

Domestic Violence Fact Sheet

≡ The Effects of Domestic Violence on Society ≡

THE VIRGINIA CODE (§16.1-228) DEFINES "FAMILY ABUSE" AS:

. . . any act of violence, including forceful detention, which results in physical injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of serious bodily injury and which is committed by a person against a family/household member.

THE VIRGINIA CODE (§18.2-57.2) DEFINES "FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBER" AS:

- Spouse, regardless of residence;
- Ex-spouse, regardless of residence;
- Parents, children, step-parents and step-children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and in-laws who live in the same home;
 - Co-habitants and those who have co-habited in the past year and their children;
 - Persons who have a child in common, regardless of residence.

VIRGINIANS AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEFINES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS:

. . . a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one individual intended to exert power and control over another individual in the context of an intimate relationship.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TOUCHES VAST AND DIVERSE AREAS IN ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY. IT HAS BECOME A WIDESPREAD AND COMPLICATED ISSUE FACING NOT JUST OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, BUT ALSO THE WORKPLACE AND DAY-TO-DAY COMMUNITY LIFE. THE FOLLOWING FACTS GIVE A GLIMPSE INTO THE MAGNITUDE AND COMPLEXITY OF THIS SERIOUS SOCIETAL AFFLICTION:

- The issuance of a Protective Order limits the abuser's access to his or her home and family, often with no alternative housing.
- Women who flee the abusive relationship and seek shelter in the Safe House provided by ACTS/Turning Points, Prince William County's domestic violence program, may be precluded from staying if they have older male children. This results in some women staying in the relationship to suffer more abuse.
- In a study of 777 homeless parents (the majority of whom were mothers) in ten U.S. cities, 22% said they had left their last place of residence because of domestic violence. (Homes for the Homeless, 1998). In addition, 46% of cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1998)¹

- Shelter providers in Virginia report that 35% of their clients are homeless because of family violence (Virginia Coalition for the Homeless, 1995) This same survey found that more than 2,000 women seeking shelter from domestic violence facilities were turned away.²
- Men who have witnessed their parents' domestic violence are three times more likely to abuse their own wives than are the children of nonviolent parents. The sons of the most violent parents are a thousand times more likely to become wife beaters.³
- Children who witness violence at home display emotional and behavioral disturbances as diverse as withdrawal, low self-esteem, nightmares, self-blame and aggression against peers, family members and property.⁴
- During 1992, approximately 28% of female homicide victims (1,414) were known to have been killed by their husbands, former husbands or boyfriends. In contrast, just over 3% of male homicide victims (637) were known to have been killed by their wives, former wives or girlfriends.⁵
- Women of all races, as well as Hispanic and non-Hispanic women, were about equally vulnerable to attacks by intimates. However, women in families with incomes below \$10,000 per year were more likely than other women to be violently attacked by an intimate.⁶
- In a 1994 survey of senior executives of Fortune 100 companies, significant numbers of respondents said domestic violence has a harmful effect on their company's productivity (49%) and attendance (47%), and increases insurance and medical costs (44%). Eighty percent of respondents said that domestic violence affects employees from all walks of life.⁷
- According to a 1996 National Institute of Justice study, domestic crime against adults accounts for almost 15 percent of total crime costs--\$67 billion per year.⁸
- In a recent New York study of 50 battered women, 75% said they had been harassed by the batterer while they were at work. In the same study, 54% reported missing an average of three days per month, and 44% lost at least one job for reasons directly related to the abuse.⁹

¹ **NCH Fact Sheet # 8** published by the National Coalition for the Homeless, April 1999. (<http://nch.ari.netdomestic.html>)

² Ibid.

³ Straus, M.A., Gelles, R.J. Steinmetz, S., *Behind Closed Doors*. Doubleday, Anchor. 1980. (<http://www.igc.org/fund/the facts/children.html>)

⁴ Peled, Inat, Jaffe, Peter G. & Edleson, Jeffery L. (eds.) *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995. (<http://www.famvi.com/othersts.htm>)

⁵ BJS Press Release: Violence Against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey. **Women Usually Victimized By Offenders They Know**. (<http://www.famvi.com/deptjust.htm>)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Women's Work Program, Liz Claiborne, Inc., *Survey conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide*, New York, Liz Claiborne, Inc., July 18 – August 5, 1994. (<http://www.igc.org/fund/the facts/factsht.html>)

⁸ National Institute of Justice, *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look*, **NIJ Research Report**, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, January, 1996. (<http://www.igc.org/fund/the facts/factsht.html>)

⁹ Friedman, Lucy, and Cooper, Sarah, *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, New York, Victim Services Research Department, 1987. (<http://www.famvi.com/othersts.htm>)