



Executive Summary

Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force
Fatality Review Team
May 2019

Our team reviewed 8 cases in 2018, bringing the total reviewed between 2000 and 2018 to 155 cases. We review intimate partner homicides, homicide/suicides, and near fatalities. We only review closed cases (investigated, prosecuted with a resolution if appropriate). We only review intimate partner homicides. We operate with a high level of trust rooted in confidentiality. Because we understand there are numerous facets to a case, it is important to note that we are limited by the information provided by Fatality Review Team members and their access to that information.

The purpose of reviews and subsequent annual reports is threefold:

1. To honor victims and their loved ones as we learn from their tragedies and work to prevent future domestic partner homicides.
2. To raise awareness of the prevalence and devastation of domestic partner homicides and near fatalities.
3. To serve as a practical tool for those who are in a position to try to prevent domestic partner homicides and near fatalities in our community.

When reviewing cases, we identify emerging and persistent patterns or trends. Our team consistently finds that our Pinellas trends align with national trends. In particular, victim had no contact with a domestic violence center (83% of cases), a male perpetrator/subject and female victim (86%), substance use by perpetrator/subject (71%), others knew about violence (71%), criminal history of perpetrator/subject (70%), low income for perpetrator/subject (67%), system involvement in the lives of the parties (63%), perpetrator/subject unemployed or underemployed (61%), perpetrator/subject had indications of mental health issues (48%), firearm used in incident (45%), recent separation issues (40%), and perpetrator/subject had prior arrests for domestic violence (40%). In addition, there was an age difference of 6 or more years between the parties (48%).

While we track other national trends, due to the limitations of information we often are unable to determine if certain factors were in place. For example, prior strangulation (12% of our cases), possessive or controlling behavior (37%), stalking (11%), threats with a weapon, threats to kill (8%), weapon(s) in home (7%), prior suicide threats or attempts by perpetrator/subject (10%), and forced sex (4%). We have identified cyberstalking as an emerging trend and began tracking it in 2018.

Our team recognizes others knowing about the violence as an opportunity for change. Therefore, this year our annual report is one page that includes a graphic of risk factors for intimate partner homicide and a call to action for everyone to recognize and understand the seriousness of these factors and to do something.

In an effort to turn tragedy into change, our hope is that each person reading this utilizes the information to save lives in the future.

*For further information contact the Pinellas County Fatality Review Team Chairperson,
Frieda Widera via email at fwidera@largo.com*

Here's What You Need to Know

Pinellas County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team -
A Committee of the Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force



INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE



Is Someone You Know at Risk?

These factors increase the risk of someone you know being killed by their intimate partner.

-  **WEAPON IN HOME**
-  **SUBSTANCE USE BY PERPETRATOR**
-  **PERPETRATOR UNEMPLOYED OR UNDEREMPLOYED**
-  **SEPARATION ISSUES**
- FORCED SEX**
-  **ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE**
-  **JEALOUS, CONTROLLING OR STALKING BEHAVIOR**
-  **THREATS TO KILL VICTIM**
- THREATS OR ATTEMPTS TO COMMIT SUICIDE**
-  **PRIOR CRIMINAL HISTORY BY PERPETRATOR**
-  **STRANGULATION**

In the United States, 55% of women who are murdered are murdered by their intimate partner (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). There is no doubt that all of these women were part of a community that included family, friends, coworkers, classmates and neighbors. And there is also no doubt that the people who loved them may not have known how to help them.

In our review of Pinellas County Intimate Partner homicides, 71% of the time, friends or family were aware of some of these risk factors. They knew, but likely did not realize that these factors presented an increased risk for homicide. On its own, each factor in the infographic represents serious danger, but any of these combined may increase the risk of being killed.

When more than one of the factors is happening, it is time to assist your loved one in getting help. You can help by sharing this information with them, being available to help with safety planning and support, listening to them, respecting their choices, and/or offering to reach out to a domestic violence center or law enforcement.

If someone you know is the one displaying these dangerous behaviors, it is your responsibility to let them know their behavior is unacceptable. You can also call law enforcement, reach out to the victim to help them stay safe, or reach out to a batterer intervention program.

Recognizing *and* understanding the seriousness of these factors saves lives. Taking no action when these factors are present may result in the death of your loved ones and friends.

For more information visit:

<https://pinellasdvtf.weebly.com/how-to-help-someone.html>