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# Practice Issues in Responding to High Risk Domestic Violence

## Betty Taylor 2017



*change the ending*





# Risk Outcomes

- Homicides
- Suicides
- Suspicious Deaths
- Child Abuse
- Missing Persons
- Permanent Physical Injury
- Psychological Injury including trauma induced PTSD
- Premature deaths from a range of health consequences
- Compounding social problems: Homelessness, alcohol & drug addictions, coercive pregnancies, protracted court interventions and others

# What we know

## Partner violence

Intimate partner violence is experienced by a quarter of women in Australia:



Of the 2.2 million women who have experienced male intimate partner violence:



Almost all violence between cohabiting partners happens in the home:



2013–14

## Hospitalised assault injuries among women & girls



Nearly **one-third** of hospitalised assault victims (6,293) were women & children



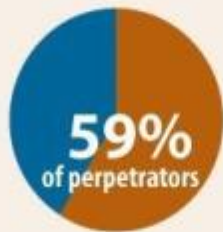
**30–34 years**

was the age group with the highest rate of assault



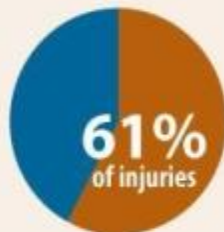
**76%**

of reports **contained information** about the **perpetrator**



**59%**  
of perpetrators

were **spouses or domestic partners** (2,843 cases)



**61%**  
of injuries

by a spouse or partner, (1,641 cases) were to the **head region**



**8%**  
victims

were **pregnant** at the time of the assault

Source: AIHW 2017. Hospitalised assault injuries among women and girls: Injury fact sheets  
[www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129559173](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129559173)



Australian Government  
Australian Institute of  
Health and Welfare



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1 January 2006 to 30 June 2016, **234** women, men and children in Queensland have been killed by a family member, or by a person in which they were, or had been, in an intimate partner relationship with, and a further 13 bystanders to domestic and family violence have lost their lives in this period.

Queensland Courts, Coroner's Office

[http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/489167/ccq-dfv-qld-domestic-and-family-homicide-stat-overview.pdf](http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/489167/ccq-dfv-qld-domestic-and-family-homicide-stat-overview.pdf)

***“I saw stars and I passed out. When I came to, he’s on top of me, banging my head against the kitchen floor and strangling me.”***

***“ Nobody could help me.....everyone turned a blind eye. It was easy for him to isolate me.”***

***“ I want people to understand how easy it is to be trapped by fear. I was immobilised through fear”***

### **Predictable**

Domestic Violence deaths are rarely a 'out of the blue' occurrence:

- The vast majority of victims and perpetrators are known to various agencies
- Victims may have their safety needs met with varying degrees of success
- Perpetrators are seldom held systemically accountable for their abuse

### **Preventable**

While the responsibility for stopping violence must rest with the perpetrator, victim safety and perpetrator accountability must always be the cornerstone of our service responses.



# Changing Practice

Agency Policy & Practice may change in response to:

- New overarching policy frameworks as is the case with the Domestic & Family Violence Common Risk & Safety Management Framework;
- In response to organisational reviews specifically following a death or serious injury;
- Through application of emerging research;
- Implementation of new programs or services.

# Risk Assessment

Benefits of applying a uniform approach to risk assessment:

- Assists victims and professionals develop a more comprehensive view of the risks posed
- to victims and their children;
- Enables the development of more realistic safety management strategies;
- Allows the Criminal Justice System to identify high risk offenders;
- Identifies who is most in need of protection;
- Provides for the development of a common language within and across agencies.

Evidence based tools have been developed and applied across numerous setting

# Risky Behaviour



Campbell 2009

# Risky Behaviour

Risk assessment is a complex, continuing, evaluative process.

Static factors, and dynamic (changing) factors

Includes examination of:

- Patterns of behavior
- Patterns of violence
- Coercive controls – impact on a victim’s decision making
- Be informed by the narrative
- Know where to get further information
- Beliefs of abusive partners

Victim-centered intervention includes an analysis of the complex package of physical, legal, economic, familial, social, and emotional risks faced by the victim, and by those the victim feels bound to protect.

**Consider:**

- What are the consequences and implications for any course of action?
- How constricted has the victim's life become?

# Safety Planning

1. Assessing multiple harms
2. Specifying environmental resources and barriers
3. Identifying developmental aspects of coping
4. Developing social capital resources = 'planning for success'





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Thank You



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