

45/AVDA

45 YEARS OF TRANSFORMING LIVES



Public Safety Committee

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Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse

A United Way agency



United Way of Greater Houston

Domestic Violence Is Defined As:

- The systematic pattern of behaviors in a relationship that are used to gain and/or maintain power and control over another.

It's more than just a family matter.
It's a public health issue.



Domestic Violence is a Public Health Crisis

- Crimes classified as intimate partner violence are unlike most crimes due to the intimate relationship between the victim and the accused.
- Traditionally, this distinction led authorities to treat these crimes as though they were not crimes but private family matters.



Domestic Violence is a Public Safety Crisis

- 247,896 family violence offenses (TX)
- Calls for Service
 - **2023-48,147** **2024-49,947** **2025-46,396**
- 38 homicides in Harris County
- 52% sought help before being killed
- 67% separated from their abuser prior to being killed

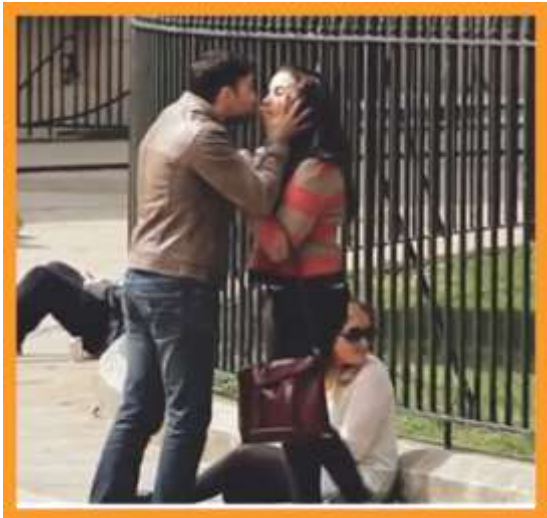
Domestic Violence is a Public Safety Crisis

1 in 3 women experience domestic abuse in their lifetime

1 in 4 women experience severe domestic violence in their lifetime

1 in 4 men experience domestic abuse in their lifetime

1 in 9 men experience severe domestic violence in their lifetime



Lethality & Risk

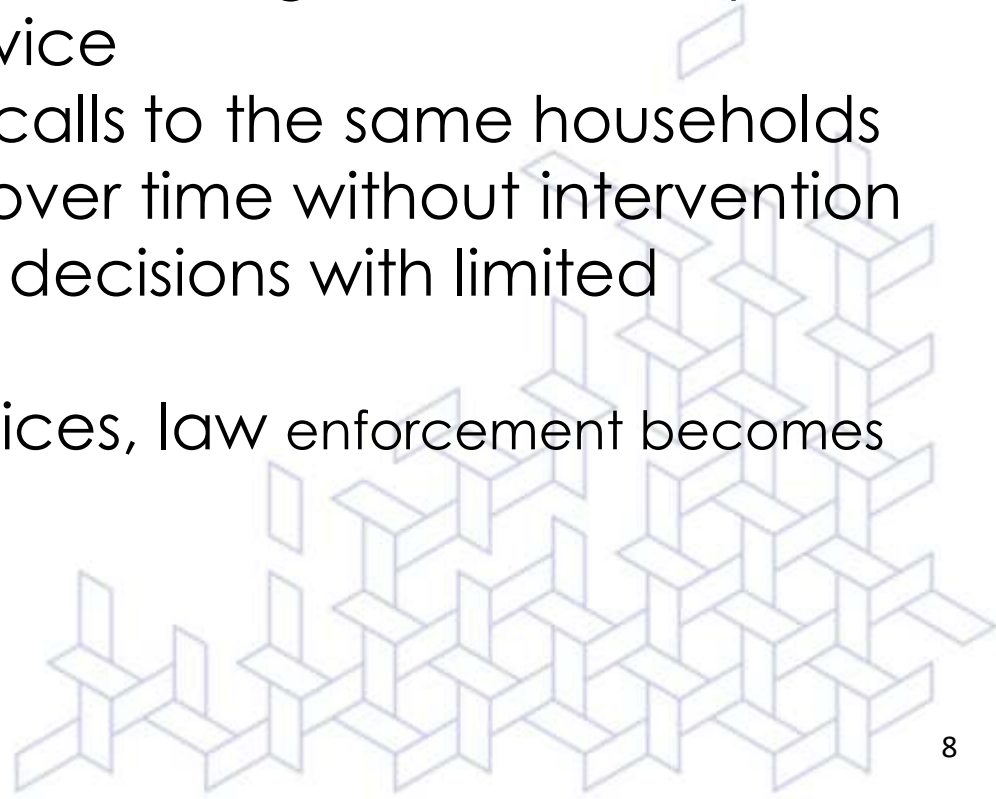
- Gun increases homicide risk by 500%
- Strangulation increases homicide risk by 750%
- 75% of murders occur when victim is leaving
- Leaving does NOT equal safety

Understanding Victim Behavior

- Fear, economic dependence, children
- Hope, love, pressure
- Many do not identify as victims
- Trauma bonding and coercive control
- Fear of retaliation or escalation

Law Enforcement Impact

- Domestic violence calls are among the most frequent and complex calls for service
- High likelihood of repeat calls to the same households
Incidents often escalate over time without intervention
- Officers must make rapid decisions with limited information
- Without coordinated services, law enforcement becomes the default safety net



System Gaps

- 293,000+ crisis calls
- 59% shelter requests denied
- High volume of repeat calls without coordinated follow-up
- Survivors interacting with multiple systems—but not connected

System Gaps

Missed Opportunities for Early Identification

- Lack of routine domestic violence screening across systems
- Abuse often not identified until escalation or crisis
- Non-physical abuse (coercive control, fear, isolation) frequently missed
- Limited safe ways for survivors to disclose abuse

System Gaps

Inconsistent Follow-Up & Intervention

- No required follow-up for many domestic violence calls
- Repeat calls without coordinated intervention
- Survivors left to navigate systems alone
- Cases often do not move forward without visible injury or cooperation

System Gaps

Fragmented Systems & Data Sharing

- Limited coordination across law enforcement, courts, healthcare, and schools
- No unified system to track repeat victims and offenders
- Critical risk information not shared in real time
- Systems operate in silos instead of as a coordinated safety net

System Gaps

Gaps in Offender Accountability

- Inconsistent enforcement of bond conditions
- Limited use of monitoring tools (ankle monitors, geo-fencing)
- Substance use often not addressed as a risk factor
- Lack of universal domestic violence education for offenders



System Gaps

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System Gaps

High-Risk Moments Not Adequately Addressed

- Leaving an abuser significantly increases danger
- Limited targeted intervention during separation
- Survivors often return due to lack of safe alternatives
- Firearm access not consistently addressed

When Systems Fail

- 59% of shelter requests are denied due to lack of space
- Survivors often return to unsafe environments
- Increased risk of serious injury or homicide
- Greater reliance on 911 and emergency response systems
- Missed opportunities for early intervention

What Works?

Closing the Gaps

- Coordinated response
- Early identification
- Legal + advocacy integration
- Offender accountability



AVDA Services

- Legal services, counseling, advocacy
- Safety planning
- BIPP for offenders
- Community education and prevention



AVDA Model

(A Comprehensive Approach to Safety)

- Combines legal advocacy + trauma counseling + safety planning
- Addresses both immediate danger and long-term stability
- Supports survivors through every stage of leaving abuse
- Holds offenders accountable through BIPP programming

AVDA Model

(A Comprehensive Approach to Safety)

- Reduces repeat violence by addressing root causes
- Simple flow: Crisis → Legal → Counseling → Stability)



AVDA Impact

- **5,615 adults and children were supported through AVDA's Legal Advocacy Program.**
- **2062 received legal assistance**
- **573 survivors receiving legal representation, resulting in \$11M+ awarded to survivors helping them rebuild safer, more stable lives**
- **534 clients, including 54 youth, received trauma-informed support through 3,257 hours of counseling.**
- **734 abusers received counseling through the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP).**
- **26,951 adults and youth were impacted through 559 events and presentations from the Community Awareness and Prevention Program (CAPP).**
- **Altogether, AVDA delivered more than 68,200 points of support and intervention across the continuum of survivor services, accountability, and prevention—impacting nearly 30,000 individuals in our community.**

Partnership with HPD

- Co-located advocates since 2008
- North, Westside, Southeast stations
- Real-time support



How the Partnership Works (Logistics)

- AVDA + HPD: Real-Time Collaboration
- Advocates co-located at:
 - ○ North Division
 - ○ Westside Division
 - ○ Southeast Division
- Provides immediate, on-site support to survivors
- Services include:
 - ○ Safety planning
 - ○ Protective order assistance
 - ○ Connection to counseling and resources

Why Civil Legal Services Matter

- Civil Legal Services Save Lives
- Protective orders are a critical tool for preventing future violence
- Legal intervention creates:
 - Enforceable boundaries
 - Immediate safety protections

Equity & Access

- 30% foreign-born population
- Language & financial barriers
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) barriers
- ALICE population (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)
- Immigration-related fears



Impact on Houston

- Improved safety
- Reduced repeat violence
- Lower system costs

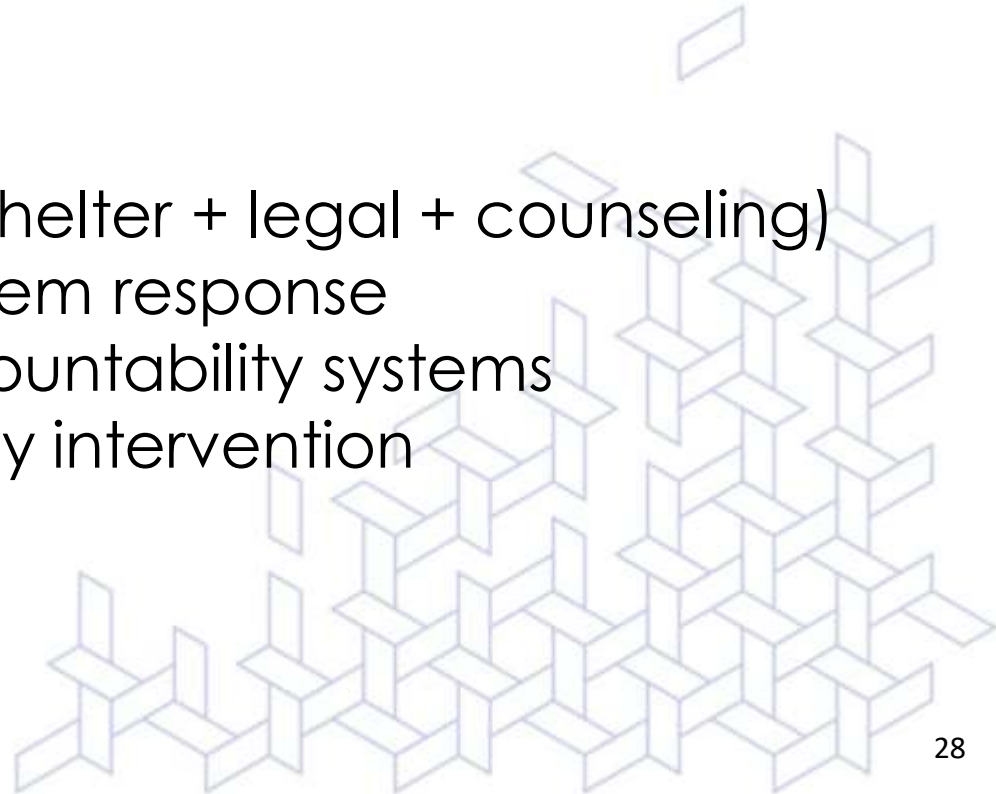


System Cost & Public Safety Impact

- Reduces repeat calls for service
- Frees up law enforcement resources
- Decreases emergency room visits and hospitalizations
- Lowers court system burden over time
- Creates safer, more stable communities

CALL TO ACTION

- Sustain funding
- Support partnerships
- Invest in prevention
- Expand survivor access (shelter + legal + counseling)
- Invest in coordinated system response
- Strengthen offender accountability systems
- Fund prevention and early intervention



For More Information

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