

2018
Annual Report

Domestic Violence Homicide in Nashville

Domestic Abuse Death Review Team
Nashville - Davidson County, TN





Cover Image: 2017 'Meet Us at the Bridge' Event hosted by the Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). Meet Us at the Bridge is an annual event recognizing outstanding individuals and groups that use their time and talents to combat domestic violence and to honor those who have lost their lives to domestic violence.

Meet Us at the Bridge is held in October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month on the west side of the John Seigenthaler Pedestrian Bridge.

The events and incidents described within this report are derived from the following sources: the Metro Nashville Police Department homicide report relating to the homicide in question; interviews with several members of the adult victim's family; interviews with church leadership; and an 18-page document hand-written by the adult victim for her divorce attorney just days before the homicide. These details and descriptions do not reflect the opinions of the Domestic Abuse Death Review Team, the Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety, or the City of Nashville.

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Metro Office of Family Safety

Nashville – Davidson County, TN 2018 Annual Report

PREPARED FOR

The Honorable Mayor John Cooper

&

The Metropolitan Government Office of Family Safety
Advisory Committee

PREPARED BY

Diane Lance, Department Head

Becky Owens Bullard, Senior Director of Programs

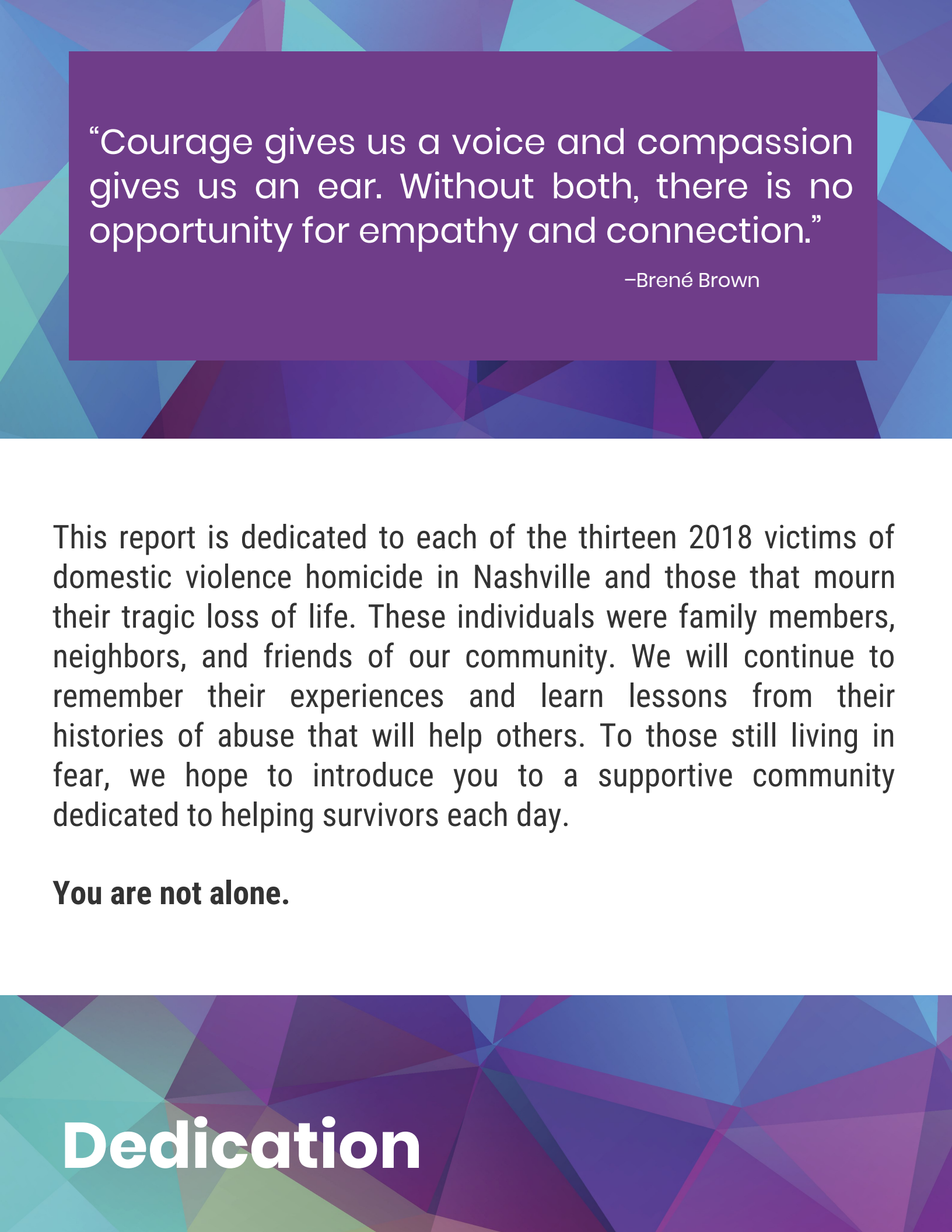
Heather Herrmann, Statewide Fatality Review Coordinator

Megan Moore, High Risk Programs Coordinator

of the

Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County,
Office of Family Safety

Domestic Abuse
Death Review Team



“Courage gives us a voice and compassion gives us an ear. Without both, there is no opportunity for empathy and connection.”

—Brené Brown

This report is dedicated to each of the thirteen 2018 victims of domestic violence homicide in Nashville and those that mourn their tragic loss of life. These individuals were family members, neighbors, and friends of our community. We will continue to remember their experiences and learn lessons from their histories of abuse that will help others. To those still living in fear, we hope to introduce you to a supportive community dedicated to helping survivors each day.

You are not alone.

Dedication

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Nashville Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT or Team) would like to thank Nashville's past and present Mayors and Council members for their support of the Team's work in examining domestic violence fatalities. The Team would also like to express its gratitude to the Metro Government Office of Family Safety's (OFS) Advisory Committee for its guidance and support.

We are extremely grateful for the many Team members who dedicated time out of their busy schedules to thoughtfully review the selected 2018 case. The dedication and expertise that DADRT members bring to each meeting is invaluable in identifying the gaps in domestic violence homicide prevention.

Nashville's Domestic Abuse Death Review Team would like to specifically thank Judge Phillip Smith for generously sharing his time and expertise to help the Team understand Tennessee's divorce and custody laws while researching this case and crafting their findings.

Lastly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all individuals that volunteered their time identifying and providing insight into warning signs and possible points of intervention. We are especially grateful to those family and friends who suffered a painful loss but were willing to share their loved one's story with the Team in order to help us better serve future victims of domestic violence.

It is the hope of our Team that this report will lead to a better understanding of domestic violence in our community, the strengths and weaknesses in our response systems, and the steps that we must take in the future to improve victim safety and offender accountability.



Meet Us at the Bridge, 2018



Dear Mayor Cooper,

The Nashville-Davidson County Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) would like to share our 2018 annual report. DADRT is managed by the Metro Office of Family Safety (OFS) and meets monthly at the new Family Safety Center (FSC) with partners from criminal justice and victim services agencies.

Under the authority of Executive Order 022 (2016) and following National Fatality Review best practices, the Team performed an in-depth review of one case of domestic violence familicide, where the perpetrator murdered his wife and their elementary school aged daughter before taking his own life. This murder-suicide case is representative of a growing trend in Nashville with five completed or attempted murder-suicides in 2018 and seven in 2017. In previous years, murder-suicides were stagnant at 0-1 incidents per year. This disturbing trend is also occurring throughout the state of Tennessee and the country with incidents of murder-suicide increasing exponentially across the board.

The familicide case reviewed by the team involved virtually no domestic violence-related contact with law enforcement, the criminal justice system, or victim services agencies in Nashville. This is indicative of the 43% of Nashville's intimate partner homicides in 2018 where the victim and perpetrator had no law enforcement or court interactions regarding the abuse. It is also representative of the 92% of domestic violence murders in Nashville in 2018 that had no contact with the city's two Family Justice Centers.

It is the Team's hope that this report will highlight areas of potential improvement in Nashville's domestic violence response and prevention services. Ultimately, it is our goal to identify ways to reduce domestic violence homicides in our community and make Nashville the safest city for women and children.

Sincerely,

Diane Lance

Department Head, Office of Family Safety

Bonnie Beneke

DADRT Chair, TN Dept. of Children's Services

Captain Michelle Richter

DADRT Sub-Chair, Metro Nashville Police Department

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Tennessee Code Establishing Death Reviews

Mission, Responsibility, & Authority of Team

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Power & Control Wheels

Executive Summary

Tennessee currently ranks 5th in the nation for the rate of women killed by men and has been in the top 10 of this ranking 18 out of the last 22 years. Nashville alone accounted for 13% of all domestic violence incidents and 18% of domestic violence homicides in Tennessee according to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's most recent reporting. The purpose of the Nashville's Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) is to review Nashville's domestic violence homicide cases and identify opportunities to close gaps in Nashville's response to domestic violence that may leave victims vulnerable.

The case reviewed in 2018 was a double murder-suicide involving the murder of a 48-year-old woman (the perpetrator's wife) and their 9-year-old daughter. This type of homicide is also called a "familicide" where the perpetrator murders multiple members of the family, often then taking their own lives. The homicide was extremely violent, involving arson, blunt force trauma, and stabbing. Criminal justice and victim service records for the case indicated only one contact with the victim. Interviews with family, the perpetrator's employer, and faith leaders painted a picture of a fourteen-year relationship characterized by the perpetrator's physical and emotional abuse, coercive control, and severe isolation of the victim.

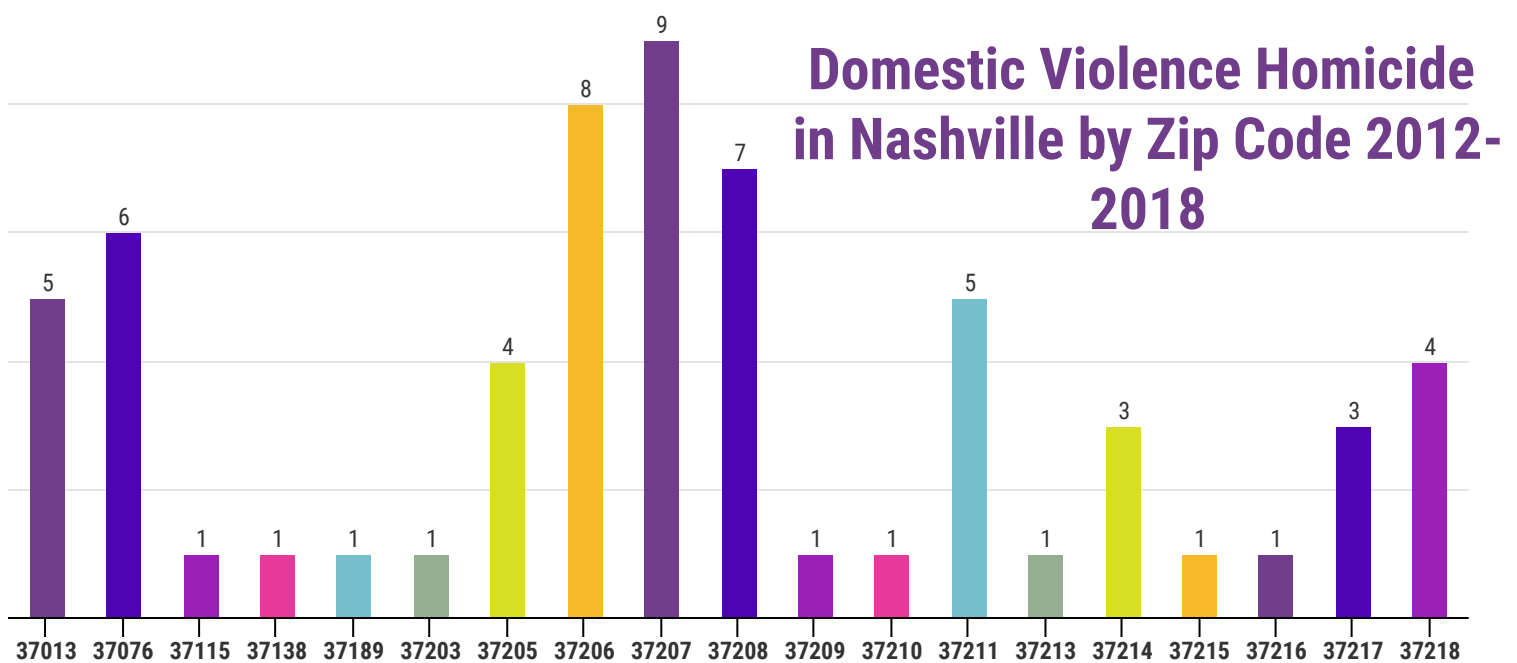
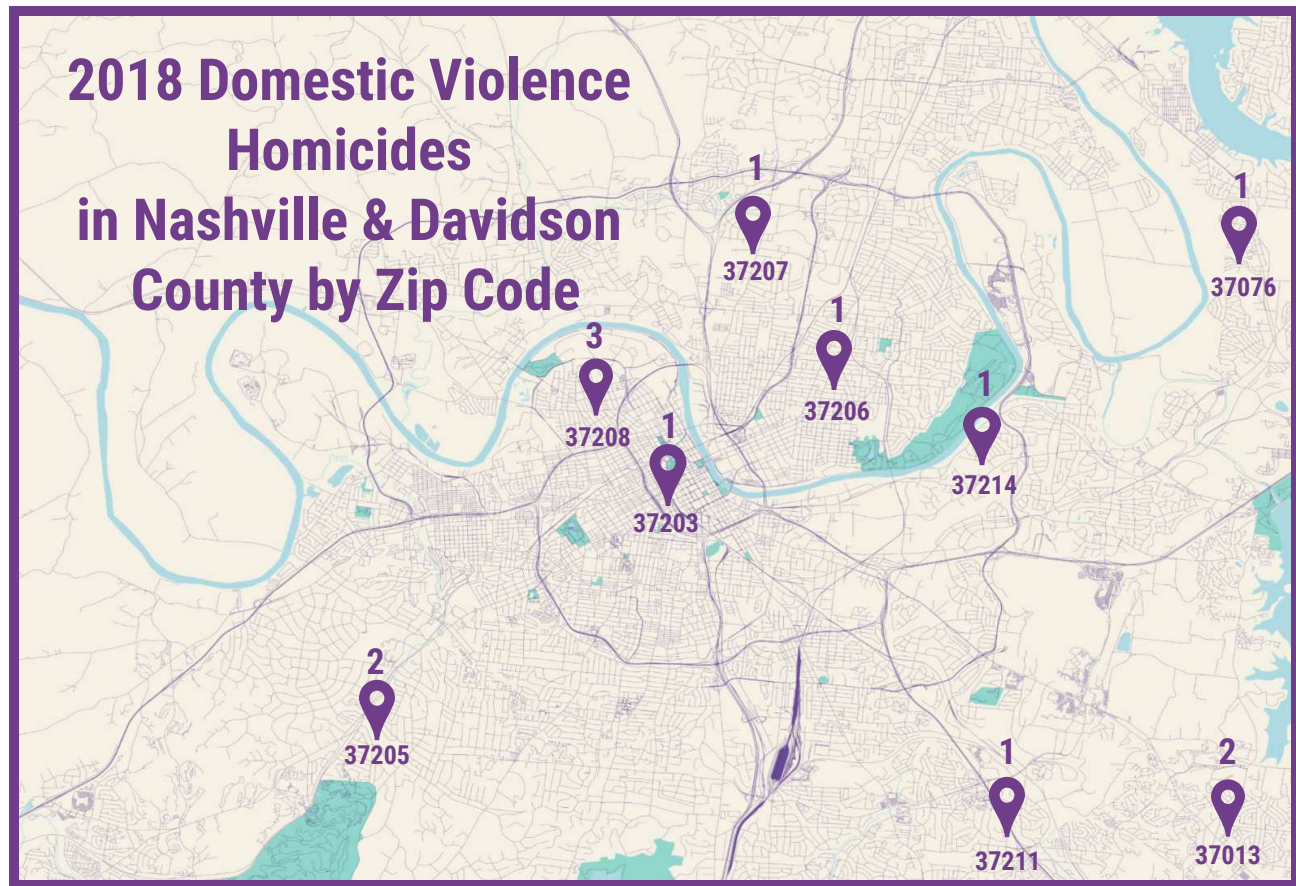
"Familicide is defined as one family member who murders other members of their family, commonly taking the lives of all. It is most often used to describe cases where a parent, usually the father, kills his wife and children and then himself. These cases are horrifying acts which can wipe out an entire family, leaving relatives, friends, and colleagues stunned and confused. Often no outward signs were visible to suggest anyone was in danger or that there was a risk of an individual taking such horrific actions. Familicide is commonly intertwined with the term 'family annihilator' stemming from the act itself, that of family annihilation. Most researchers agree that this act is a form of mass murder due to the multiple victims involved."

-Family Annihilation: The Crimes and Psychology of Familicide, Fiona Guy, Family Violence & Homicide, June 2019

The Domestic Abuse Death Review Team identified four findings and recommendations in the case that may have contributed to the victim's level of risk:

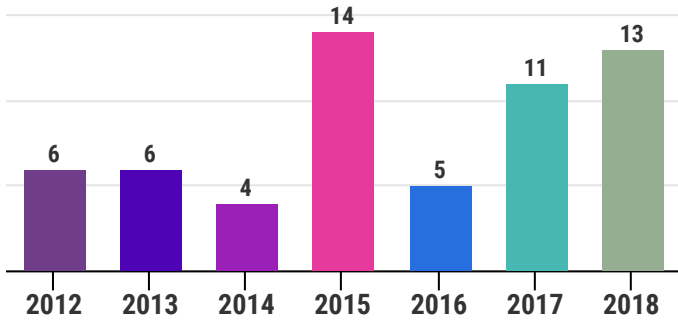
- 1. Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP):** The need to amend LAP guidelines for the Metro Nashville Police Department to include administering the LAP when domestic abuse is merely suspected and documented as a "matter of record".
- 2. Legal Manipulation:** The need to prevent perpetrators from using a mischaracterization of Tennessee's laws regarding divorce, separation, and child custody to pressure victims into remaining in violent relationships.
- 3. Community Education & Support:** The need to address the lack of understanding of domestic violence within the community which can leave victims feeling trapped within abusive relationships. There is an additional need to provide families with adequate support in the aftermath of violence experienced by their loved ones.
- 4. Bullying & Domestic Violence:** The need to correct the mischaracterizing of abusive behaviors as 'bullying' which can lead to the minimization of chronic domestic abuse and victim risk.
- 5. Identification & Support of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence:** A need to identify children exposed to domestic abuse through school, faith communities, and other child programming.

2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Location



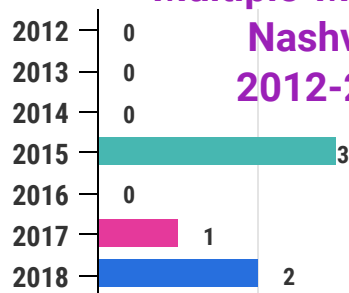
2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Homicide Types & Rates

Total Domestic Violence (DV) Homicides in Nashville 2012-2018



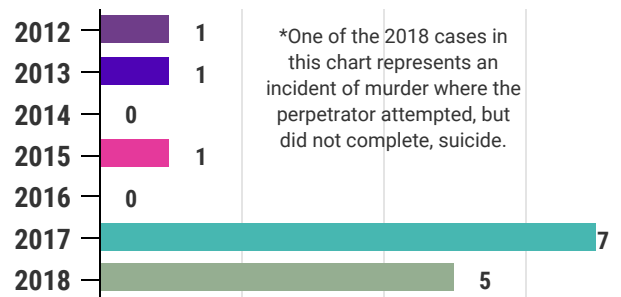
The spikes in DV homicides in 2015, 2017, & 2018 coincide with spikes in DV multiple-murders and murder-suicides.

Total DV Familicides & Multiple-Murders in Nashville 2012-2018



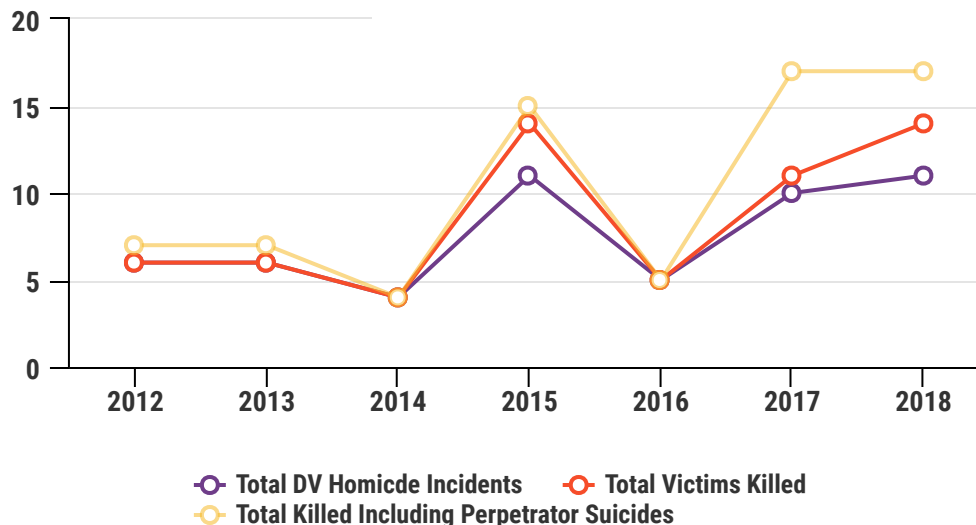
Deadly incidents are now involving more victims, including children.

Total* DV Murder-Suicides in Nashville 2012-2018

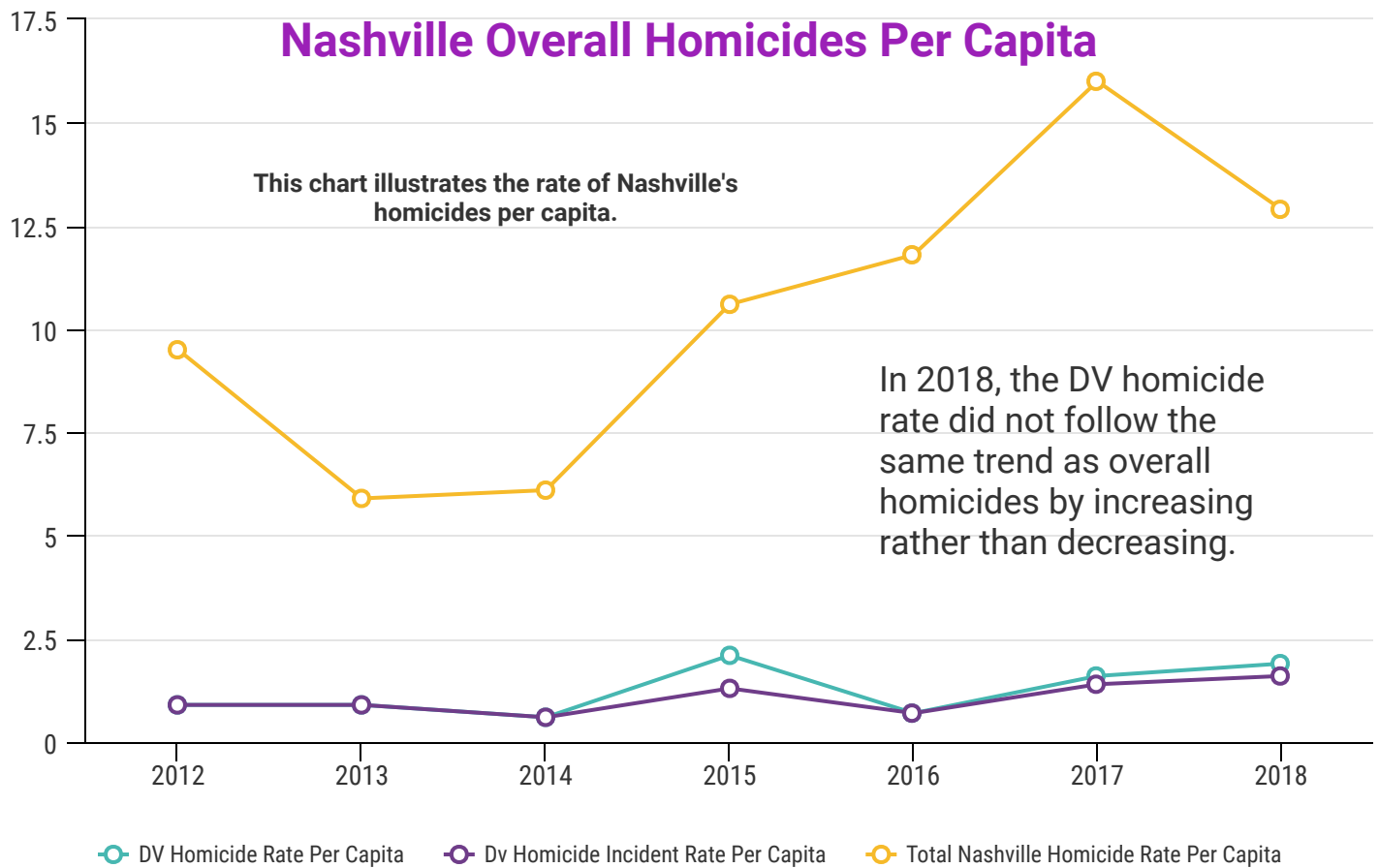


Murder-suicides are on the rise in Nashville and across the state

Number of individual DV homicides vs the number of individuals killed in those incidents.



2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Homicide Types & Rates

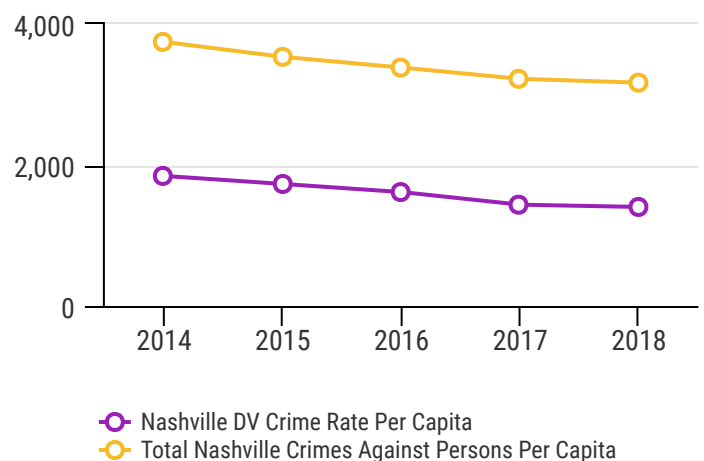


Nashville Crimes Reported to Law Enforcement Per Capita

This decline in reporting is not necessarily an indicator of less domestic violence in Nashville, but may be an indicator of less disclosures of abuse to police and the courts.

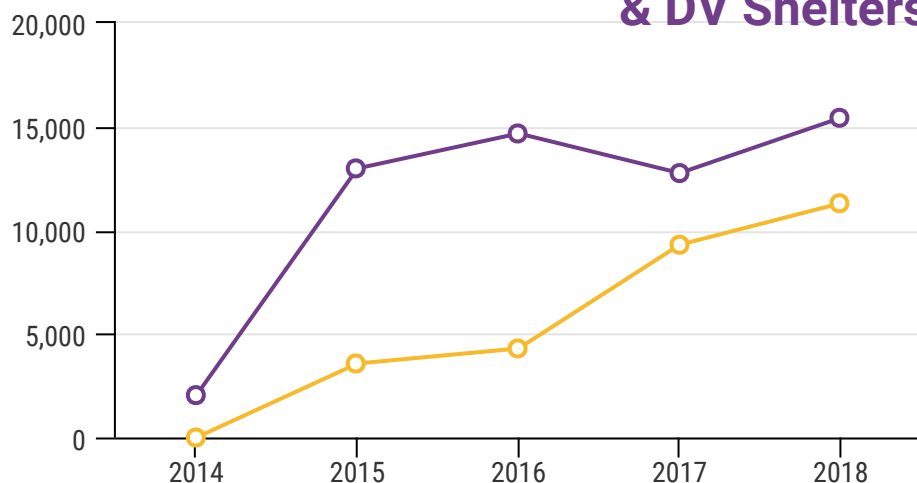
Historically, most victims of DV homicide have not sought assistance from law enforcement or the courts.

This is illustrated by the rise in DV homicides shown above and the rise in services to victims provided by Nashville's Family Justice Centers and domestic violence shelters as illustrated on the next page.



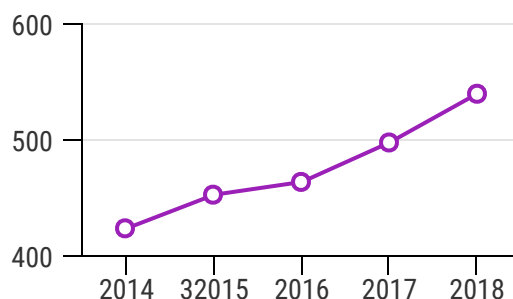
2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Victim Services

Services Provided by Nashville's Family Justice Centers & DV Shelters



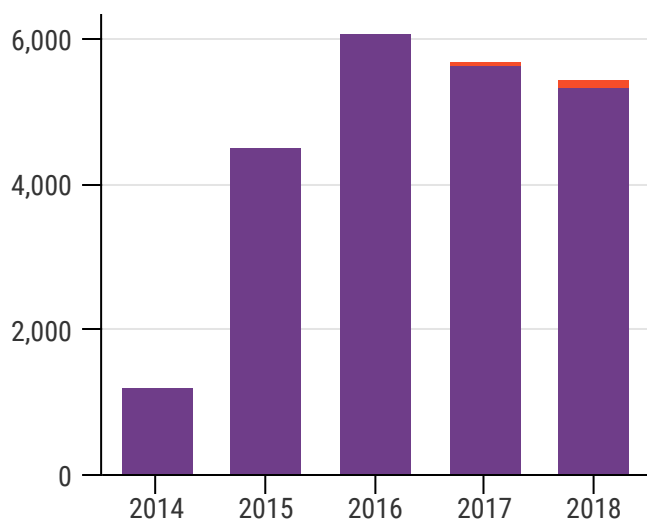
Resources Provided at Nashville FJC's Direct Services Provided at Nashville FJC's

In spite of the decrease in DV crimes reported to law enforcement, Nashville's victim services agencies have seen a **steady increase** in the services they have provided to victims since 2014.



Victims Sheltered at the YWCA

Jean Crowe Advocacy Center



Number of Adult Victims Served at JCAC
Number of JCAC Clients Murdered

The Jean Crowe Advocacy Center has served 26,140 victims of DV since it opened in 2014. **Three** of those victims have been killed, one in 2017 and two in 2018.

Orders of Protection



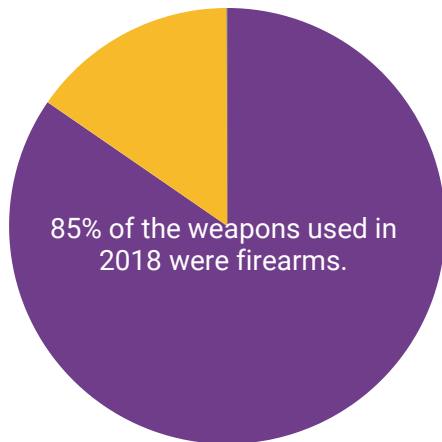
7% of DV homicide victims in 2018 had an Order of Protection against their killer **at the time of the murder.**

Many of the NIP multiple-murderers had a history of abusing intimate partners, **some of these killer's intimate partners received services from one of Nashville's Family Justice Centers. While the intimate partner violence victims benefited from the Office of Family Safety's advocacy services, their abusers remained determined to kill and went on to murder multiple other people instead.**

Definition: Non-Intimate Partner (NIP) domestic violence homicides include the killing of roommates and familial homicides. Unfortunately, these victims are less likely to seek services from Nashville's two Family Justice Centers or domestic violence shelters than those who are abused by intimate partners. Those who murder NIPs often have a history of intimate partner violence.

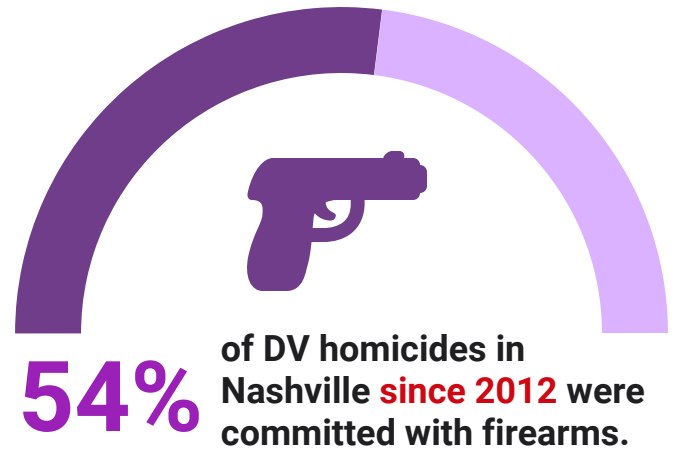
2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Nashville DV Homicides

Weapons Used in 2018 DV Homicides



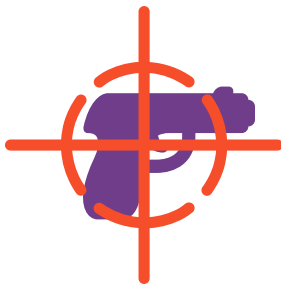
● Gun ● Knife ● Fists/Feet ● Strangulation
● Arson ● Other

Firearm Use

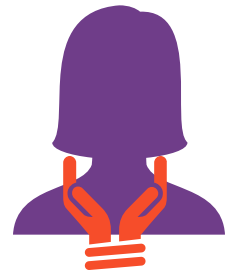


Firearm use in DV homicides is on the rise in Nashville.

Firearm & Strangulation Flagging



In June of 2019 the Metro Office of Family Safety began a daily review of domestic violence criminal and civil court dockets to flag each case in which a perpetrator possessed a firearm or had a history of strangling their victim, two of the highest risk indicators for the perpetration of a domestic violence murder.



In the two months since beginning this project the OFS has flagged a total of 1,093 criminal defendants and OP respondents, 770 of those were flagged for the possession or use of a firearm, 723 for strangling a victim, and 400 were flagged for both.

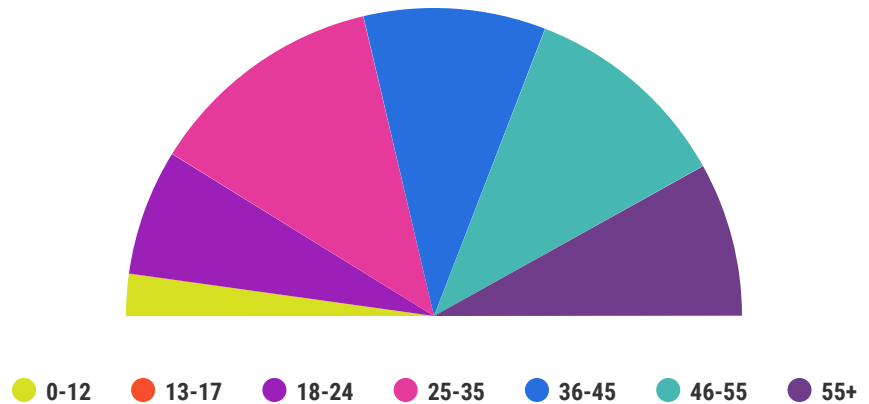
As a consequence of this project, the OFS has noted at least 14 incidents of intimate partner domestic violence during these two months where an intimate partner Lethality Assessment (LAP) should have been completed, but was not.

2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Victims

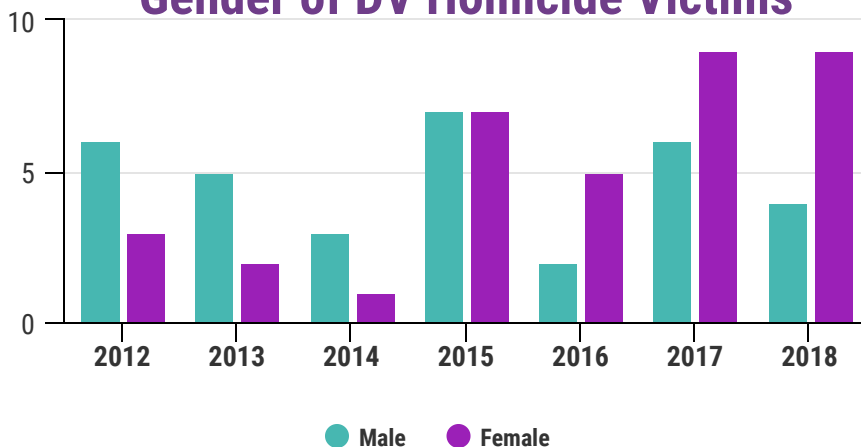
Child Victims



Victim Age 2012-2018



Gender of DV Homicide Victims

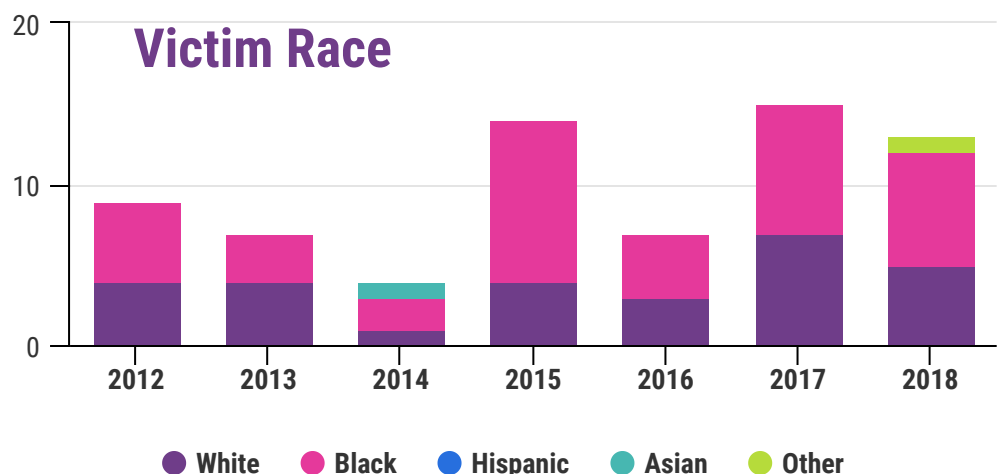


Women are far more likely to be killed by an intimate partner, while men are more likely to be victims of non-intimate domestic violence.

Despite making up only 28% of Nashville's population, black people account for over 50% of Nashville's DV homicide victims.

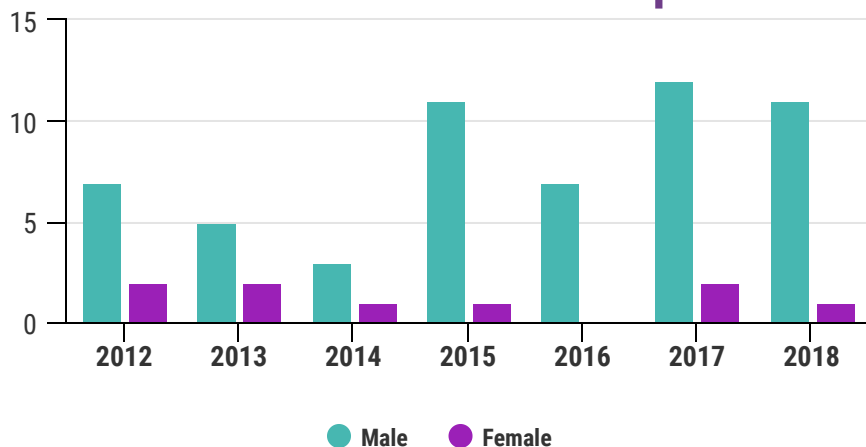
Black women are at a greater risk of DV homicide than any other population in Nashville and across the US.

Victim Race



2012–2018 Data & Statistics: Perpetrators

Gender of DV Homicide Perpetrators

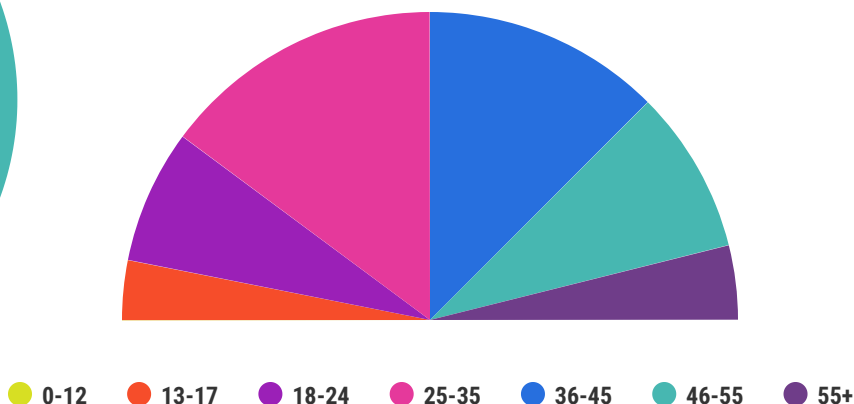


In Nashville, men perpetrate domestic violence homicides at far higher rates than women.

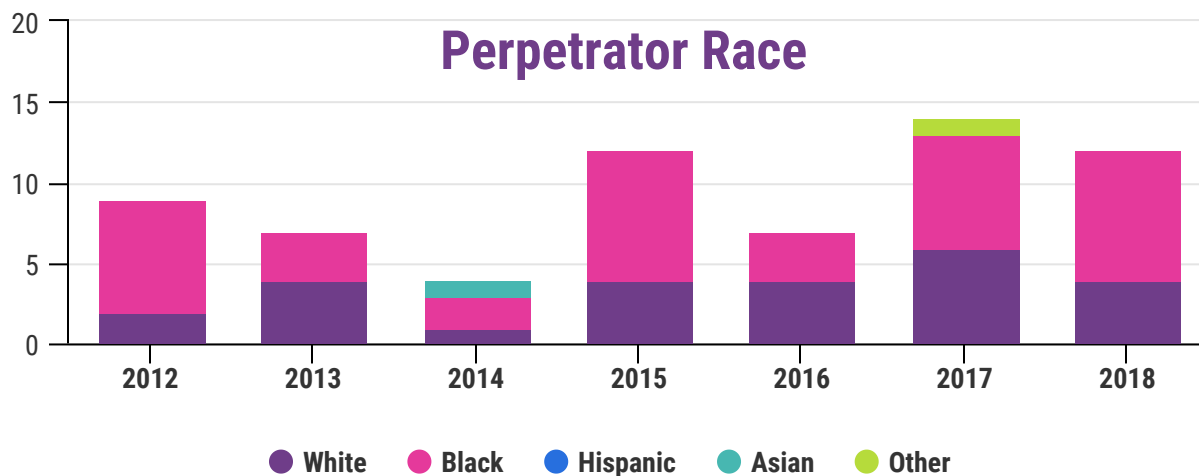
Men have perpetrated 95% of intimate partner homicide cases in Nashville since 2012.



Perpetrator Age 2012-2018



Perpetrator Race




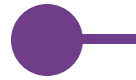



The Timeline of the Murder

On the following page you will find a timeline of the relationship between the perpetrator and his two homicide victims. It is important to note that the perpetrator subjected his victims to significant and prolonged mental, emotional, and physical abuse. That abuse is reported in greater detail in subsequent pages of this report.

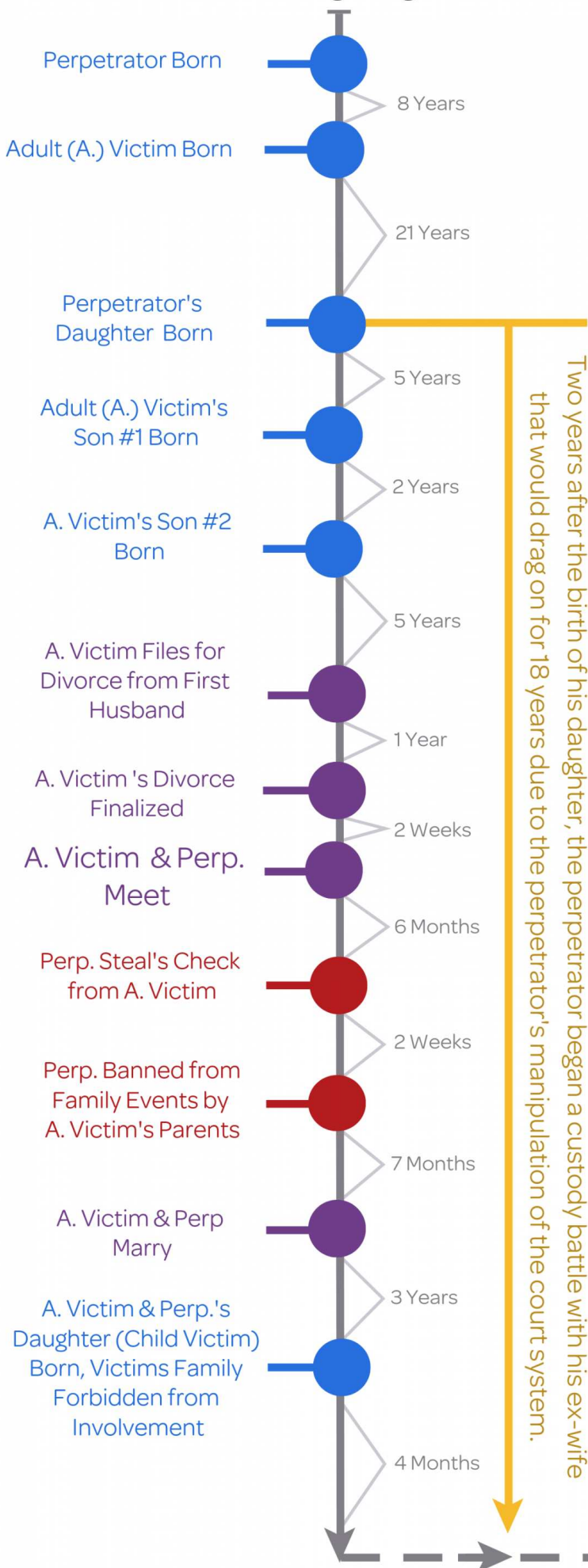
However, the timeline you see here is a reflection of those incidents which the Team could place firmly on a specific date based on the evidence presented in the law enforcement homicide report, witness interviews, and the adult victim's own writing.

Therefore, the incidents of abuse presented on this timeline do not reflect a complete picture of the abuse suffered by these two victims.

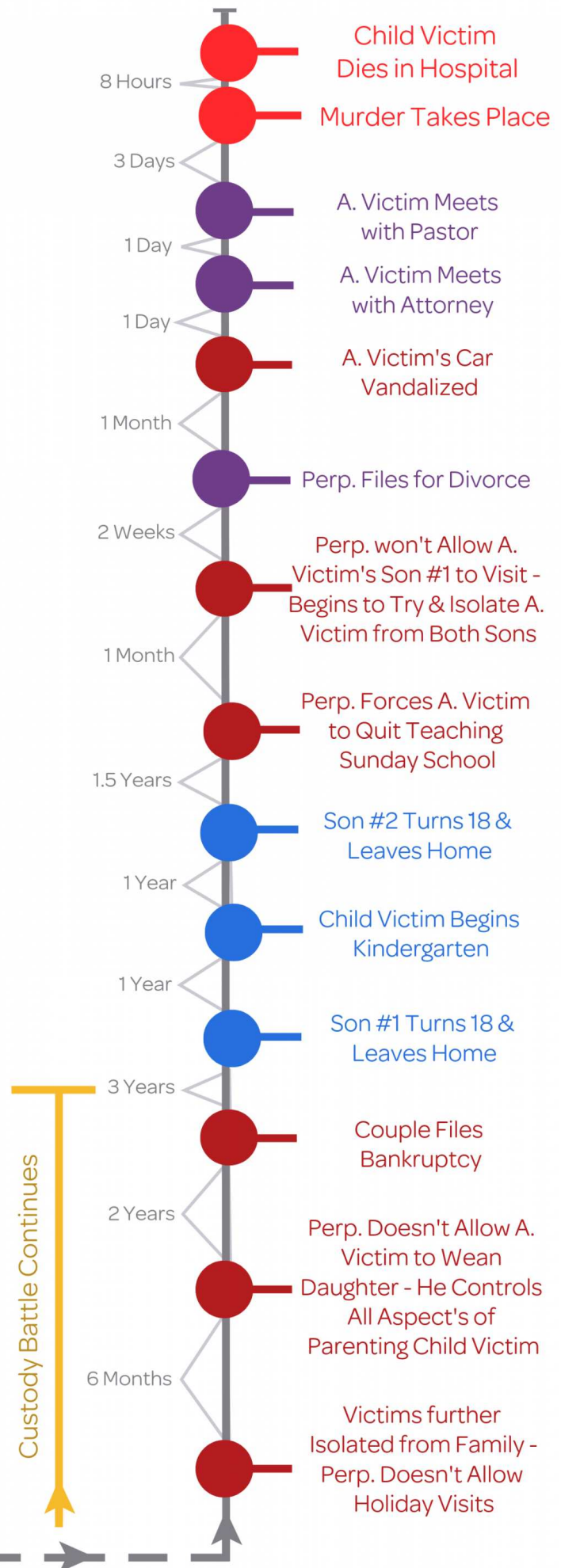
Timeline Key

-  Births & Significant Milestones
-  Adult Victim & Perpetrator Relationship Milestones
-  Incidents of Abuse
-  Perpetrator's Custody battle with Ex-Wife
-  The Homicide

The Beginning



The Homicide



Case Review

The Adult Victim (Wife of Perpetrator)

The adult victim was described by her family, friends, and church leaders as bubbly, energetic, and kind. Her father and stepmother remember her as a precocious and talkative child. She had three adult siblings that she was very close to and she got along well with her stepmother. By all accounts, she had a peaceful childhood. She loved her work with children at an after school daycare and enjoyed helping others. She had two sons with her first husband. They divorced when her sons were young and, according to her family, she worked hard to get back on her feet and make a home for herself and her sons as a single mother. She volunteered at her church Sunday School, and church leaders described her as warm, kind, and reliable.

“She was a strong person, a single mom, and we saw her completely and totally change.”

– The Adult Victim’s Sister

The Perpetrator

Although the DADRT reached out to the perpetrator’s family members, the Team did not receive a response and were unable to include them in the background interviews. Therefore, little is known about the details of the perpetrator’s childhood. The perpetrator’s parents were divorced, and the victim’s family members described the perpetrator as a ‘bully’ in school and with his siblings. The team was unable to find corroborated information about previous domestic violence incidents in the three prior marriages or other relationships, however, the perpetrator did tell the adult victim that he had kidnapped his older daughter from her mother in order to gain custody. The perpetrator was divorced three times before he met the victim and had one daughter of his own. He had no consistent work history, and when he met the victim he was living with his mother.

Their Relationship & Children

The adult victim and perpetrator met in church shortly after the victim’s divorce from her first husband. In getting to know each other the perpetrator lied about his age (he was several years older than he told the victim), his job status (he was unemployed), and his living situation (he lived with his mother). A few months after they began dating, the perpetrator stole a check from the victim and allegedly used it to pay off a debt. Although he convinced the victim to forgive him, the behavior was concerning to the victim’s family and her parents forbade the perpetrator to attend future family gatherings.

“God told me I’m going to marry you.”

–The perpetrator to the adult victim on their first meeting, as reported by the adult victim’s family.

In interviews, the victim’s family stated they hoped that by excluding the perpetrator, the victim would more clearly see his troubling behavior. Instead, family members reported that his exclusion from the family allowed the perpetrator to drive a wedge between the victim and her family, further isolating her to the point where he controlled who she could see and speak to on the phone. The victim even became too afraid to speak to her siblings if she saw them in public. The perpetrator pushed their relationship forward very quickly and the two were engaged within six months and married in just over a year.

“Quick Involvement: Many people in abusive relationships dated or knew their abusive partners for less than six months before they were married, engaged or living together. He comes on like a whirlwind, claiming, “You are the only person I could ever talk to” or “I’ve never felt like this for anyone before.” ”

– Alan C. Brantley, Traits and Characteristics of Violent Offenders, FBI Academy, 2014

Case Review

Their Relationship & Children Continued

Although the adult victim and the perpetrator had primary custody of their own children from previous marriage(s), the perpetrator obsessively controlled all five members of the household throughout their fourteen-year relationship including what family members wore, what they ate, what songs they listened to, where they could go, and who they could talk to on the phone. The victim's two sons were forbidden from receiving presents or cards from the victim's family on birthdays or holidays. The perpetrator prevented the victim's family from attending important events like the boys' graduations, and would start fights with the victim if she did not comply. He was equally controlling with his oldest daughter who ran away to live with her birth mother at the age of sixteen. The perpetrator masked his controlling behavior as 'care,' often insisting that he isolated the adult victim to protect her and controlled every aspect of their lives out of love.

The perpetrator subjected the adult victim to severe emotional abuse and humiliation. He was described by each of the family members interviewed as a "bully", a word that unintentionally minimizes the severe and degrading physical and mental abuse he inflicted on the victim. In the victim's own words, written out in preparation for her divorce, "He would wrestle me to ground. He loved it when I fought back. He would slobber in my face, put my finger in his nose, pull my toe nails up, lick my eyes, slobber in my ears." She also indicated in her written statement that the perpetrator would sit on or pin her in place while he did these things and even force the victim to touch him in unpleasant or degrading ways, including forcing the adult victim to perform sexual acts against her will.

The perpetrator used similar tactics of abuse against the victim's two sons: calling them names, pushing and shoving them, belittling them, and even shooting them with a BB gun. He used extremely disproportionate punishments for the boys' every mistake, forcing them to scrub the sides of the house with toothbrushes or clean the gutters in the dead of winter. In the aftermath of the homicide, some of the neighbors admitted to suspecting that something "wasn't right" in the home but felt that they didn't have enough proof to contact authorities. The perpetrator minimized his behavior as 'roughhousing' and often used the excuse that 'boys will be boys' and that he and her sons were 'bonding' when the victim tried to intervene.

"Battering changes the nature of children's crucial relationships with their mother through mechanisms that include undermining her authority and interfering with her ability to provide care."

-Lundy Bancroft, "The Batterer As Parent", Sage Publications, 2012

The Child Victim (Daughter of Perpetrator & Adult Victim)

The perpetrator's second victim was his elementary-school-aged daughter. The child victim was born to the adult victim and perpetrator roughly four years into their marriage. The perpetrator's isolation and control extended to their daughter, with him dictating when and how the announcement of his wife's pregnancy would be made, and forbidding the victim's family from being a part of their daughter's life. As with the other members of the family, the perpetrator controlled what his daughter wore, what she ate, where she went, who was allowed to babysit her, and even when the adult victim could wean her as an infant.

"After children are born, a range of decisions about how they are to be treated, fed, trained, and educated may fall increasingly under the batterer's control, even though he is typically contributing only a small portion of the labor of child rearing."

-Lundy Bancroft, "The Batterer As Parent", Sage Publications, 2012

Case Review

The Child Victim Continued

When the victim's sons and perpetrator's older daughter became independent and moved out of the home the perpetrator's need for control focused more intensely on the two victims remaining in his control – his wife and their young daughter. The perpetrator controlled all of their finances and the adult victim often missed work due to the perpetrator's unreasonable demands on her time. The perpetrator appeared to treat her more like a servant than a co-parent. Additionally, the perpetrator utilized the child victim as a weapon of his abuse to the adult victim. The adult victim described in her written statement to her attorney that he would encourage their child to hit, spit on, and call her mother names, intentionally damaging their parent-child relationship.

The perpetrator's control was cemented by his threats to take their daughter away if the adult victim ever tried to leave him. The perpetrator often told the adult victim that he had kidnapped his older daughter and taken her to another state when he and his ex-wife divorced, ultimately retaining custody. Whether or not this story was true is unknown, but it had the desired effect of making the adult victim terrified of losing her daughter should she try to leave.

“That was how he twisted things. He told her if she tried to leave he would take [their daughter] and run off.”

–The Adult Victim's Stepmother

Interviews with the victims' family and faith community described the perpetrator as subjecting both victims to intense isolation and control and focusing his emotional abuse and physical 'bullying' behaviors on the adult victim. The child victim's grandparents were only able to see their granddaughter three times in secret before the homicide, despite living only a few miles apart.

Faith Community

The adult victim's only social outlet was attending the church where the perpetrator worked as a custodian. According to the adult victim's divorce statement and each family member interviewed, the perpetrator often stole supplies from the church and used church funds to order items for himself. He expressed feeling entitled to these items for no other reason than because he wanted them. The church community supported the family in times of financial hardship, but the perpetrator made sure to keep distance between them. He scheduled his work hours for times when the church was empty, interacted as little as possible with fellow church members, and cultivated a reputation as being 'quirky' and 'strange.' Church leaders noticed that he seemed somewhat overbearing and controlling of the adult victim and the child victim, but none of them knew the level of control and physical and emotional abuse he was truly subjecting them to.

Leaving the Perpetrator

Once grown, the adult victim's sons moved out of the home and the perpetrator began to isolate the adult victim from them as well. These attempts to estrange the adult victim from her sons was a tipping point and the victim told her sister that she planned to leave the perpetrator and file for divorce.

The Metro Nashville Police Department shows only a single police report made by the adult victim less than a week before the homicide. The victim's car had been vandalized, her gas tank was filled with an unknown substance, and she believed her husband had vandalized her car in order to prevent her from meeting with her divorce attorney. However, as there was no evidence that the perpetrator had vandalized the car, no criminal warrant was issued and a Matter of Record (MOR) report was filed. Following MNPDP protocol on all cases of domestic violence, the responding officer offered to connect her with shelter, counseling and a protective order, but the victim declined. The officer did not conduct the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) to assess the risk level of the victim, which is optional for MNPDP officers on Matter of Record (MOR) reports.

Case Review

Leaving the Perpetrator Continued

The victim was able to meet with her attorney and file for divorce two days after her car was vandalized. The perpetrator had filed for divorce only a few days before. One week later the perpetrator killed both victims. In both divorce filings the perpetrator and victim cited Inappropriate Marital Conduct, although the perpetrator's divorce complaint did not give any indication as to what type of conduct he was alleging. The victim's counter-complaint specified controlling and emotionally abusive behavior. As previously threatened, the perpetrator requested exclusive custody of the child victim and to be vested full ownership of their home in his divorce complaint.

Following the divorce filings the perpetrator and both victims continued to live together until the homicide one week later. The perpetrator and adult victim slept in separate bedrooms under the same roof. The adult victim slept in a spare room where they kept exercise equipment, including weights, which were used to bludgeon her the night of the homicide.

Multiple sources, including the adult victim's written communication to her divorce attorney, confirm that she remained in the home with the perpetrator for fear of losing her house and custody of her daughter in the divorce if she left. These sources describe her fear that she would be penalized for 'abandonment' if she left the home for a shelter and would be breaking the law if she fled with the child victim, both misconceptions that she had been given by the perpetrator. In the one week between the divorce filing and the murder, the perpetrator would hide the victim's mail in an attempt to damage her divorce case by causing her to miss deadlines and important correspondence. In addition, the perpetrator stopped paying the household bills causing the victim's phone to be cut off and isolating her further.

“Her daughter and her home, that’s what she was fighting for.”

—The Adult Victim's Sister

Just days before the homicide, the adult victim met with the pastor of their church to confide in him about the divorce and some of her safety concerns. Although he recommended that she seek help from victim service agencies, the victim was confident that the perpetrator's behavior would not escalate and that once the divorce was finalized she and her daughter would be free.

During that same period, however, the victim more fully shared her fears with her sister stating “if something happens to me you should know it was him [the perpetrator].” She also confided in her sister that she was afraid to eat any food prepared by the perpetrator in case he tried to poison her, as she suspected he had done to animals in the past.

“If something mysterious happens to me or if I disappear you need to make sure there’s an autopsy.”

—The Adult Victim as Reported by her Sister

The Homicides

First responders arrived when a neighbor reported signs of a fire from the house just after midnight. The adult victim's body was found with blunt trauma and a stab wound to her back. The perpetrator and the child victim were found together in a different bedroom unresponsive from the fire and smoke, both died in the hospital within 48 hours.

“ [The Child Victim] was the happiest child, she would just run up and hug you. She was loved by everyone, innately curious about people around her, and never in a bad mood.”

—The Child Victim's Aunt

Case Review

The Homicides Continued

Investigation of the scene showed extensive premeditation and planning on the part of the perpetrator. Plastic was taped over the home's windows to contain the smoke and the perpetrator left a handwritten note in the car with contact information for his extended family members.

“The murder is awful but what people don’t understand is we lost her 14 years earlier. We didn’t get to reestablish the relationship. There are people who go through this every day. How do we help them?”

—The Adult Victim's Sister

Power & Control

The perpetrator used many of the power and control elements outlined in the Duluth Model's Power and Control Wheel. This Wheel is the most widely-used domestic violence education and intervention approach in the world and provides tremendous insight into the most common and effective tactics used by offenders to control victims. (A copy of the wheel is available on page 33.) The following pages describe specific behaviors from the Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel that the perpetrator inflicted against the adult victim, these incidents come from interviews with the victims' family and the adult victim's divorce filing.

Emotional Abuse

- The perpetrator would often call the victim vulgar and derogatory names. He also regularly told the victim that she was stupid or useless.
- Isolation
- The perpetrator isolated the victim from friends and family throughout their 14-year relationship. He controlled who she could see and speak to on the phone. The victim was too afraid to even speak to her siblings if she saw them in public.

Minimizing, Denying, Blaming

- The perpetrator made excuses for his controlling and isolating behaviors by insisting that he was protecting the victim from anyone and anything that would hurt or upset her. He said that her family “caused fights” between the adult victim and the perpetrator, and that they “never liked him.”
- He minimized his physical abuse by describing it as ‘horseplay,’ ‘roughhousing,’ and ‘playing,’ claiming that he was ‘just bonding with the boys’. He blamed the victim and told her she ‘sucked all the fun out of life’ when she complained about the abuse.

Using Children

- The perpetrator threatened to take their daughter (child victim) away if she ever left him.
- He used equally controlling, demeaning, isolating, and violent tactics in his interactions with the victim's sons and disregarded the victim's concerns.
- Based on the adult victim's written statement to her attorney, the perpetrator instructed the child victim to disrespect the adult victim, including hitting, spitting on her, and calling her names, likely damaging their parent-child relationship.

Economic Abuse

- The perpetrator controlled all of the household finances and caused the victim to miss work or cut down her hours to meet his demands to do anything he asked of her, including household chores, arranging all of his appointments, and watching the child victim because he refused to allow anyone else to babysit her.

Case Review

Power & Control Continued

Coercion & Threats

- The perpetrator often warned the victim that if she disobeyed his wishes he would “cause a scene” and “she would be sorry.”

Physical & Sexual Violence

- The perpetrator often knocked the victim down or wrestled her to the floor. He sat on her, pinned her down, spit on her, and pinched her. The perpetrator would make the victim put her fingers in his nose, he would lick her eyes, pull her toenails up, and slobber in her ears. Additionally, the perpetrator would force the victim to touch him in unpleasant or degrading ways.

Power & Control - Child Victim

The Duluth Model also provides a Power and Control Wheel specific to the abuse of children, below you will find some examples from this case that illustrate the abuse perpetrated toward the child victim. You can find a copy of the Abuse of Children Wheel on page 34.

Using Institutions

- The perpetrator regularly threatened to kidnap the child victim or secure full custody of her through the courts if the adult victim tried to get herself and the child victim away from the perpetrator.

Isolation

- On the three instances where the adult victim’s parents were able to meet their granddaughter (the child victim), the victims had to meet them in public places and meticulously hide the meeting from the perpetrator.

Emotional Abuse

- Based on the adult victim’s written statement to her attorney, the perpetrator instructed the child victim to disrespect the adult victim, including hitting and spitting on her and calling her names, likely damaging their parent-child relationship.

Using Adult Privilege

- The perpetrator exercised excessive control over every aspect of the child victim’s life including what she wore, her meals, her recreational activities, and her relationships with family and friends.

Intimidation

- Intimidation permeated the entire atmosphere of the home due to the offenders abusive behavior towards the child victim’s mother and the perpetrators unrelenting control over the household.

“Whether or not it is the batterer’s intention, exposing children to domestic violence has multiple negative effects on them, including inherently damaging their relationship with their mother. The batterer’s abuse of the children’s mother should thus be seen as reflecting on his parenting.”

– The Batterer as Parent 2nd Edition, Bancroft & Silverman, 2012

Nashville's Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) identified five Findings during their 2018 case review. The Findings address 1) strengthening Nashville's Lethality Assessment Protocol, 2) preventing legal manipulation, 3) ensuring adequate community education and support, 4) addressing the mislabeling of domestic violence as 'bullying,' and 5) identifying and supporting child victims.

The Team has made specific recommendations to address each finding and remove associated barriers to victim safety. The recommendations are assigned to a variety of agencies and organizations in Nashville, both within and outside of Metro government.

Color-coded labels identify what progress that has already been made on each recommendation:

- **No Progress**
- **Some Progress**
- **On Target to Complete**
- **Complete or Active**

SUCCESS: Items identified as successes are coded in teal. These are things already being implemented throughout Nashville that address some aspects of the findings in this report.



Finding: Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP)

DADRT recommends that the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) guidelines for the Metro Nashville Police Department be amended to include incidents when domestic violence is only suspected by police.

CASE FACTS RELATED TO THIS FINDING

The Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) is a lethality screening tool for intimate partner violence victims recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice as a “promising practice” in intimate partner homicide prevention. The LAP was implemented in Nashville by the Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPd) in late 2016. Under MNPd LAP Protocol, “It shall be the policy of the [MNPd] to use the Lethality Screen at the scene of all intimate partner domestic violence incidents.” MNPd administers the 11 question assessment and when a victim screens in as “high risk,” they are immediately connected with a YWCA hotline crisis counselor. Depending on their level of risk, LAP cases may also be reviewed by Metro’s High Risk Intervention Panel (HRIP), a multidisciplinary team.

By allowing officers to learn about prior, potentially lethal incidents, the LAP gives police an evidence-based tool to evaluate the victim’s risk of lethality and to encourage them to access resources. In 2018, there were 7,352 total LAP forms collected. Of those cases, 43% percent were labeled high risk. This is an average of 20 LAP screenings per day, 9 of them high risk.

Although the victim did report an incident of vandalism related to her vehicle shortly before the familicide, there was no direct evidence tying this vandalism to the perpetrator. While the victim suspected the perpetrator was responsible, the lack of evidence meant that it was not reported as domestic violence and was considered a Matter of Record (MOR). Because the case was a MOR and there was not enough evidence to classify it as a domestic violence incident, administration of the LAP was not mandatory and the 11 LAP questions were not asked. Although the officer who took this report offered domestic violence resources, the victim declined them.

Had the 11 questions been asked and answered honestly her response likely would have resulted in a finding that she and her daughter were at high risk of being murdered or seriously harmed. In that case, the victim would have been immediately connected with crisis intervention services and safety planning.

The Team determined that if the LAP had been administered, at a minimum, the victim would likely have answered “yes” to all the statements highlighted in purple below. Due to the victim’s level of isolation, we do not know about any threats that may have been made to the adult or child victims.

1. Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
2. Has he threatened to kill you or your children?
- 3. Do you think he might try to kill you?**
4. Does he have a gun or can he get one easily?
- 5. Has he ever tried to choke you?***
- 6. Is he violently or constantly jealous or does he control most of your daily activities?**
7. Have you left him or separated after living together or being married?
8. Is he unemployed? **
9. Has he ever tried to kill himself?
- 10. Do you have a child that he knows is not his?**
11. Does he follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?

Given how the victim could have answered the LAP questions, she would have been considered as “high risk” by law enforcement had the screening been given.

Finding: Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP)

CASE FACTS CONTINUED

*While the DADRT has found no reports to indicate that the perpetrator ever tried to strangle (referred to as “choke” in the LAP) the victim, many of the stories of him holding the victim down and sitting on her chest would have had the effect of restricting her airways, meeting the Tennessee criminal code requirement for strangulation.

**The perpetrator was unemployed off and on throughout his relationship with the victim. Although he was employed at the time of the MOR, had the victim been given the LAP at another time she likely would have answered ‘yes’ to this question.

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES

RECOMMENDATION A1– All MNPD Officers should be encouraged to provide a LAP screening to any individual they suspect of being a victim of domestic violence, even in cases of MORs or non-domestic violence cases where a LAP is not required.

RECOMMENDATION A2– All MNPD officers should receive a brief refresher training which emphasizes the importance of the LAP even in cases where domestic violence is only suspected.

SUCCESS – The Office of Family Safety provided training during every MNPD precinct’s officer “roll call” during the summer of 2019. This training including information on the importance of the LAP and encouraging officers to use their discretion to perform a LAP screening even during MORs. The OFS developed an illustrative handout used during these trainings, and based upon this homicide case, which further highlighted the importance of the LAP screening as a tool for homicide prevention.

Finding: Legal Manipulation

A misunderstanding of Tennessee's laws regarding divorce, separation, and child custody is often used by perpetrators against victims of domestic violence to pressure victims into remaining in violent relationships.

CASE FACTS RELATED TO THIS FINDING

Although the perpetrator's threats about custody did not begin until the birth of their daughter (the child victim of the homicide), the DADRT's research shows that he was no stranger to using child custody as a means to control and harass his partners. He repeatedly told the victim that if she left he would take their daughter away, reminding her that he kidnapped his daughter from his previous marriage and fled to another state when the mother filed for divorce from the perpetrator.

While the Team has no way of knowing if that particular story was truthful or simply used as a threat, the Team was able to find evidence of a custody battle with the perpetrator's ex-wife dragging out over the course of eighteen years. Over this eighteen-year period, the perpetrator filed dozens of court motions, closing and reopening the case at least three times, and often ignoring his own petitions and court dates for months or years before beginning the cycle again. This custody battle carried through the first six years of the perpetrator's marriage to the victim, with the perpetrator maintaining primary custody of his daughter during that time. The victim witnessing this custody ordeal likely added credibility to the perpetrator's threats to take away their shared daughter if the victim left him.

An additional vulnerability in the divorce was that the victim had no official documents such as police reports to corroborate her claim of abuse during the divorce and custody process, with the exception of the single vandalism report which occurred only days before she was killed.

“Court personnel and other service providers look skeptically at allegations of abuse that arise during custody and visitation battles. It is not at all uncommon for a [victim] to tell no one about the abuse prior to separation because of her shame, fear, and desire to help the abuser change.”

—Lundy Bancroft, *Understanding the Batterer in Custody and Visitation Disputes*, LundyBancroft.com

THIS FINDING'S IMPACT ON NASHVILLE

For many perpetrators, the challenging processes of marital separation, divorce, and determining child custody are simply new avenues to exert their control over the victim. Prior to any formal divorce proceedings, perpetrators will often threaten the victim (“I’m going to take everything. You’ll be out on the streets.”) or the children (“You’ll never see our child again if you leave me.”). For many victims, these threats are real and the reason they stay with the perpetrator.

The following excerpts underscore how offenders use children to abuse their victims, especially in legal proceedings:

- “The batterer’s use of coercion during the custody process can take many forms. It can include demanding custody simply for the sake of staying involved in the victim’s life; forcing the victim to return to court dozens of times to prolong contact; and using court-mandated visitation or custody as an opportunity to commit physical violence against the victim.” [1]
- A combined report by the American Psychological Association and the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence concluded that abusive parents are more likely to seek sole custody than nonviolent ones, and they are successful 70% of the time. [2]

Finding: Legal Manipulation

THIS FINDING'S IMPACT ON NASHVILLE CONTINUED

- Regarding a perpetrator's advantages in custody disputes, researcher Lundy Bancroft writes that a perpetrator has "marked advantage over his victim in psychological testing, since she is the one who has been traumatized by the abuse. Because of the effects of trauma, the victim of battering will often seem hostile, disjointed, and agitated, while the abuser appears friendly, articulate, and calm. Evaluators are thus tempted to conclude that the victim is the source of the problems in the relationship."

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES

- **RECOMMENDATION B1** – Create and distribute printed and video resources for victims that de-legitimize offender threats surrounding how the court will negatively respond to the victim during separation, divorce and child custody proceedings. These materials can be distributed to family law attorneys and courtrooms.
- **RECOMMENDATION B2**– Provide an annual Continuing Legal Education opportunity for family practice attorneys on domestic violence dynamics, power & control, high risk indicators, and the use of children in domestic violence.

Finding: Community Education & Support

A lack of understanding of domestic violence within the community can leave victims feeling trapped within abusive relationships, lead them toward resources which may put them in additional danger, or silence them from speaking out altogether. Additionally, this leaves families without adequate support in the aftermath of violence experienced by their loved ones.

CASE FACTS RELATED TO THIS FINDING

The level of isolation experienced by the victims in this case meant that they had a very limited circle of people they were able to interact with outside of the perpetrator. These included a very small number of church members, a few coworkers, a small number of teachers and Girl Scout leaders, and a few neighbors. While many of these connections suspected that something was wrong within the family as a whole, or at least the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, none of them fully recognized the signs of domestic violence or knew how to intervene in an impactful way. Neighbors admitted to the victim's family after the homicide that they had suspected 'something wasn't right' but didn't feel that they 'had enough information to get involved.'

Because of the adult victim's level of isolation from her family, her primary support system and social outlet throughout her relationship with the perpetrator was her church community. Leadership within her church were among the only individuals she reached out to regarding her experiences and her plan to divorce the perpetrator. While the adult victim's church leaders were supportive and concerned primarily with her safety, they did not have the training or resources to provide appropriate interventions or safety planning to the victim. Leaders and members within the church have been left with lingering guilt over not having been equipped to do more, and the church as a whole suffered substantial trauma in the wake of their employee and church member killing his wife, nine year old daughter and himself.

Those members of the victim's family and church interviewed by DADRT expressed a desire for more community resources to help them deal with the grief and trauma of their loss. Specifically, the Team was informed of the family's longing for connection with others who had lost loved ones to domestic violence so that they were not going through the process of grieving and healing alone.

THIS FINDING'S IMPACT ON NASHVILLE

Community Education & Support

While the resources and services provided by formal systems are vital parts of Nashville's response to domestic violence, to generate and sustain change across our communities requires a broader coalition of allies. Historically, those who are most affected by domestic violence – the families and communities that live with it – have been missing from the table when systems professionals have been coordinating outreach, education, and intervention efforts. These community members are the experts on how violence affects daily life, relationships, neighborhoods, and communities, yet they have often not been given the tools to respond to domestic violence in effective or impactful ways.

Studies show that victims first turn to extended family, friends, and neighbors before they reach out to a professional. Relatively few victims access shelter services, and they seek out police, courts, and child protection agencies as a last resort. Families that are experiencing domestic violence are regularly isolated from connections and resources outside of their immediate neighborhoods. Community members often know which families need help and may have a sense of which services could make a difference. Additionally, most communities have informal leaders who take on the burden of caring for their neighbors and who influence the norms and attitudes of their communities. Many times these leaders have the willingness and capacity to conduct domestic violence prevention and intervention activities given the appropriate skills and education. [3]

Finding: Community Education & Support

THIS FINDING'S IMPACT ON NASHVILLE CONTINUED

Faith Community Education & Support

Faith communities can provide a primary support system for an individual experiencing domestic violence. Victims who are involved with a faith community often seek out their faith leaders as one of their first points of contact to disclose their experiences with domestic violence and find help. The misinterpretation and misuse of religion can have a detrimental effect on survivors of domestic violence whether done purposefully by the perpetrator as a tool of control or mistakenly by faith leaders who have a lack of understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence. For example, strongly held beliefs in the permanency and sanctity of marriage may prevent a victim from considering separation and divorce as options for safety. Likewise, couples counseling is not a safe option in relationships where one person is using violent and coercive tactics to control the other person.

"Sometimes, clergy believe that domestic violence is simply not happening in their community because they never hear about it. In reality, if victims are not talking about their experiences, it is usually because faith leaders have not created an atmosphere in which it is safe to disclose. After the silence surrounding domestic violence has been broken, faith-based leaders often begin to hear the stories of abuse that had been occurring in their congregations all along." [4]

In this particular case, the church did not hold create an unsafe atmosphere to disclose but instead wished they had known about services available. By knowing about resources in our community, such as our Family Safety Centers with multiple services under one roof, she could have been connected with experts in interpersonal violence that could have helped her more accurately assess her and her daughter's risk and better plan for their safety.

Family Education & Support

Families who have lost a loved one to a domestic violence homicide often feel guilt, confusion and anger as they struggle to identify how the homicide could have been prevented and the loss of their loved one. Engaging with others who have experienced similar grief can help with healing.

"How individuals grieve depends on many factors: their support system; the circumstances of the death; the response by family members, friends and the criminal justice system; the nature of the relationship with the deceased; religious or cultural beliefs and customs; and the individual's coping skills. No two people will grieve in the same way. However, survivors often find it helpful to speak with others experiencing loss, as there are common reactions and experiences that may prove useful to share." [5]

In addition, families whose loved ones are currently experiencing domestic violence often report not knowing how to offer support to the victim or how to even start a conversation about the abuse. These families may not be aware of the wealth of support that exists for victims in Nashville and may need information on how to support their family member in a way that does not allow the offender to further alienate the family members from the victim.

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES

RECOMMENDATION C1 – Increase domestic violence outreach efforts in order to reach those people victims often first disclose to such as church leadership, work, neighbors and friends. As part of the Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety's Training & Outreach committee, partners providing preventative education will commit to coordinating these prevention efforts to create a greater overall impact in Nashville.

- **Utilize existing networks and share materials between providers to ensure consistent and effective messaging and prevent unnecessary duplication of materials.**

Finding: Community Education & Support

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION C2 – Increase outreach efforts to the Nashville community by engaging with formal and informal community leaders, and creating targeted outreach campaigns for victims of domestic violence.

SUCCESS – the Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety has created multiple outreach materials around the opening of the new Family Safety Center in March 2019 and have canvassed communities with vulnerable and marginalized populations. The OFS outreach campaign has continued throughout 2019 with multiple news media spots and will expand to public transit locations and boosted social media posts.

RECOMMENDATION C3 – MNPd’s counselors do an outstanding job of supporting the families of homicide victims. To expand on this work, the Office of Family Safety should explore ways to assist in the outreach to the community as a whole who are impacted by a domestic violence homicide and include those groups that the victim belonged to such as LGBTQ, ethnic and religious groups.

RECOMMENDATION C4 – Create grief support groups for those who have lost a loved one to domestic violence, specifically to encourage peer-to-peer connections.

- The ‘Meet Us at the Bridge’ event in October to remember domestic violence homicide victims is an ideal starting point to connect the families and loved ones of the victims being honored.

SUCCESS – The YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee is hosting a community support group every Thursday at the Family Safety center titled “How Can I Help? Community Support Group for Friends and Family.” The group provides family and friends with resources, education, and support for helping a loved one who may be experiencing domestic violence. They also host another instance of this support group in an additional location in the community.

SUCCESS - Metro’s Family Safety Center has formed a Survivor VOICES Committee which includes individuals who have lost someone to homicide. Members of this committee offer a unique perspective in regards to established programming and help identify gaps in services as well as carrying out projects that aid and support others who have similar experiences. The goal is that VOICES members are able to connect and form a bond through a shared experience with a common goal of helping others find hope and healing. The committee provides an opportunity for survivors to utilize their voices in our community to prevent and address interpersonal violence.

RECOMMENDATION C5 – Identify and develop Domestic Violence Faith Leader Ambassadors to act as the education and resource point of contact for those experiencing domestic violence or are concerned for a loved one.

SUCCESS – The Office of Family Safety (OFS) launched an internal workgroup in August 2019 with the goal of increasing the capacity to respond to violence against African American victims in Nashville-Davidson County. OFS also launched a collaborative committee addressing this topic in September 2019. The committee consists of community partners who serve, partner, and focus on African American communities in Nashville. This committee will meet quarterly and will include a focus on outreach to and collaboration with faith communities.

SUCCESS - The YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee provides free domestic violence education to faith communities through the AMENDING through Faith curriculum.

Finding: Bullying – Domestic Violence Link

Mischaracterizing abusive behaviors as ‘bullying’ can lead to the minimization of chronic abusive and torturing behaviors as well as the risk posed to victims of this type of abuse.

CASE FACTS RELATED TO THIS FINDING

It is believed that the victim may not have realized that the offender’s abusive conduct rose to the level needed to secure protections from police, courts, and shelter. Contributing to this misunderstanding is the fact that the perpetrator’s behavior was often characterized as “bullying” or “horseplay”. Not a single individual interviewed, nor the victim’s own divorce transcripts, described the perpetrator as physically abusive although many of the abusive behaviors he used against the two homicide victims and other children in the home were physical. Without having a more thorough understanding of intimate partner violence beyond those stereotypes often shown in the media, the victim and her family were unable to name her experience as physical and emotional abuse. This created a significant barrier to the victim seeking help prior to the murder.

THIS FINDING’S IMPACT ON NASHVILLE

In the intimate partner relationship, “bullying” is domestic violence just as in the parent-child relationship “bullying” is child abuse. No matter what the label, the perpetrator’s offensive behavior and physically restraining conduct rose to a criminal level. Unfortunately, the average person has a more narrow definition of physical abuse, preventing many victims from identifying what they have experienced as domestic violence and seeking help.

“Bullying and domestic violence are both acts of abuse and destruction. They both consist of an imbalance of power relations between the parties and an abuse of that power relationship. That is, the perpetrator uses their power over the victim to make them feel powerless, frightened, alone, intimidated, and anxious. The perpetrator is in a position to manipulate their victim into doing anything that they want.” [6]

While Tennessee’s law defines domestic abuse as including “physical contact a reasonable person would consider offensive or provocative” not just injury-causing violence, the average person has a more narrow definition of physical abuse. This prevents many victims from identifying what they have experienced as domestic violence and seeking help. Education to frame bullying as abuse should begin at a young age within healthy relationship programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES

RECOMMENDATION D1 – Broaden the descriptions and definitions of intimate partner violence used in community education and outreach materials to include abusive behaviors that fit under the stereotype of “bullying”.

RECOMMENDATION D2 – The Tennessee Legislature should pursue the adoption and implementation of an act that requires relationship violence prevention and healthy relationship education in schools, which would educate students on a broader definition of domestic abuse and help prevent the minimization of various types of abuse. The Legislature should consider the following existing laws as possible models for Tennessee:

- **Connecticut HB 5315 (2010):** includes teen dating violence and domestic violence education as part of the in-service training program for certified teachers, administrators, and pupil personnel.
- **Indiana SB 316 (2010):** the Department of Education, in collaboration with organizations that have expertise in dating violence, domestic violence, and sexual abuse, shall identify or develop: (1) model dating violence educational materials; and (2) a model for dating violence response policies.
- **Rhode Island SB 875 (2007) and HB 6166 (2009) and Nebraska LB 63:** the “Lindsay Anne Burke Act” which requires the Department of Education to develop a model dating violence policy to assist school districts in developing policies for dating violence reporting and response.

Finding: Identification & Support of Children Exposed to Domestic

As a result of the aforementioned findings around the misunderstanding of chronic abusive behaviors as “bullying” and the need for community education on domestic abuse, the abusive behaviors by the perpetrator were not identified by the family, the adult victim, or the children as incidents deserving of mention to outside parties. This additional finding demonstrates the need to increase efforts to identify and support children exposed to domestic abuse through school, faith communities, and other child programming.

CASE FACTS RELATED TO THIS FINDING

Even though the children in this case interacted with teachers, individuals within their church, and other child programming like Girl Scouts and Sports teams, there were no disclosures made to these individuals and no identification by these individuals of the abuse within the home. Recognizing the abuse in the home was made even more difficult due to the perpetrators effective isolation of both victims.

THIS FINDING'S IMPACT ON NASHVILLE

When victims and their children are not involved with services or the criminal justice system, it can be very difficult to identify and support children exposed to domestic violence or those who have been abused directly. The following data makes clear the need to focus on the identification and support of children exposed to domestic abuse:

- Per an analysis of the National Network to End Domestic Violence’s annual Domestic Violence Shelter Census reports from 2010-2018, 51% of domestic violence shelter residents in Tennessee are children.
- According to the CDC, children witness 68-80% of domestic violence incidents, and children who live in violent households experience co-occurring child abuse at 15 times the national average.
- In 1/5 of domestic violence homicides a child of the victim is also killed. [7]

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES

RECOMMENDATION E1 - Partner with ACE Nashville to ensure that ACEs Trainers are providing resources on identification of children exposed to abuse and resources available at the Family Safety Center, Nashville Children's Alliance and other community agencies.

RECOMMENDATION E2 - Create a child specific safety plan that can be utilized by providers as well as school personnel that emphasizes safe people for a child to identify.

- Oklahoma’s Family Justice Center, Palomar, utilizes a child safety plan within their center that has illustrative pictures of a pet finding ways to be safe that decreases the potential traumatic experience of creating a safety plan for a child and creates positivity and hope.

RECOMMENDATION E3 - Ensure that all community education and support efforts mentioned previously include information on child exposure to domestic violence, including its impacts and how to identify children affected.

RECOMMENDATION E4 - Increase attention on children exposed to domestic violence within our two Family Justice Centers by intentionally working with caregivers to form a plan around services and support for children and educating caregivers of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children.

Finding: Identification & Support of Children Exposed to Domestic

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUCCESSES CONTINUED

RECOMMENDATION E5 & SUCCESS – while the following well respected Nashville programs address children and youth in curricula related to domestic violence, healthy relationships, and other related skills, these programs often do not coordinate their efforts to ensure a comprehensive approach to Nashville’s youth.

- The YWCA of Nashville & Middle TN’s programs Girls Inc. and AMEND Together both address the importance of healthy relationship-building and the importance of speaking up if you see someone in a bullying and/or unsafe situation. Currently, Girls Inc. programming is in 21 Nashville schools and AMEND programming is in 20 Nashville schools.
- You Have The Power (YHTP) Healthy Relationships & Bullying Prevention programs educate middle school- through college-aged young people on relationships and bullying prevention.
- Sexual Assault Center’s (SAC) Safe@Last personal safety curriculum for children K-6th grade and Be. program focuses on promoting healthy relationships for middle and high school students.
- AWAKE Healthy Relationships, Finances, & Truancy Intervention Project programs work with young people in schools to improve relationships, financial literacy, and combat truancy.

Implementation Plan

On the following pages you will find the collected recommendations listed in the previous findings. Each recommendation has a **suggested "Entity for Implementation"**. Each Entity for Implementation is encouraged to see the pages associated with their recommendations for more details on implementation. Each Entity for Implementation has been color-coded* as follows:

Overall No Progress on Recommendations

Overall Some Progress on Recommendations

Overall On Target to Complete Recommendations

Overall Recommendations are Complete or Active (Such as Training Programs)

*This color code is not intended to “grade” a particular agency but merely to show progress toward implementation.

Implementation Plan

Entity for Implementation – Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

- Work with the Office of Family Safety to create and distribute printed and video resources for victims that de-legitimize offender threats surrounding how the court will negatively respond to the victim during separation, divorce and child custody proceedings. These materials can be distributed to family law attorneys and courtrooms.

Entity for Implementation – Metro Office of Family Safety (OFS)

- Continue to provide refresher trainings for MNPd officers which emphasizes the importance of the LAP even in cases where domestic violence is only suspected.
- Broaden the descriptions and definitions of intimate partner violence used in community education and outreach to victims to include a broader range of abusive behaviors, including those that fit under the stereotype of 'bullying.'
- With the Legal Aid Society, create and distribute printed and video resources for victims that de-legitimize offender threats surrounding how the court will negatively respond to the victim during separation, divorce and child custody proceedings.
- Provide trainings on working with domestic violence victims for family law attorneys in which CLE credits are available.
- Coordinate with formal and informal community leaders to broaden the scope of outreach to Nashville's communities.
- Provide domestic violence education tailored to congregations and faith leaders.
- Form a Training and Outreach Committee that collaborates with faith leaders in Nashville to work as "ambassadors" within their congregations for domestic violence education and awareness.
- Create strategies to support communities and congregations who have been affected by trauma related to domestic violence.
- As part of the OFS Training & Outreach Committee, bring together the various agencies providing prevention education in Nashville and encourage coordination of their prevention efforts to create a greater overall impact in Nashville.
- Partner with ACE Nashville to ensure that ACEs Trainers are providing resources on identification of children exposed to abuse and resources available at the Family Safety Center, Nashville Children's Alliance and other community agencies.
- Create a child specific safety plan that can be utilized by providers as well as school personnel that emphasizes safe people for a child to disclose family violence and stay safe during a violent episode.
- Work with caregivers to form a plan around services and support for children and educating caregivers of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children.
- Increase the availability of domestic violence education specifically created for Nashville's community members.
- Increase the loss support that is currently provided to communities impacted by domestic violence homicide.

Entity for Implementation – Tennessee Legislature

- Legally requiring comprehensive relationship violence prevention education in schools to help encourage reporting and prevent the minimization of abusive behaviors.

Entity for Implementation – Youth Empowerment and Prevention Education Programs

- Increase coordination around domestic violence prevention efforts with other agencies and organizations in Nashville.
- Work with OFS's Training Committee to coordinate these prevention efforts to create a greater overall impact in Nashville.

Entity for Implementation – Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPd)

- Encourage all MNPd officers to provide a LAP screening to any individual they suspect of being a victim of domestic violence, even in cases of MORs where a LAP is not required.
- MNPd Counselors continue to provide excellent service to families grieving the loss of a loved one to domestic violence and seek support as needed from OFS in expanding these services to the broader community.

Entity for Implementation – ACE Nashville

- Partner with OFS to ensure that ACEs Trainers are providing resources on identification of children exposed to abuse and resources available at the Family Safety Center, Nashville Children's Alliance and other community agencies.

Conclusion

The findings and recommendations found within this report highlight areas for continued growth and improvement in Nashville's domestic violence prevention services and responses that can be addressed within our government, non-profit, and for-profit sectors. The Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety (OFS) and the Domestic Abuse Death Review Team (DADRT) are committed to working on the recommendations and implementation plan from this review in conjunction with our partner agencies. The DADRT will continue to review each domestic violence homicide in Nashville Davidson County as well as conduct its annual in-depth case review to further glean information on how to improve our work. The OFS will work with partner agencies on the implementation of the report recommendations that we hope will provide solutions to identified gaps and increase community awareness. The OFS Statewide Fatality Review Coordinator will continue to develop domestic violence fatality review teams throughout the state and convene Tennessee's first ever statewide team. This statewide team will amplify the impact of Nashville and other jurisdictions' recommendations throughout the state.

The DADRT and Metro Nashville Office of Family Safety (OFS) are incredibly grateful for the support we have received from Metro Nashville-Davidson County Government, the Mayor, our Advisory Council, our state and federal funders, and our committed partner members for the support they have contributed to this report. Above all, we are grateful to the survivors of domestic violence homicide that shared their experiences and insight with our Team and helped form these recommendations.

Appendix

2010 Tennessee Code

Title 36 - Domestic Relations

Chapter 3 - Marriage

Part 6 - Domestic Abuse

36-3-624 - Death review teams established Protocol Composition of teams Disclosure of communications

Authority to subpoena.

- (a) A county may establish an interagency domestic abuse death review team to assist local agencies in identifying and reviewing domestic abuse deaths, including homicides and suicides, and facilitating communication among the various agencies involved in domestic abuse cases.
- (b) For purposes of this section, "domestic abuse" has the meaning set forth in § 36-3-601.
- (c) A county may develop a protocol that may be used as a guideline to assist coroners and other persons who perform autopsies on domestic abuse victims in the identification of domestic abuse, in the determination of whether domestic abuse contributed to death or whether domestic abuse had occurred prior to death but was not the actual cause of death, and in the proper written reporting procedures for domestic abuse, including the designation of the cause and mode of death.
- (d) County domestic abuse death review teams may be comprised of, but not limited to, the following:
- (1) Experts in the field of forensic pathology;
 - (2) Medical personnel with expertise in domestic violence abuse;
 - (3) Coroners and medical examiners;
 - (4) Criminologists;
 - (5) District attorneys general and city attorneys;
 - (6) Domestic abuse shelter staff;
 - (7) Legal aid attorneys who represent victims of abuse;
 - (8) A representative of the local bar association;
 - (9) Law enforcement personnel;
 - (10) Representatives of local agencies that are involved with domestic abuse reporting;
 - (11) County health department staff who deal with domestic abuse victims' health issues;
 - (12) Representatives of local child abuse agencies; and
 - (13) Local professional associations of persons described in subdivisions (d)(1)-(10), inclusive.
- (e) An oral or written communication or a document provided by a third party to a domestic abuse death review team is confidential and not subject to disclosure or discoverable by a third party. Notwithstanding the foregoing, recommendations of a domestic abuse death review team upon the completion of a review may be disclosed at the discretion of a majority of the members of a domestic abuse death review team.
- (f) To complete a review of a domestic abuse death, whether confirmed or suspected, each domestic abuse death review team shall have access to and subpoena power to obtain all records of any nature maintained by any public or private entity that pertain to a death being investigated by the team. Such records include, but are not limited to, police investigations and reports, medical examiner investigative data and reports, and social service agency reports, as well as medical records maintained by a private health care provider or health care agency. Any entity or individual providing such information to the local team shall not be held liable for providing the information.

Appendix

Domestic Abuse Death Review Team Mission, Responsibility & Authority

Team Mission

In accordance with Executive Order No. 016 authorized by Tennessee Code Annotated §36-3-624, the Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County created the Domestic Abuse Death Review Team or DADRT to “establish an interagency domestic abuse death review team to identify and review domestic abuse deaths, including homicides and suicides, and to facilitate communication among the various agencies involved in domestic abuse cases in order to recommend improvements in the system of services to domestic abuse victims and their families, and to provide accurate information related to domestic abuse issues to the community.” Metro Government's Office of Family Safety is tasked with leading this team.

Responsibility and Authority of the Team

It shall be the responsibility of the Team to identify, review, and analyze fatal or near fatal incidents of domestic violence to better understand the dynamics of these fatalities or near fatalities and to facilitate communication among the various agencies involved in domestic abuse cases. It shall also be the responsibility of the Team to conduct an in-depth review of a minimum of one domestic violence fatal or near-fatal incident(s) per year. Selected cases must be considered “closed cases” by both the Police Department and the District Attorney's Office. A minimum period of six months must have elapsed from the time of death in order to interview family members and other close associations of the victim and/or perpetrator.

Report References:

- [1] How Domestic Violence Batterers Use Custody Proceedings in Family Courts to Abuse Victims, and How Courts Can Put a Stop to It, Emmaline Campbell, OCLA Women's Law Journal, Volume 24, Issue 1, 2017**
- [2] Domestic Violence and Education: Examining the Impact of Domestic Violence on Young Children, Children, and Young People and the Potential Role of Schools, Michele Lloyd, Front Psychol., 2018**
- [3] Preventing Family Violence: Community Engagement Makes the Difference, Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2002**
- [4] Safe Sacred Space: A Training Guide for Family Violence Task Forces, Georgia Commission on Family Violence and the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2016**
- [5] Grief: Coping with the Death of a Loved One, The National Center for Victims of Crime, <https://victimsofcrime.org/help-for-crime-victims/get-help-bulletins-for-crime-victims/grief-coping-with-the-death-of-a-loved-one>**
- [6] Domestic Violence And School Bullying: An Examination Of The Inextricable Link Between The Two And The Use Of Restorative Justice To Break The Cycle, International Journal of Business, Economics and Law, Vol. 8, Issue 4, 2015**
- [7] Websdale, N. (1999). Understanding domestic homicide. Boston: Northeastern University Press.**

Appendix

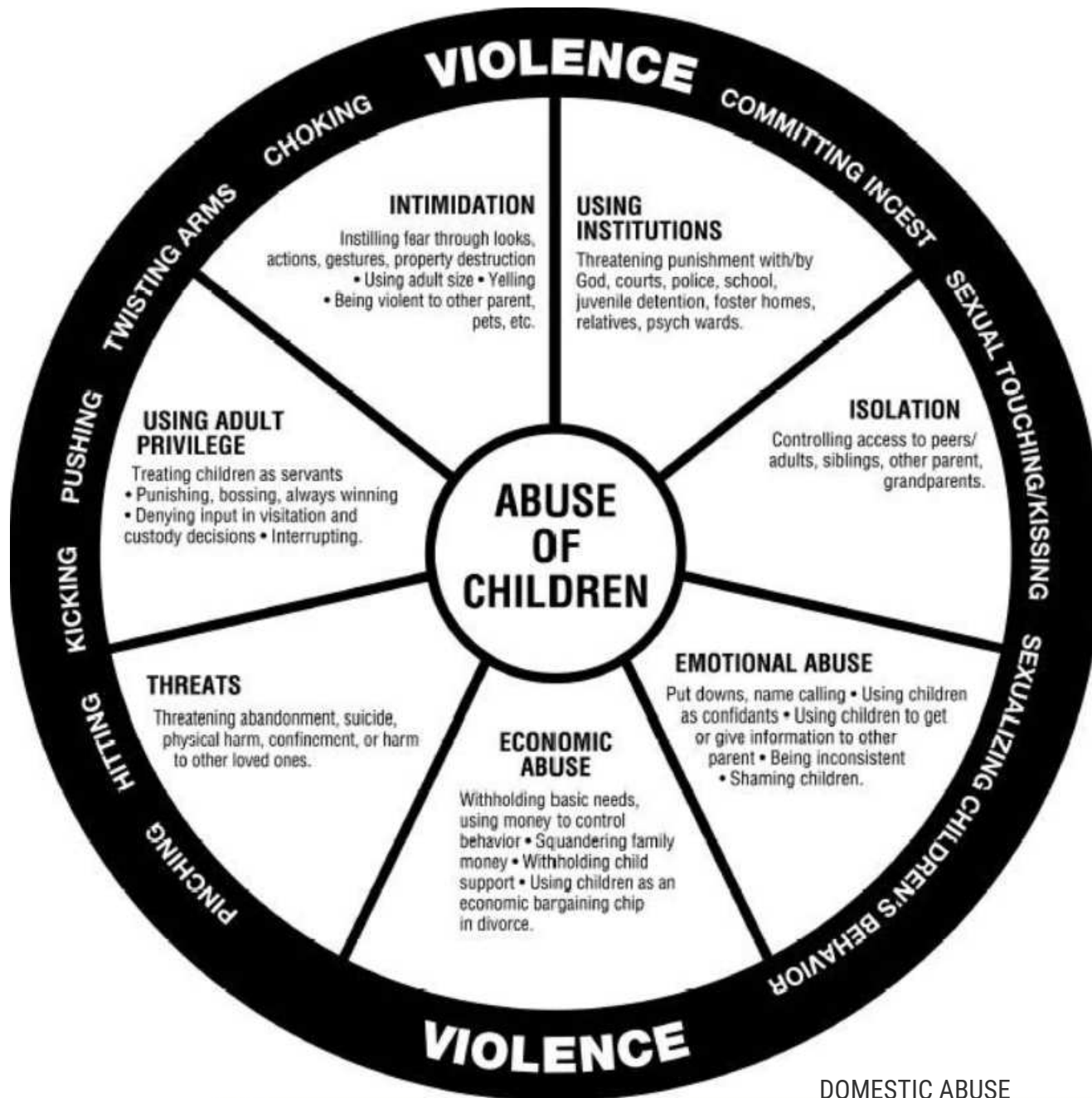
Power & Control Wheel



DOMESTIC ABUSE
INTERVENTION
PROGRAMS
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.theduluthmodel.org

Appendix

Abuse of Children Wheel



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202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
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If you have any questions about the report, please contact Becky Bullard (615-862-5158 or beckybullard@jis.nashville.org), the Senior Director of Programs at the Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County Office of Family Safety.

MEMBERS OF THE DOMESTIC ABUSE DEATH REVIEW (DADRT)

Bonnie Beneke - TN Dept of Children Services, DADRT Chair

Joshua Blaisdell - LT Metro Police DV Unit

Whitney Blanton - Office of Family Safety

Chris Buford - District Attorney's Office

Becky Bullard - Office of Family Safety, DADRT Staff

Allison Cantway - OFS, formerly YWCA

Tracy DeTomas - Citizen Member

Nichelle Foster - Metro Public Health Department

Erica Gilmore - Metro Council at Large

Cathy Gurley - You have the Power

Susan Kay - Citizen Member

Diane Lance - Office of Family Safety

Melanie Lutenbacher - Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

Peter Macdonald - Citizen

Larhonda Magras - YWCA

James (Jim) McDowell - Davidson County Sheriff's Office

Chandler Means - AGAPE/Morning Star Sanctuary

Michelle Richter - Captain Metro Police DV Unit, DADRT Sub-Chair

Kristi Steel - YWCA

Shania Thompson - Legal Aid Society

Susan Tucker-Smith - DA's Office Victim Witness Coordinator

Additional individuals may be invited to attend DADRT Meetings when they had involvement working with any of the parties in the case being reviewed.



Metro Office of Family Safety