

Fact Sheet

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in the African American Community



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Statistics

- In a nationally representative survey conducted in 1996, 29% of African American women and 12% of African American men reported at least one instance of violence from an intimate partner.¹
- African Americans account for a disproportionate number of intimate partner homicides. In 2005, African Americans accounted for almost 1/3 of the intimate partner homicides in this country.²
- Black women comprise 8% of the U.S. population but in 2005 accounted for 22% of the intimate partner homicide victims and 29% of all female victims of intimate partner homicide.²
- Intimate partner homicides among African Americans have declined sharply in the last 30 years. Partner homicides involving a black man or a black woman decreased from a high of 1529 in 1976 to 475 in 2005, for a total decline of 69%.²
- Intimate partner deaths have decreased most dramatically among black men. From 1976-1985, black men were more likely than black women to be a victim of domestic homicide; by 2005, black women were 2.4 times more likely than a black male to be murdered by their partners. Over this period, intimate partner homicides declined by 83% for black men vs. 55% for black women.²

- As with other abusive men, African American men who batter are higher in jealousy and the need for power and control in the relationship.⁵
- As with women of other races, among African American women killed by their partner, the lethal violence was more likely to occur if there had been incidents in which the partner had used or threatened to use a weapon on her and/or the partner has tried to choke or strangle her.⁵
- Among African American women killed by their partner, almost half were killed while in the process of leaving the relationship, highlighting the need to take extra precautions at that time.⁵
- Among African American women who killed their partner, almost 80% had a history of abuse.⁵

Risk Factors

- Intimate partner violence among African Americans is related to economic factors. Intimate partner violence among blacks occurs more frequently among couples with low incomes³, those in which the male partner is underemployed or unemployed,⁴ particularly when he is not seeking work,⁵ and among couples residing in very poor neighborhoods, regardless of the couple's income.⁵
- When income and neighborhood characteristics are controlled for, racial differences in IPV are greatly reduced.^{3,6}
- Alcohol problems (drinking, binge drinking, dependency) are more frequently related to intimate partner violence for African Americans than for whites or Hispanics.⁷



Impact of Abuse

- Black women who are battered have more physical ailments,⁸ mental health issues,⁴ are less likely to practice safe sex,⁹ and are more likely to abuse substances during pregnancy¹⁰ than black women without a history of abuse.
- Battered women are at greater risk for attempting suicide¹¹ particularly if they were physically abused as a child, for being depressed¹² and to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹³



Dynamics of Abuse

- Domestic violence re-occurs. In a large sample of battered black women, in about half of the cases in which abuse happened, the violence did not happen again; however, over 1/3 of women reporting abuse had at least one other incident of severe domestic violence in the same year, and one in six experienced another less severe act of domestic violence.⁵
- Women attempt to leave abusive relationships. Seventy to eighty percent of abused black women left or attempted to leave the relationship.⁵
- Women in abusive relationships need the support of friends and family. Battered black women who reported that they could rely on others for emotional and practical support were less likely to be re-abused,¹⁴ showed less psychological distress,¹⁵ and were less likely to attempt suicide.¹¹

Teen Dating Violence

- Black youth are over represented as victims of teen dating violence. In a 2003 national study of high school students, almost 14% of African American youth (vs. 7% of white youth) reported that a boyfriend or girlfriend had "hit, slapped, or physically hurt them on purpose" in the last year. Boys (13.7%) and girls (14%) were almost equally likely to report being a victim of dating violence.¹⁶

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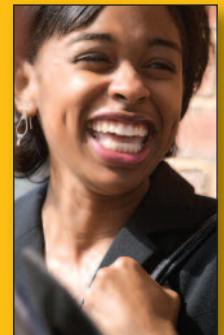
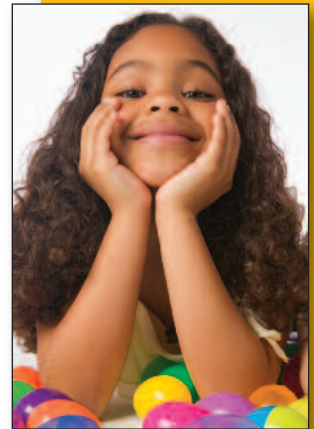
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