

Domestic Violence Risk Assessment

This assessment of the behavior of an abuser is meant to be a guide in determining which domestic violence cases are “high risk,” that is, which intimate relationships show signs of turning into a lethal situation. All intimate partner violence is unacceptable and presents a risk for lethal levels of violence. The purpose of this guide is to help identify situations which need immediate increased intervention for the abuser and the victim.

Abuser Behavior

HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITH CURRENT PARTNER OR OTHERS

- Especially if there is a rapid escalation of abuse
- If there is a new twist i.e. forced sex, abuse during pregnancy, use of weapon
- If victim feels trapped

THREATS TO KILL OR HARM PARTNER

- Strangulation and/or visible injuries
- If there is a specific articulated plan
- If there are credible threats to use weapons and access to weapons
- Family/friends may recognize the danger first, as a victim may minimize threat

SEPARATION OR ATTEMPTED SEPARATION

- Including if victim goes to court, leaves the offender, has a new partner, or gets a restraining order
- Offender refuses to accept the separation “I’ll never let you go”

OBSESSIVE / POSSESSIVE BEHAVIOR

- Stalking, constantly watching or checking on the victim
- Constant phone calls
- Extreme jealousy
- Controlling behavior

MAJOR LOSSES /CHANGES FOR OFFENDER

- Job loss, separation from family, financial loss, health problems, loss of reputation
- Offender believes he has nothing left to lose
- Discharge from active military duty

SUICIDAL THREATS AND /OR HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS

- Threats by offender to commit suicide or to kill or harm children, family or pets
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Prior attempts or well planned threats
- Offender sees himself as the victim
- In an agitated state or ‘off his meds’

FREQUENT RESTRAINING ORDER VIOLATIONS

- Even if violations do not involve further physical violence
- Pressure on victim to drop order

THE RISK INCREASES WHEN THESE FACTORS BECOME MORE FREQUENT OR INTENSE AND THE OFFENDER’S BEHAVIOR ESCALATES