

# FATALITY REVIEW TEAM 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2023



[WWW.PINELLASCOALITIONTOENDDV.COM](http://WWW.PINELLASCOALITIONTOENDDV.COM)

# REMEMBERING

In 2022, these four women tragically lost their lives at the hands of someone who was supposed to love them. This report honors their memory and is an effort to prevent future tragedies.

*Sharry Ann Colon, 30, Largo*

*Frances "Darlene" Neubert, 72, Dunedin*

*Deborah Ann Waugh, 70, St. Petersburg*

*Crystal Williams, 33, Pinellas Park*



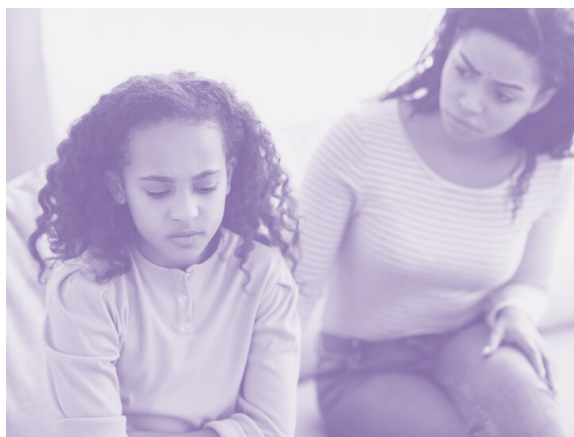
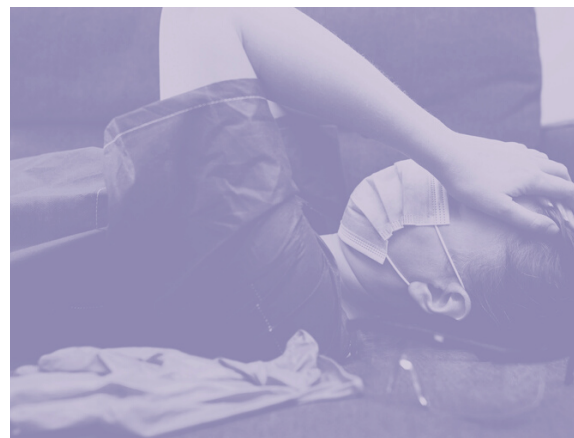
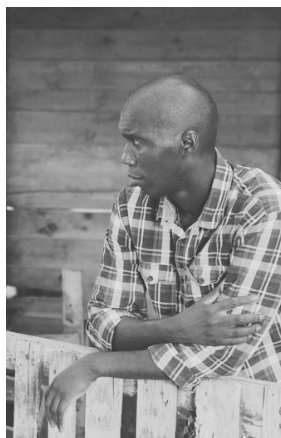
## FOREVER CHANGED

A child left behind after the murder of a parent, a new partner murdered by an ex-partner, a mother left grieving, the neighbor who reported a disturbance, and the emergency responders who arrived on scene are only a few of the people whose lives are tragically affected by intimate partner homicide.

The devastation of intimate partner homicide not only impacts the victim, the entire community is forever changed.

What does it look like to be forever changed? It looks like the child who grows up without a parent and spends their entire life coping with the grief and loss. It looks like the emergency responder who now lives with post-traumatic stress disorder after working the crime scene. It looks like the family member who now questions whether they did everything they could to possibly prevent this. It looks like the prosecutor who spends years fighting in court for justice. It looks like the clergy who is left wondering if they could have intervened more actively. It looks like the neighbor who struggles with the remorse of having not reached out when they saw the bruises or heard the screaming. It looks like the coworker who has nightmares about the day the abuser came to the workplace to threaten everyone and then killed their colleague. It looks like the family and extended family of a victim who is left grieving and trying to understand why, while missing their loved one at every holiday and milestone.

These community members will never be the same. They will continue to deal with the devastation of intimate partner homicide for the remainder of their lives.



# TRENDS

The Pinellas Fatality Review Team reviews intimate partner deaths in an effort to learn from each one and prevent further tragedies. Between 2000 and 2022, our team reviewed 177 cases. Because we understand there are numerous facets to a case, it is important to note that we are limited by the available information provided by Fatality Review Team members and their access to that information. Also, while we track national trends, due to the limitations of information we often are unable to determine if certain factors were in place. From our 177 reviews, consistent patterns have emerged and solidified into what we call trends. The trends we have identified for Pinellas County are on this page. We hope that the community sees recognition of these trends as opportunities to save lives.

## NO BATTERER INTERVENTION

In 89% of the cases, the abuser had not attended nor been referred to a batterer intervention program. In 49 (42%) of the cases, the perpetrators had been previously arrested for domestic violence crimes yet only 12 (25%) had been ordered to batterer intervention. Batterer Intervention Programs (BIP) hold batterers accountable and work to make behavioral change.



Only 16% of the victims had filed for an injunction for protection against violence (restraining order). Injunctions restrict contact and make it easier for police to take action.

## FIREARM USED

In 47% of the cases and 83% of the homicide/suicide cases, a firearm was used. Abusers who own guns are 5 times more likely to kill their partner.



Only 18% of the cases involved a victim having contact with a domestic violence (DV) center. Victims who have contact with a DV center are less likely to be killed.

## SUBSTANCE USE

Abuse of substances was a contributing factor in 71% of the cases. Substance use includes alcohol, marijuana, prescribed medication and synthetic drugs. Substance use in a home with domestic violence increases the chances of lethality.

## CRIMINAL HISTORY

In 73% of cases, the perpetrator had a criminal history involving various crimes, that may or may not have included domestic violence charges. In homes where DV exists, any criminal history increases the chance of homicide.



In 71% of cases, friends, family, coworkers, and/or neighbors knew about intimate partner violence. Calling a domestic violence center for information, resources and how to help can save a life.

## NATIONAL RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE


*Local and national studies consistently demonstrate that the danger level for the victim is heightened when any of these indicators is present.*

- Jealous, possessive behavior
- Controlling behavior
- Separation issues
- Firearm in the home
- Substance use
- Prior threats to kill
- Prior use of a weapon
- Threats with a weapon
- Prior strangulation
- Forced sex



# RESOURCES

You, your loved ones, and our community do not have to be forever changed by intimate partner homicide. We ask that you take action when it is safe to do so. Learning about area resources is one simple way to take action. Below is a list of resources we believe could help save lives in Pinellas County.



For more information regarding **shelter services, support groups, safety planning and general information about intimate partner violence**, Pinellas County has two domestic violence centers:

- The Haven of Hope Villages of America 727-442-4128 [www.hopevillagesofamerica.org/help/#domestic](http://www.hopevillagesofamerica.org/help/#domestic)
  - CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse) 727-895-4912 [www.casapinellas.org](http://www.casapinellas.org)
- For **sexual assault services**, please contact:
- Suncoast Center Inc. 727-530-7273 [www.suncoastcenter.org](http://www.suncoastcenter.org)



For **legal assistance**

- Gulfcoast Legal Services 727-821-0726 [www.gulfcoastlegal.org](http://www.gulfcoastlegal.org)
- Community Law Program 727-582-7480. [www.lawprogram.org](http://www.lawprogram.org)



For assistance regarding **mental health treatment and/or substance abuse support**, please contact

- Suncoast Center for Mental Health: 727-388-1220 [www.suncoastcenter.org](http://www.suncoastcenter.org)
- Directions for Living: 727-524-4464 [www.directionsforliving.org](http://www.directionsforliving.org)
- Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services: 727-479-1800 [www.gulfcoastjewishfamilyandcommunityservices.org](http://www.gulfcoastjewishfamilyandcommunityservices.org)
- Pinellas Enrichment Through Mental Health Services (PEHMS) 24 hours mental health line: 727-541-4628
- Operation PAR [www.operationpar.org](http://www.operationpar.org) 1-888-PARNEXT (1-888-727-6398)
- National suicide and crisis lifeline - call or text 24 hours a day: 988




For information about **Batterer's Intervention Programs** contact The Haven of Hope Villages of America, CASA or your local Victim Advocate associated with your law enforcement agency.




To **search criminal history and arrest records free of charge**, Pinellas County has two ways to access information:

- Pinellas County Sherriff's Department-Jail Intake <http://pcsoweb.com/InmateBooking/>
- Pinellas County Clerk of Court [www.mypinellasclerk.org](http://www.mypinellasclerk.org)



**Injunctions for protection** can be filed at one of three court buildings in Pinellas County. You may also call the clerk's office at 727-464-7000 or visit their website at [www.mypinellasclerk.org](http://www.mypinellasclerk.org)

- Civil Court Records - 315 Court Street, Room 170, Clearwater
- Pinellas County Justice Center - 14250 49th Street North, 2nd floor, Clearwater
- St. Petersburg Branch Office - 545 First Avenue North, Room 154, St. Petersburg



For information and **support for seniors**, please contact Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc 727-570-9696 or 1-800-963-5337 [www.agingcarefl.org](http://www.agingcarefl.org)

To **report child or elder abuse**, please call the Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

For more information on intimate partner homicide or this report, please contact: Frieda Widera, Chairperson, Fatality Review Team - Largo Police Department, 201 Highland Avenue, Largo, FL 33770 PH: 727-586-7481 Email: [fwidera@largo.com](mailto:fwidera@largo.com)

To join the Pinellas County Coalition to End Domestic Violence (formerly Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force)- visit our website [www.pinellascoalitiontoenddv.com](http://www.pinellascoalitiontoenddv.com) or attend our next General Assembly Meeting. We meet odd months of the year, the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 2-4 pm at the Barbara Ponce Library in Pinellas Park. Chairperson: Jennifer Young at [jennifer@counselingforyourself.com](mailto:jennifer@counselingforyourself.com)