suggested Reform

Questions

Working Definition to Frame Conversation.....

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

<https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/quick-guide-what-is-domestic-violence>

Characteristics of Domestic Violence Pre-Covid

- Never Sufficient Shelter Space
- Services Available ≠ Services Needed
 - Legal
 - Mental Health
 - Economic
 - Trauma Informed, wrap- around services
 - Singular Orientation of Behavior and needs
 - Lack of training for folks interfacing with individuals impacted by IPV, especially for those who are unable to leave violent relationship

Characteristics of Domestic Violence During COVID-19

Increased Stress = Increased Violence

Increase in Domestic Violence Incidents (22% Jump in Boston in March) / Decrease in Hotline Calls

Stay-at-Home Order = Limited Ability for Survivors to Safely Seek Assistance

Court Closures Complicating Filing for Protective Orders

Safe places of contact (Doctor, School etc.) no longer open

The Shelter Problem During COVID-19



Impact of gun availability in the home.

- Abusers with firearms are five times more likely to kill their victims. Guns further exacerbate the power and control dynamic used by abusers to inflict emotional abuse and exert coercive control over their victims.
- Every month, an average of 53 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. Nearly 1 million women alive today have reported being shot or shot at by intimate partners, and 4.5 million women have reported being threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/guns-and-violence-against-women-americas-uniquely-lethal-intimate-partner-violence-problem/>

Impact on Children and Child Welfare Intervention

- Children have long-lasting impacts when they experience violence.
 - The dual experience of violence and COVID will be exponential
 - The dual experience of violence and violence with a gun is also exponential.
- Surveillance and Intervention impacts populations differently
 - Black and Immigrant woman face removal at much higher rates
 - Trauma associated with fear of removal is real
 - Poverty , should not be the basis for removal.
 - Poverty is a risk factor for neglect, but poverty does not equate to neglect

What works? Does anything work to mitigate this issue?

- 1. Strengthen state laws that prohibit domestic abusers from possessing guns and requiring abusers to relinquish guns they may already have.
- 2. Focus on implementation and enforcement of existing state firearm relinquishment laws by state and local courts and law enforcement agencies.
- 3. Strengthen the federal background check system to keep guns out of dangerous hands by closing deadly “boyfriend” loopholes and addressing other deficiencies.
- 4. Require dealers to notify state or local law enforcement when a domestic abuser or convicted stalker attempts to buy a gun and fails a background check.
- 5. Fund comprehensive research on the nexus of guns and intimate partner violence.
- 6. This is a public health ISSUE with possibilities for improvement-a concern for all of us.

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/guns-and-violence-against-women-americas-uniquely-lethal-intimate-partner-violence-problem/>