What is domestic violence?

- **Domestic Violence (DV)**, describes physical violence, sexual violence, and threats of physical or sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression by a current or former intimate partner or spouse.
- **Teen dating violence (TDV)** is a type of DV specific to non-married adolescents and young adults. It can occur between two people in a close relationship and includes physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence, as well as stalking.

How common is DV in NH?

- Epidemiological data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention documented that 40.4% of adult women and 37.8% of adult men in New Hampshire (NH) have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by a partner during their lifetime. This means that about 214,000 NH women and 191,000 NH men have been victims of DV during their lifetime.\(^1\)

- Although these rates suggest that men and women are victims of DV at similar rates, it is important to keep in mind that female victims often report more severe forms of DV than male victims. Also, female victims of DV report worse psychological and physical outcomes and more fear than male victims of DV.\(^1,2\)

- 51.2% of adult women and 28.0% of adult men in NH have experienced sexual violence by any perpetrator (not just specific to a partner). This means that about 272,000 NH women and 141,000 NH men have been victims of sexual violence during their lifetime.\(^1\)

- 7.4% of high school students in NH reported being physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend during the past year.\(^3\)

- 10.2% of NH high school students reported being forced by someone they were dating to engage in sexual behavior they did not want to do during the past year.\(^3\)

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**Key Findings:**

- 40.4% of women and 37.8% of men in NH have experienced DV in their lifetime.
- 50.0% of homicides and 92.0% of murder-suicides are DV related.
- The average cost of services for DV victims in NH is $5,016 per year per victim.
- Civil legal services for DV in NH saved communities and tax-payers $2.4 million per year.
21.8% of college students in NH reported physical DV victimization during the past six months.²

50.0% of homicides in NH are DV related.⁴

92.0% of murder-suicides in NH are DV related.⁴

What are the consequences to victims?

Victims of DV in NH suffer not only immediate negative impacts, but also long-term physical, psychological, and social consequences. These impacts include but are not limited to fear, post-traumatic stress disorder, and physical injury.¹

NH high school students who have experienced TDV in the past year report more depression, binge drinking, poor academics, and feelings of non-belonging compared to NH high school students who do not experience TDV.⁵

NH college students who have experienced TDV in the past six months struggle more with academics than NH college students who have not experienced TDV in the past six months.⁶

Do victims seek help?

The vast majority of victims of DV in NH do not seek formal help (e.g., domestic violence shelters/hotlines, police, medical doctors). However, the majority of victims of DV in NH do tell someone about the abuse, most commonly a friend.²

In 2012, members of the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence assisted 16,348 NH DV victims with services such as counseling, health services, domestic violence shelters, or domestic violence hotlines.⁷ However, this represents only 6% of victims of domestic violence homicides in NH who sought crisis center services.⁴

What are the financial costs of DV in NH?

The average cost of medical treatment, counseling, advocacy, police protection, and other services for DV victims in NH is $5,016 per year per victim.⁸

Civil legal services (e.g., provision of free legal services to DV victims through organizations such as NH Legal Assistance) for DV in NH saved communities and taxpayers $2.4 million annually.⁸

Overall DV costs to NH taxpayers and communities would be reduced most significantly by primary prevention efforts that aim to prevent first-time DV perpetration. This underscores the importance of early prevention education with children and adolescents and widespread public education campaigns (discussed in the next section), which holds the most promise for reducing the overall costs to NH associated with DV.

How can legislators help?

At least 19 states have laws that urge school boards to provide students with curriculum on DV. NH currently does not have any laws like this. Thus, we urge legislators to explore ways to support DV education in middle and high schools in NH.
Support increased funding for DV and sexual abuse education, prevention, intervention, research, and other relative initiatives. Critical areas of need include:

- Funding for the provision of coordinated services for victims of DV.
- Restore funding for crisis centers who provide front line services for victims.
- Support funding for widespread public education campaigns that help shift attitudes across all NH communities that are intolerant of DV.

- Support the establishment of a commission to study DV prevention programming in schools.
- Support more inclusive laws to protect victims of DV. We applaud the NH legislature for their passing of SB318, Establishing the Crime of Domestic Violence.
- At the local level, meet and collaborate with local crisis centers, law enforcement, prosecutors, and other key stakeholders to discuss DV-related community needs at the local level.

Where to learn more:


University of New Hampshire Interpersonal Violence Research Lab: http://unh.edu/ivrl/index.html

University of New Hampshire's Prevention Innovations: http://cola.unh.edu/prevention-innovations


Center for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html


Love is Respect: http://www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/dating-violence-statistics

Endnotes


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