



NORTH CAROLINA SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

NC SOPHE Advocacy Priority #4 2016-2017

Dissemination of Violence Prevention Education and Survivor Support Services

With a Focus on Populations Disparately Impacted by Dating Violence, including Women, Men, & LGBT Persons.

NC SOPHE prioritizes the prevention of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within our state, because it is an important public health issue -- one that affects all people-regardless of national origin, sex/gender, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, and educational status. The World Health Organization or WHO (2016) reports that global estimates suggest "1 in 3 or 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime."

Not all sexual assaults are documented, because (sadly) many go unreported. According to End Sexual Violence (2017) "About 14% of reported rapes involve men or boys, and that 1 in 6 reported sexual assaults is against a boy and 1 in 25 reported sexual assaults is against a man." In both cases, there are numerous health consequences such as: homicide and suicide, injuries, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, mental health disorders, and poor overall health (WHO, 2016).

Why should we care about this as a priority issue? Because:

- ***"Every minute, about 20 people are physically abused by an intimate partner in the U.S., according to the CDC" (US News & World Report, 2015). 20% of all violent crime between 2003 and 2012 was partner violence and the majority of offenders are not spouses, but current and former girlfriends and boyfriends (US News & World Report, 2015).***
- ***1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men*** aged 18 and older have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner (CDC, 2017).
- In 2013, ***108 North Carolinians were murdered*** as a result of domestic violence (NC Department of Justice, 2013).

Intimate partner violence can involve the use of deadly force:

- ***19%*** of domestic violence involves a ***Weapon*** (Truman & Morgan, 2014).
- Firearms can play a particularly deadly role in domestic violence as well: ***"Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm"*** (Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2016).

Intimate partner violence can be costly:

- A UNC-Charlotte study found domestic violence in North Carolina costs the state nearly **\$308 million — an average cost of \$32.26 per resident annually** (UNC-Charlotte, 2014).
- IPV leads to severe mental and physical health consequences for victims and is a leading cause of homelessness among women (CDC, 2015).

Intimate partner violence can extend across the sexual orientation spectrum:

- **More than 40% of LGBTQ + college students** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) report they have experienced IPV in their current relationships; a rate that generally aligns with the rate of violence among heterosexual couples (Edward & Sylaska, 2014).
- The Human Rights Campaign (2017) reports: “**Same-sex cohabitants reported significantly more intimate partner violence** than did opposite-sex cohabitants.’ **Among women** who reported cohabiting with a female partner at some point in their lifetime, **39.2 percent had experienced rape, physical assault or stalking** by an intimate partner, compared to 21.7 percent of women who had cohabited with men only. **Among men** who had cohabited with same-sex partners, **23.1 percent had experienced rape, physical assault or stalking** by an intimate partner, compared to 7.4 percent of men who had cohabited with women only”.

What works to prevent IPV and reduce its impact on our state?

Preventing IPV:

- Interventions that educate youth and adults about healthy relationships and address harmful gender norms can prevent partner violence before it starts (CDC, 2012).
- Bystander intervention programs that train friends, family and peers to recognize abusive behaviors in others and respond appropriately, may help reduce acceptance for norms that lead to physical and sexual violence and provide opportunities to link perpetrators and victims to help (CDC, 2015).

What can legislators and other stakeholders do to prevent and respond to intimate violence in NC?

1. Protect funding for domestic violence prevention and response, including Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs, the Family Violence Prevention and Service Act (FVPSA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2015).
2. Develop and support legislation that strengthens funding for evidence-based violence prevention programs that target youth early before they are at risk for entering abusive relationships.
3. Develop/support legislation that holds batterers accountable and provides support for survivors and their children, including full compliance of law enforcement with protective orders and the expansion of funds for shelters and housing programs.

NC SOPHE hereby supports inclusive legislation that protects the rights of vulnerable men, women, children, and LGBTQ residents of North Carolina. By doing so, we will ensure lower social and economic costs for sexual assault survivors, their children, and our society in the long run, and advocate for the mental and physical health of all North Carolinians-regardless of their background.