

Reading the Signs

For participants in the MNADV's Lethality Assessment Program for First Responders

Training Bulletin

- Subject:** About the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP)
- Purpose:** To remind officers how the LAP works and what its objectives are
- Instructions:**
- (1) Add your jurisdiction's domestic violence homicide information below (see Conclusion).
 - (2) May read verbatim.
 - (3) Footnotes are for reader's use and information.

Goal of the LAP

We participate in the Lethality Assessment Program. The LAP, as it's called, identifies victims of domestic violence who run the highest risk of being murdered and actively tries to get them help. The goal of the LAP is to prevent domestic homicides and to stop the recurrence of assaults in high risk situations.

When to Initiate a Screen

In domestic violence cases in which you are dealing with any kind of intimate partner situation¹ and (1) you believe an assault has occurred, (2) the names or location are repeats, or (3) you just feel that the situation is dangerous, initiate a Lethality Screen.²

What to Say to a High Danger Victim

If a victim "screens in" as being in "High Danger,"³ tell her:

- (1) She's in a dangerous situation;
- (2) In situations like hers people have been killed (*Be sure to say this to the victim*);
- (3) You are going to call the domestic violence hotline for advice (*The number is on the Screen*); and
- (4) You would like her to speak with the hotline worker when you finish.

Calling the Hotline

Call the hotline for ALL High Danger victims, even though a victim initially indicates she doesn't want to speak with a hotline worker. If, at first, she says she doesn't want to speak with the hotline worker, encourage her to reconsider, both before making the call and after speaking with the hotline worker. That's your main task: trying to get the victim on the phone. If she doesn't get on the phone, the hotline can't work with her and encourage her to go into services. Getting the victim into domestic violence services is likely the victim's best chance of survival and the main objective of the program.

Conclusion: Make Your Response Count!

We haven't had a domestic violence homicide in a long time; let's try to keep it that way (*or, "we've had ___ domestic violence homicides over the past ___; let's try to have none."*) In 50% of domestic violence homicides, police had previously responded to the location. Make your response count!

¹ husband-wife, ex husband-wife, boyfriend-girlfriend, ex boyfriend-girlfriend, dating currently or in the past, children in common, same sex relationship

² Show the Lethality Screen and ask everyone if they have copies.

³ The standards for scoring are on the Lethality Screen.