

# VITAL SIGNS

Central Oklahoma

Research Brief, September 2019

## Domestic Violence in Central Oklahoma - Why it Matters

Domestic violence and abuse is prevalent in every community and affects all people regardless of age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or nationality.



...will experience severe intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking that results in injury, fear, post-traumatic stress disorder or use of victim services.<sup>1</sup>

People who experience domestic abuse are **12x more likely to end their lives** by suicide than non-victims.<sup>2</sup>

Access to social support, material necessities and confidence in the ability to control one's environment can protect against development of worsening mental health concerns.<sup>3</sup>



The devastating consequences of intimate partner abuse can last a lifetime and cross generations.

# MYTH: DOMESTIC ABUSE IS NOT A PROBLEM IN MY COMMUNITY.

**FACT:** Oklahoma is...

**6<sup>th</sup>**

...in the nation for **highest rate of physical violence occurrence** towards a woman in her lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

**FACT:** In 2018, United Way Partner Agency, YWCA Oklahoma City provided:<sup>5</sup>

- 4,438** people with assistance obtaining protective orders, violence risk assessment, safety planning and court support
- 797** survivors with emergency shelter and transitional housing
- 573** sexual assault forensic exams
- 84** children affected by domestic violence with counseling services

**FACT:** **8%** of Oklahoma high school students reported **having experienced physical dating violence** while 7% reported having experienced sexual dating violence.<sup>6</sup>

Nationally, 50% of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide.<sup>7</sup>

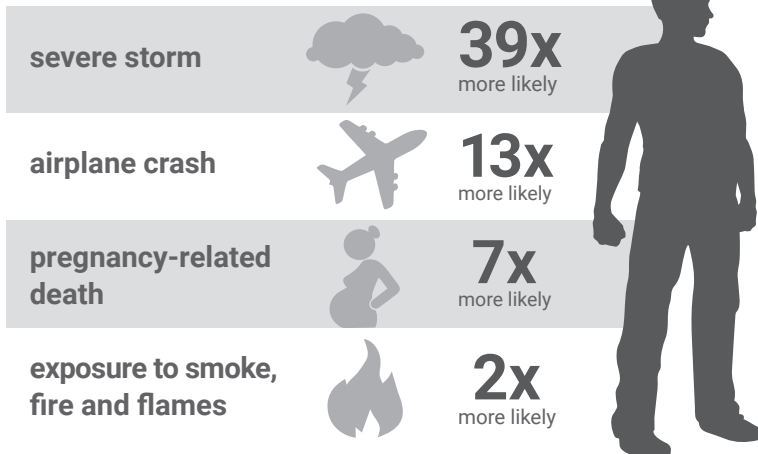


**WARNING SIGN:**  
Choking is a significant risk factor for intimate partner homicide.

Almost 50% of intimate partner homicide victims and survivors report a history of being choked.<sup>11</sup>

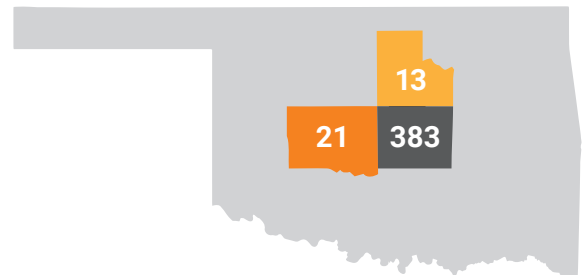
## OKLAHOMA IS THE 11TH MOST DANGEROUS STATE IN THE NATION FOR WOMEN.<sup>8</sup>

A woman in Oklahoma is more likely to be killed by her husband or intimate partner than by a ...<sup>9</sup>



Oklahoma County is the #1 county for domestic violence-related homicides in Oklahoma.<sup>10</sup>

Domestic violence-related homicides by county - 1998 to 2017:<sup>10</sup>



Logan Co. .... 13  
Canadian Co. .... 21  
Oklahoma Co. .... 383

# 98%

of domestic violence-related homicide victims in Oklahoma **never accessed services prior to their death.**<sup>12</sup>

## POLICY OPPORTUNITIES for OKLAHOMA



### **Boundary and consent training to prevent intimate partner violence.**

Twenty states have a state policy that requires K-12 schools to teach curriculum on healthy relationships, consent, boundaries and/or sex education.<sup>13,14</sup> These same states also have the lowest rates in the nation for domestic-violence related homicides and teen pregnancy.<sup>15,16</sup> Currently, Oklahoma has the 11th highest domestic-violence related homicide rate for women<sup>8</sup> and the 3rd highest teen birth rate.<sup>17</sup> Could Oklahoma reduce the occurrence of intimate partner violence and teen birth by mandating and funding evidence-based, comprehensive, medically accurate and culturally competent sex education programs that include training on healthy relationships, consent and boundaries?



### **State family medical leave act for recovery from trauma.**

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is the only federal law that provides job-guaranteed leave from work for employees. This law, however, does not explicitly mention domestic or sexual violence as qualifying circumstances. Could Oklahoma support survivors by creating state family or medical leave laws that provide unpaid job-guaranteed time off to heal from serious physical or mental health conditions including conditions resulting from intimate partner abuse?<sup>18</sup>



### **Job-guaranteed leave for justice.**

Eleven states provide the most comprehensive support to employed survivors through statutes providing unpaid, job-guaranteed leave or leave as a reasonable accommodation. Could Oklahoma join these states and more fully support survivors of domestic or sexual assault by creating a law that guarantees unpaid leave or leave as a reasonable accommodation? This would allow survivors to:

- Go to civil court to obtain protection for themselves or family members
- Seek medical attention for injuries caused by abuse
- Obtain services from a victim services program
- Retain legal counsel
- Go to criminal court to participate in legal proceedings

These laws could also prohibit the employer from discriminating against an employee for exercising their right to use this unpaid leave.<sup>19</sup>

## Interested in printed copies of our research publications or a presentation?

Contact United Way of Central Oklahoma's Community Impact Department at [info@unitedwayokc.org](mailto:info@unitedwayokc.org) or 405-236-8441.



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An enduring community analysis of the health and human service needs in central Oklahoma.

United Way of Central Oklahoma  
1444 NW 28th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106  
405.236.8441 • [unitedwayokc.org](http://unitedwayokc.org)

