

Domestic Violence Homicide

The Advocates of Lake County would like to extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family of Yolanda LaCome, who was shot and killed by her intimate partner in January. In an effort to understand what happened, and what can be done to prevent further tragedy, we would like to offer the following information on domestic violence homicide and domestic violence more generally.

How common is Domestic Violence Homicide?

Tragically, domestic violence homicide is quite common. From 1980 to 2008, nearly 1 out of 5 murder victims were killed by an intimate partner. Available research shows that women are more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than by anyone else. In 2018, 1,606 women nationwide were murdered by a male they knew, for an average of 31 per week.

What can I do to prevent Domestic Violence Homicide?

Safety plan with people leaving violent situations

Remember that acts of domestic violence are usually triggered by a loss of power and control. **Leaving a severely violent relationship is exceptionally dangerous for battered women**; as perpetrators realize they no longer have control, they will often take extreme measures to regain power. Statistics suggest women are 70 times more likely to be killed in the two weeks after leaving than any other time in the relationship. This risk is amplified when divorce papers, child custody papers, or protection orders are served upon the perpetrator. **It is imperative that victims of domestic violence safety plan with an advocate or a trusted friend or family member before, during, and after leaving a violent situation.**

Recognize the risk factors

The availability of a weapons is a significant risk factor to domestic violence homicide. The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%.

The greatest risk factor in domestic violence homicide is prior domestic violence. It is important to remember, however, that only about half of all domestic violence incidents are reported to law enforcement. The most common indicators of an abusive relationship include jealousy, criticism, isolation, controlling behavior and anger. **If you suspect someone is a victim of domestic violence, offer extra support and security.** Offer to help them seek assistance by reporting to law enforcement or turning to a community-based domestic violence agency which offers confidential services (and can often provide safe housing).

**The Advocates of Lake County can provide these services; call us 24/7 at:
(719) 486-3530.**

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