

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MY SUMMER WATCHING COPS:

WHY DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE VICTIMS
DO (& DO NOT)
PARTICIPATE IN LETHALITY
ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

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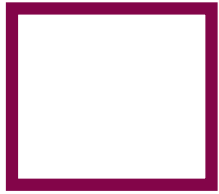


INSTITUTE
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COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Powered by Conference on Crimes Against Women

OUR MISSION is to work alongside rural communities to improve their collaborative, systemic responses to domestic violence.

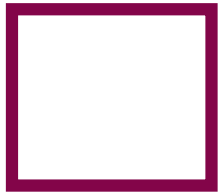
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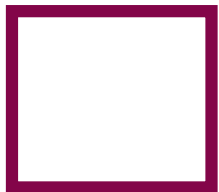
**WHAT ARE LETHALITY ASSESSMENT
PROTOCOLS/PROGRAMS (LAP) & HOW DO THEY
WORK?**



HOW DOES THE LAP WORK IN PRACTICE?



**WHEN ARE VICTIMS MOST LIKELY TO DECLINE
PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP?**



**HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP IMPACT
CASE OUTCOMES?**

RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER **HOMICIDE**

Top 10 risk factors for Intimate partner homicide

Risk for male perpetrated & female **IPH** victimization

- 1) Direct access to guns
 - 2) Threatened victim with a weapon
 - 3) Non-fatal strangulation
 - 4) Controlling behaviors
 - 5) Perpetrated rape/forced sex
 - 6) Threatened to harm the victim
 - 7) Abused victim while pregnant
 - 8) Perpetrated stalking
 - 9) Jealousy
 - 10) Substance abuse
-

- 11-fold** increase in risk of **IPH**
- 7-fold increase in risk
- 7-fold increase in risk
- 6-fold increase in risk
- 5-fold increase in risk
- 4-fold increase in risk
- 4-fold increase in risk
- 3-fold increase in risk
- 2-fold increase in risk
- 2-fold increase in risk
-

Spencer & Stith, 2020 – meta analysis of 17 IPH studies

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS/PROTOCOLS (LAP)



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LETHALITY SCREEN FOR FIRST RESPONDERS



Victim:	DOB:	Gender:	Race/Ethnicity:	Date:	Time: am/pm
Officer Name:	Badge #:	Department/Precinct:	Case #:		
Victim Phone:	Is this a safe #?: ☐ Yes ☐ No				
Relationship to offender:	Consent to follow-up call from service provider: ☐ Yes ☐ No				
☐ Check here if victim declined to be screened ☐ Advised victim of discoverability of the screen					
☐ Check here if the officer could not administer the screen					
A "Yes" response to any of Questions #1-3 is an automatic High-Danger Assessment					
1. Have they ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
2. Do you think they might try to kill you?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
3. Have they ever tried to choke/strangle you (cut off breathing)?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
"Yes" responses to at least four of Questions #4-11 is an automatic High-Danger Assessment					
4. Have they threatened to kill you or your children?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
5. Do they have a gun, or can they easily get one?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
6. Are they violently or constantly jealous or do they control most of your daily activities?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
7. Have you left them or separated after living together or being married?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
8. Are they unemployed?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
9. Have they ever tried to kill themselves?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
10. Do you have a child/children that they know are not theirs?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
11. Do they follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
Do they have mental health concerns?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
Have they harmed or threatened to harm any pets?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
Are they in a gang?		☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Ans/Unk	
Is there anything else that worries you about your safety? (If "yes") What worries you?					
<i>A first responder may make a High-Danger Assessment if the first responder believes the victim is in a potentially lethal (imminent danger of IPH) situation.</i>					
Check one:		☐ Victim is High-Danger based on score ☐ Victim is High-Danger based on first responder belief ☐ Victim is not assessed as High-Danger			
If victim is High-Danger, did first responder make a call to the hotline?		☐ Yes	☐ No		
Did the victim speak with the hotline advocate?		☐ Yes	☐ No		

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

Identifies high-risk victims with strong accuracy^{1, 2}

Risk tools outperform intuition or clinical judgement alone¹

Increases connecting high risk victims to advocates¹

Not associated with increase prosecution or conviction rates³

Lots of unknowns – victim refusal; officer effects

¹Graham et al. (2019); ²Messing et al. (2016; 2017); ³Anderson et al. (2022)

LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

MNADV (2013)

12,108 Lethality Screens

51% screened in as high risk for lethality

53% spoke on phone to advocate

28% accessed victim services

Messing & friends (2016)

Interviews with 563 survivors screened in as high risk

62% spoke on phone to advocate

38% declined to speak to an advocate

NOT ALL LETHALITY SCREENS ARE THE SAME

	TOOL	PREDICTS	BUILT FOR	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
VICTIM-CENTERED	Dangerous Assessment (DA)	Lethality/Near-fatal violence	Front line police	Victim interview
	Dangerous Assessment for Law Enforcement (DA-LE)	Near-fatal violence	Health & victim service professionals; High Risk DV Teams	Victim self-report
	Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)	Lethality/near-lethal violence	First responders at scene	Victim self-report
OFFENDER-FOCUSED	ODARA	Re-assault (recidivism)	Front line police	Offender interview/records
	SARA	Re-offense + Risk management	Clinicians w/advanced training	Offender & victim interviews, court/clinical files
	DVSI; DVSI-R	Re-assault/ court non-compliance	Criminal-legal professionals	Offender criminal record

SOURCES: Messing & Thaller (2015); Messing et al. (2017); Garvia-Vergara et al. (2022)

SCREENS IDENTIFY RISK | PROTOCOLS ACT ON RISK

GOAL OF PROTOCOL	APPROPRIATE TOOLS
Identify & connect high-risk victims to advocates fast, on scene	Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)
Educate victims about their risk for lethality	LAP; Dangerous Assessment (DA)
Identify & intensively monitor high-risk cases through a coordinated team	Dangerous Assessment for Law Enforcement (DA-LE)
Flag escalating offenders for follow-up & case management	ODARA & SARA
Inform justice decisions: charging, bail, & sentencing	DVSI-R for pretrial; SARA for conditions & intervention

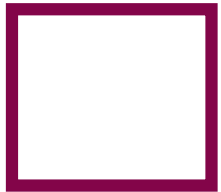
SOURCES: Messing & Thaller (2015); Messing et al. (2017); Garvia-Vergara et al. (2022)



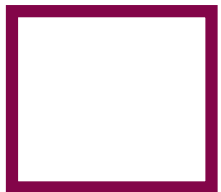
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HOW DOES THE LAP WORK IN PRACTICE?



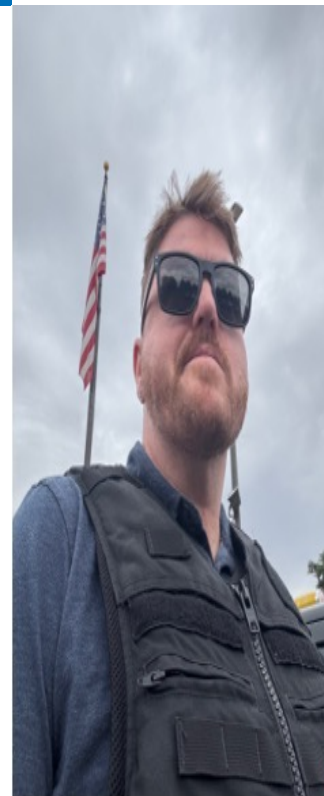
**WHEN ARE VICTIMS MOST LIKELY TO DECLINE
PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP?**



**HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP IMPACT
CASE OUTCOMES?**

MY SUMMER WATCHING COPS

**Law Enforcement-Based
Victim Services (LEV)**



Heat Forecast 6-hour Period for 2025

6-Hour Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
00:00-04:00	16	16	24	10	20	32	40
01:00-05:00	9	8	17	12	14	19	41
02:00-06:00	8	8	10	11	11	12	29
03:00-07:00	5	4	11	12	9	12	16
04:00-08:00	7	7	8	11	7	18	14
05:00-09:00	8	12	14	12	12	11	12
06:00-10:00	15	14	16	14	13	11	15
07:00-11:00	23	16	21	19	16	14	20
08:00-12:00	19	19	31	24	17	21	21
09:00-13:00	26	23	26	21	22	24	25
10:00-14:00	29	26	31	29	26	29	32
11:00-15:00	28	29	29	30	29	38	31
12:00-16:00	30	30	21	31	32	34	35
13:00-17:00	33	30	31	36	31	34	39
14:00-18:00	34	33	28	33	34	39	31
15:00-19:00	41	39	32	30	38	35	36
16:00-20:00	34	41	37	30	36	41	46
17:00-21:00	31	32	31	39	41	42	36
18:00-22:00	36	47	32	45	41	48	47
19:00-23:00	34	45	35	46	46	51	40
20:00-00:00	37	46	37	58	47	51	33
21:00-01:00	33	39	39	52	44	68	36
22:00-02:00	32	29	41	40	38	51	41
23:00-03:00	24	23	39	25	31	49	41



MY SUMMER WATCHING COPS

Law Enforcement-Based
Victim Services (LEV)



Mixed methodological approach to
exploring victim participation in the LAP



Mandatory Arrest State

Police department: 130 sworn officers

City: 98,000 residents

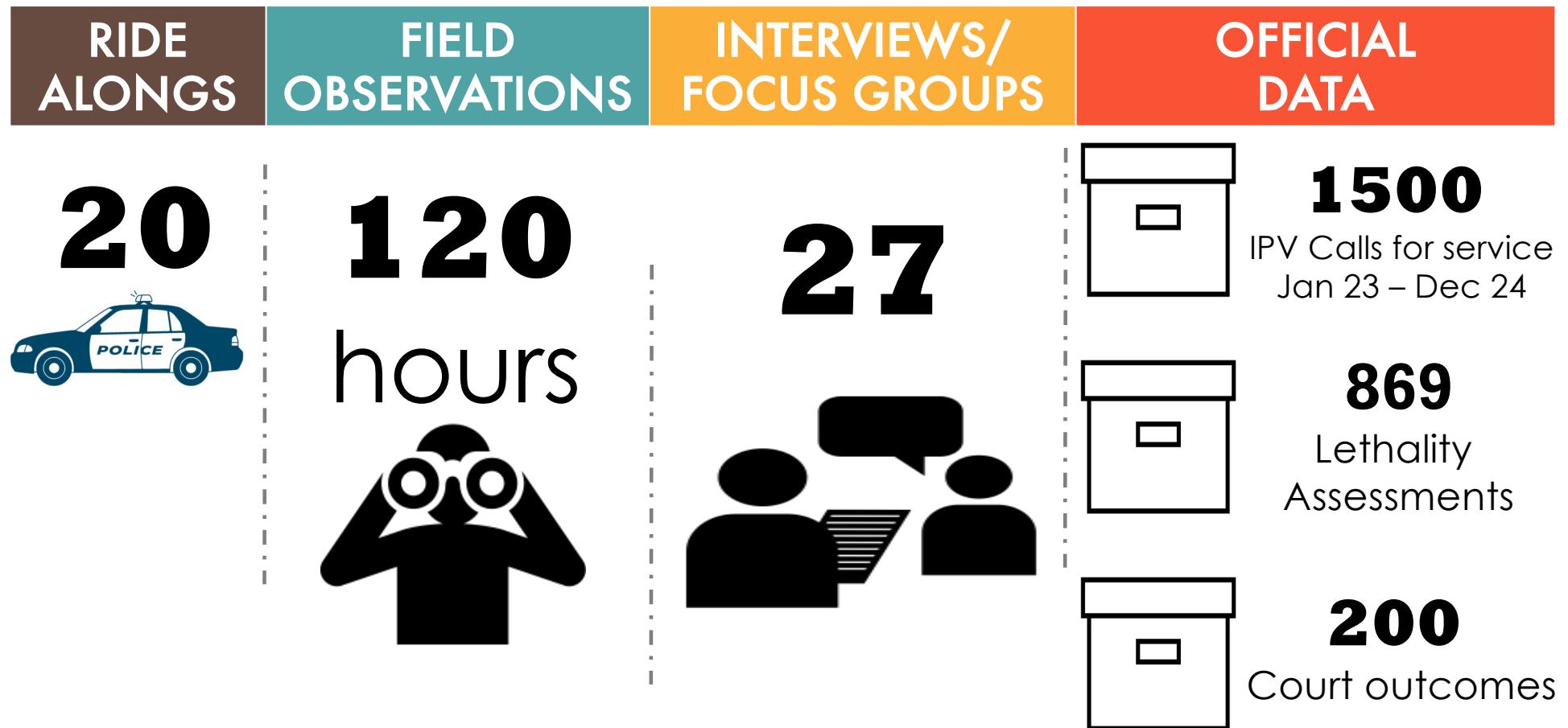
Median income \$56k | 19% below poverty

Demographics: 47% Hispanic/Latino

40% speak other languages in household

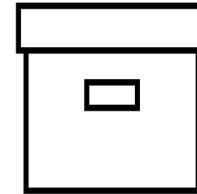
DATA SOURCES

Mixed methodological approach to exploring victim participation in the LAP



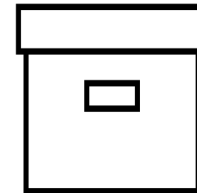
DATA SOURCES

OFFICIAL DATA



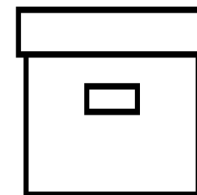
1500

IPV Calls for service
Jan 23 – Dec 24



869

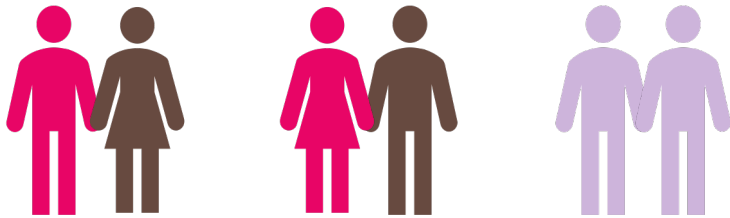
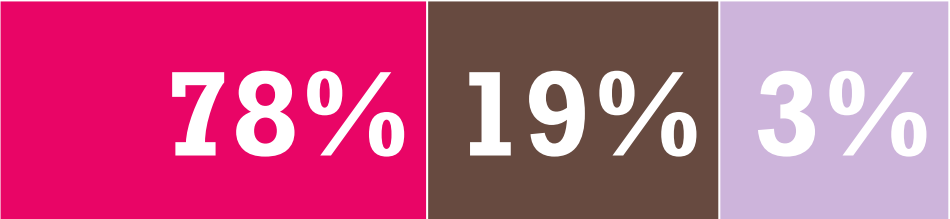
Lethality
Assessments



200

Court outcomes

DEMOGRAPHICS: 1500 IPV CASES

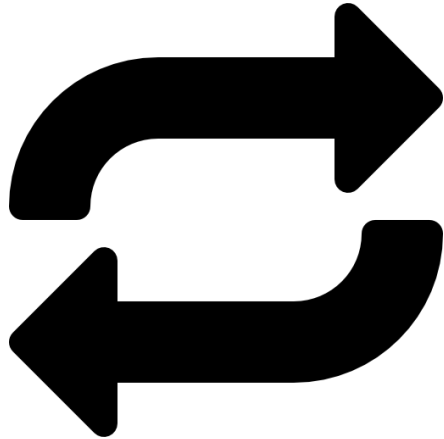


57% 
result in arrest

	SUSPECTS	VICTIMS
Age	36 Range: 16-84	34 Range: 15-85
Hispanic	55%	50%
Non-Hispanic White	36%	42%
Native/Black/Asian/mixed	9%	8%

Repeat suspect

37%

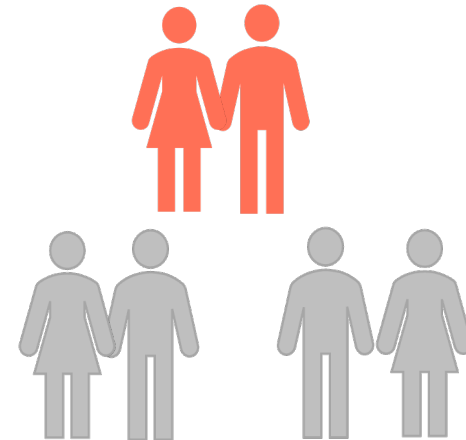


Repeat victim

36%

Repeat Couple

32%

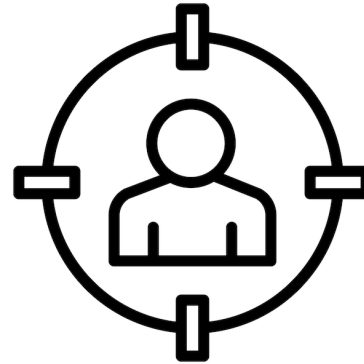


DEMOGRAPHICS OF VICTIMS & SUSPECTS

37%

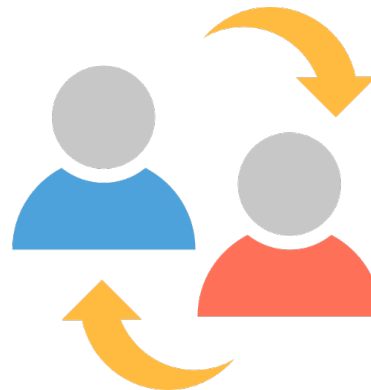


Serial Offenders
(same offender
w/ 2+ victims)



36%

Serial Victims
(same victim
w/ 2+ offenders)



11%

Switch Roles
Victim becomes the
offender & vice versa

**High
frequency
offenders**

15%

**High
frequency
victims**

13%

**High
frequency
couples**

11%

**OFFICERS
UNABLE TO
COMPLETE A
LETHALITY
ASSESSMENT
IN 40% OF
IPV CALLS**

**VICTIM
Refused**

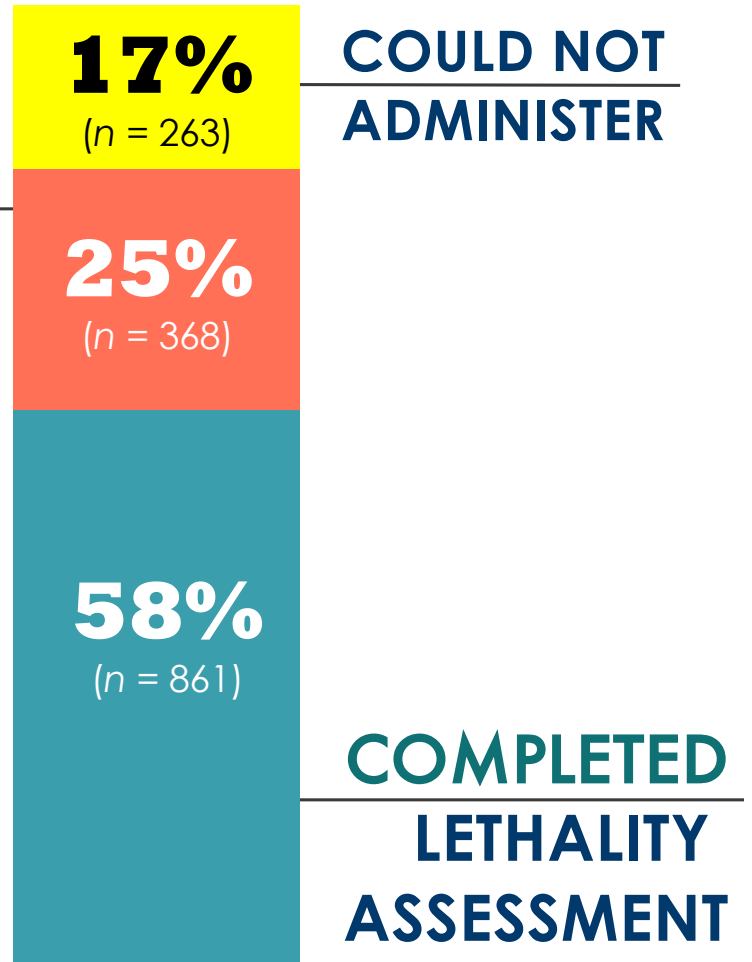
17%
(n = 263)

**COULD NOT
ADMINISTER**

25%
(n = 368)

58%
(n = 861)

**COMPLETED
LETHALITY
ASSESSMENT**



Victim
unavailable

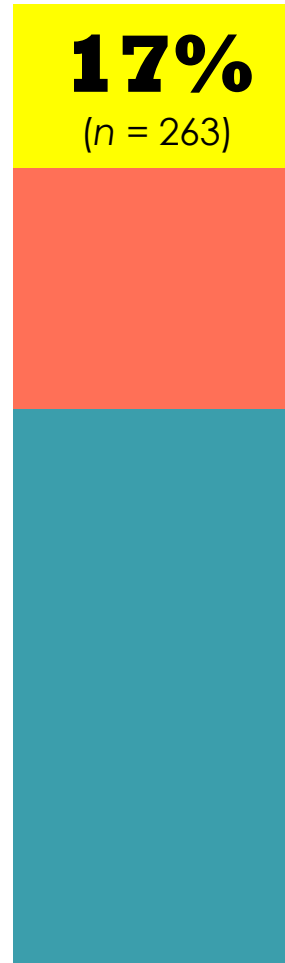
Dual
arrest

Jail house
phone call

Language/
disability barrier

17%
(n = 263)

**COULD NOT
ADMINISTER**



861

completed
lethality
assessments



47%
(n = 403)

Screened as
high risk for
homicide

ONE OR MORE 'YES' TO Q1-Q3

- Q1: Weapons
- Q2: Believes suspect will kill
- Q3: Strangulation

39%
(n = 331)

FOUR OR MORE 'YES' TO Q4-Q11

Q4: Threats to kill

Q5: Access to weapons

Q6: Jealousy

Q7: Separation

Q8: Unemployment

Q9: Threats of suicide

Q10: Non-bio children in home

Q11: stalking

30%
(n = 259)

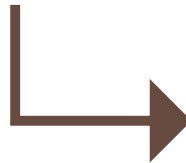
46.8%
(n = 413)

Screened as
high risk for
homicide



39%
(n = 167)

Officer called hotline



67%
(n = 111)

Victim connected with Advocate

46.8%
(n = 413)

Screened as
high risk for
homicide



Officer called hotline

39%
(n = 167)

67%
(n = 111)

28%
(n = 120)

72%
*Not connected
with advocate?*



Victim connected with Advocate

The image is a composite of two photographs. On the left, a police officer in a light-colored uniform is shown from the waist up, looking towards the right. On the right, a woman with glasses and her hair in a ponytail is shown in profile, covering her face with her hands in a gesture of distress or crying. In the center, a large, semi-transparent oval contains the title text in blue, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**THE LAP IN
YAKIMA:
OFFICER
EXPERIENCES
&
APPROACHES**



TRAINING WAS LIMITED TO HOW VERSUS WHY

Training either **occurred** during roll call or by FTO - generally **“on the fly”**

Officers **described** training in terms of learning how to **complete the assessment**, but not why



TRAINING WAS FINE BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN

WHY ARE WE ASKING WHAT WE ARE ASKING?

WHAT ABOUT “VERBALS” WHEN BOTH ARE ‘INVOLVED’?

ANY GUARDIANSHIP FOR RELUCTANT VICTIMS?

TRAINING WAS FINE BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN

WHY ARE WE ASKING WHAT WE ARE ASKING?

"I wish there was more information on questions and why certain questions are being asked. Why am I asking if the victim has children the suspect knows are not his?"

– YPD patrol officer

Need better information about what happens after the complete the assessment. *"There isn't any follow-up unless the report is kicked back because the assessment wasn't done"* -

YPD patrol officer

TRAINING WAS FINE BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN

WHAT ABOUT “VERBALS” WHEN BOTH ARE ‘INVOLVED’?

- “Verbals” or no crime calls don’t always have a ‘victim’ or ‘suspect’
 - What if both are ‘High-Danger’?

TRAINING WAS FINE BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN

ANY GUARDIANSHIP FOR RELUCTANT VICTIMS?

“I’m not always sure what to do when victims refuse to answer the questions. Are there things we can say that would get them to cooperate?”

- YPD patrol officer

LESSON #1

Lethality assessment programs succeed or fail based on officer buy-in, not agency policy or state mandates

Train officers about the ‘why’ behind LAPs

Allocate resources for ongoing training, time on calls, supervision, and feedback loops on cases



LAP

INITIATION &

CHALLENGES

APPROACHES TO INITIATING ASSESSMENTS

Inconsistencies with Initiation & implementation

No formal policy on LAP implementation

Usually initiated after arrest/out of ear shot of suspect

Approaches: To frame or not to frame

APPROACHES TO INITIATING ASSESSMENTS

Inconsistencies with Initiation & implementation

Approaches: To frame or not to frame

FRAMING: “I say ‘I have some questions to ask you that are **voluntary**. The information is **helpful for court purposes** to move the case forward. **I let them decide whether they want to answer the questions on the app**’.” – YPD officer

DIRECT: “**I don’t usually ask them if they want to do it**. I feel if I just start asking the questions, victims seem to be more truthful and cooperate.” – YPD officer

INVESTIGATE & CORROBORATE: Officer knows the questions & **uses them as an investigative tool** first before using the app to clarify what was said and document any remaining questions
– researcher note

APPROACHES TO INITIATING ASSESSMENTS

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

Participation: Shock, stress, & competing emotional demands

Presence of children

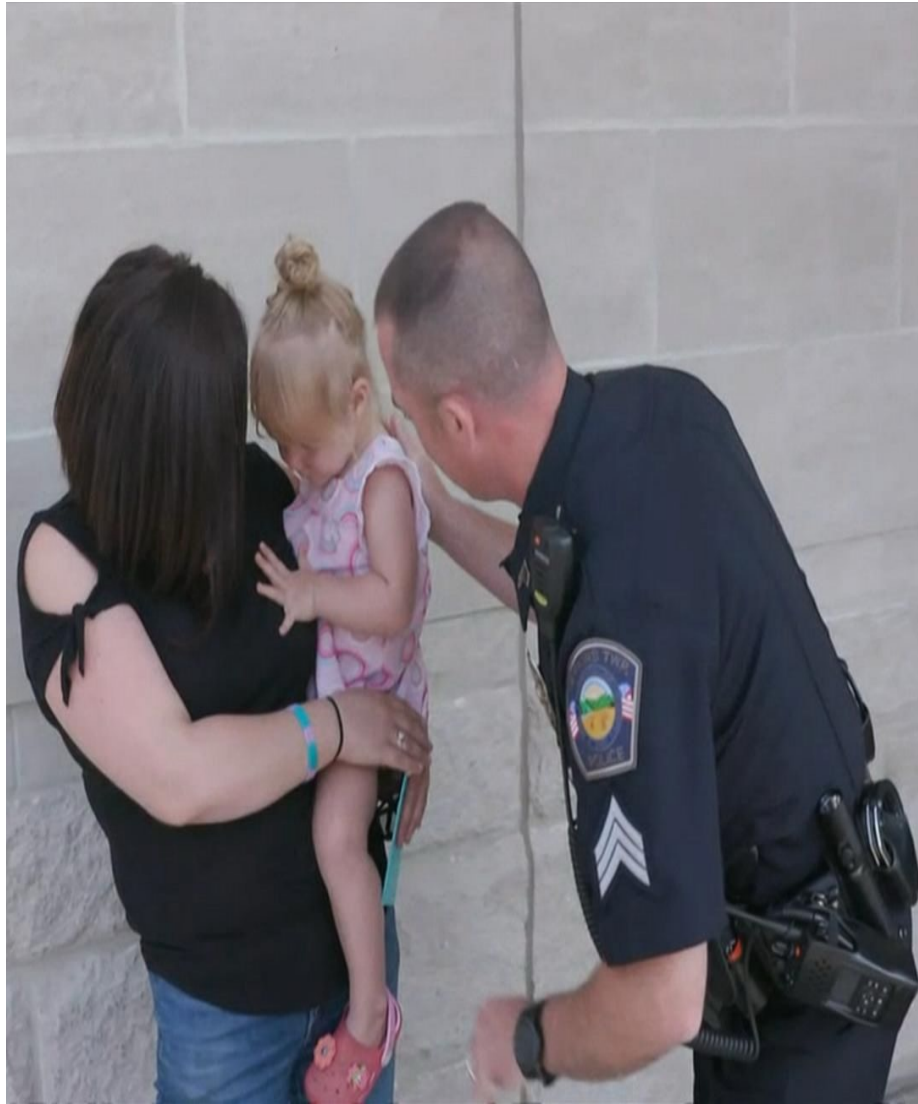
Discoverability

Technology & victim engagement

Victim cooperation

*"When we get on the phone with the victim, **whatever just happened is so jarring that they [victims] are just not ready to speak with us. Some people just shut down, they are tuned out, they are in shock, you talk to them and try to give them as much information as you can,** you leave them with your phone number, you do the safety planning which is all very positive, but they are going through a horrible time at the moment, and **I don't think they are really absorbing anything that is going on.** While I know there are many victims who just don't want anything more to do with us once that phone call ends, but others may not be in the right state of mind at that moment to accept the help being offered because they are just not ready."*

- Victim advocate working in Connecticut



PRESENCE OF CHILDREN

“Some of the questions can be intimate and so I ask them if they want to answer it out of ear shot of their kids and a lot of them don’t want to be separated and I have to ask them in front of the kids.”

– YPD officer

APPROACHES TO INITIATING ASSESSMENTS

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

Participation: Shock, stress, & competing emotional demands

Presence of children

Discoverability

App usability

Technology & victim engagement

“The discoverability question is challenging because victims tend to not want to say anything once they know the offender could find out what they said.” - YPD officer

APPROACHES TO INITIATING ASSESSMENTS

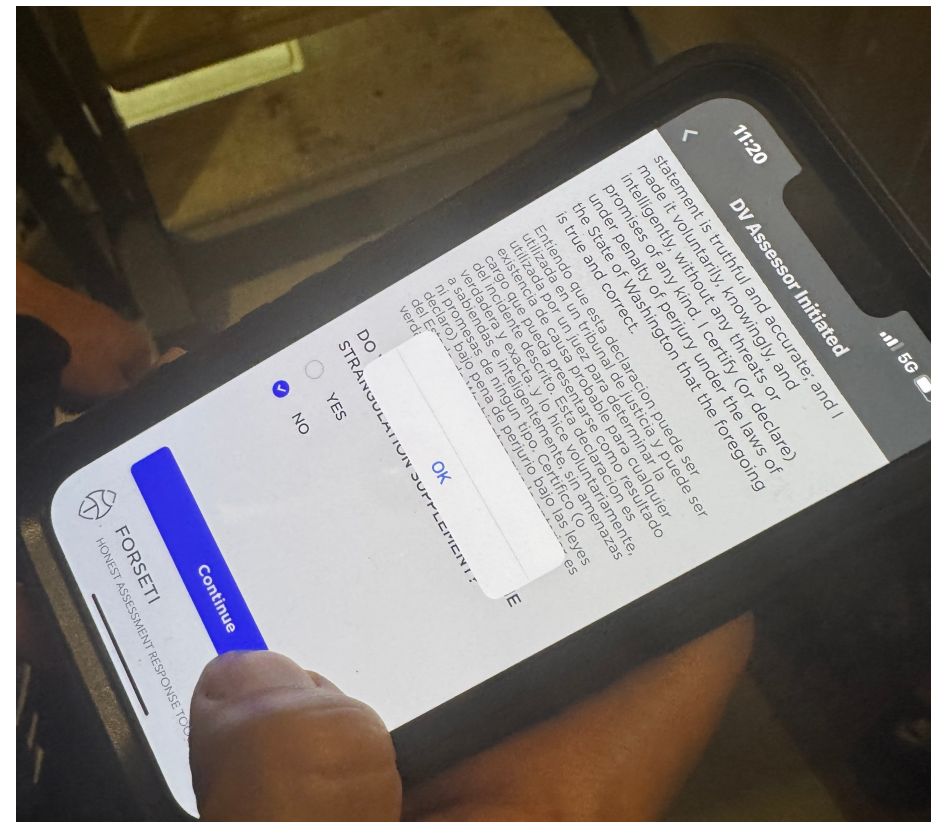
CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

App usability

Tech errors

Access to
Lethality questions

Text boxes to provide
additional context



APPROACHES TO INITIATING ASSESSMENTS

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS



Tech & victim engagement

“It’s hard to engage victims while reading things off my phone.” – YPD officer

“Using my phone to go through the questions makes me feel like I look like I’m new and don’t know what I’m doing”

– YPD officer

“The lethality portion should be done during the follow up... Detectives are best suited for this cause they aren’t bogged down with other calls”

– YPD officer

LESSON #2

How officers administer the screen & conduct the handoff may **matter** as much as the questions themselves

Ensure **framing** is trauma-informed & victim-centered

Cross-training with advocates & officers is key: how to introduce screen, ask questions, explain risk, and role of advocate

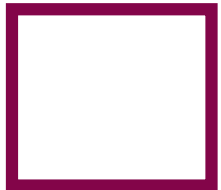
Training should focus on challenging situations: hesitant/unwilling participants; victims in crisis



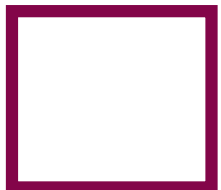
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HOW DOES THE LAP WORK IN PRACTICE?



**WHEN ARE VICTIMS MOST LIKELY TO
DECLINE PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP?**



HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP IMPACT
CASE OUTCOMES?



VICTIM COOPERATION

Lethality screens & referrals
require victim participation

IPV victims have legitimate
reasons for not wanting to
complete the screen or talk
to an advocate

INCIDENT

INDIVIDUAL

RELATIONAL

SHIFT

Days (0600-1559)
Swings (1600-2059)
Nights (1200-0559)

CALL TYPE

"Verbals"
Physical violence
POV
Property crime
Stalking/Harassment

ANY INJURY

THIRD PARTY COMPLAINTANT

WITNESSES

REPEAT VICTIM

SERIAL VICTIM

HIGH FREQUENCY VICTIM

VICTIM RACE

White
Hispanic
Mixed/Other

SUSPECT RACE

White
Hispanic
Mixed/Other

RACE/ETHNICITY

Same Race couple
Mixed Race couple

AGE

Victim is younger
Victim is same age
Victim is older

GENDER DYADS

Fem Victim/Male Sus
Male Victim/Female Sus
Same sex couple

PARENTAL STATUS

Child in common
Current/Formers partners

LAP REFUSALS ALSO CLUSTER ON CERTAIN DAYS AND TIMES

**VICTIM
Refused**

25%
(n = 368)

**MOST COMMON
DAYS**

**Sundays,
Saturdays, &
Thursdays**

**MOST COMMON
TIMES**

**8 PM to Midnight &
10 PM to 4 AM**

DAY OF WEEK	TIME OF DAY												Total # of refusals per day
	06:00 to 08:00 (6 AM to 8 AM)	08:00 to 10:00 (8 AM to 10 AM)	10:00 to 12:00 (10 AM to Noon)	12:00 to 14:00 (Noon to 2 PM)	14:00 to 16:00 (2 PM to 4 PM)	16:00 to 18:00 (4 PM to 6 PM)	18:00 to 20:00 (6 PM to 8 PM)	20:00 to 22:00 (8 PM to 10 PM)	22:00 to 00:00 (10 PM to Midnight)	00:00 to 02:00 (Mid to 2 AM)	02:00 to 04:00 (2 AM to 4 AM)	04:00 to 06:00 (4 AM to 6 AM)	
Monday		2	5	5	3	3	8	5	6	9	2	1	49
Tuesday	2	4	1	2	5	6	9	5	8	2	3	3	50
Wednesday		1	2	2	6	4	3	4	13	3	3		41
Thursday		5	6	8	3	4	4	7	8	6		2	53
Friday	3	4	2	4		4	3	8	9	4	2	3	46
Saturday		3	8	2	5	7	4	7	11	10	9		66
Sunday	2	3	7	3	2	4	2	6	6	8	11	8	62
Total # of refusals per time slot	7	22	31	26	24	32	33	42	61	42	30	17	367

WHAT PREDICTS VICTIMS' DECISION TO REFUSE THE LA?

LAP REFUSALS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY:

Night shift: 37% vs. 26%

“Verbals”: 41% vs. 22%

No injuries: 37% vs. 24%

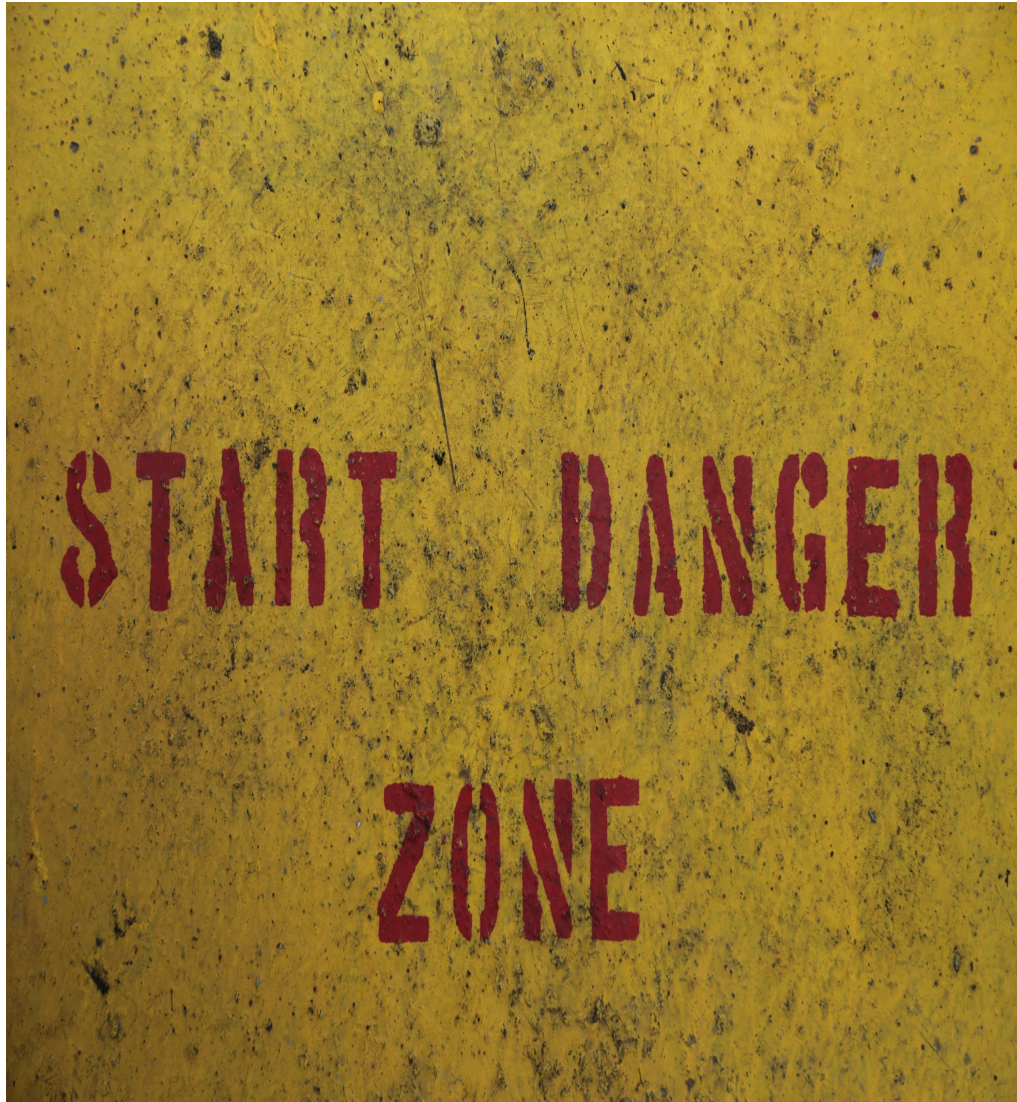
No witnesses: 37% vs. 24%

LESSON #3

Victim refusals should be viewed as implementation challenges, not program failures

Victims have legitimate reasons for declining participation

Prepare officers to anticipate refusals. Refusals happen – need to understand the context in which they occur and equip officers with strategies for explaining the process without pressuring victims to participate



HIGH

RISK

VICTIMS

861

completed
lethality
assessments



47%
(n = 403)

Screened as
high risk for
homicide

ONE OR MORE 'YES' TO Q1-Q3

- Q1: Weapons
- Q2: Believes suspect will kill
- Q3: Strangulation

39%
(n = 331)

FOUR OR MORE 'YES' TO Q4-Q11

Q4: Threats to kill

Q5: Access to weapons

Q6: Jealousy

Q7: Separation

Q8: Unemployment

Q9: Threats of suicide

Q10: Non-bio children in home

Q11: stalking

30%
(n = 259)

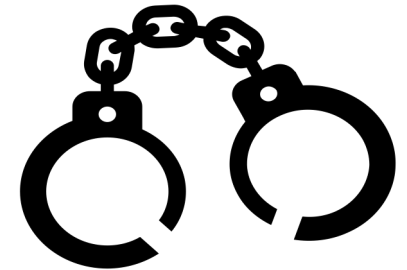
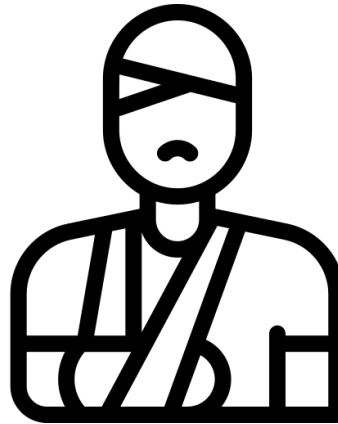
IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH DANGER VICTIMS CLUSTER ON CERTAIN DAYS AND TIMES

Most common days: Sundays, Fridays, & Thursdays

Most common times: 6 PM to Midnight & Noon to 2 PM

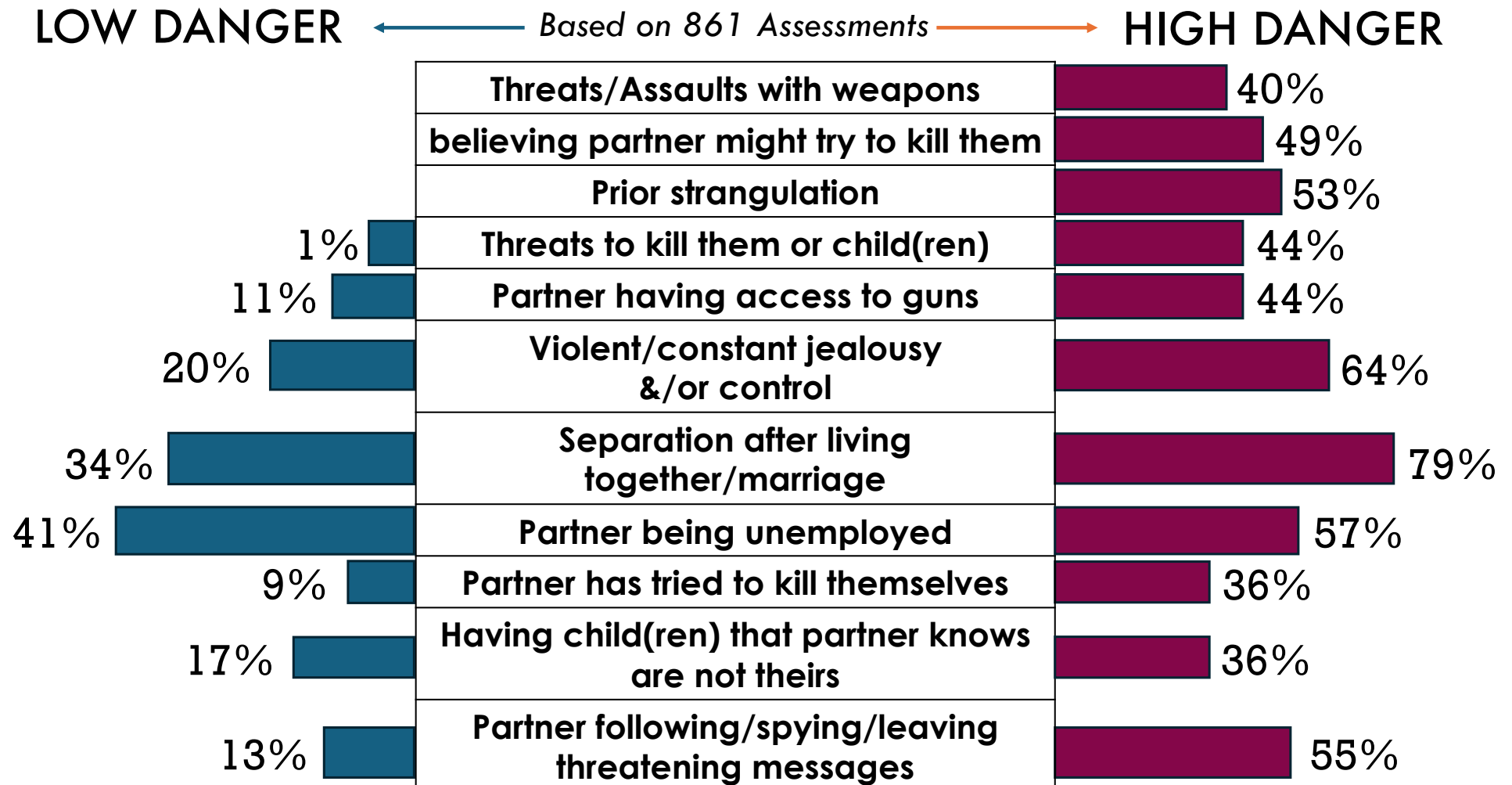
Day of Week	Time of Day												Total # of High Risk victims per day
	06:00 to 08:00 (6 AM to 8 AM)	08:00 to 10:00 (8 AM to 10 AM)	10:00 to 12:00 (10 AM to Noon)	12:00 to 14:00 (Noon to 2 PM)	14:00 to 16:00 (2 PM to 4 PM)	16:00 to 18:00 (4 PM to 6 PM)	18:00 to 20:00 (6 PM to 8 PM)	20:00 to 22:00 (8 PM to 10 PM)	22:00 to 00:00 (10 PM to Midnight)	00:00 to 02:00 (Mid to 2 AM)	02:00 to 04:00 (2 AM to 4 AM)	04:00 to 06:00 (4 AM to 6 AM)	
Monday	3	4	4	7	8	6	10	5	6	2	3	2	60
Tuesday	2	4	5	6	3	7	6	10	4	6	1		54
Wednesday	3	4	5	4	5	10	6	5	3	3	2	4	54
Thursday	2	5	8	8	4	6	6	10	8	3	1	2	63
Friday	1	1	6	8	7	8	10	8	7	4	2		62
Saturday		4	2	4	2	6	5	4	9	7	3	2	48
Sunday	1	2	4	11	4	5	9	8	11	6	10	3	74
Total # of High Risk Victims per time slot	12	24	34	48	33	48	52	50	48	31	22	13	415

HIGH LETHALITY VICTIMS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY:

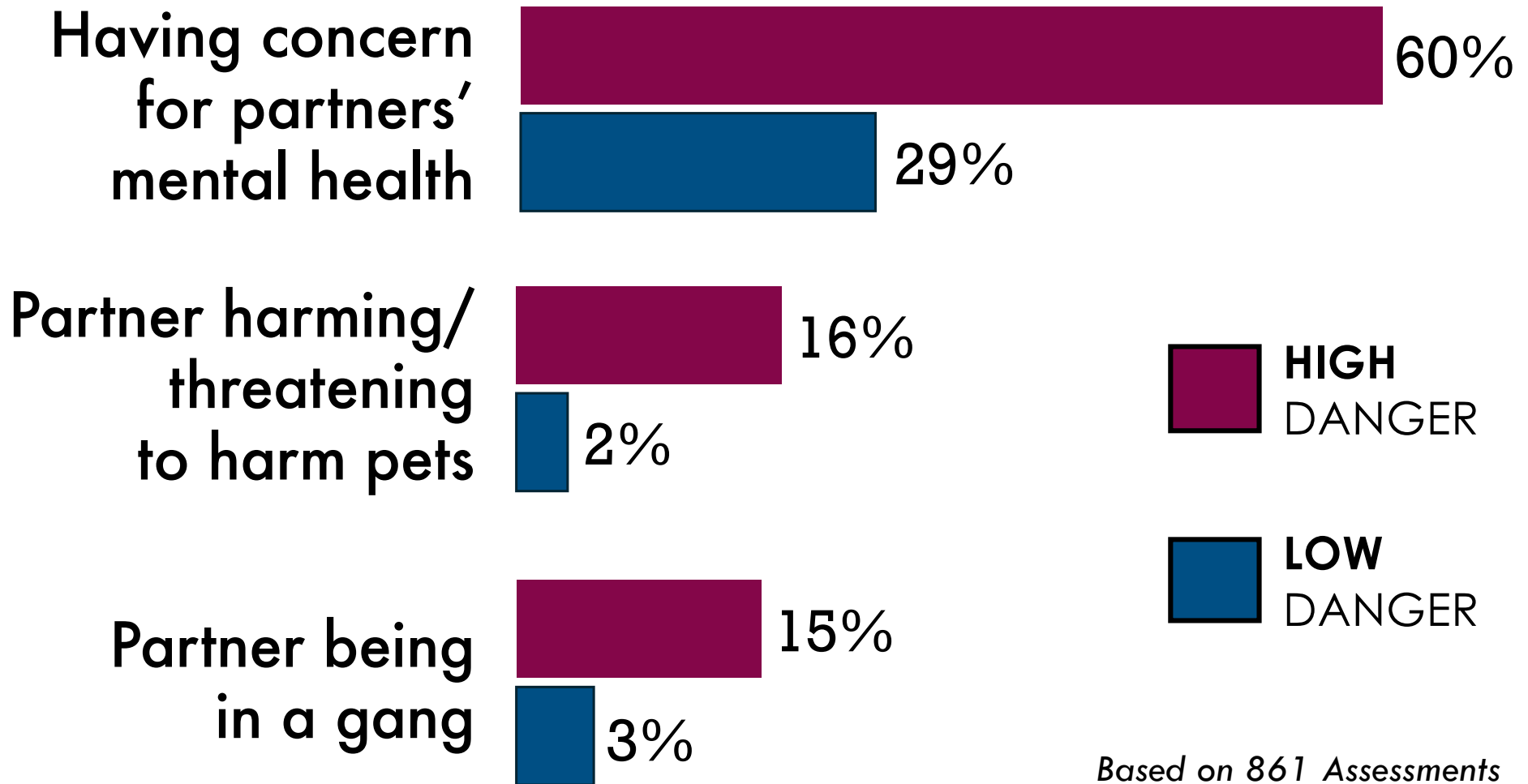


Female victims of male offenders	Victims with injuries	Victims of suspects with previous DV arrests
vs.	vs.	vs.
Male victims of female Offenders	Victims without injuries	No prior DV arrests
36% vs. 27%	57% vs. 29%	55% v. 45%

% OF _____ IPV VICTIMS SAYING 'YES' TO...



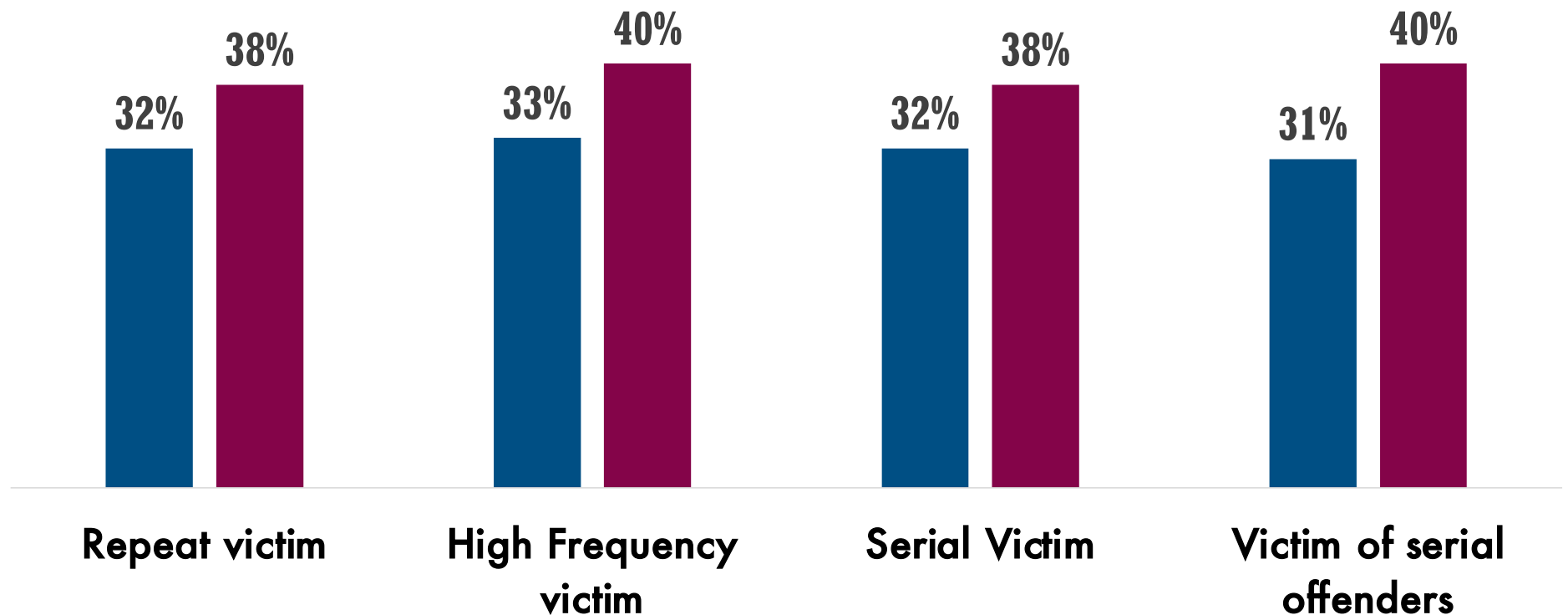
% OF _____ IPV VICTIMS SAYING 'YES' TO...



REPEAT VICTIMS & VICTIMS OF SERIAL OFFENDERS MORE LIKELY TO BE IDENTIFIED AS HIGH RISK FOR LETHALITY

 IDENTIFIED AS **LOW RISK**

 IDENTIFIED AS **HIGH RISK**



“IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT WORRIES YOU ABOUT YOUR SAFETY?”

Escalation and additional physical violence

Stalking/Harassment

Children & family safety

Partner mental health, substance use, & unpredictability

Retaliation by friends, family, or gang associates

OTHER CONCERNS VICTIMS REPORTED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

Escalation and additional physical violence

"Yes, she is afraid of [offender]. Believes he might try to assault her again."

"Does get afraid of him at times because he gets mad."

"Everyday scared for her life."

OTHER CONCERNS VICTIMS REPORTED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

Stalking/Harassment

"Victim is worried,
the suspect will find
her."

"Afraid to
walk to work."

"He won't ever leave
me alone."

"That she'll come to the residence again."

OTHER CONCERNS VICTIMS REPORTED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

Children & family safety

"Worries about children being taken."

"Worried for children and having to leave her home."



Not my
safety,
but my
children's."

"That he will do
something to me
and my children."

OTHER CONCERNS VICTIMS REPORTED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

Partner mental health, substance use, & unpredictability

"Yes, she is worried about his mental state."

"Unstable thinking, drug use, & his mental issues"

"Yes, he is an evil person when he drinks."

"When he is on drugs, she is afraid he might act out."

"He is unpredictable right now."

OTHER CONCERNS VICTIMS REPORTED ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

Retaliation by friends, family, or gang associates

"Yes, his family coming after her."

"His friends and family, because he's told me they can hurt me."

"All the homeless subjects are related to him. She fears retaliation."

"Related to gang members, has made veiled threats."

LESSON #4

Identifying high-risk victims is only the beginning of the intervention

Focus on who, but also, WHY someone is classified as high risk

Educational component often skipped by officers for both low and high-risk victims. Low risk victims still informed about resources; Education about score and safety concerns should be conveyed to high-risk victims

Victim safety concerns moving forward reveal need to educate/monitor for stalking/harassment charges

A photograph showing a police officer in a light-colored uniform shirt and dark belt, holding a clipboard and looking towards a woman. The woman is standing in a doorway, looking down with her hands covering her face, appearing distressed. The background shows a wooden wall and a doorway. Overlaid on the center of the image is a yellow text box with the words "CONNECTING HIGH RISK VICTIMS TO ADVOCATES" in bold black capital letters.

**CONNECTING
HIGH RISK
VICTIMS TO
ADVOCATES**

PATROL PERCEIVED ADVOCATES TO BE HELPFUL

CONNECTING VICTIMS TO ADVOCATES

**POSITIVE
EXPERIENCE**
FOR MOST
OFFICERS

**USING FRAMING
TO ENCOURAGE
VICTIM
PARTICIPATION**

**HOTLINE
ADVOCATES
HELPFUL &
KNOWLEDGEABLE
ABOUT RESOURCES**

PATROL PERCEIVED ADVOCATES TO BE HELPFUL

CONNECTING VICTIMS TO ADVOCATES

“If the victim is high risk, I explain how I have a connection to someone who can help them with additional resources. I call the advocates, give them a synopsis of what happened and some demographic information and then hand the phone to them [the victim].” – YPD officer

PATROL PERCEIVED ADVOCATES TO BE HELPFUL

CONNECTING VICTIMS TO ADVOCATES

“I say things like - ‘this is someone who can help you if you need to relocate and they will do it in a way where your kids can still go to the same school.’ – YPD officer

“I’ve heard that the [YWCA] advocates are not always fans of us [YPD], but I’ve never had a negative interaction with them.” – YPD officer

“They [YWCA advocates] are really good about picking up the phone and helping.’ Mentioned that they had advocates who speak Spanish “– YPD officer/Researcher note

46.8%
(n = 413)

Screened as
high risk for
homicide



Officer called hotline

39%
(n = 167)

67%
(n = 111)

28%
(n = 120)

72%
*Not connected
with advocate?*



Victim connected with Advocate

WHAT PREDICTS VICTIMS' DECISION TO REFUSE TO SPEAK TO ADVOCATES?

Suspect is younger vs. older than victim:
20% vs. 31%

Male victims of female offenders:
14% vs. 29%

More likely to speak to advocate when strangled:
37% vs. 24%

LESSON #5

Strong **LAPs depend on healthy working relationships between police & advocates**

Advocates & officers need to understand each others' roles, responsibilities, and limitations of job

Frame advocacy in a way that informs victims of how advocates can help on scene and beyond

Ongoing communication and check-ins with each other are essential



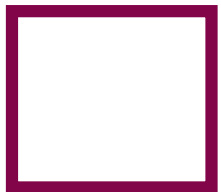
WHAT ARE LETHALITY ASSESSMENT
PROTOCOLS/PROGRAMS (LAP) & HOW DO THEY
WORK?



HOW DOES THE LAP WORK IN PRACTICE?



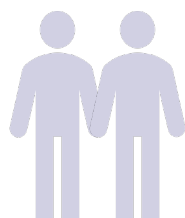
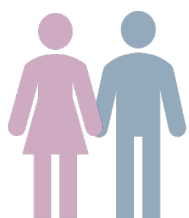
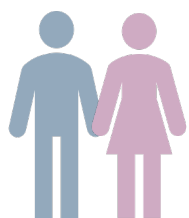
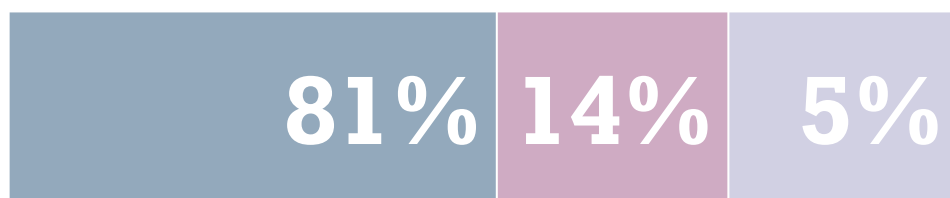
WHEN ARE VICTIMS MOST LIKELY TO DECLINE
PARTICIPATION IN THE LAP?



**HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE
LAP IMPACT CASE OUTCOMES?**

COURT CASE DEMOGRAPHICS

N = 200 arrests



	SUSPECTS	VICTIMS
Age	36 (SD = 11.9) Range: 17-80	36 (SD = 11.5) Range: 18-84
Hispanic	57%	49%
NH White	35%	47%
Mixed/other	8%	3%

Repeat suspect	Repeat victim	Repeat pair
13%	12%	11%

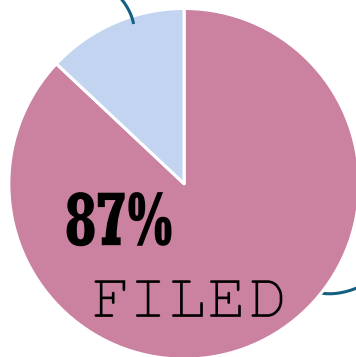
CASE OUTCOMES OF IPV ARRESTS 2023-2024



200
ARRESTS

13%

CHARGES
DISMISSED



24%
FELONY

CASE OUTCOMES OF IPV ARRESTS 2023-2024



200
ARRESTS

Outcome of charges filed

(173 cases)

CONVICTION

47%

DISMISSAL

35%

DEFERRAL /
DIVERSION

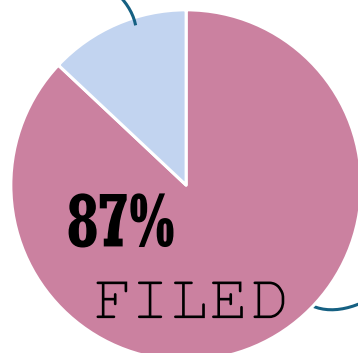
10%

PENDING

8%

13%

CHARGES
DISMISSED



24%
FELONY

CASE OUTCOMES: TOP FIVE MOST COMMON...

	ORIGINAL CHARGES FILED	SERIOUS CHARGES FILED	CHARGES RESULTING IN A CONVICTION	SERIOUS CHARGES RESULTING IN A CONVICTION	CHARGES DROPPED/DISMISSED
1	Protection order violations ^{M & F}	Assault 2 – strangulation ^F	POV ^M	Felony POV ^M	Assault 4 ^M
2	Assault 4 ^M	Burglary/Robbery ^F	Felony POV ^F	Assault 2 – strangulation ^M	Child exposed to DV ^M
3	Harassment ^M	Assault 3 ^F	Assault 4 ^M	Assault 3 – substantial pain ^M	Mal Mischief ^M
4	Malicious mischief ^M	Felony harassment ^F	Harassment ^M	Felony harassment ^M	POV ^M
5	Child exposed to DV ^M	Rape/sex offense ^F	Mal Mischief ^M	POV ^M when felonies dismissed	Harassment ^M

Based on 173 IPV cases filed in Jan 2023 – Dec 2024; M = Misdemeanor/Gross Misdemeanor | F = Felony

SENTENCING & CONDITIONS

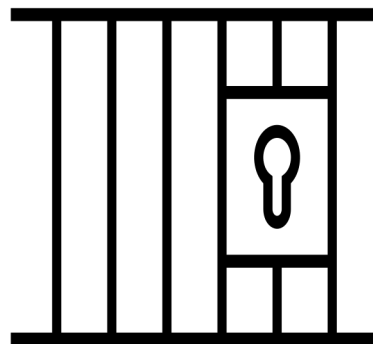


47%
of convictions

(82 cases)

77%

sentenced to one
or more days
of confinement



69 offenders sentenced to jail

Sentence range: 0 to 364 days

Average # of days served: 33 days

Median # of days served: 2 days

12 offenders sentenced to prison

Sentence range: 12 to 102 months

Average # of months: 33 months

Median # of months: 30 months

50% of sentences included probation

Sentence range: 12 to 60 months

Average # of months: 31 months

Median # of months: 24 days

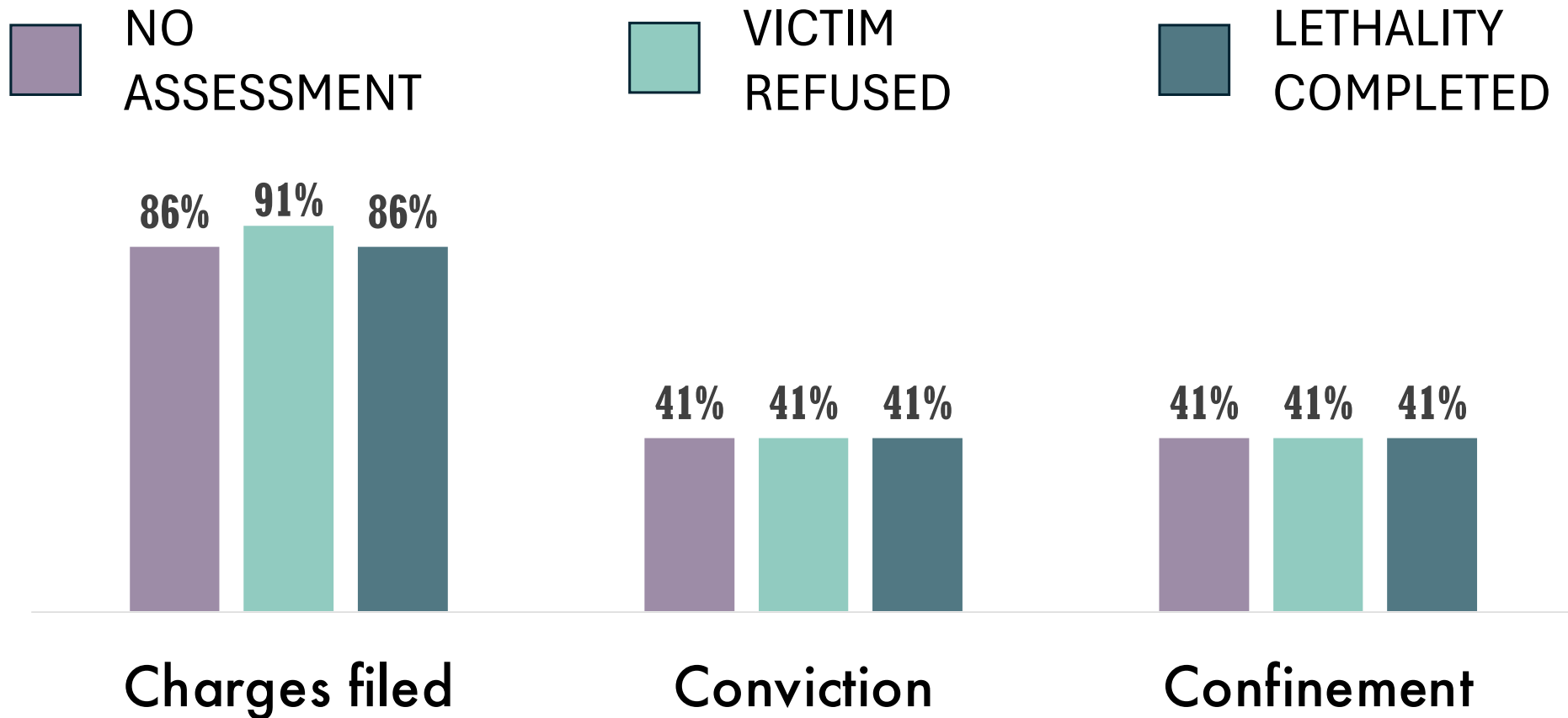
IPV calls and convictions center around gross misdemeanors

No trials - Prosecutors tend to charge stack & use serious crimes to leverage guilty pleas

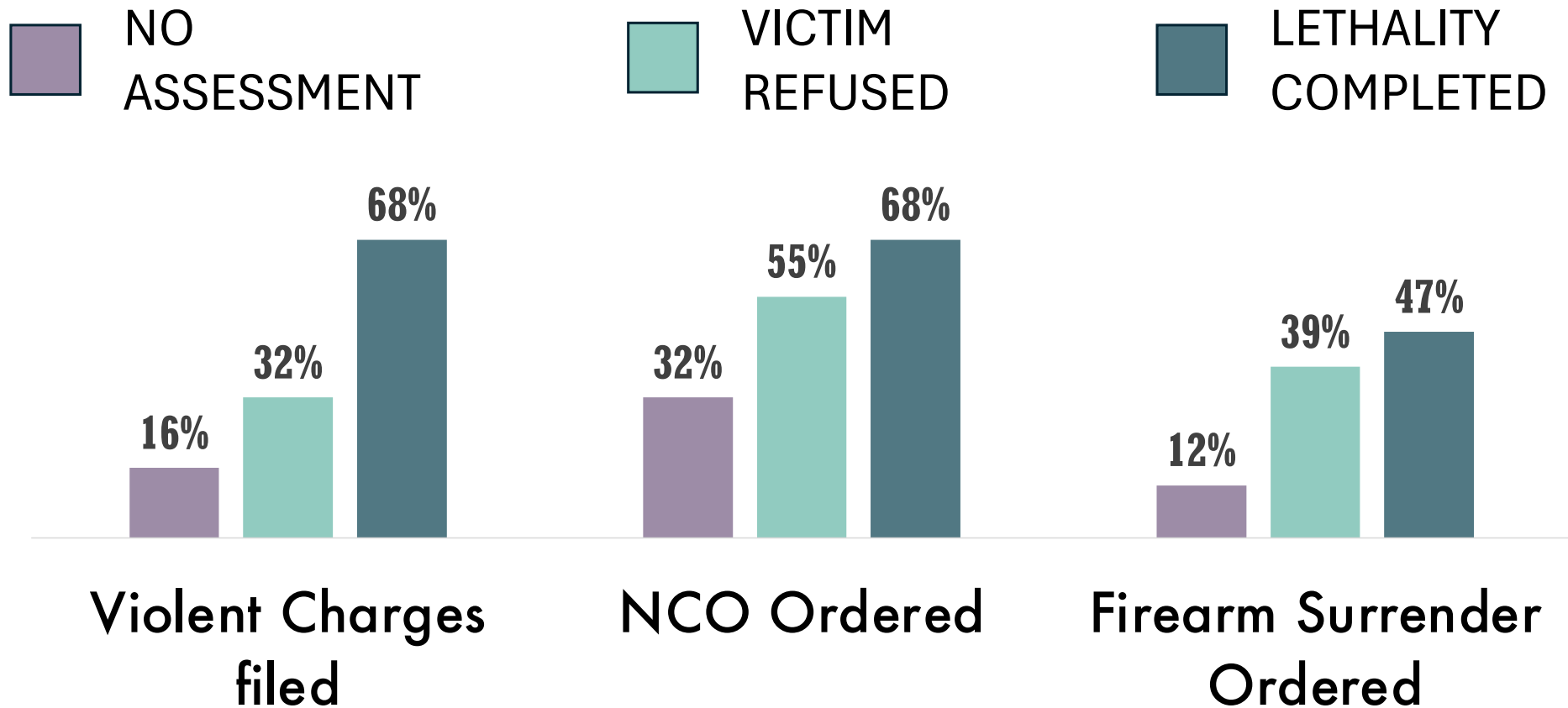
High-severity offenses (strangulation/sex crimes) **often fail to survive conviction**

Plea outcomes skew heavily toward **misdemeanor assault or POVs**

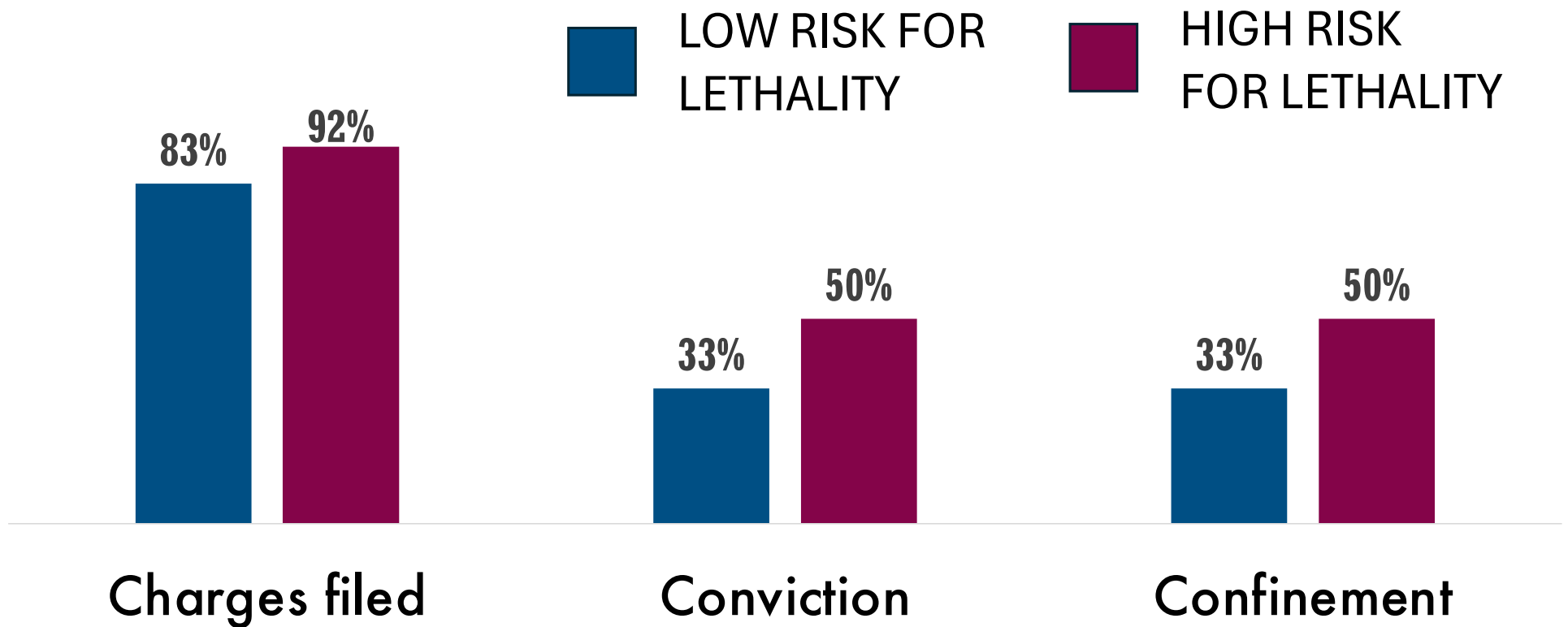
VICTIMS' REFUSAL TO COMPLETE LETHALITY ASSESSMENT **DID NOT** IMPACT CASE OUTCOMES



CASES WITH LETHALITY ASSESSMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENT CHARGES & SENTENCING CONDITIONS



CASES WITH **HIGH LETHALITY VICTIMS MORE LIKELY** TO RESULT IN CONVICTIONS AND CONFINEMENT



CASES **WITH** LETHALITY ASSESSMENTS RESULTED IN LONGER JAIL SENTENCES



~33.7 days
served in jail



~4 days
served in jail

While case outcomes were not impacted by refusals/incomplete assessments, cases with assessments lead to better outcomes

Cases with lethality assessments & higher scores more likely to result in...

Violent charges

More time spent in jail

Convictions

NCOs & Firearm
surrender orders

Confinement

LESSON # 6

The role of **lethality screenings after the call remains largely unanswered**

We know nothing about how lethality screens are used beyond the initial call for service, if at all

Are lethality screens a safety-planning tool? An investigative document? A risk assessment? Evidence? All of the above?

Who gets access to the lethality screen? To what extent is the screen used for pre-trial/sentencing conditions?

MOVING FORWARD

LAPs are useful if implemented and tracked consistently

Lessons learned applicable to implementation efforts across communities

Different screens/protocols for different goals; limited research on lethality screens & criminal-legal decisions

Advocates & crime analyst essential for homicide prevention by tracking and connect high-risk victims/cases

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MY SUMMER WATCHING COPS:

WHY DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE VICTIMS
DO (& DO NOT)
PARTICIPATE IN LETHALITY
ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

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