

2020

HOMICIDE REPORT

RELATIONSHIP
ABUSE IN
MINNESOTA



**VIOLENCE FREE
MINNESOTA**

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

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FOREWORD

2020 was a reckoning. Globally, we experienced a pandemic of epic proportions; uprisings for racial justice in response to the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis law enforcement; and an onslaught of gender-based violence, including the intimate partner homicides of 30 people in Minnesota.

As we navigated trauma and grief, we took time to reflect: how might we shift our focus to fully live into our vision of a violence-free Minnesota? In 2015 Violence Free Minnesota (VFMN), the statewide coalition of programs working to end relationship abuse issued *Empower Our Future*, a vision plan borne out of dialogues with advocates from across the state to answer that very question. We continue to use the framework and five priority areas named in *Empower Our Future* for this 2020 *Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota*. Violence Free Minnesota has committed to investing time, energy, and resources into policies that explore victim safety outside of the criminal legal system. This annual report is one way we honor that commitment.

For over 30 years Violence Free Minnesota has produced annual documentation on Minnesota's intimate partner homicides. We use public records to create this report, understanding that there are some victims whose stories are not included because their death was never reported as a homicide, and their trauma never placed within the context of relationship abuse. In the *Homicide Report*, we focus on the details of the homicide itself to raise questions and work towards systemic change. So often, stories of intimate partner homicide are sensationalized, not put within a context of abuse, or – in some cases – not even mentioned in the media. Sometimes we are able to tap into stories that reveal the richness of a victim's life, painting a picture far beyond the story of their murder. Other times, we do not have the gift of knowing anything about a victim beyond their name and the devastating way they died. While we collect the names of the victims and details of the one thing they share – we understand that each victim has a story beyond their murder. Each person killed due to intimate partner violence carried so many stories and memories – of joy, of struggle, of laughter, of the sun touching their skin. Each person contained a multitude of stories and possibilities. Each person killed now has someone who misses their presence and is tasked with keeping them in memory. We produce this report so that we can, in their memory, write new stories with different endings.





WE REMEMBER

INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES IN MINNESOTA: 1989-2020

1989

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence*
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

1990

At least 15 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

1991

At least 9 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 6 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 2 bystanders/interveners died

1992

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 5 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

1993

At least 24 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 5 bystanders/interveners died

1994

At least 14 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse

1995

At least 23 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 2 bystanders/interveners died

1996

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

1997

At least 13 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

1998

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 1 bystander/intervener died

1999

At least 19 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 11 bystanders/interveners died

2000

At least 29 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2001

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 5 bystanders/interveners died

2002

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

2003

At least 13 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 bystanders/interveners died

2004

At least 12 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 5 bystanders/interveners died



WE REMEMBER

Intimate Partner Homicides in Minnesota: 1989-2019

2005

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

2006

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 bystander/intervener died

2007

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 bystanders/interveners died

2008

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 4 bystanders/interveners died

2009

At least 12 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2010

At least 14 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2011

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

At least 6 bystanders/interveners died

2012

At least 15 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2013

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 6 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 7 bystanders/interveners died

2013

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 6 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 7 bystanders/interveners died

2014

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2015

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 4 bystanders/interveners died

2016

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 1 bystanders/interveners died

2017

At least 21 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

At least 5 bystanders/interveners died

2018

At least 9 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 bystanders/interveners/bystanders died

2019

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 5 bystanders/interveners/bystanders died

2020

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 6 bystanders/interveners died



WE REMEMBER

Intimate Partner Homicides in Minnesota: 1989-2019

2005

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

2006

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 bystander/intervener died

2007

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 bystanders/interveners died

2008

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 4 bystanders/interveners died

2009

At least 12 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2010

At least 14 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2011

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

At least 6 bystanders/interveners died

2012

At least 15 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2013

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 6 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 7 bystanders/interveners died

2013

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 6 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 7 bystanders/interveners died

2014

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 3 bystanders/interveners died

2015

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 men died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 4 bystanders/interveners died

2016

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 1 bystanders/interveners died

2017

At least 21 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

At least 5 bystanders/interveners died

2018

At least 9 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 4 bystanders/interveners/bystanders died

2019

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 5 bystanders/interveners/bystanders died

2020

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence

At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence

At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse

At least 6 bystanders/interveners died



POWER & CONTROL

At its core, domestic violence is rooted in power, control, and oppression. People who abuse often use multiple tactics to control their partners - economic abuse, isolation, gaslighting, and physical and sexual violence. Throughout 2019, we saw many examples of power, control, and oppression. Raven Bianca Gant's former partner took all of her and her daughter's clothing prior to her leaving and refused to return them. Bryce Bellomo, who killed his two sisters-in-law Candi Cheryl Goochey and Heidi Eve Pierce, previously prevented his wife Billie from calling 911 during an argument and then drove her out to a state forest against her will.


Abusive partners from dominant groups - such as white, cisgender, heterosexual men - benefit from privilege and systems of oppression while victims from marginalized groups - Black, Indigenous, and people of color, victims with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+ victims, immigrants, and women - may be punished and disempowered by the criminal-legal system, the child protective system, and educational institutions that funnel abused children into the juvenile justice system. These systems, just as abusive partners, wield control over victims. We cannot address nor prevent domestic violence without also addressing all forms of oppression and the ways in which they are leveraged to further trap, marginalize, and harm victims.




OVERVIEW OF THE 2020 HOMICIDE REPORT


At least 30 Minnesotans were killed due to violence from a current or former intimate partner

The known number of Minnesotans killed due to domestic violence varies from year to year. We have seen numbers range from a yearly low of 12 deaths to as many as 37. In 2019, at least 21 Minnesotans were murdered due to domestic violence. This year, the number is higher. However, it is important to note that one year's data does not indicate a trend. In 2012, there were 19 known domestic violence homicides included in our report and in 2015, there were 33. The numbers of homicides in Minnesota fluctuate and can vary significantly from year to year.

 **At least 20 women** were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner.

 **At least 1 man** was murdered in a case where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner.

 **At least 9 friends, family members, or bystanders** were murdered in domestic violence related situations.

 **At least 20 minor children** were left without a parent due to intimate partner homicide.



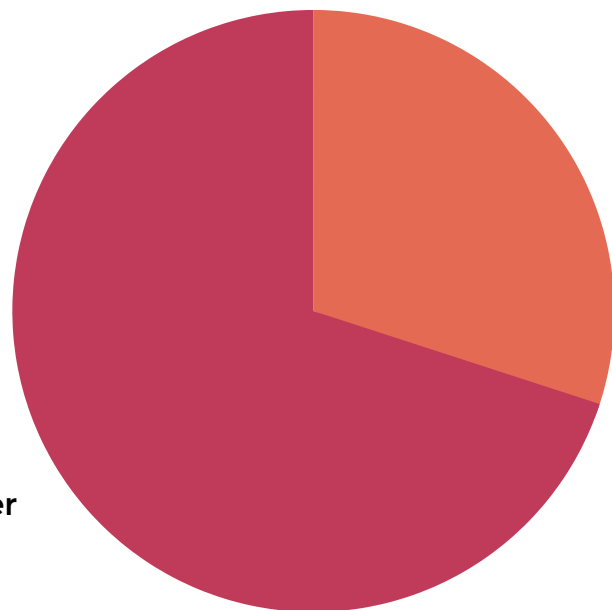
VICTIMS AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

Key Intimate Partner Homicide Statistics: 2020

Current/former intimate partner: 21 victims

- Joseph Abraham McRunnel
- Abigail Elise Simpson
- Monique Saraya Robbins
- Jackie Ann DeFoe
- Yang Liu
- Pauline Hollman
- Patricia Ann Valley
- Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew
- Genevieve Marie Skouge
- Ochea Shay Brown
- Ashli Koren Johnson
- Leneesha Helen Columbus
- Klara Eugenie Wright
- Yuliya Khort
- Angela Lynn Mesich
- Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessann
- Keona Sade Foote
- Nigar Mammadzada
- Kim Laen Theng
- Loretta Jean Billman
- Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan

Intimate Partner
70%



Other
30%

Other: 9 victims

- Kevin Lee Shabaiash Jr.*
- Brandon Jose Nieves^
- Kevin Logan Jr.^
- Richard Alhag Stephen^
- Brandon Jerome Salter+
- Leneesha LaDell Columbus*
- Miyona Zayla Miller*
- Julio Cesar Guadalupe Rodriguez+
- Todd Anthony Gerleman#

* Family members killed alongside victim of intimate partner violence
 # Friend or Family member of intimate partner violence victim killed
 + Family member of intimate partner violence victim killed after intervening to prevent intimate partner violence
 ^ Other

CAUSE OF DEATH

Key Homicide Statistics (2018-2020) for Adult Women Murdered by a Current or Former Intimate Partner

2020 VICTIMS : 20

STRANGULATION: 3

Monique Saraya Robbins
 Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew
 Keona Sade Foote

GUNSHOT: 9

Yang Liu
 Patricia Ann Valley
 Ashli Koren Johnson
 Leneesha Helen Columbus
 Yuliya Khort
 Angela Lynn Mesich
 Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessann
 Nigar Mammadzada
 Loretta Jean Billman

BEATING: 4

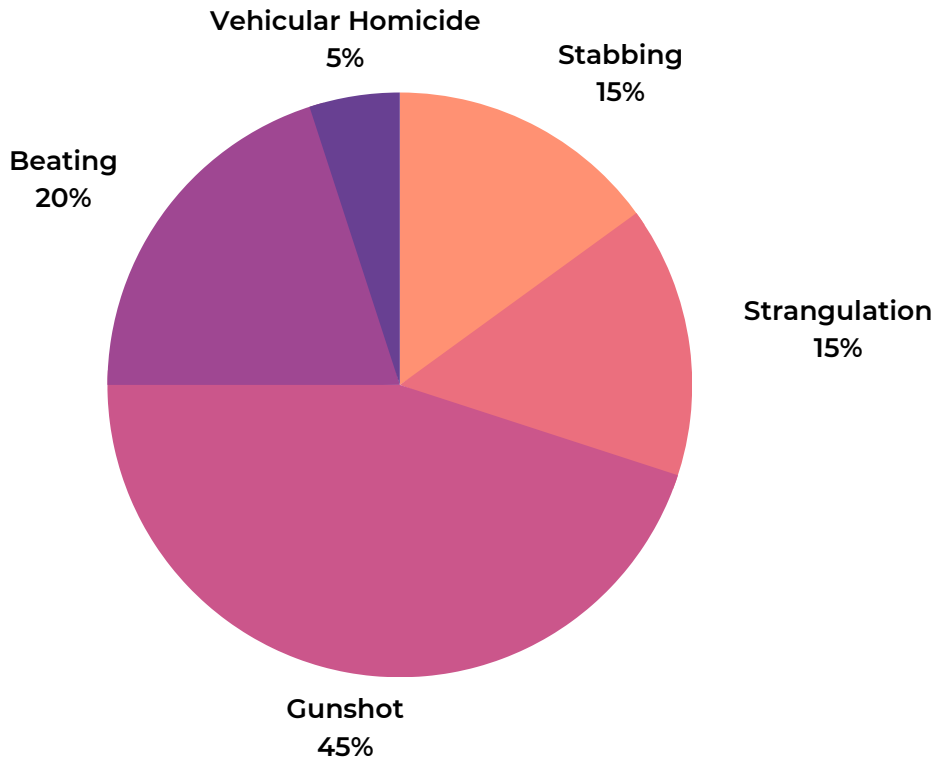
Genevieve Marie Skouge
 Kim Laen Theng
 Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan
 Abigail Elise Simpson

STABBING: 3

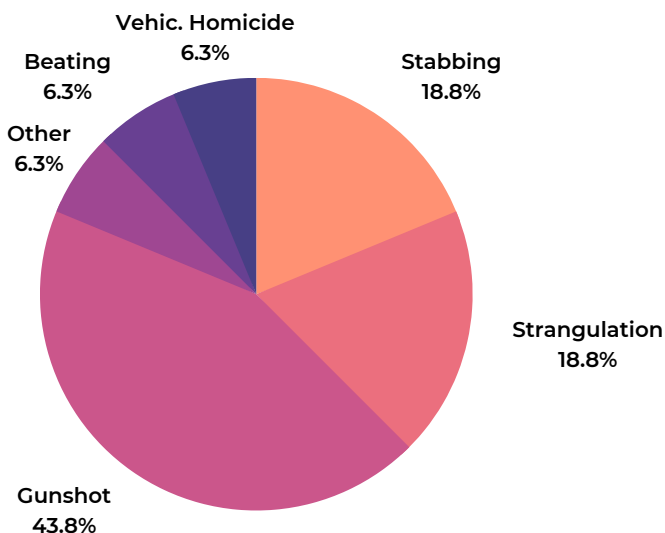
Jackie Ann DeFoe
 Pauline Hollman
 Klara Eugenie Wright

VEHICULAR HOMICIDE: 1

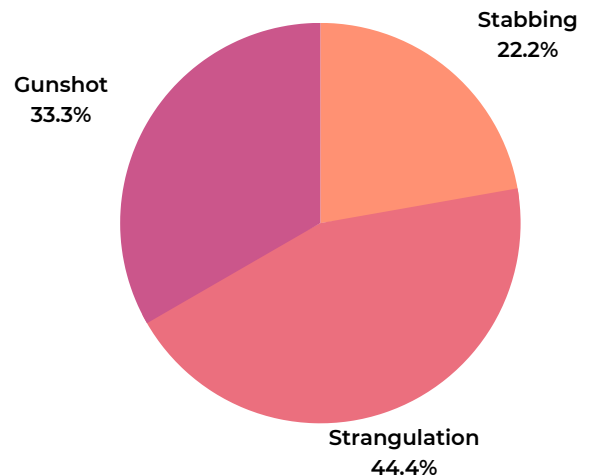
Ochea Shay Brown



2019



2018



VICTIM WAS SEPARATED FROM ABUSER OR ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE

Key Homicide Statistics (2018-2020) for Adult Women Murdered by a Current or Former Intimate Partner

2020 VICTIMS : 20

TOGETHER: 12

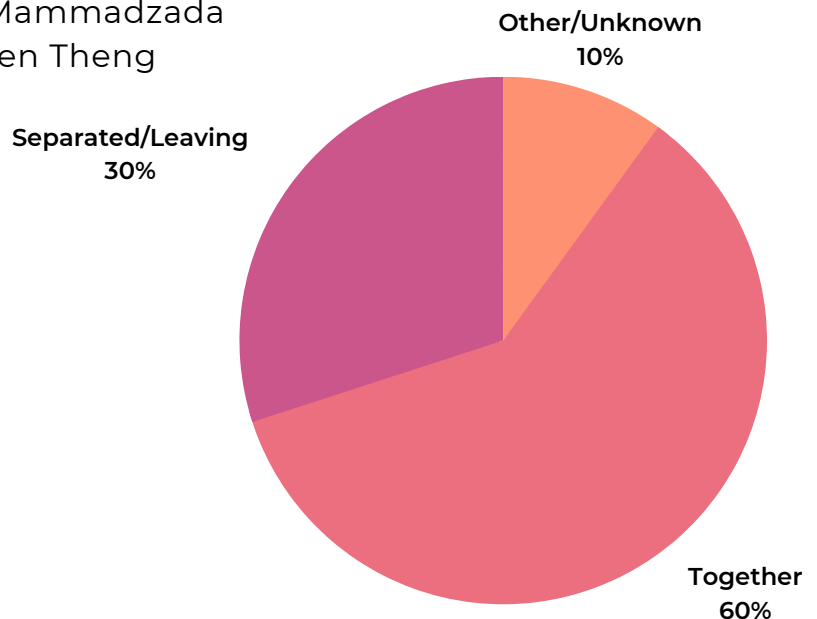
- Abigail Elise Simpson
- Monique Saraya Robbins
- Jackie Ann DeFoe
- Pauline Hollman
- Patricia Ann Valley
- Ochea Shay Brown
- Ashli Koren Johnson
- Leneesha Helen Columbus
- Klara Eugenie Wright
- Yuliya Khort
- Angela Lynn Mesich
- Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessann
- Kim Laen Theng
- Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan

SEPARATED OR ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE: 6

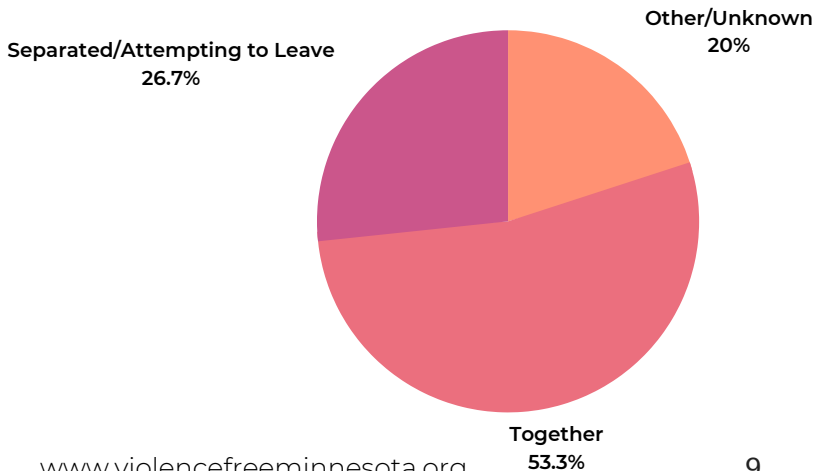
- Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew
- Loretta Jean Billman
- Yang Liu
- Keona Sade Foote
- Nigar Mammadzada
- Kim Laen Theng

OTHER OR UNKNOWN: 3

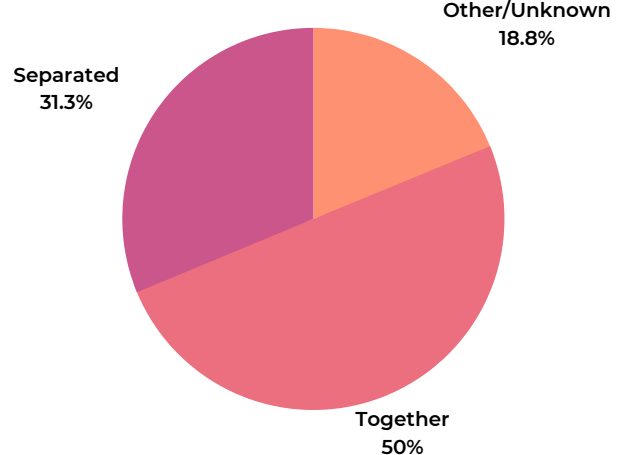
- Monique Saraya Robbins
- Genevieve Marie Skouge



2019



2018



HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Key Homicide Statistics (2018-2020) for Adult Women Murdered by a Current or Former Intimate Partner

2020 VICTIMS: 20

HISTORY WITH DOCUMENTATION: 7

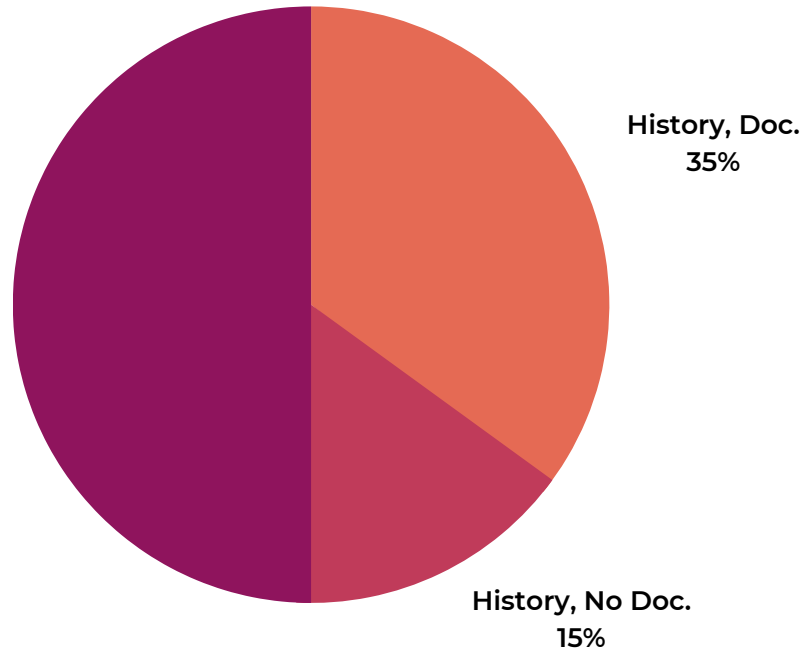
- Monique Saraya Robbins
- Jackie Ann DeFoe
- Ochea Shay Brown
- Ashli Koren Johnson
- Leneesha Helen Columbus
- Keona Sade Foote
- Angela Lynn Mesich

HISTORY, NO DOCUMENTATION: 3

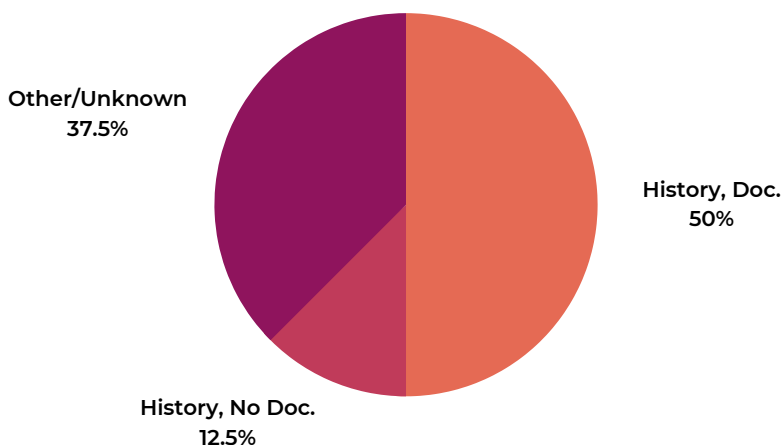
- Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew
- Yuliya Khort
- Kim Laen Theng

OTHER OR UNKNOWN: 10

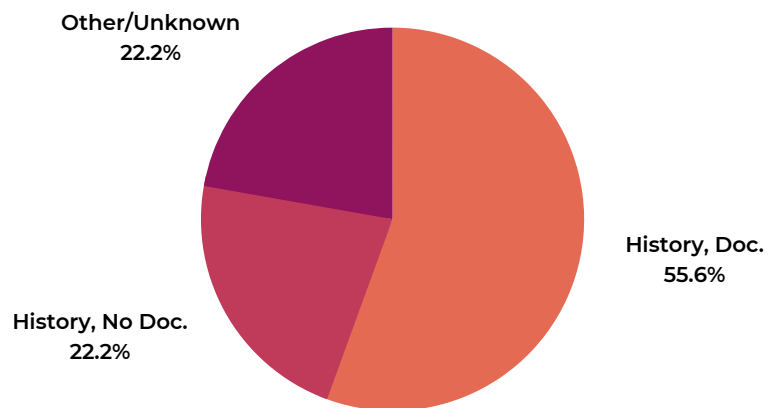
- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Abigail Elise Simpson | Genevieve Marie Skouge | Loretta Jean Billman |
| Yang Liu | Klara Eugenie Wright | Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan |
| Pauline Hollman | Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessann | |
| Patricia Ann Valley | Nigar Mammadzada | |



2019



2018



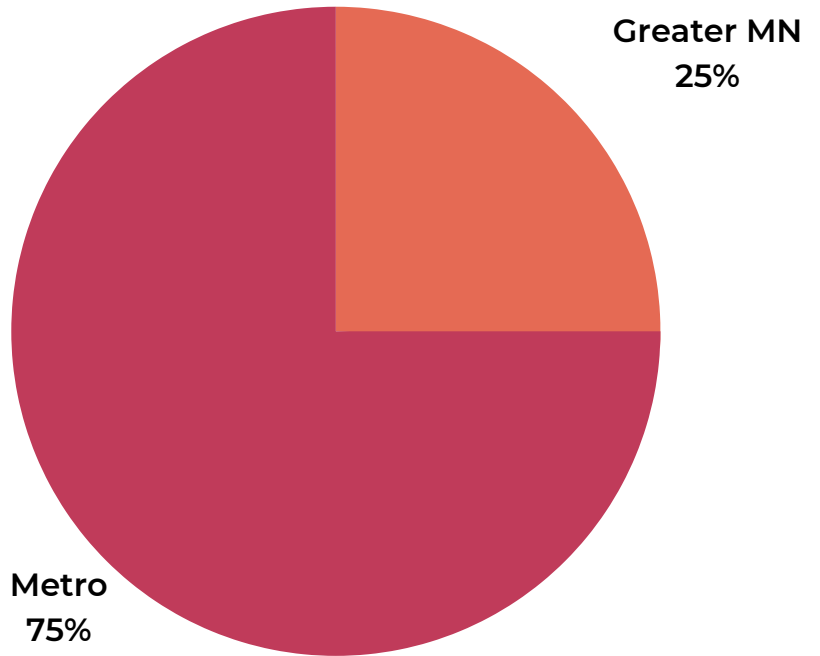
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF VICTIM

Key Homicide Statistics (2018-2020) for
Adult Women Murdered by a Current or Former Intimate Partner

2020 VICTIMS : 20

TWIN CITIES METRO AREA: 15

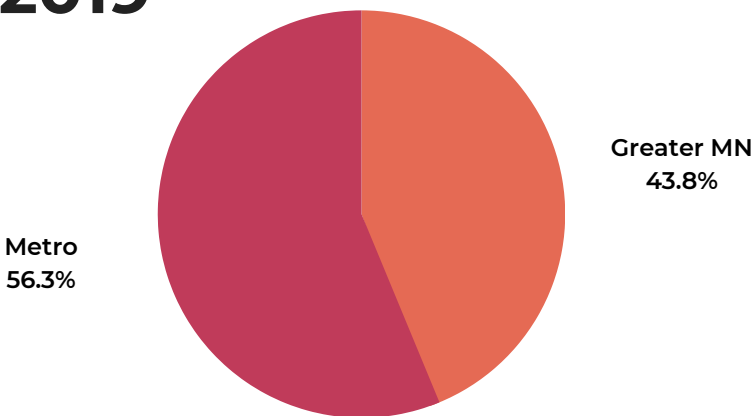
Abigail Elise Simpson
Monique Saraya Robbins
Yang Liu
Pauline Hollman
Patricia Ann Valley
Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew
Genevieve Marie Skouge
Ochea Shay Brown
Ashli Koren Johnson
Leneesha Helen Columbus
Yuliya Khort
Angela Lynn Mesich
Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessann
Nigar Mammadzada
Kim Laen Theng



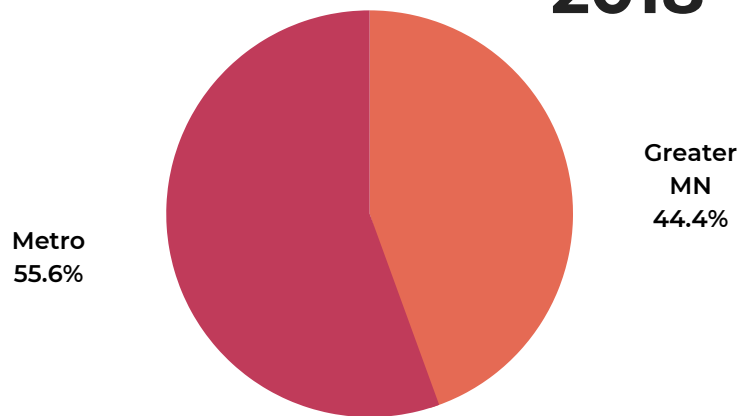
GREATER MINNESOTA: 5

Jackie Ann DeFoe
Klara Eugenie Wright
Keona Sade Foote
Loretta Jean Billman
Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan

2019



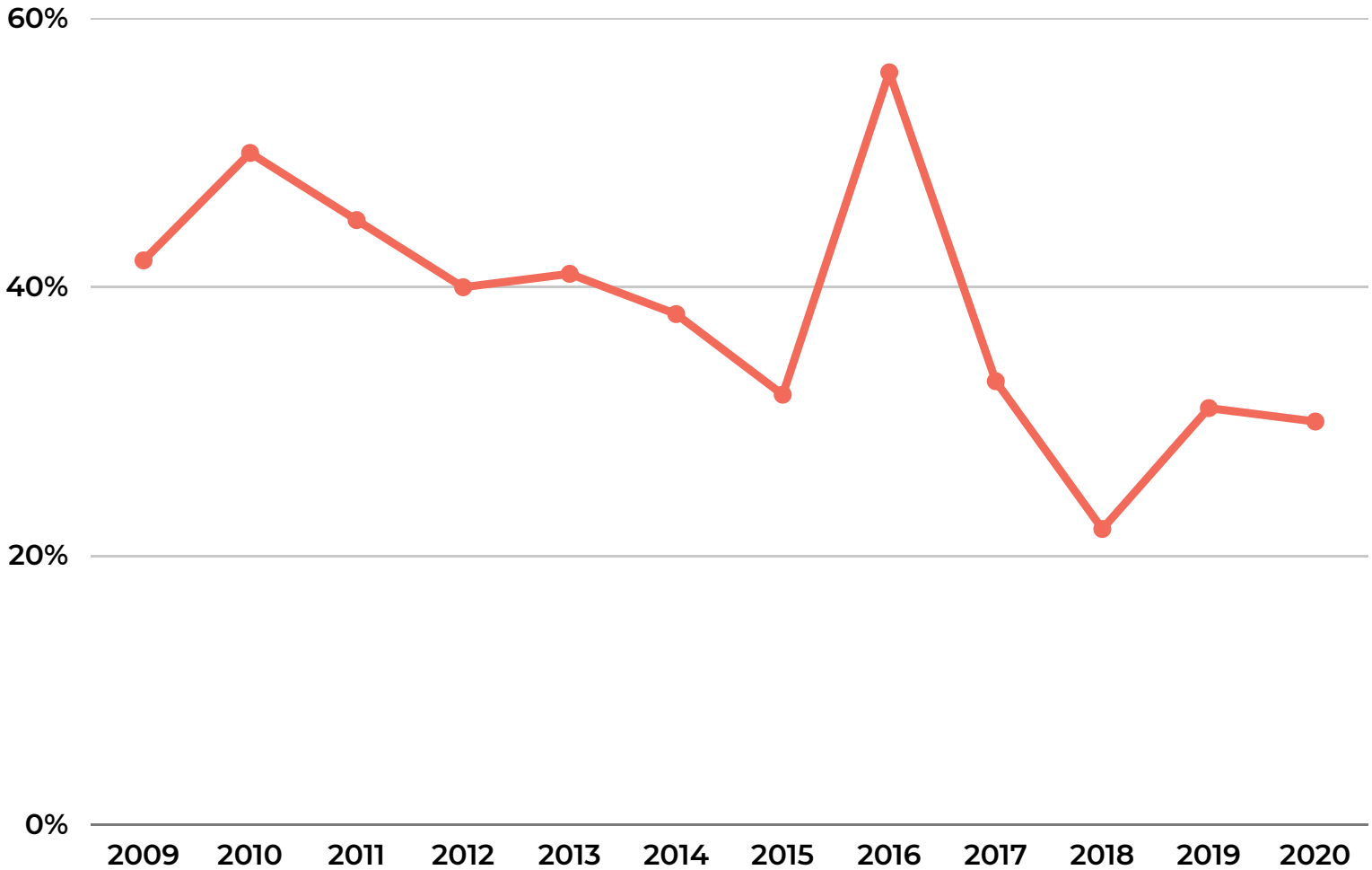
2018



HOMICIDE-SUICIDE

Key Homicide Statistics (2009-2020) for Adult Women Murdered by a Current or Former Intimate Partner

Percentage of Adult Women Intimate Partner Homicide-Suicides Per Year



**2020
HOMICIDES WHERE
PERPETRATOR
COMMITTED SUICIDE**

VICTIMS: 6

Patricia Ann Valley
Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew+
Genevieve Marie Skouge^
Klara Eugenie Wright*
Nigar Mammadzada*
Loretta Jean Billman

*Perpetrator attempted suicide

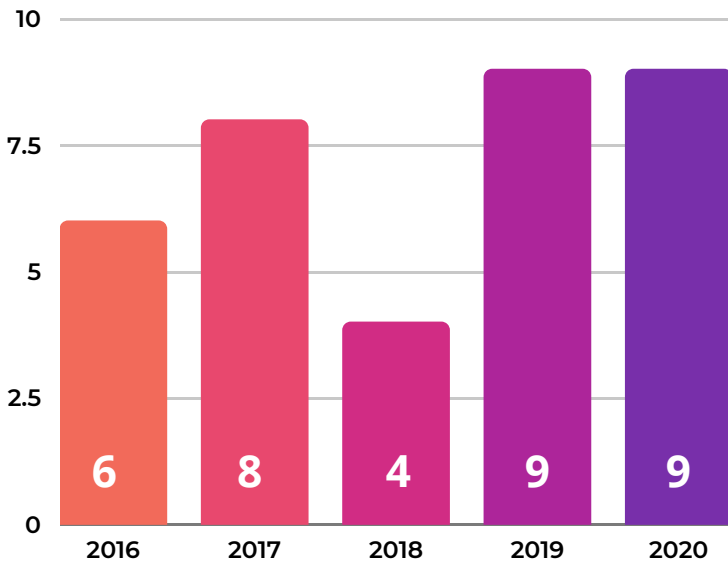
+Perpetrator committed suicide in jail after conviction

^Perpetrator committed suicide after being charged

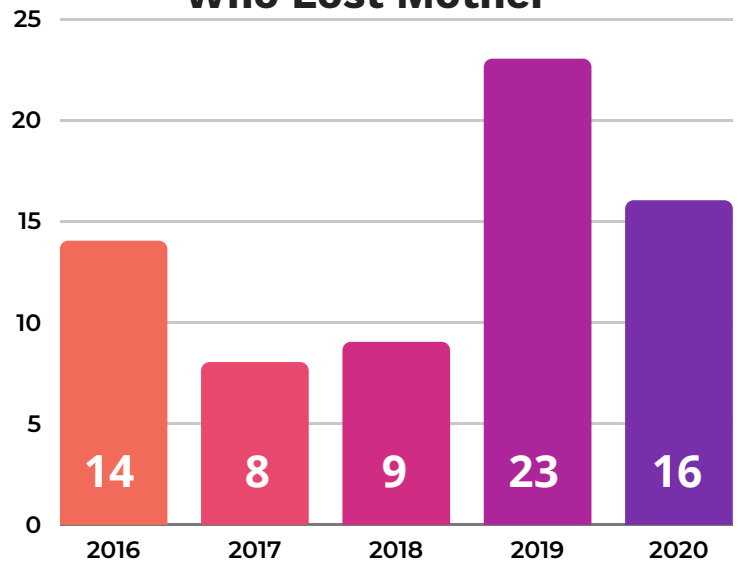
MURDER OF MOTHERS AND EFFECT ON CHILDREN

Key Homicide Statistics (2016-2020) for Adult Women Murdered by a Current or Former Intimate Partner

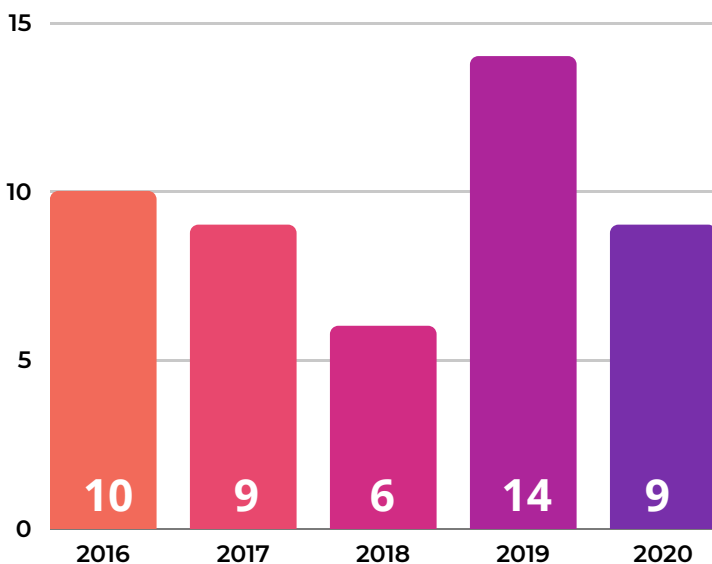
Mothers with Minor Children *



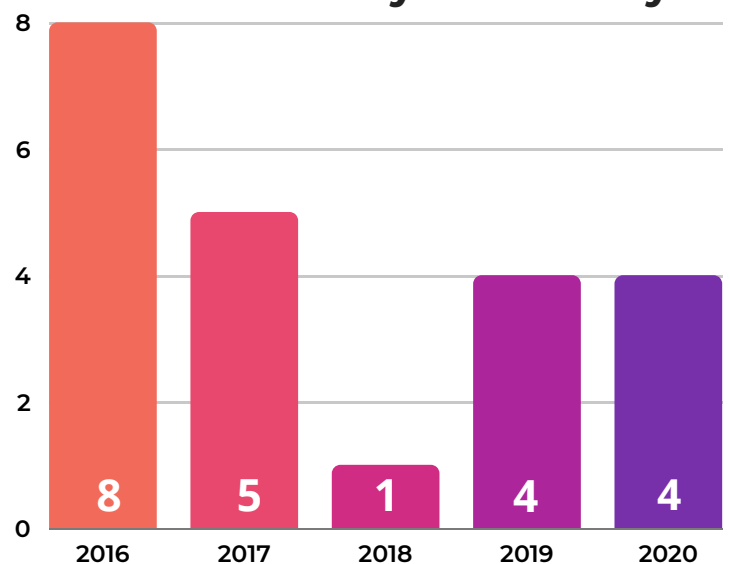
Number of Minor Children Who Lost Mother *



Number of Adult Children Who Lost Mother *



Child(ren) Present at Time of Murder or Discovery of the Body *



*Numbers based on information available, and confirmed. It is likely that some numbers may be higher than indicated here.

**2020
MOTHERS
WITH MINOR
CHILDREN**

VICTIMS: 9

Monique Saraya Robbins
Jackie Ann DeFoe
Ochea Shay Brown
Ashli Koren Johnson
Leneesha Helen Columbus

Yuliya Khort
Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessann
Keona Sade Foote
Nigar Mammadzada

RED FLAGS FOR LETHALITY

Each year, Violence Free Minnesota examines known intimate partner homicide cases in Minnesota and gathers information regarding four key lethality factors:

LETHALITY FACTORS

- **the victim's attempts to leave the abuser;**
- **previous threats to kill the victim;**
- **abuser's access to firearms; and**
- **abuser's history of violence.**

Violence Free Minnesota has analyzed these four factors since 2006. For the past 14 years, these lethality factors have been present in a significant number of cases. If we had more access to records and conducted interviews with friends and family members of victims, we are confident that we would find additional information pertaining to lethality factors.

While lethality factors are often considered in a criminal-legal context, we believe that by placing them into a public health framework, these factors can illuminate important patterns in cases of intimate partner homicide. These indicators can and should be addressed through multiple avenues, including public health, social services, community-based services, and housing and economic justice systems.

In 2020, 30 people were killed due to domestic violence in Minnesota. This included 16 women who were murdered by their current or former intimate partners.

ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE

Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew, Loretta Jean Billman, Keona Sade Foote, Nigar Mammadzada were all either in the process of leaving their abusers, or had already separated from them. Nigar dropped off her daughter at a babysitter before returning home, where she worked. Her ex-boyfriend still had the garage code to her home and shot and killed her when she arrived. Loretta told coworkers she was planning on leaving her boyfriend before he killed her and himself. Kim Laen Theng's daughter urged her to leave her abusive boyfriend before he beat her to death.

PREVIOUS THREATS TO KILL

Keona Sade Foote's ex-boyfriend made threats over social media that he was going to kill the mothers of his children. He strangled and killed Keona and her 2 year-old daughter, Miyona Zayla Miller. Monique Saraya Robbins's boyfriend had made numerous threats to kill her.

ACCESS TO FIREARMS

Ashli Koren Johnson, Leneesha Helen Columbus, and Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessan were all shot and killed by current or former intimate partners who were legally prohibited to possess a firearm. Ashli and Leneesha were pregnant at the time they were killed. Lauren's 15 month-old child was present when she was shot and killed by her boyfriend. Angela Mesich was shot and killed by her husband, Jason, before he exited their home and shot two of his neighbors, 29 year-old Canisha, and her 12 year-old sister, Makayla. When Makayla was shot she was holding Canisha's 1 year-old daughter, who was not harmed. Canisha and Makayla survived, but remain in recovery.

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Sheldon Thompson had a long history of abuse towards ex-intimate partners before he killed Jackie Ann DeFoe and her 20 month-old son, Kevin Lee Shabaiah Jr. Jackie was also pregnant at the time she was killed.

All of these cases illustrate the need for more effective intervention and the preventable nature of each homicide.

VICTIM'S ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE THE ABUSER

LETHALITY FACTOR

National statistics, as well as information gathered from our history of reports, show attempts to separate from an abuser can increase the risk of lethality for victims. Abusive partners often view any attempts by the victim to leave the relationship as a loss of the abuser's power and control; therefore they may go to great lengths to prevent the victim from leaving. These lengths may include escalating or initiating violence as a means of regaining control.

If a perpetrator is involved with the criminal-legal system, victims may perceive greater safety; however, this may or may not be true depending on the level of monitoring and control from the criminal-legal system and the presence or lack of victim safety planning. Victims may also perceive greater safety in leaving the relationship when previous abuse in the relationship was solely non-physical; however, emotionally abusive relationships can and do sometimes escalate to physical abuse and homicide.

Most individuals leaving abusive relationships are not killed, but a large number of those who are killed were attempting to separate from their abuser. Even when victims are able to leave an abusive relationship, there may be a period of increased risk in the months after leaving.

At least six victims (30% of adult women victims), had either attempted to leave or left the relationship in 2020. The majority of these cases involved documented or undocumented abuse histories, pointing to the importance of community-based interventions and safety planning.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

NIGAR

MAMMAZADA

On November 12, Nigar Mammadzada, 29, was shot and killed in her Crystal home by her ex-boyfriend, Erik Eggleston, 38. That day, Nigar had dropped off her daughter, whom she shared with Eggleston, at a babysitter and her mother at work before returning to home. Later that night, when Nigar's mother came back from work, she found Nigar dead from gunshot wounds in the home office. **Nigar had recently broken up with Eggleston, but he had the garage code to gain access into the home.** Eggleston was found that night in front of a friend's home in Oak Grove, with self-inflicted wounds in an apparent suicide attempt. A car parked in the driveway of the friend's house was on loan to Nigar from a car dealership, and contained a shotgun covered in blood and several shells. Nigar Mammadzada leaves behind her young daughter. Erik Eggleston is charged with second-degree murder.

ACCESS TO FIREARMS

LETHALITY FACTOR

While the percentage of domestic violence homicides using firearms fluctuates from year to year, firearms are the most frequent weapon of choice and are used in almost half of the documented domestic violence homicides in our reports. The Violence Policy Center has found that female intimate partners are more likely to be killed with a firearm than all other means combined. These statistics emphasize access to firearms by an abuser as a significant risk factor for lethality. In 2020, thirteen victims (43% of total victims; 9 or 45% of adult women victims) were killed by firearms.

National studies also show that firearms are the most commonly used weapon when there are multiple people killed by an intimate partner. A 2020 study using data from the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports found that among male perpetrators of domestic violence homicide, the use of a firearm was associated with a nearly two times higher likelihood of having at least one additional victim, compared to domestic violence homicides through other means. We routinely see this confirmed in our report.

Due to restrictions that prevent the Minnesota Department of Health from gathering and analyzing firearms data, we cannot know how perpetrators gained access to firearms - specifically perpetrators who used a firearm to commit

homicide but did not qualify for a firearms license due to a history of domestic violence. In 2020, three victims (Ashli Koren Johnson, Leneesha Helen Columbus, and Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessan) were shot and killed by current or former intimate partners who were legally prohibited to possess a firearm. Two of those victims were pregnant at the time they were killed; the third victims' 15 month-old child was present when she was shot and killed by her boyfriend.

These cases illustrate the need for the ability for the Minnesota Department of Health to collect firearms data as it relates to domestic violence, as well as the need for safety planning and risk assessments for victims whose abusive partners possess firearms.

CASE HIGHLIGHT ANGELA LYNN MESICH

Angela Lynn Mesich, 47, was shot and killed by her husband, Jason Mesich, 48, in their Bloomington home on August 30. **Jason shot Angela 12 times after arguing with her over their lack of sex. Jason then went outside and shot two of his neighbors in their front yard, because he believed they heard him kill Angela.** The neighbors were sisters who were loading a moving truck when Jason shot them. Canisha Saulter, 29, was shot three times in the lower body. Makayla Saulter-Outlaw, 12, was shot in the head while she was holding Canisha's 1-year-old daughter. Makayla was released from the hospital in November 2020 and continues her recovery at home. Canisha's daughter was unharmed during the shooting. When police arrived at the scene, Jason barricaded himself in his home, and exchanged gunfire with officers. **He fired over 40 rounds at police, and was later taken into custody unharmed.** In 2015, Jason was charged with domestic assault, which was eventually dismissed. He pled guilty to second-degree murder for Angela, and attempted second-degree murder and second-degree assault for shooting Canisha and Makayla. He was sentenced to 48 years in prison.

PERPETRATOR'S HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

LETHALITY FACTOR

We strive to capture as much information as possible regarding a perpetrator's history of violence. Since our main source of information regarding a perpetrator's history of violence is through public court records, we are limited in our analysis. We consider a perpetrator to have a documented history of domestic violence if there are police or court records available to us or if a history of violence is referenced in the media.

Occasionally, media stories will quote a perpetrator's undocumented history of abuse in interviews with family members or loved ones of the victim or previous victims of the perpetrator. At times, we will be contacted by family members who share this information with us. We categorize this information as "undocumented but known" domestic violence history of the perpetrator.

At least nine perpetrators in 2020 had documented histories of violence against their current and/or former partners, children, or partners' family members, and at least five had known but undocumented histories. Perpetrators' histories of violence often do not begin or end with one victim; in some cases there may be a history of violence against previous or subsequent partners as well, up to and including homicide. While it is unclear how many victims in 2020 filed for or obtained orders for protection, at least two previous partners of perpetrators had obtained civil orders for protection against them. Those same partners also had criminal domestic abuse no contact orders put in place by the court against their perpetrators.

We note that in each of these cases criminal-legal system interventions did not prevent future violence or, ultimately, the homicides. These documented histories of violence by the criminal-legal system indicate the need for different interventions and represent missed opportunities, specifically for domestic abuse transformation programming for abusive partners, which addresses the root of power and control at the heart of domestic violence.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

JACKIE ANN

DEFOE

On March 7, Jackie Ann DeFoe, 27, and her 20-month-old son, Kevin Lee Shabaiah Jr., were killed in their Cloquet home on the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation by Jackie's boyfriend Sheldon Thompson, 33. During a welfare check on the home, police officers found Jackie's body covered with lacerations and blood in a bedroom closet. Kevin's body was found in a separate bedroom with "observable bruising to his head." Shortly after police discovered the bodies, Thompson called 911 to turn himself in for the murders and was taken into custody. **An autopsy found Jackie died from multiple stab wounds, and was 13 weeks pregnant at the time of death.** Kevin was killed due to blunt force injuries. **Thompson has a long history of relationship abuse including a conviction for misdemeanor domestic assault in 2013, and gross misdemeanor domestic assault in 2016, both against previous partners. He also had multiple domestic assault by strangulation charges that were subsequently dropped.** Thompson's ex-wife had a protective order and a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO) against him after several assaults. **One assault resulted in a broken jaw; doctors were initially prevented from performing surgery on her due to excessive swelling.** Thompson received a felony conviction after he violated his ex-wife's DANCO in 2017. In 2006, he was charged with second-degree murder but took a plea deal that reduced his conviction to felony second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon. In October 2020, Sheldon Thompson was indicted by a grand jury on five counts of first-degree murder and three counts of second-degree murder for the killing of Jackie Ann DeFoe and her son, Kevin Lee Shabaiah Jr.

THREATS TO KILL THE VICTIM

LETHALITY FACTOR

Threats by the abuser to kill the victim, as well as the victim's belief that the abuser will kill them, are among the most reliable indicators of lethality. These indicators are often overlooked by the criminal and civil justice systems. A review of court documents and media reports of the 2020 murders showed that at least three cases (Monique Saraya Robbins, Brandon Jose Nieves, and Keona Sade Foote) involved the perpetrator making threats to kill the victims.

Without access to and review of police case files and court records, it is difficult to determine whether threats to kill were made against the victim. While the absence of threats to kill does not tell us much, their presence can be a significant indicator of an abuser's risk of lethality.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

KEONA SADE

FOOTE

Keona Sade Foote, 23, and her two-year old daughter, Miyona Zayla Miller were strangled and killed by Keona's ex-boyfriend, Renard Carter, 29, on September 10. Police report that Keona was strangled and both she and Miyona died from trauma. **Keona was pregnant with Carter's child at the time she was killed. Carter had recently made social media posts threatening to kill the mothers of his children and multiple witnesses reported hearing Carter make threats in person.** Friends and family became worried on September 12, when they had not heard from Keona in a couple of days, and entered her apartment to find her and Miyona dead. A warrant was then issued for Carter, who was on probation after he pled guilty last year to felony domestic violence no contact order violation, and was sentenced to prison. He was released from prison in April 2020. **Videos of Keona's killing were posted to Carter's social media.** Carter was eventually apprehended in Columbia, South Carolina, on September 13, where it is believed he traveled to kill another ex-girlfriend, and mother of his children. When police arrived to arrest Carter at a hotel, he opened the door holding a BB gun. He was shot multiple times by officers. Carter livestreamed a portion of this incident online. After being hospitalized for gunshot wounds in South Carolina, Renard Carter was extradited to Minnesota and charged with two counts of second-degree murder and one count of second-degree murder of an unborn child.



**EMPOWER
OUR FUTURE:**
A VISION TO END
RELATIONSHIP ABUSE
IN MINNESOTA

EMPOWER OUR FUTURE:

A VISION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE IN MINNESOTA

In 2013, Violence Free Minnesota - then known as the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women - began an intentional process to reflect on its work across 40 years of the modern movement to end domestic violence. During this time, programs working to support victims and their children were confronted with multiple years of reduced funding and societal complacency ("domestic violence is inevitable"). To this day, 2013 remains the year with the highest documented number of intimate partner violence homicides in Minnesota. Advocates were overwhelmed and increasingly pessimistic. Programs were working hard to just get by, keep their doors open, and meet the individual needs in their local communities.

The Butler Family Foundation presented VFMN with the opportunity to engage in an intentional dialogue process facilitated by Minnesota Assistance Project for Non-Profits (MAP). Over 100 advocates gathered over three full days to pivot the work of Minnesota's movement to end intimate partner violence.

The dialogue sparked ideas and energy and laid the foundation for VFMN to take on the process of creating Empower Our Future – an ambitious plan released in 2015 with multi-layered strategies to move us toward the vision of a violence-free Minnesota. Five years later, we continue to use Empower Our Future to guide our work. Our hope is that by placing the vision plan within the context of the Homicide Report, we may highlight both the urgency and connection between intimate partner violence and each priority area.

Priority Topics

The VFMN Empower Our Future Vision Plan focuses on five areas that need to be effectively addressed in order to end domestic violence in Minnesota. The five areas are:

- Anti-Oppression
- Complex Unity
- Social Norm Change
- Economic Justice
- Evaluation



ANTI-OPPRESSION: A WORLD OF JUSTICE & EQUITY

We have long understood that domestic violence is more than the physical acts of violence but involves power and control over another person. Oppressions exist along many lines (e.g. race, gender, class) and intersecting oppressions impact the safety of people experiencing abuse and violence. Addressing oppression is the foundation for creating a world without violence. While victims and advocates have always talked about the connection between oppressions generally and domestic violence specifically, authentic implementation of anti-oppression work is cornerstone to ending abuse.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

On March 7, Jackie Ann DeFoe, 27, and her 20-month-old son, Kevin Lee Shabaiash Jr., were killed in their Cloquet home on the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation by Jackie's boyfriend Sheldon Thompson, 33. During a welfare check on the home, police officers found Jackie's body covered with lacerations and blood in a bedroom closet. Kevin's body was found in a separate bedroom with "observable bruising to his head." Shortly after police discovered the bodies, Thompson called 911 to turn himself in for the murders and was taken into custody. An autopsy found Jackie died from multiple stab wounds, and was 13 weeks pregnant at the time of death. Kevin was killed due to blunt force injuries. Thompson has a long history of relationship abuse including a conviction for misdemeanor domestic assault in 2013, and gross misdemeanor domestic assault in 2016, both against previous partners. He also had multiple domestic assault by strangulation charges that were subsequently dropped. Thompson's ex-wife had a protective order and a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO) against him after several assaults. One assault resulted in a broken jaw; doctors were initially prevented from performing surgery on her due to excessive swelling. Thompson received a felony conviction after he violated his ex-wife's DANCO in 2017. In 2006, he was charged with second-degree murder but took a plea deal that reduced his conviction to felony second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon. In October 2020, Sheldon Thompson was indicted by a grand jury on five counts of first-degree murder and three counts of second-degree murder for the killing of Jackie Ann DeFoe and her son, Kevin Lee Shabaiash Jr.

ANTI-OPPRESSION:

A WORLD OF JUSTICE & EQUITY

Racial Disparities

Domestic violence occurs across all social boundaries and within all communities; however, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities are disproportionately represented among intimate partner homicide victims both in Minnesota and nationally. We found disproportionate numbers of Black and Native victims of domestic violence homicide compared to statewide demographics. In 2020, 40% of domestic violence homicide victims were Black, while comprising less than 7% of Minnesota's population. Four women were pregnant at the time they were killed by a current or former intimate partner, and three of them were Black. These violent disparities are attributed to histories of colonization, chattel slavery, genocide, generational trauma, and on-going systematic oppression.

Native women face higher rates of victimization due to legacies of colonialism and disconnect between local, state, and tribal laws. Jurisdiction issues between tribes and states create barriers and gaps in seeking due process. For example, tribes do not have the authority to prosecute non-Native perpetrators who commit assaults on tribal lands. In addition, many Native women, girls, transgender individuals, and Two-Spirit individuals go missing at staggering rates, but accurate and comprehensive data is difficult to track due to lack of national media attention and uniform reporting.

Native victims accounted for 10% of the 2020 homicide victims, while the Native population makes up only 1% of the state. [Jackie Ann DeFoe](#) was a Native woman, and one of the four pregnant women killed due to domestic violence last year. She was also killed alongside her 20 month-old son, [Kevin Lee Shabaiah Jr.](#)

In 2018, the Violence Policy Center found that Black women were murdered by male intimate partners at rates nearly three times that of white women. Black women are also most frequently killed with firearms, and non-Hispanic Black women and Native women experience the highest rates of homicide, of which over half are committed by a current or former intimate partner. In addition, Black women are significantly more likely to be killed as a result of domestic violence during pregnancy or the year after childbirth than white women.

In 2020, 40% of domestic violence homicide victims were Black, while comprising less than 7% of Minnesota's population. Four women were pregnant at the time they were killed by a current or former intimate partner, and three of them were Black.

ANTI-OPPRESSION:

A WORLD OF JUSTICE & EQUITY

Criminalization

Survivors are often labeled as both victims and offenders within the criminal-legal system. Victims are criminally charged for a variety of reasons, including using retaliatory violence, acting in self defense, or engaging in criminal behavior due to addiction - which may be a coping mechanism to survive the abuse they have experienced - as well as for criminal acts coerced by abusive partners. According to the ACLU, as many as 94% of women in some women's prison populations have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point prior to incarceration.

According to the national coalition Survived & Punished, women and girls who are survivors of violence are at risk for incarceration because their survival strategies are so often criminalized. Some survivors are coerced into criminal activity by their abusers, others defend themselves or their children to prevent further abuse. It is often a life spent in between the dangers of violence and the risk of going to jail or prison.

Criminalization disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities. Survived & Punished reports that about 67% of U.S. female prisoners are women of color. Nearly half of all Black transgender people have been incarcerated at some point, many of whom are then further victimized in prison by guards, other prison staff, and other prisoners. Native Americans make up 1.1% of Minnesota's population, but according to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Native women make up 20% of the female prison population in the state. The Lakota People's Law Project found that Native women are admitted to prison at 6 times the rate of white women.

While gender-specific data on incarceration rates of Native communities is scarce, the Prison Policy Initiative reports that Native youth are three times more likely to be confined than white youth, and U.S. Census data indicates that Native communities are overrepresented in the criminal-legal system.

According to the ACLU, as many as 94% of women in some women's prison populations have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point prior to incarceration.

ANTI-OPPRESSION:

A WORLD OF JUSTICE & EQUITY

Criminalization

Race disparities play out throughout the criminal-legal system. Women of color are less likely to be able to afford cash bail as a condition of release thus remaining incarcerated pre-trial. Black women are also overrepresented in solitary confinement, on death row, and disproportionately serve sentences of life and life without parole.

Five of the 20 (25%) adult women murdered by a current/former intimate partner had a criminal history. One was charged with a qualifying domestic violence related offense (QDVRO) and had a domestic abuse no contact order (DANCO) put in place against her by the court. Of those five women, four had been on supervision within five years of their murder.

Ochea Shay Brown was punished by the criminal legal system by having her children taken away from her in 2017.

Ochea Shay Brown was punished by the criminal legal system by having her children taken away from her in 2017. While her case was being investigated by Child Protection Services in 2016, she was assaulted by her boyfriend. He put her head through the bathroom wall, causing bruising and two black eyes. CPS found that Ochea's boyfriend had maltreated her children and threatened to harm them. Despite this, and the fact that the father of her children said he was not concerned about her parenting, Ochea still lost custody of her two children months after she was assaulted.

A 2019 report by Prison Policy Initiative found that nearly half of all incarcerated women in the US are held in jails and not prisons. This severely limits the programs and services available to incarcerated women. Prisons, due to the longer stay of those incarcerated, offer more services than jails. Healthcare, especially mental health services, is scarce in jails. This is especially significant considering the high mental health needs for incarcerated women and the prevalence of trauma from violence in their lives. A study by the Vera Institute found that 77% of incarcerated women have a history of intimate partner violence. Histories of violence cause lasting effects from trauma and PTSD.

COMPLEX UNITY:

BOTH/AND/ALL

Domestic violence is not experienced in isolation from other life events. It is woven into people's lives in complex ways. Many different systems are implicated in the work to end intimate partner violence. While systems and communities hold unique expertise in areas of work and lived experience, everyone invested in ending violence must still come together in unity to make forward movement. The concept of "complex unity" embraces unique areas of experience such as sexual assault, relationship abuse, and trafficking with different systems such as healthcare, housing, and education. "Complex Unity" also recognizes differences of culture and geography, the differences between individual and system advocacy, and prevention and intervention.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

Abigail Elise Simpson, 21, was killed by her boyfriend, Terrion Sherman, 23, in her St. Paul apartment on February 26. Police responded to the apartment after calls of a loud and violent argument between a man and a woman. Upon arrival, officers heard a child crying through Abigail's apartment door, along with a man saying, "Stay down or I'll kill you." When police entered the apartment, they found Sherman and his 2-year-old nephew covered in blood. Abigail was also found bloody and unresponsive with a knife close to her body. While Sherman was being transported to the Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center, he told officers he was on drugs and broke out of the back window of the police car. He was taken to Regions Hospital, but was soon medically cleared and discharged. Later, while talking to investigators, Sherman said he remembered punching Abigail and hitting her head against a radiator before blacking out. Abigail was also stabbed several times and the medical examiner ruled her cause of death to be from multiple traumatic injuries. Sherman was civilly committed less than a week prior to Abigail's murder, but he was not held in a secure hospital. Instead, he was connected with various services provided by the county. Sherman was committed previously in 2019. While he initially told officers he was on drugs, in his confession Sherman later said he was not on drugs and did not take his prescribed medication because, "he is not crazy." Terrion Sherman has been charged with second-degree murder of Abigail Elise Simpson.

COMPLEX UNITY:

BOTH/AND/ALL

Systems

Systems and institutions structure our society and lives. Victim/survivors often simultaneously navigate interpersonal violence and systematic violence at the same time: from the violence of criminalization to the violence of economic instability and homelessness. Challenging systems and promoting social change are core tenets of Violence Free Minnesota's mission. We understand that to center victim safety and end intimate partner violence, the systems in place must fundamentally change to make an impact on the individual victim/survivor.

Criminal-Legal

While many victims do not turn to the criminal-legal system to address the abuse they are experiencing, others may have multiple points of contact with these systems. Some of the ways that victims may come into contact with these systems is through civil protective orders, Domestic Abuse No Contact Orders (DANCO), trials and testimony, and calls to 9-1-1 or law enforcement. Some victims have positive experiences with the criminal-legal system, while others experience retraumatization, harm, and a loss of control. Barriers such as language access, mistrust of legal systems, desire to remain in the relationship, and/or fear of the perpetrator,

their community, and/or law enforcement may motivate victims' decisions as to criminal-legal system involvement. Some abusive partners also leverage criminal-legal systems such as law enforcement, civil protective orders, and family court proceedings as tools to continue to abuse and control, drawing victims into repeated proceedings.

Barriers such as language access, mistrust of legal systems, desire to remain in the relationship, and/or fear of the perpetrator, their community, and/or law enforcement may motivate victims' decisions as to criminal-legal system involvement.

COMPLEX UNITY:

BOTH/AND/ALL

Criminal-Legal

In addition, studies show that approximately 80% of victims are afraid to call the police for assistance with the abuse they are experiencing. Many fear that they will not be believed by police, and studies show that 24% of victims who reach out for help are themselves arrested instead. Prosecutors may threaten victims with jail time if they refuse to testify against their abusers. A study from the University of Cambridge found that Black victims whose partners were arrested on misdemeanor charges were 64% more likely to have died early, possibly due to causes consistent with chronic stress amplified by the arrests, compared to victims whose partners were warned but not removed by police. No such effect was found for white victims.

For each victim whose perpetrator had contact with the criminal-legal system, the system ultimately failed to create and maintain safety.

Further, a perpetrator's history of violence indicates varying points of contact with criminal-legal system actors and opportunities for intervention. These points of contact and intervention are an opportunity to transform abusive behavior through appropriate programming and potentially prevent future homicide. In 35% of the cases where an adult woman was killed by an intimate partner last year, the perpetrator had a history of abuse that involved contact with the criminal-legal system. When factoring in all intimate partner homicide cases in 2020, the number rises to 40%. For each victim whose perpetrator had contact with the criminal-legal system, the system ultimately failed to create and maintain safety.

After 30 years of working with the criminal-legal system, it is time to re-evaluate whether our criminal-legal responses are increasing safety and creating the conditions for a future without violence.

COMPLEX UNITY:

BOTH/AND/ALL

Healthcare

Many victims and survivors of relationship abuse experience contact with healthcare systems, sometimes repeatedly. While public perception of relationship abuse often centers around physical injuries like black eyes, relationship abuse is associated with a wide range of health impacts. This includes but is not limited to anxiety, depression, and PTSD, substance use, traumatic brain injuries, sexual and reproductive health issues, and chronic health concerns. In Minnesota, between 2016 and the first quarter of 2018, relationship-abuse related emergency department visits and hospitalizations for female survivors were associated with diagnoses such as head injuries and physical abuse complicating pregnancy and childbirth.

One survey of female domestic violence victims in Minnesota found that while the majority sustained injuries as a result of abuse, only 38% sought medical care.

One survey of female domestic violence victims in Minnesota found that while the majority sustained injuries as a result of abuse, only 38% sought medical care. Some victim/survivors may be prevented from seeking care by their partner, or may fear police or CPS involvement. Still others may not connect their experiences of relationship abuse to health concerns.

While healthcare professionals have a critical role to play in preventing and responding to relationship abuse, some may lack adequate training in identifying and responding to abuse. According to research conducted by relationship abuse experts in Minnesota in 2019, healthcare professionals generally report low rates of preparation, knowledge, and victim understanding in relation to addressing abuse with patients, as well as job-related constraints. In Minnesota, no specific statute exists addressing relationship abuse screening or response protocols for healthcare professionals. While various professionals across the state have been introduced to the Futures Without Violence evidence-based universal education assessment method, there is a lack of standardized, universal training mandated for or used by all professionals.

Even though it is unclear exactly how many victims in our 2020 report had substantive points of contact with healthcare providers during the course of their abuse, we do know that because four victims were pregnant when they were killed, they likely had recent contact with healthcare professionals.

SOCIAL NORM CHANGE: EQUALITY – A NATURAL STATE OF BEING

While there is a critical need for intervention work - and providing services to individuals or changing systems to better provide those intervention services is important - the work to end domestic violence does not begin nor end at the point of intervention. In order to end relationship abuse, we must also change the social norms that promote and support relationship abuse and gender-based violence. Intimate partner violence will end when we meaningfully address the structures that promote and support violence, beyond responding to the urgent and necessary needs of those who have experienced violence.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

Richard Alhag Stephen, 33, was killed in Moorhead by **Cameron St. Claire**, 33, on June 3. Richard and his girlfriend were walking home on June 3, when two men and one woman **began catcalling Richard's girlfriend** from a parked car. The girlfriend told them to **stop "catcalling"** her. As she and Richard walked toward her apartment building, the woman in the car, **Erin Sundby**, exited and assaulted Richard's girlfriend. Sundby pulled the girlfriend down by her hair and began punching her. While this was happening, St. Claire and the other man in the vehicle got out and began beating and "pulverizing" Richard. After the assault, St. Claire, Sundby and the other men left, and Richard and his girlfriend went into her apartment. Richard fell asleep on the couch, but when his girlfriend was unable to wake him up she called 911. Richard Alhag Stephen was pronounced dead at the hospital. Cameron St. Claire was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to over 15 years in prison. Erin Sundby was found guilty of third-degree assault against Richard's girlfriend and was sentenced to 120 days in jail.

SOCIAL NORM CHANGE: **EQUALITY – A NATURAL STATE OF BEING**

“Public violence”

It is not uncommon for abusers to publicly humiliate and criticize victims in front of other people as a tactic of power; public homicide signals the ultimate act of control and violence. An abuser who commits relationship homicide in public has not “snapped” or “lost control,” but in fact has already engaged in continuous violence and coercive control at home.

For those who witness a public intimate partner homicide, it is traumatizing, whether or not they knew the victim(s) personally. Witnesses may experience physical and emotional trauma responses, such as shock, disorientation, helplessness, numbness, anger and fear, and recurrent nightmares. They may also struggle with guilt about their responses at the time of the homicides.

An abuser who commits relationship homicide in public has not “snapped” or “lost control,” but in fact has already engaged in continuous violence and coercive control at home.

Loved ones and those close to homicide victims often suffer as a result, whether or not they witnessed the homicide. Several studies demonstrate that loved ones of homicide victims experience greater rates of PTSD than for other forms of violence, and may also experience physical health consequences, as well as economic consequences and loss of income. Some loved ones may experience secondary victimization through engagement with the criminal-legal system and other service providers.

SOCIAL NORM CHANGE:

EQUALITY – A NATURAL STATE OF BEING

“Public violence”

Across several cases in 2020, victims were killed in public:

- **Richard Alhag Stephen** was beaten to death after a man and a woman began catcalling Richard’s girlfriend, who was also assaulted by the woman.
- Videos of **Keona Sade Foote**’s murder were posted on her ex-boyfriend’s social media accounts. He also killed Keona’s daughter, **Miyona Zayla Miller**.
- After **Angela Mesich**’s husband killed her in their home, he went outside and shot two of his neighbors, one of whom was holding her 1 year-old niece.
- **Brandon Nieves** and a 16 year-old friend at a park after his girlfriend’s ex threatened his life on social media.
- **Todd Gerleman** was helping his friend repair damage to her home caused by her abusive boyfriend. The boyfriend shot at the woman in her driveway, and then shot and killed Todd.
- **Leneesha Helen Columbus** was shot and killed at an intersection in Minneapolis. Bystanders attempted lifesaving measures on her to no avail. She was pregnant at the time, and her daughter, **Leneesha LaDell Columbus**, died in the hospital after being delivered prematurely.
- **Lauren Summer Koffi-n’guessan** was shot and killed in the parking lot of her apartment. A woman and her children witnessed the incident from their car. Lauren’s boyfriend then entered the woman’s car with Lauren’s fifteen-month-old child in an attempt to flee.
- **Genevieve Marie Skouge** was beaten to death in the street outside of her home.
- **Ochea Shay Brown** was run over by her boyfriend with other friends also in the car at the time.

SOCIAL NORM CHANGE: EQUALITY – A NATURAL STATE OF BEING

Schools/Education

While schools may be a source of safety for some children and a place to escape an abusive home, they can also act as a pipeline to incarceration. Children who witness or grow up in a home with relationship abuse may experience unpredictability and instability at home and in their parental relationships. They are often at risk for homelessness, foster care involvement, mental and behavioral health issues, repeated activation of stress responses, and social isolation. These experiences may impede children's academic achievement and healthy relationships with peers.

Children who exhibit trauma responses at school due to violence at home may be disciplined, suspended, expelled, and/or referred to law enforcement, with their responses treated as infractions of school conduct codes rather than the result of prolonged and intense stress. These disciplinary methods disproportionately impact girls of color and push them out of school and into the juvenile justice system.

In addition, the presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) in educational institutions frequently leads to surveillance and punishment of students of color, thereby retraumatizing youth for whom school should be a safe place.

Not only does research show that the presence of SROs tends to generate an atmosphere of distrust, but SROs too often engage in violent and discriminatory practices to “de-escalate” situations (often involving students with disabilities and mental health conditions), leading to further traumatization.

The presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) in educational institutions frequently leads to surveillance and punishment of students of color, thereby retraumatizing youth for whom school should be a safe place.

Because children who witness or experience abuse at home are more likely to fall behind academically, they may be diverted into remedial education programs at school, which disproportionately target youth of color and may lead to disability diagnoses instead of identifying trauma responses. Protective factors for youth experiencing abuse at home include a sense of belonging at school, which is eroded when teachers punish students and separate them from their peers.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE/ HOUSING:

A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Economic security is foundational to safety. For individuals and families, economic insecurity is linked to their safety. Economic security includes having the financial means to support yourself and your family, access to housing resources as well as the resources to provide for basic needs such as food, clothing, medical care, and education. While emergency shelter is vital and serves a specific purpose for victims in a time of extreme crisis, to end violence we must invest in the full range of housing needs and housing options.

CASE HIGHLIGHT

On March 10, [Yang Liu](#), 40, was shot and killed by her husband, John Wiseman, 54, in their Maple Grove home. When police officers arrived at the home, multiple witnesses reported Yang and Wiseman had a "volatile" relationship, and they often fought over "money and fidelity." Witnesses described Wiseman as wealthy and mentioned that the couple owns businesses in China. Wiseman also has homes in Minnesota, Nevada, and China. Police were also notified by witnesses that Wiseman was seeking a divorce, but did not want to contribute to a divorce settlement because he "earned this." Inside the home, police found a letter showing that Wiseman met with an estate planner in February, along with a passport and hidden cash. John Wiseman has been charged with second-degree murder of Yang Liu.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE/ HOUSING:

A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Economic Instability

Economic abuse is one of the most used tactics to maintain power and control over victims and occurs in 99% cases of relationship abuse. It destabilizes victims' access to basic human necessities like employment, housing, food, transportation, and child care. Economic abuse includes using tactics that cause a victim to lose their job or public benefits; ruining a victim's credit or preventing them from having a credit history; denying child support or making it too dangerous to pursue child support; and causing a victim to get evicted from, or denied access to, housing. Victims may also experience difficulties with work absenteeism and maintaining employment. Victims may sometimes become involved in systems of sexual exploitation due to financial need. Economic abuse is one of the most common reasons why victims are unable to leave abusive relationships.

Economic abuse is one of the most used tactics to maintain power and control over victims and occurs in 99% cases of relationship abuse.

While we have not had access to consistent data on the economic abuse experienced by the homicide victims in our reports, throughout our reports we have found victims who had faced economic instability in the past and/or suffered from a lack of economic resources in the five years preceding their murder.

- **Jackie Ann DeFoe:** Misdemeanor theft conviction in 2011, and taken to court by Carlton County for child support in 2017
- **Ashli Koren Johnson:** Evicted from home in 2011, Misdemeanor theft conviction in 2014
- **Leneesha Helen Columbus:** was taken to court over housing in 2019
- **Loretta Jean Billman:** Taken to court by a bank in 2017

ECONOMIC JUSTICE/ HOUSING:

A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Housing

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and their children. According to data collected by the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), between January 1, 2005 and September 4, 2019, 46,961 individuals who had experienced homelessness in Minnesota had also experienced domestic violence. The Wilder Research Center found in 2015 that domestic violence is one of the five leading causes of homelessness in the state. In addition, while the root of domestic violence is power and control, economic stress resulting from chronic unemployment/underemployment, foreclosures, evictions, and bankruptcy can exacerbate abuse. One of the top needs of survivors continues to be safe, affordable housing, along with the economic resources to maintain safety.

At least six intimate partner homicide victims in 2020 (20%) experienced homelessness at some point. Three had past documented intimate partner violence experiences, and two were fleeing violence while experiencing homelessness. In addition, Ashli Koren Johnson was evicted from her home in 2011.

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Minnesota had also
experienced domestic violence.**

EVALUATION:

TELLING OUR STORY

To effectively tell our story, to understand the needs of domestic violence victims, and to evaluate our work in meaningful ways, those working to end relationship abuse must access better data and research to inform our work. Policies, funding, and the way advocacy and services are provided should, over the course of time, ultimately demonstrate our efficacy in ending relationship abuse.

Data collection

Violence Free Minnesota is not a research agency and the information in the Homicide Report is not research. Rather, it is a collection of publicly available information and our observations and recommendations based on forty years of expertise working with domestic violence advocates and survivors. Violence Free Minnesota is currently the only entity in Minnesota that collects intimate partner homicide information. Our partnerships with state systems such as the Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Public Safety have increased the kinds of information offered in the report, but no government agency collects information based on an intimate partner definition.

The agencies that collect the information we rely upon to create the Homicide Report have access to underlying, individual data and could make more informed observations about the relationship between certain factors, such as race or murder-suicide rates, than is possible with publically available aggregate data.

Ultimately, to identify the gaps in the system that need to be bridged in order to prevent intimate partner homicide, we need reliable and consistent data collection on domestic violence incidents beyond what currently exists.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Intimate partner violence is a public health crisis and a systemic issue. As a public health crisis, it is predictable and preventable. Like any public health crisis, implementing policy changes to our systems and institutions can lead to positive outcomes including fewer instances of intimate partner violence and safer communities. Survivors, community-based advocacy programs, and programs created and led by and for culturally specific communities should be at the center of all policy recommendations., from inception to implementation.

T.I.E. MODEL: TRAINING, IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION

Violence Free Minnesota recommends a three-pronged approach for tangible change through use of the T.I.E (Training-Implementation-Evaluation) model in relation to our policy recommendations. **Training** develops understanding; **implementing policies** results in changes to practice; and ongoing **evaluation** of policies and practices measures change and intended impact. For the success of any recommendation that suggests training, T.I.E. must be used. T.I.E. is an ongoing process; it must be routine and embedded in each organization, system, or institution. Each element of the model is imperative to success; leaving out one or two prongs of the model results in stagnation. Focusing heavily on training but neglecting to implement or evaluate resulting policies will not have a significant impact on practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Community Engagement/Media



Identify gaps in services around the state and create a comprehensive plan to address those gaps. **Community experts**, experts in the field of domestic and sexual violence, and public and private funders must participate in gap assessments and plan development. As the primary funder for domestic and sexual violence work in the state, the Office of Justice Programs within the Department of Public Safety, should lead this effort. It is critical to **provide long-term, consistent financial support for programs to meet the local needs** across the state. Communities that currently have no programs or are underrepresented should receive priority consideration.



Media must cover the full spectrum of domestic violence in our communities beyond domestic violence homicides. Focus on local programming, resources, and collaborations to **increase safety for victims** even when a domestic violence homicide has not happened.



Media agencies implement protocols for reporting on domestic violence. Examples include: not using photos of the victim and perpetrator together; not using sensationalized language; highlighting and centering the victim's life; and consistently sharing resource information for survivors, perpetrators, and family/friends, such as 24-hour crisis lines.



CASE STUDY: ANOKA COUNTY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ROUNDTABLE

In 2019, Anoka County and Allina Health-Mercy Hospital collaborated on a combined Community Health Assessment, which resulted in the identification of relationship violence as a key health priority within the county. The Anoka County Violence Prevention Roundtable was created to begin addressing this priority, composed of individuals from various sectors including legal systems, healthcare, community services, schools, faith communities, government services, and child protection. A key member of the Roundtable includes Violence Free Minnesota member program, Alexandra House.

CASE STUDY: ANOKA COUNTY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ROUNDTABLE (CONT'D)

On the development of the Anoka County Violence Prevention Roundtable, Alexandra House executive director Connie Moore shared:

Alexandra House has participated in the Community Health Assessment process over the years providing information on the public health implications and impacts of domestic and sexual violence and their intersection with other social determinants. We were very pleased that, in 2019, relationship violence was recognized as a key health priority in Anoka County. The creation of the Anoka County Violence Prevention Roundtable will help to broaden the efforts that Alexandra House believes are key to effectively addressing relationship violence – community-based solutions and action. Alexandra House has always recognized that working with our community partners and with people from all walks of life across the community is critical in making long-term change and improving access to services and empowering survivors.

Since 2019, the group has focused on identifying prevention strengths, opportunities, and activities for addressing relationship violence within Anoka County, as well as priority areas for the remainder of 2021. The group has used the recommendations outlined in Violence Free Minnesota's *30 Year Retrospective Intimate Partner Homicide Report* as a guiding source of information throughout the process, working to align key activities with the recommendations.

At this time, the roundtable has developed three workgroups to identify actions that will address three priority areas: lack of resources, barriers to accessing resources, and lack of education. Some of these actions include conducting outreach to partners to increase access to prevention education and intervention services, increasing connections with local businesses, partnering with faith communities, and developing survivor focus groups with marginalized communities.

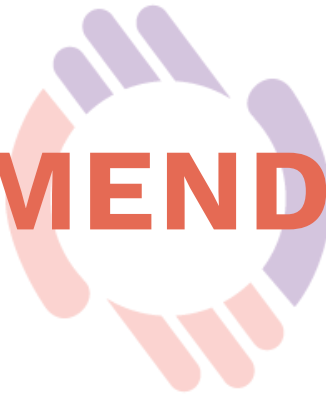
Kassy Podvin and Justin Navratil of the Anoka County Public Health Department, who coordinate the roundtable, share the following about their experiences addressing relationship violence through this community effort.

"The Violence Prevention Roundtable works because it brings together people from many different experiences and backgrounds. All of these perspectives are necessary to prevent relationship violence and provide support for victims in the community."

"The Violence Prevention Roundtable was born out of a desire to create community-based solutions to relationship violence. Through our collective work, we hope to pave new paths for prevention and intervention that increase access and empowerment for all survivors."



RECOMMENDATIONS



Criminal-Legal System



Training and protocol development for **all personnel within family and juvenile court and child protection to identify domestic violence, understand the context for the violence, and the impact of that violence on children, as well as more effective interventions for specific communities (racial/cultural). This work should be guided by existing resources and expertise.** Based in Minneapolis, the Battered Women's Justice Project has a nationally recognized SAFeR model that goes beyond merely identifying whether domestic violence is present. It is a model that accounts for the context, the impact on children, and provides direction to interveners and courts for appropriate responses. These systems should work together to share necessary information and coordinate strategies.



Establish a sustainably grant-funded pilot program similar to California's proposed Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (CRISES) Act [AB 2054], to scale up community-based responses to local emergency situations, including, but not limited to: intimate partner violence; community violence; public health crisis; people experiencing homelessness; mental health crisis; substance use; natural disasters. Such **a program would create and strengthen alternatives to law enforcement in response** to crisis situations not related to or that do not require a Fire Department or Emergency Medical Service (EMS) response in communities where there is a history and pattern of racial profiling, law enforcement violence, gaps in law enforcement service, or where vulnerable populations live.






With research showing the high rates of victimization amongst incarcerated populations, build the capacity of advocacy to work with survivors who have criminal charges and the capacity of those working within systems to **understand the links between victimization and the commission of crime.**

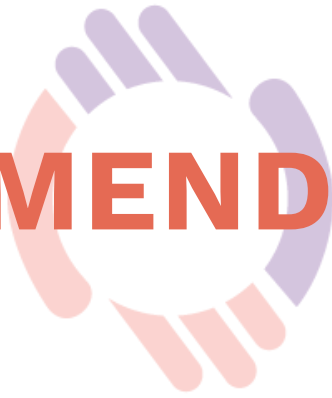
RECOMMENDATIONS



Equity/Racial Justice

-  Processes similar to the Missing and Murdered Task Forces be explored and implemented to **address issues within the LGBTQIA2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, plus) communities.** Data on LGBTQ+ communities is severely lacking and necessary to better understand the different experiences and needs of victims within this community. Media reports, one of the primary places we gather information, often misidentify or do not include the sexual orientation or gender identity of the victim or perpetrator. Due to a lack of reliable data, we do not have an accurate count or analysis of LGBTQIA2S+ victims in Minnesota.
-  Funding should be **diverted from School Resource Officers (SROs) to hiring trauma support counselors that reflect the schools and communities they work in,** implementing trauma-sensitive culturally specific supports in schools, such as traditional wellness practices, healing ceremonies, and art therapy, and the provision of alternative justice programming.
-  Every agency must provide **accessibility for non-English speakers.** Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plans need to be in place, be regularly updated, and known throughout each agency. The communities directly impacted by the LEP plans should be involved in their development and review.

RECOMMENDATIONS



General Legislative Policy



Further investment in Domestic Abuse Transformation Programming (DATP). While the state of Minnesota has made important investments in crisis and advocacy services after violence occurs, it has only made a one time investment in DATP work. We need ongoing robust investment in this DATP to end relationship abuse. **The state must also promote culturally responsive programming that transforms behavior, prevents future violence, and increases safety. Only with sustained investment in changing perpetrator behavior will we end domestic violence.**



Rescind the restrictions on the Minnesota Department of Health to gather and analyze firearms data. Focus research on perpetrators' access to firearms, specifically how perpetrators who did not qualify for a firearms license due to a history of domestic violence were able to access firearms.






Screening/assessment tools are guides for collecting information, but should not be the only source of information about the risk an abuser poses to a victim. Nor should any risk assessment tool be used as the sole basis for providing victim access to resources or safety planning. **All victims should be connected to services as soon as possible, and all systems interventions offered to victims must be centered in their lived experiences.** Tools are available for issue-specific assessment. (e.g. assessing access for deaf and hard-of-hearing victims; and assessing lethality for immigrant and LGBTQIA2S+ victims).

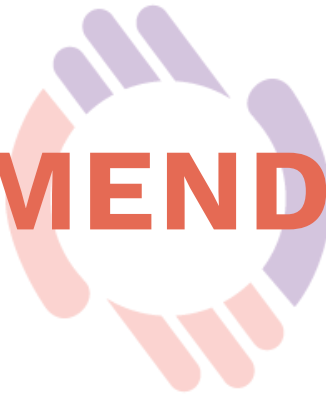


RECOMMENDATIONS




Healthcare/Prevention

-  Schools, organized sports programming, and after-school programs **make healthy relationship curriculum standard for all ages**. Many effective prevention strategies and resources are available for working with children, youth, and families.
-  Clinics should **partner with local culturally specific domestic violence agencies to incorporate best practices recommendations into their assessment protocols**. Many cultures use different frameworks and terminologies for abuse. In addition, clinics and domestic violence agencies should collaborate on cross-training, case consultation, and the development of clinic and agency policies that support the health and safety needs of survivors, including policies that require patients to be seen alone.
-  **Child witnesses to domestic violence and/or domestic violence homicide must have access to robust, trauma-responsive and evidence-based therapeutic services**. Mental health professionals should collaborate with domestic violence advocates to generate partnerships that involve cross-training and consultation; domestic violence shelters and agencies may benefit from bringing mental health professionals on staff to provide services to the non-abusive parent and their children, ranging from individual therapy and family therapy to child support groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Housing and Economic Justice

-  Support economic empowerment programs that work to build financial capacity. Violence Free Minnesota's Economic Empowerment program is one such approach. It provides training to direct service advocates who in turn provide financial coaching to victim/survivors. Survivors learn to manage debt, strengthen credit, build income, and increase their overall financial stability.
-  Stronger tenant protection laws must be implemented, and the existing legal protections for survivors that exist under provisions such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) must be properly enforced and expanded, to ensure that survivors can access and maintain affordable housing and are not discriminated against based on factors arising from relationship abuse.
-  Domestic violence agencies, and the voices of survivors with lived experience of housing instability, must be fully integrated into local homelessness and housing services networks to ensure that housing policies and practices are trauma-informed, and reflect the unique needs of survivors.

REPORT METHODS

Violence Free Minnesota tracks homicides in which the known or suspected perpetrator was a *current or former intimate partner* or the homicide is the result of domestic violence between current or former intimate partners. This includes family members, friends, and interveners who are killed as a result of the domestic violence being perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner.

EXPLANATION OF DATA

For over 30 years, the statewide coalition to end relationship abuse has produced annual documentation on intimate partner homicides. The information contained within these 30 years of reports is overwhelming in terms of the numbers of individual deaths that are recorded. The reports list the number of people killed, however they do not reveal the enormous number of people impacted by those deaths, nor do the reports reflect the hundreds of thousands of individuals who, across these years, have experienced domestic violence and survived.

REPORT MEASURES

In 1989, Violence Free Minnesota - then known as the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women - began collecting the names of women killed by domestic violence. The report has always recorded the deaths of women killed by current or former boyfriends and husbands. Over time, the report has expanded to include anyone killed due to domestic violence between current or former intimate partners. This includes the homicides between lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and/or transgender current and former intimate partners, as well as cases of men killed by their current and former intimate partners. The report also documents the deaths of other family members, friends, neighbors, interveners, and bystanders who are killed due to domestic violence between current or former intimate partners.

Since 1993, the report has included those killed as a result of engaging in sex work and being used in prostitution or sex trafficking. These deaths are included because Violence Free Minnesota recognizes people engaging in sex work face violence due to stigma and that being used in prostitution and sex trafficking is a system of violence against women and children. These numbers were tracked separately for a number of years but are now included in the general count.

CURRENT INCLUSION CRITERIA

- The homicide victim and perpetrator were current or former intimate partners, including dating partners; or
- The homicide victim was someone present during, or intervened in, an intimate partner violence incident, including friends, family members, new intimate partners, law enforcement officers or other professionals attempting to assist a victim of intimate partner violence; or
- Children who are killed by a parent's current or former intimate partner where there is sufficient public information that the perpetrator killed the child as an act of abuse against the parent; or
- The perpetrator killed the homicide victim due to perceived or actual rejection of romantic interest; or
- Homicides of sex workers, victims of sex trafficking, prostitution, and exploitation.

AND

- If the homicide happened in Minnesota, if the body of the victim was found in Minnesota, or if the body was found in a nearby state but the circumstances surrounding the homicide began in Minnesota.

METHODS

REPORT MEASURES (CONTINUED)

We do not include cases where victims of domestic violence have killed an abusive partner in retaliation or self-defense. To make this determination, we examine each case individually, and consider the history of abuse, circumstances of the homicide, and information from family members and friends.

WHAT THE REPORT DOES NOT MEASURE

The definition of domestic abuse in Minnesota law is broader than the definition that we use for this report. The legal definition of domestic abuse is physical violence or threats of physical violence between a family or household member. This includes violence between any family members or household members: adult child to parent, between cousins, roommates who have no intimate relationship, uncles who kill nieces, and parents who kill children. The *Homicide Report* focuses on one section of that broader definition of domestic abuse. Violence Free Minnesota specifically looks at those killed by current or former intimate partners or as a result of domestic violence between current or former intimate partners.

Why do we limit our definition? While all of these homicides are tragic and there are many similarities, Violence Free Minnesota has expertise in intimate partner abuse. We hope that by limiting this report to the intimate partner definition and looking at those deaths in light of the research that has been done about lethality and risk factors for that specific population, we may find information to help improve our work to end domestic violence.

Violence Free Minnesota also only measures those killed in Minnesota. Sometimes a person from Minnesota is temporarily residing in another state and is killed while living there. That person would not be included in our count. Conversely, someone from Illinois or Wisconsin or New Jersey may be visiting Minnesota and be killed by their intimate partner while in Minnesota. We do include that homicide in our count. The reason we make this distinction is twofold. First, we do not have the capacity to monitor the homicides that occur in other states. Second, we gather the *Intimate Partner Homicide Report* information in part to illuminate systemic gaps experienced by victims in Minnesota and create potential policy and/or service solutions. In recent years, we have also included cases where the victim's body is found in Minnesota or where we have reason to believe the homicide occurred in Minnesota, even if the body was found in a different state.

LIMITATIONS OF THE REPORT

We rely on public information to create this report. In the early days of the report our sole source of information was media reporting. Currently, we identify most cases through media search results that are tracked daily, and then we follow up with local law enforcement agencies or county attorney's offices for more detail. We also look at other sources of information such as public court data, reports issued by medical examiners' offices, and social media. The way we gather information and the amount of data available to us has changed drastically over the years. However, we still struggle with inconsistent and incomplete information due to the discrepancies in the way information is collected and shared across the state.

METHODS

LIMITATIONS (CONTINUED)

We use the phrase "at least" when describing the number of people killed each year because we cannot be certain we have recorded all domestic violence homicides since we rely on public records - primarily news accounts. In addition, almost every year there are deaths of women that are considered suspicious but the cases are not resolved. No state or federal agency collects comprehensive data on domestic violence homicides. In addition, the murders of women and children of color, Native American people, people who are immigrants and refugees, those living in poverty, people with disabilities, rural women, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people, and those who engage in sex work or are exploited in prostitution and sex trafficking may be under-reported in our listing as they frequently go unreported in mainstream media.

While we record all homicides that are a result of domestic violence between current or former intimate partners, we provide yearly comparison information on a series of factors exclusively concerning murdered women. We limit this analysis to women killed by intimate partners because we are looking at the research that has been done on risk and lethality factors for women in abusive relationships. It may be that men face the same risk and lethality factors in abusive relationships, but to our knowledge, that research has not been done.

The information in Violence Free Minnesota's *Homicide Report* is a compilation of data gathered from public sources; it is not research. We gather this information to bear witness to those killed, to raise public awareness of domestic violence, and to help inform our policy and service work. One example of this limitation is in regard to tracking the rates of murder-suicides in domestic violence cases. For a number of years, approximately 50 percent of the domestic violence homicides of adult women also involved the perpetrator subsequently committing suicide. This percentage was significantly higher than the homicide-suicide rate reported nationally at 30 to 35 percent. In a three year period lasting through 2015, this percentage showed a significant decrease, dipping as low as 23 percent. The 2016 domestic violence homicides data showed an uptick in murder-suicides again, with 56 percent of the cases falling in that category; however, in 2017, that figure again goes down to 37 percent. What we don't know, and what this report does not address, is why there was such drastic fluctuation in these percentages and what that means. Violence Free Minnesota is not a research agency. We present this information in the hopes of raising questions, opening the door to deeper conversations, and encouraging research agencies to investigate further.





VICTIM STORIES:

Since its inception, the Intimate Partner Homicide Report has detailed how victims were killed. These descriptions provide insight towards intervention and reflect the horrific nature of relationship abuse. However, we know each victim is so much more than the moment of their death. This year, we were able to gather quotes from friends and family remembering their loved ones. While we were not able to find quotes from loved ones for each of the 30 victims in 2020, they are all remembered and held in our hearts.



**JOSEPH ABRAHAM
MCRUNNEL**

February 15, 2020

Age 39

"[Joe] always saw the good in life and in people."

Abigail Elise Simpson, 21, was killed by her boyfriend, Terrion Sherman, 23, in her St. Paul apartment on February 26. Police responded to the apartment after calls of a loud and violent argument between a man and a woman. Upon arrival, officers heard a child crying through Abigail's apartment door, along with a man saying, "Stay down or I'll kill you." When police entered the apartment, they found Sherman and his 2-year-old nephew covered in blood. Abigail was also found bloody and unresponsive with a knife close to her body. While Sherman was being transported to the Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center, he told officers he was on drugs and broke out of the back window of the police car. He was taken to Regions Hospital, but was soon medically cleared and discharged. Later, while talking to investigators, Sherman said he remembered punching Abigail and hitting her head against a radiator before blacking out. Abigail was also stabbed several times and the medical examiner ruled her cause of death to be from multiple traumatic injuries. Sherman was civilly committed less than a week prior to Abigail's murder, but he was not held in a secure hospital. Instead, he was connected with various services provided by the county. Sherman was committed previously in 2019. While he initially told officers he was on drugs, in his confession Sherman later said he was not on drugs and did not take his prescribed medication because, "he is not crazy." Terrion Sherman has been charged with second-degree murder of Abigail Elise Simpson.

Joseph Abraham "Moochie" McRunnel, 39, also known as Perry Joseph Bellcourt II, was stabbed and killed by his girlfriend Zara Case, 35, in their Minneapolis apartment on February 15. In the early morning of February 15, police responded to a call from Joseph and Case's neighbor that Case broke his window and was attempting to enter his apartment. When officers arrived, they spoke with Case - who was intoxicated - and later Joseph. While officers spoke with Joseph, the neighbor called police again to state that Case was trying to enter his apartment. The officers left when Case returned to the apartment she shared with Joseph. Shortly after, police were contacted a third time by the neighbor who stated Case was outside screaming that her boyfriend was stabbed. When police returned to the scene, officers found Joseph with a stab wound to his chest, along with visible bite marks and bruises. Joseph later died at the hospital due to the stab wound. Case told police she and Joseph were intoxicated and angry when she stabbed him. She also told police she has been addicted to methamphetamine and alcohol for the last 15 years, and had recently left a rehab facility. Zara Case pled guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.



**ABIGAIL ELISE
SIMPSON**

February 26, 2020

Age 21

"She was so smart, so beautiful, so athletic, and could have been anything she ever wanted to be."



**MONIQUE SARAYA
ROBBINS**

February 26, 2020

Age 28

"Monique was a truly beloved daughter, sister, friend, and mother to her sweet 8 year old girl, Saraya."

Monique Saraya Robbins, 28, was killed in her St. Paul apartment by her boyfriend, DeMarea Clay, 24, on February 26. Neighbors called police in the early morning of February 26, to report loud noises coming from Monique's apartment, and a man dragging a woman's body into a car. When officers arrived they found Clay standing outside his vehicle. He told police Monique had a seizure while showering, and that she was overdosing on drugs. Officers performed CPR on Monique, who did not have a pulse, before she was transported to a hospital. The drugs Clay said Monique had taken were not found in her system. She did have significant bruising and bleeding to her head and face, and her cause of death was determined to be asphyxiation. Clay has a history of documented domestic violence. Two weeks before Monique's death Clay was charged with domestic assault and given a criminal Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO) to stay away from her and her apartment building. He was also charged with domestic assault against Monique in September 2019, and police responded to domestic disturbances at her apartment in August and November of that year. Monique had told her friends and family about Clay's controlling behavior, his threats to her life, and that he strangled her. Relatives said Monique recently arranged for her daughter to live with family members because she didn't think her daughter was safe around Clay. Clay's previous girlfriend had a protective order against him for abusing her, which he was charged with violating, but was eventually dismissed. DeMarea Clay has been charged with second-degree unintentional murder. Monique Saraya Robbins is survived by her daughter.

On March 7, Jackie Ann DeFoe, 27, and her 20-month-old son, Kevin Lee Shabaiash Jr., were killed in their Cloquet home on the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation by Jackie's boyfriend Sheldon Thompson, 33. During a welfare check on the home, police officers found Jackie's body covered with lacerations and blood in a bedroom closet. Kevin's body was found in a separate bedroom with "observable bruising to his head." Shortly after police discovered the bodies, Thompson called 911 to turn himself in for the murders and was taken into custody. An autopsy found Jackie died from multiple stab wounds, and was 13 weeks pregnant at the time of death. Kevin was killed due to blunt force injuries. Thompson has a long history of relationship abuse including a conviction for misdemeanor domestic assault in 2013, and gross misdemeanor domestic assault in 2016, both against previous partners. He also had multiple domestic assault by strangulation charges that were subsequently dropped. Thompson's ex-wife had a protective order and a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO) against him after several assaults. One assault resulted in a broken jaw; doctors were initially prevented from performing surgery on her due to excessive swelling. Thompson received a felony conviction after he violated his ex-wife's DANCO in 2017. In 2006, he was charged with second-degree murder but took a plea deal that reduced his conviction to felony second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon. In October 2020, Sheldon Thompson was indicted by a grand jury on five counts of first-degree murder and three counts of second-degree murder for the killing of Jackie Ann DeFoe and her son, Kevin Lee Shabaiash Jr.



**JACKIE ANN DEFOE
&
KEVIN LEE
SHABAIASH JR.**

March 7, 2020

Ages 27 & 20 months

"She always had [Kevin] with her. They were always smiling. Always happy, even when she was in a bad mood. She had this biggest smile. The big smile right here, that was her all the time"



YANG LIU
March 10, 2020
Age 40

On March 10, Yang Liu, 40, was shot and killed by her husband, John Wiseman, 54, in their Maple Grove home. When police officers arrived at the home, multiple witnesses reported Yang and Wiseman had a "volatile" relationship, and they often fought over "money and fidelity." Witnesses described Wiseman as wealthy and mentioned that the couple owns businesses in China. Wiseman also has homes in Minnesota, Nevada, and China. Police were also notified by witnesses that Wiseman was seeking a divorce, but did not want to contribute to a divorce settlement because he "earned this." Inside the home, police found a letter showing that Wiseman met with an estate planner in February, along with a passport and hidden cash. John Wiseman has been charged with second-degree murder of Yang Liu.

"We remember Yang Liu."

On March 10, Pauline Hollman, 58, died from injuries sustained when her boyfriend, Michael Cloutier, 65, stabbed her last month. On February 15, officers responded to a call at a Minneapolis apartment from a man saying someone broke in and stabbed his girlfriend. Cloutier, who lived in the apartment with Pauline, initially denied calling 911 when police arrived. However, upon entering the apartment, officers found Pauline lying on an air mattress in a pool of dried blood. Cloutier became upset and combative with police, and he was taken into custody where he later confessed to the stabbing. Since the blood on the air mattress was dried, authorities believe Pauline was left untreated for several hours. Pauline was transported to a hospital for emergency surgery, but eventually died on March 10. While Michael Cloutier was originally charged with assault, the charges have since been amended to homicide.



PAULINE HOLLMAN
March 10, 2020
Age 58

"We remember Pauline Hollman."



BRANDON JOSE NIEVES

**April 2, 2020
Age 20**

Brandon Jose Nieves, 20, was shot and killed by Marcelino Lopez, 19, in South St. Paul, on April 2. Prior to the shooting on April 2, Lopez posted threatening social media messages, including threats to kill, directed at Brandon after he began dating Lopez's ex-girlfriend. The social media exchanges escalated and Lopez and Brandon met with the intention to "fight." When Brandon arrived at the location, he and a 16-year old friend exited his vehicle. Lopez then took a shotgun from his car and shot the unarmed Brandon and 16-year old, before fleeing. He later called 911 and stated he had shot two people. When police arrived, Brandon was dead. The 16-year old was transported to a hospital with a gunshot wound to the chest, where he remains in critical condition. Lopez was arrested and told police he had made several death threats to Brandon before April 2. Marcelino Lopez was indicted by a grand jury for second-degree murder for the killing of Brandon Jose Nieves, and attempted second-degree murder, and first-degree assault charges for shooting the 16-year old.

"[Brandon] was an amazing son, so loving and caring. He was my little best friend. Love you forever son."

Kevin Logan Jr., 31, was shot and killed by Rodney Velho on April 19 in Maple Grove. Kevin arrived to drop off his children for a scheduled supervised visit and celebrate the birthday of their mother. Kevin and Velho, the boyfriend of Kevin's children's mother, got into a verbal argument, and Velho shot Kevin two times. When police officers arrived at the Maple Grove apartment, they found Kevin dead on the kitchen floor. Rodney Velho has been charged with second-degree intentional murder. Kevin Logan Jr. is survived by his two children.



KEVIN LOGAN JR.

**April 19, 2020
Age 31**

"We remember Kevin Logan Jr."



**PATRICIA ANN
VALLEY**

April 29, 2020

Age 65

Patricia "Pat" Ann Valley, 65, was shot and killed by her husband Neal Valley, 67, in their Ham Lake home on April 29. Neal then shot and killed himself. Police responded to a 911 call that provided the address of Patricia and Neal's home and no other information. When officers arrived at the home they heard a gunshot from inside. Once police were able to enter the residence, they found the bodies of Patricia and Neal. Patricia "Pat" Ann Valley is survived by her two adult sons and three grandsons.

"[Patricia] was a proud sport mom and would not miss any of her sons baseball or hockey games."

Maria Fernanda Elizabeth Pew, 28, was strangled and killed by her husband, Joshua Fury, 28, in their Maple Grove home on May 2. Fury called police on April 30 to report his wife missing and allowed them to search the home at the time. Searches around the area were conducted over the following two days. At this time, Maria's family and friends told police the couple had problems and that Fury was "controlling and possessive." Maria's mom stated her daughter was planning to leave Fury. During a search on May 2, a police K9 indicated the presence of human remains at the home. After a search warrant was issued, Maria's body was discovered in the crawl space of the house. Fury was arrested. He told police he did not harm his wife and blamed it on one of her former boyfriends. Later, Fury confessed to strangling Maria, putting a plastic bag over her head, and burying her in the house's crawl space. He also told officers he attempted suicide after killing his wife. Joshua Fury pled guilty to second-degree murder in July 2020. Two weeks later, while awaiting sentencing, Fury killed himself in while in custody.



**MARIA FERNANDA
ELIZABETH PEW**

May 2, 2020

Age 28

"A happy, strong, resilient, supportive, and caring individual, Maria did so much in her 28 years. But she also left behind hopes and dreams, and she left undone infinite possibilities."



**GENEVIEVE
MARIE SKOUGE**

May 22, 2020

Age 26

Genevieve “Genna” Marie Skouge, 26, was killed by Andrew Story, 22, outside of her Bloomington home on May 22. Genevieve and Story had known each other for four years, recently reconnected, and went on a date two days prior to her death. They had planned to meet on the night of May 21, and Story’s cell phone records indicate he was at her house then. A neighbor called 911 that night after she was awakened by two people arguing outside, and saw Story drive away when she looked out her window. When officers arrived, they found Genevieve unresponsive with severe head injuries and a bloody baseball bat nearby. The medical examiner determined her cause of death to be homicide due to blunt force trauma. Story, who was enrolled at Marquette University in Milwaukee, was eventually arrested in Wisconsin and charged with second-degree murder. While awaiting trial on December 7, Andrew Story killed himself in his home.

"[Genna] was a gem on earth, she brightened a room when she walked in, she showed love to everyone wherever she was. She has blessed us all."

Ochea Shay Brown, 28, was killed by her boyfriend, Jordan Jefferson, 29, in Minneapolis on May 29. Jefferson was driving his car, with Ochea in the passenger seat, on May 29, when Jefferson began repeatedly punching Ochea during an argument. He then told her to get out of the car, and when she exited, he drove the vehicle on the sidewalk where Ochea was walking and ran over her. Jefferson continued to drive while Ochea was underneath the car, until he crashed it into the porch of a nearby house. After running her over, Jefferson started slapping her and yelling her name in an attempt to revive her, before moving her body inside the car. He then abandoned the vehicle with Ochea’s body in the backseat, where police located it. Jordan Jefferson has a history of relationship abuse, with six domestic assault charges, two convictions, and an additional conviction for violating a no contact order. He was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to 30 years in prison. Ochea Shay Brown leaves behind two young children.

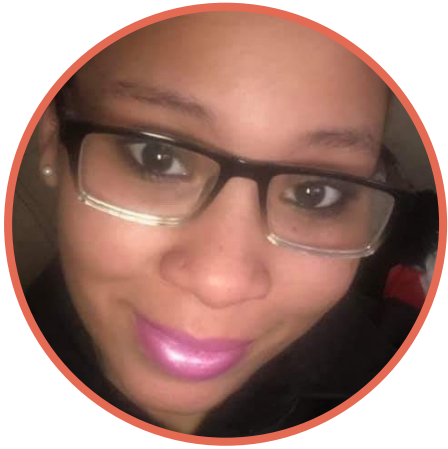


**OCHEA SHAY
BROWN**

May 29, 2020

Age 28

"I love & miss you so much baby girl."



**ASHLI KOREN
JOHNSON**

June 3, 2020

Age 29

"Ashli lived her life in such a way that encouraged people to gravitate towards her. She was a very strong woman, who focused on making sure her children felt happy and loved no matter what challenges she faced. "

Richard Alhag Stephen, 33, was killed in Moorhead by Cameron St. Claire, 33, on June 3. Richard and his girlfriend were walking home on June 3, when two men and one woman began catcalling Richard's girlfriend from a parked car. The girlfriend told them to stop "catcalling" her, and as she and Richard walked toward her apartment building, the woman in the car, Erin Sundby, got out and assaulted Richard's girlfriend. Sundby pulled the girlfriend down by her hair and began punching her. While this was happening, St. Claire and the other man in the vehicle got out and began beating and "pulverizing" Richard. After the assault, St. Claire, Sundby and the other men left, and Richard and his girlfriend went into her apartment. Richard fell asleep on the couch, but when his girlfriend was unable to wake him up she called 911. Richard Alhag Stephen was pronounced dead at the hospital. Cameron St. Claire was found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to over 15 years in prison. Erin Sundby was found guilty of third-degree assault against Richard's girlfriend, and was sentenced to 120 days in jail.

Ashli K. Johnson, 29, was shot and killed in St. Paul by the father of her unborn child, Clinton Delaney, 28, on June 3. Ashli had been in contact through texts and Facebook messages with Delaney's other girlfriend, who has a child with him. Ashli told the girlfriend that she was pregnant with Delaney's child, and the two arranged to meet to verify the pregnancy through a test on June 2. Early the next morning, on June 3, text message exchanges indicated Ashli was trying to arrange a money drop-off with Delaney and the two began arguing. Two minutes after the last text was sent, 911 received a call reporting shots in the area. Ashli was found dead by police in her "bullet ridden" vehicle a short time later. A week after her murder, a witness told authorities they overheard Delaney say he shot Ashli on June 3, because he was mad at her for "messing things up with his baby mama." Ashli had told friends that she was upset with Delaney for having a girlfriend and that he gave her a sexually transmitted disease. Delaney has a documented history of domestic violence. He has been convicted of misdemeanor domestic assault three times and violated a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order. He was previously charged with domestic assault by strangulation on two separate instances, along with a dismissal for felony level domestic assault. Clinton Delaney was charged with second-degree murder. Ashli K. Johnson leaves behind four children. She was pregnant when she was killed.



**RICHARD ALHAG
STEPHEN**

June 3, 2020

Age 33

"Richard was such a reliable brother, friend, uncle, and coworker. Richard had a kind heart, he was so trustworthy and was always there to help and support anyone who needed him. "



**BRANDON
JEROME SALTER**

June 4, 2020

Age 27

Brandon Jerome Salter, 27, was shot and killed by his sister's ex-boyfriend, Ryan Frazier, 23, in Minneapolis on June 4. Prior to the shooting, Frazier and his current girlfriend arrived at Brandon's sister's house with the intent to fight her. Brandon's sister then called 911 and asked Brandon to come over, because she was fearful of Frazier. Brandon arrived to his sister's home as she opened the front door and was assaulted by Frazier's girlfriend. The sister told police she heard Frazier repeatedly tell Brandon, "I'm going to shoot you," and saw him with a pistol. After running inside to check on her crying baby, Brandon's sister heard 4-6 gunshots. When she returned outside, she found Brandon on the ground across the street, while Frazier and his girlfriend left the scene. Ryan Frazier was eventually arrested in Chicago last week and charged with second-degree murder. Brandon Jerome Salter is survived by his three-year-old daughter.

"When [Brandon] walked in a room he was never seen without a smile on his face, and his smile was so contagious. Anytime he crossed your path, you would leave better and happier than you previously were. "

Leneesha "Nene" Helen Columbus, 27, was shot and killed in Minneapolis on July 5, by Zachary Robinson, 27, the father of her child. On the night of July 5, Leneesha and Robinson were seen arguing outside of her vehicle in Minneapolis. Leneesha then got in the car and started to drive away when Robinson fired several shots at her. When police arrived, bystanders were attempting life saving measures on Leneesha, but she later died at the hospital. Shortly after the shooting, a man who witnessed the shooting confronted Robinson, who shot the man in the foot. Leneesha was five months pregnant with Robinson's child at the time of her death. Doctors were able to deliver the child, Leneesha LaDell Columbus, but she died after being in intensive care for four weeks. Zachary Robinson was prohibited to possess a firearm when he killed Leneesha due to past criminal convictions. He pled guilty to second-degree murder and second-degree murder of an unborn child and was sentenced to nearly 50 years in prison.



**LENEESHA HELEN
COLUMBUS &
LENEESHA LADELL
COLUMBUS**

July 5, 2020

August 5, 2020

Ages 27 & 4 weeks

"Nene had one of the biggest hearts I ever knew and she would do anything for anyone no matter if you were right or wrong, she was always on your side 100 %."



**KLARA EUGENIE
WRIGHT**

July 10, 2020

Age 72

Klara Eugenie Wright, 72, was stabbed and killed in her Dakota apartment by her husband Joseph Wright, 79, on July 10. Police arrived at the home after Joseph called 911 and said he killed his wife. Upon arrival, officers spoke with Joseph, who explained that he killed his wife and then tried to commit suicide. When officers asked Joseph if Klara was breathing, he stated, "she's not, she better not be." A suicide note was found in the apartment, and Joseph had cuts on his wrist. He was charged with second-degree murder and transported to a hospital. Police were informed by the apartment landlord that Klara had dementia. Klara Eugenie Wright is survived by her three children, four grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. Joseph pled guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to over 10 years in prison.

"Klara enjoyed going for walks, playing on the computer, BINGO, but most importantly loved being with her family."

Yuliya Khort, 47, was shot and killed by her husband, Maksim Krechetov, 44, in their Blaine home on August 17. Before she was killed, Yuliya convinced her husband to let their two young daughters leave the house safely. Krechetov then shot Yuliya before killing himself. While Krechetov was never charged with assaulting Yuliya, he had a long history of abusing her. Yuliya Khort leaves behind two daughters and one son.



YULIYA KHORT

August 17, 2020

Age 47

"[Yuliya] was genuine, and she was kind. She always gave more than she had."



**ANGELA LYNN
MESICH**

August 30, 2020

Age 47

Angela Lynn Mesich, 47, was shot and killed by her husband, Jason Mesich, 48, in their Bloomington home on August 30. Jason shot Angela 12 times after arguing with her over their lack of sex. Jason then went outside and shot two of his neighbors in their front yard, because he believed they heard him kill Angela. The neighbors were sisters who were loading a moving truck when Jason shot them. Canisha Saulter, 29, was shot three times in the lower body. Makayla Saulter-Outlaw, 12, was shot in the head while she was holding Canisha's 1-year-old daughter. Makayla was released from the hospital in November 2020 and continues her recovery at home. Canisha's daughter was unharmed during the shooting. When police arrived at the scene, Jason barricaded himself in his home, and exchanged gunfire with officers. He fired over 40 rounds at police, and was later taken into custody unharmed. In 2015, Jason was charged with domestic assault, which was eventually dismissed. He pled guilty to second-degree murder for Angela, and attempted second-degree murder and second-degree assault for shooting Canisha and Makayla. He was sentenced to 48 years in prison.

"Angie was a truly selfless person who always put others before herself, she would bend over backward to help someone in need. She was the big sister anyone would have been proud to have and I was most lucky to call her mine."

Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessan, 22, was shot and killed by her boyfriend, Steven Buford, 21, on September 4, in West St. Paul. Police were called to an apartment building in West St. Paul on the night of September 4, in response to a couple arguing. When officers arrived, they heard a gunshot, and found Lauren with a wound to her head in the parking lot. Buford shot and killed Lauren before attempting to steal another woman's car in the parking lot. The woman, and her two young children, all witnessed Buford shoot Lauren before he ran to their car with Lauren's 15-month-old child in his arms. He threw Lauren's child at the woman in the car, entered the backseat, and told her to drive, but was arrested by police before he could flee. Steven Buford is charged with second-degree murder (with intent), first-degree attempted aggravated robbery and possession of a firearm by ineligible person. Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessan leaves behind her son.



**LAUREN SUMMER
KOFFI-N'GUESSAN**

September 4, 2020

Age 22

"[Lauren] gave her life for her son, and that's what I want everyone to know. She was a good person."



**KEONA SADE
FOOTE &
MIYONA ZAYLA
MILLER**

September 10, 2020

Ages 23 & 2

"[Keona] loved her family a lot. Her family meant the world to her."

Keona Sade Foote, 23, and her two-year old daughter, Miyona Zayla Miller were strangled and killed by Keona's ex-boyfriend, Renard Carter, 29, on September 10. Police report that Keona was strangled and both she and Miyona died from trauma. Keona was pregnant with Carter's child at the time she was killed. Carter had recently made social media posts threatening to kill the mothers of his children and multiple witnesses reported hearing Carter make threats in person. Friends and family became worried on September 12, when they had not heard from Keona in a couple of days, and entered her apartment to find her and Miyona dead. A warrant was then issued for Carter, who was on probation after he pled guilty last year to felony domestic violence no contact order violation, and was sentenced to prison. He was released from prison in April 2020. Videos of Keona's killing were posted to Carter's social media. Carter was eventually apprehended in Columbia, South Carolina, on September 13, where it is believed he traveled to kill another ex-girlfriend, and mother of his children. When police arrived to arrest Carter at a hotel, he opened the door holding a BB gun. He was shot multiple times by officers. Carter livestreamed a portion of this incident online. After being hospitalized for gunshot wounds in South Carolina, Renard Carter was extradited to Minnesota and charged with two counts of second-degree murder and one count of second-degree murder of an unborn child.

On November 12, Nigar "Nika" Mammadzada, 29, was shot and killed in her Crystal home by her ex-boyfriend, Erik Eggleston, 38. That day, Nigar had dropped off her daughter, whom she shared with Eggleston, at a babysitter and her mother at work before returning to home. Later that night, when Nigar's mother came back from work, she found Nigar dead from gunshot wounds in the home office. Nigar had recently broken up with Eggleston, but he had the garage code to gain access into the home. Eggleston was found that night in front of a friend's home in Oak Grove, with self-inflicted wounds in an apparent suicide attempt. A car parked in the driveway of the friend's house was on loan to Nigar from a car dealership, and contained a shotgun covered in blood and several shells. Nigar Mammadzada leaves behind her young daughter. Erik Eggleston is charged with second-degree murder.



**NIGAR
MAMMADZADA**

November 12, 2020

Age 29

"[Nigar's] bubbly personality and smile would infect you as soon as she entered any room. I've never met anyone more caring and beautiful, inside and out"



Kim Laen Theng, 54, was killed due to blunt force injuries in her Minneapolis home on November 17. Police initially ruled Kim's death "suspicious," before officially declaring it a homicide on January 6. Family members say Kim was in an abusive relationship and lived with Almanzo O. Cotton. He was arrested in Illinois in January 2021 and extradited to Minnesota on one count of second-degree murder. Kim Laen Theng leaves behind at least one adult daughter.

KIM LAEN THENG

November 17, 2020

Age 54

"I believe [Kim] deserves a voice. I believe she deserves for people to know what she went through. I believe she deserves the empathy that might come with that."

Loretta Jean Billman, 62, was shot and killed by her boyfriend, Robert Kerr, 55, in their home in Grand Lake Township on November 30. Kerr then shot and killed himself. They were both found by relatives and coworkers on the morning of November 30, when they did not show up for work.

"Loretta was well-loved and will be deeply missed by not only her family and friends, but the people she served and worked with."



**LORETTA JEAN
BILLMAN**

November 30, 2020

Age 62



**ENCARNACION
GUTIERREZ QUIXAN**

December 2, 2020

Age 47

Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan, 47, was killed by her boyfriend, Victor Marales (also known as Roberto Vasquez Jr.), 28, in their Ashby apartment on December 2. Police were notified by Marales's friend who stated that Marales was acting strangely. Marales told the friend he burned down his apartment and alluded that someone was still inside when the fire was started. When police and firefighters arrived there was an active ongoing fire. Encarnacion's body was found inside. Marales later admitted to police that he beat Encarnacion to death with a dumbbell as she slept, before setting fire to the apartment. Victor Manuel Marales (also known as Roberto Vasquez Jr.) was charged with two counts of felony second-degree murder and one felony count of first-degree arson. Encarnacion Gutierrez Quixan leaves behind five children and many grandchildren.

"Encarnación will be remembered as a loving, amazing, and caring mother that always worked hard to provide a great life for her children. And also an incredible grandmother that always had new gifts to give to her grandchildren."

Julio Cesar Guadalupe Rodriguez, 15, was stabbed and killed by his mother's husband, Jaime Vaca, 27, in their Austin home on December 15. Vaca was physically attacking Julio's mother, Virginia Rodriguez, in their bedroom when Julio broke down the door and intervened to stop Vaca from strangling Virginia. Vaca then grabbed a knife and stabbed Julio. He also stabbed Virginia, who was found by police in the front yard bleeding from a neck wound. Vaca then locked himself in the bathroom with a knife, and later told officers he had intended to kill himself. There were five other children, all younger than Julio, present in the home at the time. Virginia Rodriguez remains hospitalized from her injuries. Jaime Vaca was charged with second-degree murder, attempted second-degree murder, and first-degree assault.



**JULIO CESAR
GUADALUPE
RODRIGUEZ**

December 15, 2020

Age 15

"Julio was a young man who was quick with a joke to brighten everyone's day. His great love for his family was evident every day and undeniable in his final actions."

Todd Anthony Gerleman, 56, was shot and killed by Glenn Burton, 40, on December 21, in St. Paul. Todd was accompanying his friend, whom Burton was dating, when Burton shot Todd in the face. On the 21st, Burton's girlfriend, Todd and other friends arrived at her home to help repair property damage committed by Burton. However, when the group arrived, they saw Burton's car parked outside. The girlfriend and Todd then went to Burton's mother's home to request she call her son and ask him to leave the girlfriend's house. Burton arrived at his mother's home when his girlfriend was walking to her car, and began physically assaulting her. After noticing Todd in the passenger seat of the car, Burton yelled to his girlfriend, "You ain't gonna escape me — I own you!" before pulling out a gun. Burton shot at his girlfriend, who stated she felt the bullet pass by her face, but instead hit Todd in the arm. The girlfriend was able to get into the car and attempted to flee, but Burton shot Todd again. The woman later told police that she had been dating Burton for two weeks and he recently "became very possessive and physically abusive." Glenn Burton was charged with attempted murder of his girlfriend and intentional second-degree murder in Todd Anthony Gerleman's death.



**TODD ANTHONY
GERLEMAN**

**December 21, 2020
Age 56**

"You were such a great friend Todd; reliable, hardworking, respectful, and kind."



WE REMEMBER: **MEMORY KEEPING**

Memory keeping is an essential practice to address and respond to intimate partner homicide and domestic violence. We grieve the devastating losses, while also uplifting that victims are not defined by their deaths, but rather by their lives and stories. Through memorializing the mothers, sons, children, friends, coworkers, and neighbors named in this report, we strive to keep their memories alive. They were nurses, caregivers, grandparents, students, teachers, and cousins, who brought joy, wisdom, and laughter to their loved ones. Their lives were cut far too short, but they touched so many other lives, and in some cases, saved them.

As we share these victims' stories and the statements and memory keeping rituals of their loved ones, we must not forget our communities' capacities for post-traumatic growth and resilience. Healing is a process rather than an event, and it is not always linear. But it is possible, and we bear witness to the public awareness and peacekeeping efforts made by the families, friends, neighbors, and coworkers of those who have confronted grief and loss, as we look forward to a violence-free Minnesota.

WE REMEMBER: MEMORY KEEPING

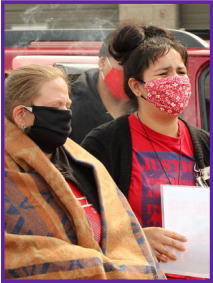
Memorials

Abigail Elise Simpson:



Abigail's Race for Endurance was held September 26, 2021, in West Bend, Wisconsin. All proceeds went to The Abigail Elise Simpson Memorial Fund to support women in early recovery/establish a much-needed women's sober home in West Bend/Washington County.

Jackie Ann DeFoe and Kevin Lee Shabaiah Jr.:



In September 2020, a crowd of several dozen gathered outside the Carlton County Courthouse to memorialize and demand justice for Jackie Ann DeFoe and her son Kevin Lee Shabaiah Jr. They led a march and presented Jackie's mother with a ribbon skirt and a customary blanket used in traditional healing. After they walked, some of the crowd shared memories of Jackie.

Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew:



Maria's loved ones created Maria's Voice, a nonprofit formed to honor her life, share the stories of survivors, and educate the community about relationship abuse prevention.

Domestic Violence Memorial Walk:

The Domestic Violence Memorial Walk in Mankato is held along the path on Stoltzman Road. This memorial recognizes, honors, and remembers the 30 Minnesotans who were killed due to intimate partner homicide in 2020.

WE REMEMBER

February 15, 2020: **Joseph Abraham McRunnel**, 39, died as a result of stabbing in Minneapolis

February 26, 2020: **Abigail Elise Simpson**, 21, died as a result of beating in St. Paul

February 26, 2020: **Monique Saraya Robbins**, 28, died as a result of strangulation in St. Paul

March 7, 2020: **Jackie Ann DeFoe**, 27, died as a result of stabbing in Cloquet

March 7, 2020: **Kevin Lee Shabaiash Jr.**, 20 months, died as a result of beating in Cloquet

March 10, 2020: **Yang Liu**, 40, died as a result of gunshot in Maple Grove

March 10, 2020: **Pauline Hollman**, 58, died as a result of stabbing in Minneapolis

April 2, 2020: **Brandon Jose Nieves**, 20, died as a result of gunshot in South St. Paul

April 19, 2020: **Kevin Logan Jr.**, 31, died as a result of stabbing in Maple Grove

April 29, 2020: **Patricia Ann Valley**, 65, died as a result of gunshot in Ham Lake

May 2, 2020: **Maria Fernanda Bliss Pew**, 28, died as a result of strangulation in Maple Grove

May 22, 2020: **Genevieve Marie Skouge**, 26, died as a result of beating in Bloomington

May 29, 2020: **Ochea Shay Brown**, 28, died as a result of vehicular homicide in Minneapolis

June 3, 2020: **Ashli Koren Johnson**, 29, died as a result of gunshot in St. Paul

June 3, 2020: **Richard Alhag Stephen**, 33, died as a result of beating in Moorhead

June 4, 2020: **Brandon Jerome Salter**, 27, died as a result of gunshot in Minneapolis

July 5, 2020: **Leneesha Helen Columbus**, 27, died as a result of gunshot in Minneapolis

August 5, 2020: **Leneesha LaDell Columbus**, 27, died as a result of premature birth in Minneapolis

July 10, 2020: **Klara Eugenie Wright**, 72, died as a result of stabbing in Dakota

August 17, 2020: **Yuliya Khort**, 47, died as a result of gunshot in Blaine

August 30, 2020: **Angela Lynn Mesich**, 47, died as a result of gunshot in Bloomington

September 4, 2020: **Lauren Summer Koffi-n'guessan**, 22, died as a result of gunshot in West St. Paul

September 10, 2020: **Keona Sade Foote**, 23, died as a result of strangulation in Rochester

September 10, 2020: **Miyona Zayla Miller**, 2, died as a result of trauma in Rochester

November 12, 2020: **Nigar Mammadzada**, 29, died as a result of gunshot in Crystal

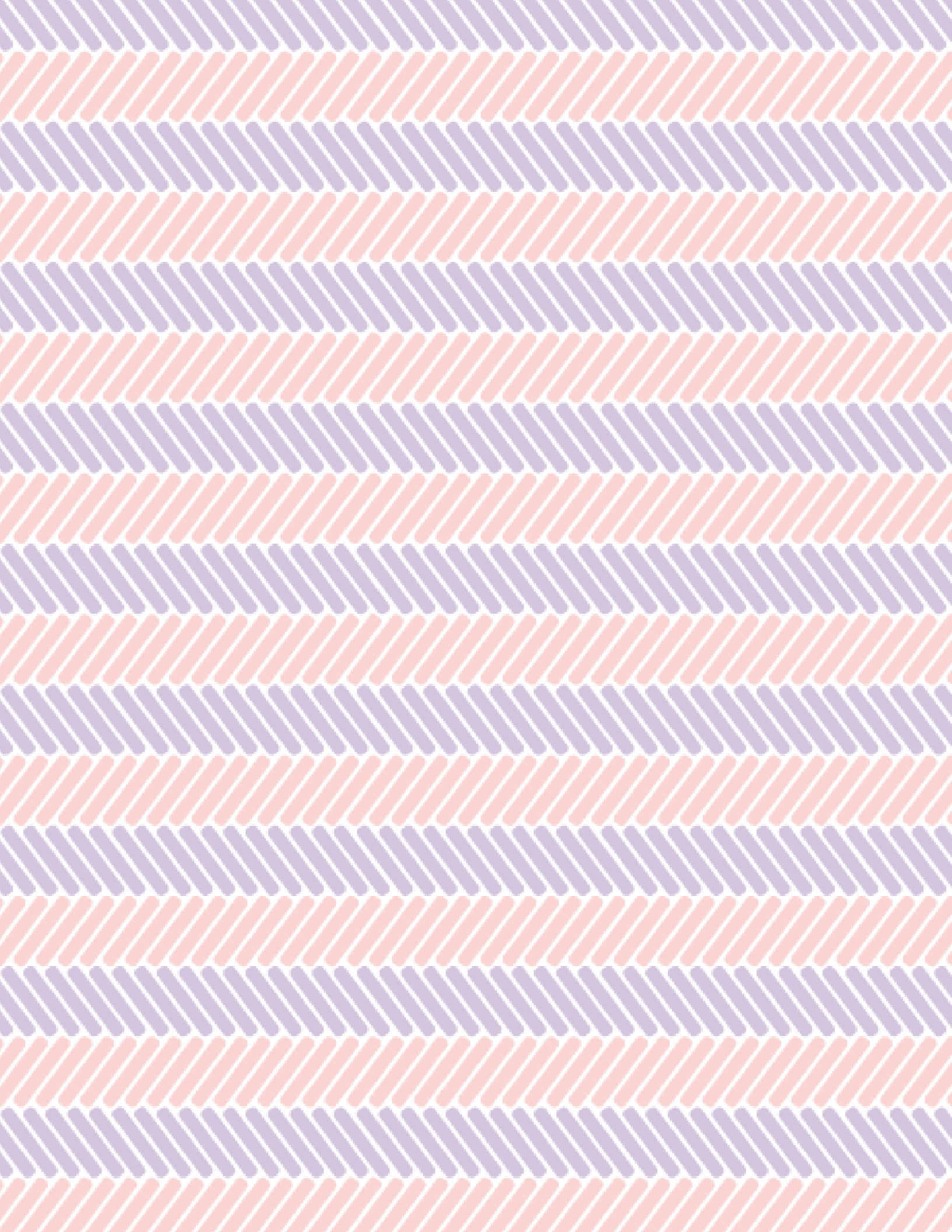
November 17, 2020: **Kim Laen Theng**, 54, died as a result of beating in Minneapolis

November 30, 2020: **Loretta Jean Billman**, 54, died as a result of gunshot in Grand Lake Township

December 2, 2020: **Encarncion Gutierrez Quixan**, 47, died as a result of beating in Ashby

December 15, 2020: **Julio Cesar Guadalupe Rodriguez**, 15, died as a result of stabbing in Austin

December 21, 2020: **Todd Anthony Gerleman**, 56, died as a result of gunshot in St. Paul





VIOLENCE FREE **MINNESOTA**

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

ABOUT

Founded in 1978, Violence Free Minnesota is a statewide coalition of over 90 member programs working to end relationship abuse. Violence Free Minnesota strives to end relationship abuse by taking strategic action in partnership with the power of survivors and member programs across the state. As Minnesota's state domestic violence coalition, we shape public policy, raise public awareness, and build the capacity of community-based programs to address the needs of survivors of relationship violence and advocate on their behalf.

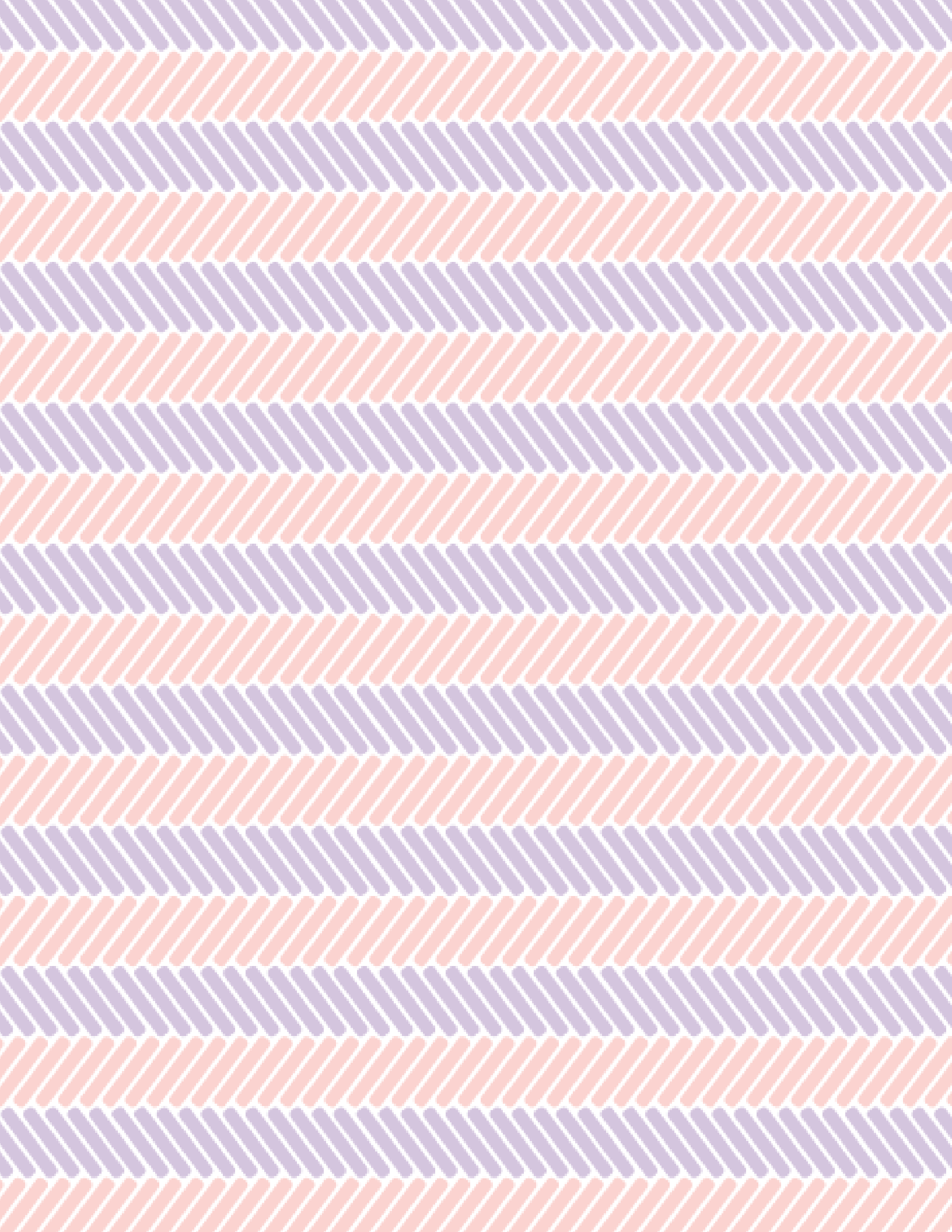
We ask Violence Free Minnesota be credited when information from this report is used.

OUR MISSION

- Represent relationship abuse victim/survivors and member programs;
- Challenge systems and institutions;
- Promote social change;
- And support, educate, and connect member programs.

OUR VISION

To end relationship abuse, create safety,
and achieve social justice for all.





VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

**If you are a victim experiencing abuse,
contact Day One at **866.223.1111** to connect with services.**

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