

Reading the Signs

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

Training Bulletin

- Subject:** Filling out the Lethality Screen
Purpose: To remind officers to mark the correct boxes
Instructions: (1) Read at roll calls, issue to officers, and post in your station.
(2) See the reverse for a visual representation of this bulletin.
(for officer use and posting only)

Collection of Data—Accuracy Is Key!

Since implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) in 2005, the collection of data, taken directly from each Lethality Screen, has been the key reason the LAP has grown to reach so many victims and practitioners in Maryland, been recognized as a Top 50 Program in the country, and now has reached a national audience. Your entries on each individual Lethality Screen tell us how the LAP is working. Accuracy is critical.

Marking the Lethality Screen Correctly

Besides correctly marking each of the 11 questions according to the victim's answers, there are four areas on the Lethality Screen that are important for tracking victims and monitoring the LAP:

1. **At the top of the Lethality Screen.** Complete the five boxes—officer, date, case #, victim and offender. This allows the local domestic violence program to track victims who go in for services and to credit your agency for its part in that effort.
2. **Just below the top of the Lethality Screen.** Do as the instruction reads: "Check here if victim did not answer any of the questions." Encourage the victim to answer, but if she/he still declines, your administration of the Screen is complete. This is an area that law enforcement has improved on in the three years we have been capturing data, from 8% in 2006 to 6% today.
3. **"Check one" near the bottom of the Lethality Screen.**
 - If the "victim screened according to the protocol," she/he answered "yes" to at least one of the top three questions, or to four of Questions #4 through #11. 57% screen in according to the protocol.
 - If the "victim screened in based on the belief of the officer," despite the victim's answers to the questions, you believed that the victim was in danger and elected to call the hotline. Less than 5% screen in based on your belief. This seems to be an appropriate level.
 - If the "victim did not screen in," she/he answered "no" to all of the first three questions, "no" to less than four of the remaining questions, and you did not consider the victim to be a "high danger" case.
4. **If the victim screened in at the bottom of the Lethality Screen.** In EVERY case where a victim screens in at "high danger," ensure that you correctly check "yes" or "no" as to whether the victim spoke on the phone to the hotline worker. 56% of "high danger" victims speak on the phone with the hotline worker. And remember: **WHENEVER a victim screens in at "high danger," MAKE THE CALL to the hotline whether or not the victim initially indicates that she/he wants to speak to the hotline worker.**