Interconnectedness of Domestic Violence and Homelessness

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Welcome!

We invite you to introduce yourself in the chat with your name, position, and organization affiliation.

If you have a specific question or topic that you would like covered in this webinar, feel free to include that as well!

Women's Advocates

Breaking the cycle of domestic violence

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Overview of the next 90 minutes

- Background on our respective orgs
- Defining homelessness
- Homelessness/DV stats
- 2-minute interconnection video
- Domestic violence intro
- Power & control wheel, different forms of violence
- Warning signs, why DV victims can't leave, lasting impacts of DV
- Housing barriers for DV victim survivors
- Red flags
- Housing specific warning signs
- Protective orders
- Cycle of abuse
- Talking about DV with someone
- Ways housing agencies can support DV victim survivors
- How advocates can help
- MN 504B, VAWA, Safe at Home MN
- Impacts of COVID-19
- Resources/community support

Feel free to use the chat box to ask any questions anytime during the presentation! A PDF of the slides will be emailed to you after the presentation is complete.

A little bit of background…

Women's Advocates

- Mission: Women's Advocates' walks with victim/survivors and our community to break the cycle of domestic violence
- Founded in 1974, St. Paul MN
- First domestic violence shelter in the nation
- Services: prevention/education, shelter, 24-hour crisis line, aftercare/housing support
- www.wadvocates.org

Standpoint

- Mission: Standpoint promotes justice for domestic and sexual violence victims.
- Unique team of attorneys and advocates
- Services: Action Line, training, technical assistance for victim/survivors, advocates, attorneys, and systems professionals

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Defining homelessness

- Minnesota Definition of Homelessness
- Long Term Homeless (DHS programs)
- HUD Homeless
- Chronic Homeless
- High Priority Homeless
- Personally Identifies

Source Source

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Homelessness in Minnesota
Wilder Study 2018

Key findings

- 10% increase in homelessness since 2015
- Increase in folks doubled up or staying outside
- 25% increase in older adults (55+)

Barriers

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of shelter beds
- Low income

Populations

- Begins at young age – trauma
- Chronic health condition – cause for concern
- African American and American Indian overrepresented

Source

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Adding in domestic violence
Wilder Study 2018, Supplemental PIT Count

- Over half of women experiencing homelessness had at least one experience with violence or exploitation (adults: 67%, youth: 57%)
- Number of homeless women who are also fleeing domestic violence has steadily increased since 2009 (37% in 2018, up from 29% in 2009)

EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, BY GENDER

	Adults (age 18 or older)		Youth (age 24 or younger)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
At least one experience of violence or sexual exploitation	67%	40%	57%	43%
Stayed in an abusive situation due to no other housing options	53%	25%	43%	27%
Left last housing because of abuse by someone they lived with	33%	12%	28%	17%
Physically or sexually attacked while homeless	31%	18%	28%	18%
Had to be sexual with someone to get shelter, clothing, or food	23%	12%	22%	13%

Supplemental Point in Time Count, 2018

VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA
THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Source

Source

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Video Link

Intersection of Domestic Violence and Homelessness

The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Homelessness

The two most pressing concerns for survivors of abuse are the need for safe housing and the need for economic resources to maintain safety.[1]

80% Experienced DV

A study of homeless women with children found that 80% had previously experienced domestic violence.[2]

57% Homelessness was caused by DV

Studies show that as many as 57% of all homeless women report domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness.[3]

Barriers to Safety: Understanding the Intersection

As a direct result of the power and control dynamics related to their abuse, survivors often face unique barriers to accessing shelter and affordable housing.

Poor Credit & Ruined Rental Histories

Often caused by abusers running up credit card bills or lying about paying rent, utilities, childcare and other bills. This affects a survivors' ability to pass a landlord background check.

Lack of Steady Employment

Caused when victims are forced to miss work as a result of violence, or are fired as a result of stalking and harassment that occurs at the workplace.

Housing Discrimination

The most common cases of this occur when landlords evict victims from housing due to repeated calls to the police or property damage caused by the abuser.

Loss of Subsidized or Other Affordable Housing

Caused by lease or voucher policy violations committed by the abuser.

This is particularly true for survivors most marginalized in our society and with the least access to resources, including many survivors of color, Native Americans, immigrants, those living in poverty and who are geographically isolated, those with disabilities, and others.

In just **1 Day** In 2016[4]

OVER **41,000**

adults and children fled domestic violence and found refuge in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program.

7,914

requests by domestic violence survivors for housing were unmet due to a lack of funding, staffing, or other resources. Emergency shelter and transitional housing were the most urgent unmet need for survivors.

Source

What do you think of when you hear the term domestic violence?

- Certain kind of person
- Certain relationship dynamic
- Certain kind of violence
- What words do you use to describe someone experiencing domestic violence
- What words do you use to describe someone that causes harm
- Where have you seen domestic violence? Media? Shows? Personally?
- Why do you think domestic violence happens?

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We could fill Target Field 17 times with MN women who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.

Statistic from *2018 Status of Women & Girls in MN* - U of M Humphrey School and Women's Foundation of MN

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Defining domestic violence

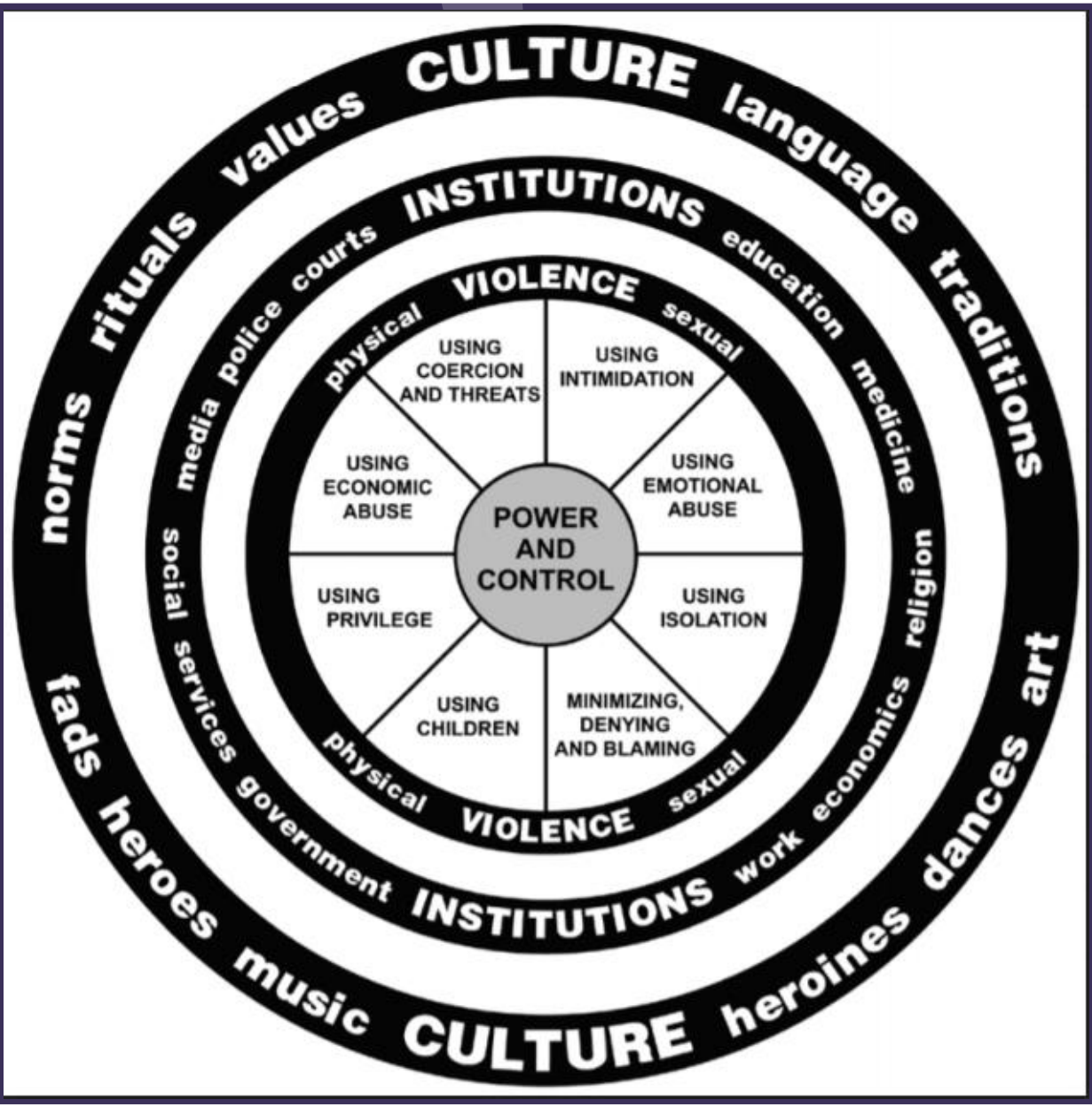
Domestic violence is an intentional and systematic **pattern** of physical and psychological abuse, threats, intimidation, isolation or economic coercion used by one person to exert **power and control** over another person in the context of a **dating, family or household** relationship.

Domestic violence is maintained by societal and cultural attitudes, institutions and laws which are **not** consistent in naming this violence as wrong.

Source

Power & Control Wheel

- Different populations and communities – LGBTQ+, immigrants, elders, disabled, etc.
- Other –isms and systems



Various adaptations of the wheel for specific populations here

Source

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5-minute video explaining it more in depth: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tWlDLivzII&t=67s

Various forms of violence

Verbal	Emotional	Children	Culture	Financial
Intellectual	Pets & Property	**Power & Control**	Reproductive	Spiritual
Physical /Stalking	Psychological	Sexual	Social	Digital

No form is worse than another. Multiple forms can be used in a day, in a lifetime, or just one.

Learn more

General warning signs

- Dynamics
  - Pattern
  - Timing
  - Location
- Themes
  - Power and control, not anger
  - Jealousy
  - Manipulation
  - Power and control wheel
- Impact of Trauma
- Change in Behavior
  - Personality/Expression
  - Activities
  - Communication
- Minimizes/Makes Excuses
- Unexplained Injuries/Damages

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Looking at the facts

In Minnesota

- More than **65,000** adults in Minnesota receive domestic violence services from programs each year.
- 47% of girls from homes where others have been physically abused, hurt themselves on purpose and 56% contemplated suicide
- **Less than 50%** of people who experience domestic violence ever reach out for services
- In 2015, there were **29** domestic violence homicides. Victims ranged from 14-76 years old. The homicides took place in 17 different cities. And 50% were in Greater Minnesota.

Source

In the United States

- Every minute in the U.S. **20** people are victims of domestic violence
- **1 in 3** women and **1 in 4** men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner
- On a typical day, domestic violence hotlines receive approximately **21,000** calls, 15 calls per minute
- Intimate partner violence accounts for **15%** of all violent crime

Source
Source

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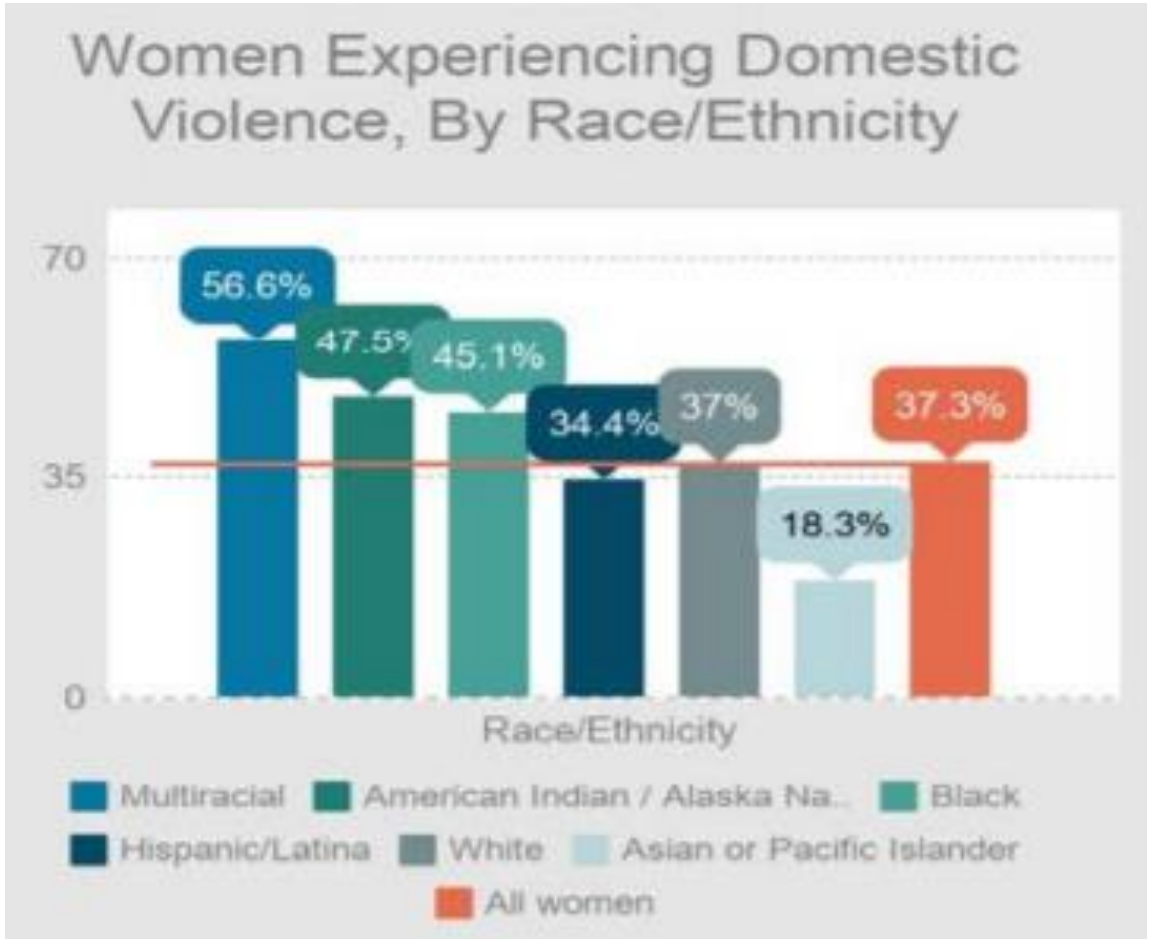
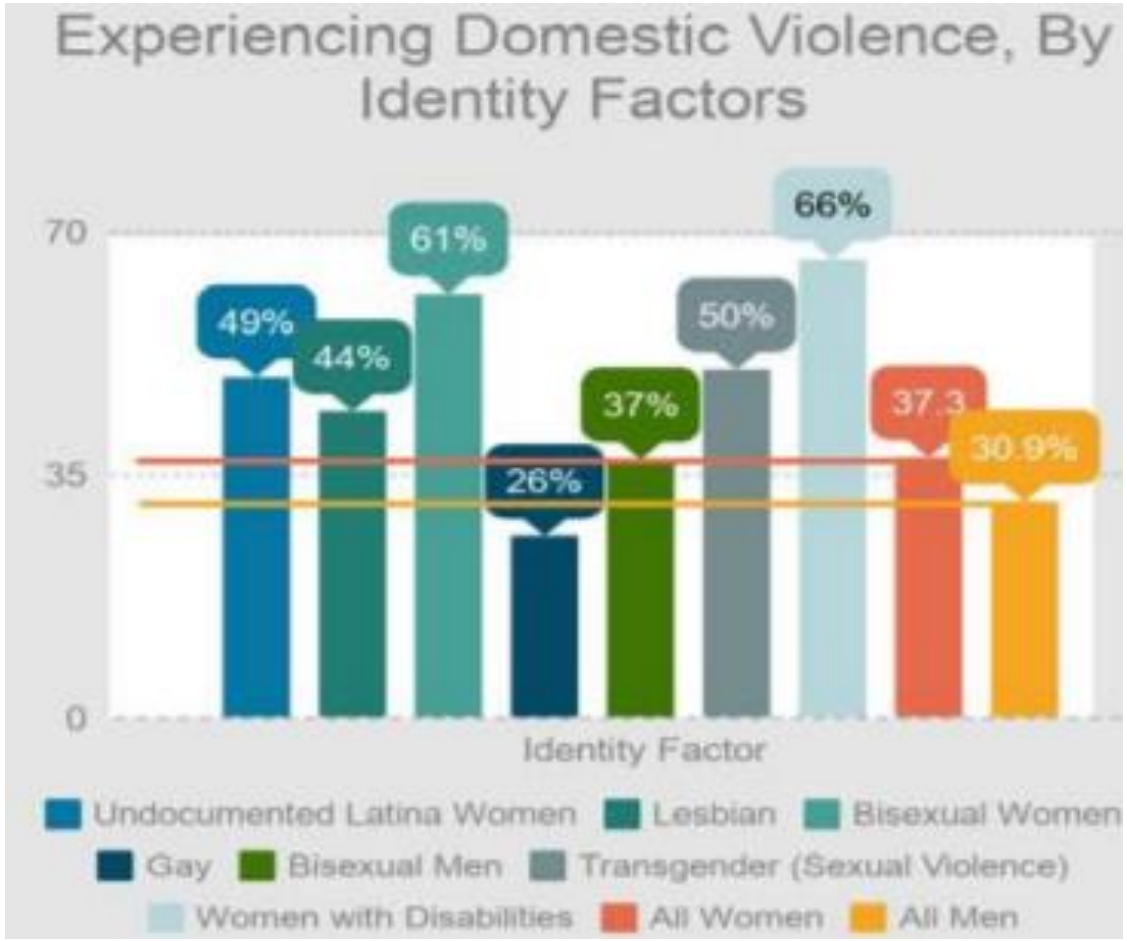
A public health issue with disproportionate rates depending on various social identities





Source

Why can't some victims successfully leave?

Threats or **fear** of increased violence if one leaves (children)

Insufficient institutional responses

Lack of resources (housing, money)

Love and sympathy for one's abuser, hope for change, feelings of responsibility

Threats of suicide or homicide

Believing abuse is normal

Lack of outside support

Cultural/religious reasons

Threat is real- for every woman killed in the U.S. from DV homicide, nearly **nine** are almost killed

Language barriers/immigration status/disability

Leaving is the most dangerous time for a victim

*victims who leave their abusive partners are at a **75 percent** greater risk of being killed by their abuser than those who stay*

Source

Lasting impacts of domestic violence

Physical: bruises, broken bones, stab wounds, gunshot wounds, headaches, traumatic brain injuries, stress on the heart, immune system, gastrointestinal system

Psychological: anxiety, depression, PTSD, flashbacks, suicidality, hyperarousal/avoidance

Social: strained relationships with family members or friends, isolation from social networks, **homelessness**, embarrassment, and trauma

Economic: health care costs, **unemployment**, public assistance, costs of evading a stalking ex-partner, coerced debt, evictions

Housing barriers for domestic violence victims

- Financial violence can include not having access to family finances, not having a recent work history, destroyed credit scores by abuser (coerced debt)
- Discrimination due to violent and criminal actions of perpetrators
- Limitations of location and type of housing due to unique safety and confidentiality needs– many assistance programs have barriers that inadvertently exclude victims of violence
- Economic barriers that are also faced by other individuals in the nation: unemployment, lack of affordable housing, living-wage jobs, transportation, safety nets, and child-care options
- Eviction record and denial of housing benefits due to violence and criminal actions of others

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Addressing some red flags from tenant screening reports

- Acknowledge the long lasting, damaging effects of financial abuse and coercion
- Previous evictions
  - Expungement clinics – Standpoint, learn more here
- Criminal backgrounds – may be a result of coercion
- Insufficient income – may be a result of financial abuse
- Option for an advocate to write a letter to the housing agency on their behalf, learn more here

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Recognizing the warning signs

- Tenant-related signs that abuse might be occurring include:
  - repeated late payment of rent (change in payment pattern: e.g. previously on time, now late)
  - Noticeable injuries or inappropriate use of cover-up sunglasses, clothing, makeup etc.
  - Fewer visitors or getting out less
  - Change in tenant's behavior
  - Change in visits to the office
  - Seems to need permission from partner for everything
  - Expression of fear

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Recognizing the warning signs

Property-related signs that abuse might be occurring include:

- Broken lock or door
- Smashed lights
- Broken window or mirror
- Hole punched or kicked in the wall

Neighbor complaints that might indicate that abuse is occurring include:

- Noise complaints (particularly yelling/shouting from fighting)
- Concerns expressed by other tenants (observing abusive or questionable behavior)

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Protective Orders and Housing

Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO)

- Family or household relationship
- Issued by courts to prohibit all contact during a criminal trial
- No contact

Order for Protection (OFP)

- Family or household relationship only – includes roommates
- Prohibits contact and acts or threats of violence
- Who leaves and who stays?
- Belongings
- Pets
- Financial Relief – sometimes
- Court order re: Section 8 voucher

Harassment Restraining Order (HRO)

- Does not require relationship, but often used in domestic and sexual violence cases
- Cease/avoid harassment
- No contact

Protective orders don't legitimize abuse.
Protective orders might not be accessible or the safest option for all survivors.
Learn more about these orders here.

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Why does the abuser keep coming back?

- On average, it takes 7 attempts to successfully escape an abusive relationship. (National Domestic Violence Hotline)
- Fear, threats, intimidation
- Wanting power and control
- Hope for change, promises of change
- Gifts, money, other incentives
- Children involved
- Gaslighting
- Two main suggestions: Connect tenants with community resources and ask THEM what you can do that would help them feel safe in that moment

Having the conversation

- Tell your tenant what you have noticed
- Stick to the facts
- Let the individual know that you are concerned
- You may be wrong, they may deny it, they may not trust you or be ready to deal with the situation
- Give a warm referral
- Meet them where they are at
- Ask if it is safe for you to give them a resource

If they open up about what's happening:

- Say you believe them
- Thank them for trusting you
- Ask if there's anything you can do to help
- Let them know there are services that can help
- Give information, not advice

Signs that things may get worse:

- History of violence (especially strangulation: homicide 750% more likely)
- Actual or pending separation
- Loss of job
- Access to firearms (homicide 500x more likely)
- Previous threats to kill the victim

What can housing agencies do to support victim/survivors?

1. **Safety Resources** (include in welcome packet, call crisis lines for advice, post safety fliers on bulletin boards/communal spaces, keep safety resources in office)
    - Keep record of OFPs/HROs/no trespass documents/photos in your office
2. Stay informed about **VAWA/MN Statue 504b** rights and responsibilities
3. **Be curious** about property damage, late rent, noise complaints
    - Try to talk to individuals you're concerned about 1 on 1 (also acknowledge why communication might be hard for some tenants)
4. **Property support options:** change locks, trespass abusers, keeping copies of OFPs, motion sensored lights, locks on windows, option to not live on the first floor
    - Be aware of options, allow survivor to make the choice that is the best option for them
    - Have realistic and trauma-informed expectations
    - Meet tenants where they are at, acknowledge the cycle of abuse, make sure you're attributing blame/responsibility on the abuser- not the victim

Ways advocates can help

- Support at meetings or on the phone with landlords/housing authority
- Written statements to landlord (qualified 3rd party document)
- Provide copies of 504b or VAWA housing laws to client and landlord
- Contact landlord on behalf of client to follow up
- Help safety plan
- Assist in applying for OFPs

More legal support - knowing tenant rights

Minnesota Statute 504B

Link

Right to break a private lease, right to call the police (without being evicted)

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Link

Federally funded housing protections

Safe at Home Program

Link

Designed to help people who fear for their safety maintain a confidential address through assigning a lot #

Landlord/Tenant Rights

Landlords and Tenants Rights and Responsibilities

Right to call for help link

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Context of COVID-19 and Housing/DV

Risk of DV has increased due to...

- Loss of power and control
- Safe places/periods of reprieve are inaccessible (work, school)
- In-person support groups and advocacy are unavailable
- Job loss/lack of financial security
- Isolation compounds violence
- Travel restrictions, compromised immune systems- all contribute to inaccessibility of services

Systemic Responses to COVID-19

- Evictions are prohibited (with exceptions)
- 2/3 of police calls involved domestic violence within the first weekend of Stay at Home

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Resources Available + How to Share Them

Women's Advocates Online Resource HUB: https://www.wadvocates.org/our-services/violence-prevention-education/safetyresources/

Comprehensive 90 page National/Minnesota Resource Hub: click here to view

- This document is organized by topic including: Sexual Assault/Stalking Victim Resources, Sex Trafficking/Prostitution Resources, DV Groups, Legal Services, Mental Health Services, Emergency Shelters, Supportive/Transitional/Affordable Housing, Emergency Assistance Services, Child Services, Youth Services, Senior Citizens, Disability Services, Health, LGBTQ+ Services, Services for Men, Transportation, Furniture, Childcare Resources, Clothing Resources, Community Advocacy, Family Support Services, Employment Services, Debt Management Resources, and more!

- There are so many resources and helpful people who are here to support you. What kind of resource do you think would be most helpful for you? Can I show you a pamphlet that has a lot of useful information?
- Example: You mentioned finances and legal barriers. Can I tell you about a local organization that does relevant work?
- Would it be safe for you to have a resource card or would it be better for you to know how to access the information on your own? I know of Roxy over at Women's Advocates, she would be happy to help you create a safety plan.

Working is being done!

- Cross training domestic violence advocates & housing advocates
- Landlord, property manager domestic violence trainings
  - Some landlords modifying their tenant application criteria to account for financial and other forms of domestic violence
- Dedicated housing advocates/case managers
- Prevention efforts
- Emphasizing the needs of domestic violence survivors in discussing affordable housing and livable wages
- Expungement clinics/legal efforts to help reduce barriers to housing
- Deeper understanding of domestic violence & homelessness by department of corrections/criminal justice system

Thank you! Q&A time!

Take our quick 2-minute online survey

https://forms.gle/bzq7Zn14Kc3c9bnf7

Link is also in the Zoom chat box!

You will receive an email soon with the PowerPoint slides, survey link, and resource URL.

Visit our housing specific resource webpage: https://www.wadvocates.org/our-services/violence-prevention-education/housing-resources/

Women's Advocates

- Brenisen Wheeler, Education and Outreach Coordinator (bwheeler@wadvocates.org)
- https://www.wadvocates.org/support-us/donate/

Social Media:

- Facebook: @wadvocates
- Instagram: @womensadvocates
- YouTube channel: search Women's Advocates

- Website: www.wadvocates.org
- 24-hour crisis line: 651-227-8284

Standpoint

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