**Scope and Scale of Violence against Women in Our Community**

*Centralizing the experience of all women and all communities*

*A note on “data”*

We commonly think of “data” as equaling numbers. Certainly counting things is important, such as number of calls to 911 or reported rapes or cases charged or convictions. In understanding and articulating the scope and scale of violence against women, however, we want more than numbers. Other sources of data—other ways of knowing—are also essential to drawing a full picture of what is happening in our communities. These sources include: survivors’ stories about their experiences and needs and how community systems have responded; and analysis of the extent to which policies and protocols reflect recommended practice.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Strategies and sources for finding data*** | | |
| * State, national, & global sources | | |
| * Tribal coalitions | niwrc.org/tribal-coalitions | |
| * State & territorial coalitions | nnedv.org/resources/coalitions.html | |
| * National TA providers | ta2ta.org | |
| * National Institute of Justice Violence Against Women & Family Violence Program | nij.gov/topics/crime/violence-against-women/Pages/welcome.aspx | |
| * Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Stalking Data Resource Center | jrsa.org/projects/domviol.html | |
| * National Intimate Partner & Sexual Violence Survey | cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/ | |
| * World Health Organization | who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/ | |
| * Statistical reports * Community-based advocates * Police * Prosecutor * Courts * Probation * SANE / SART * State, national, & global | * Talking with survivors of VAW * Focus groups /listening circles * Individual interviews * Talking with community-based advocates & others that work with survivors * Domestic violence programs * Rape crisis centers/sexual assault * Culturally-specific organizations | |
| * Mapping the steps in case processing * Analysis of case files & reports * Observing how cases get processed, such as: * Sitting with 911 call-taker * Riding with patrol officers * Sitting in court | * Interviews with practitioners in community institutions: | |
| * 911 call-takers * Patrol officers * Investigators * Prosecutors * Victim/witness specialist * Judges & court staff | * Probation agents * Tribal attorney * Tribal court judge & staff * Batterer intervention |
| * Praxis International Institutional Analysis – praxisinternational.org * Praxis Safety & Accountability Audit/Community Assessment * Domestic Violence Best Practice Assessment Tools * Supporting the Safety of Battered Mothers and Their Children Together: A Guide to Assessing Child Protection Practice in Domestic Violence-Related Cases | | |

**Scope and Scale of Violence against Women in Our Community:**

**A Data-Gathering Template**

This data-gathering template does not cover all possible questions you might want to ask. To illustrate the process, it includes examples that are more specific to the criminal legal system response and the general community. You would develop similar but different information if you were looking at other systems or processes—e.g., child welfare, orders for protection, campus sexual assault, intervention by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners—or experiences of specific communities, such as Native American, immigrant, LBTBQ, people with disabilities, or elders.

*Instructions*

It is unlikely that any community will have all of this information available or readily accessible. While the goal of the exercise is to see what you can readily recall or have available, the key goal is to stimulate thinking and provide examples of the kind of data that is necessary to draw a full picture of the scope and scale of violence against women in a community.

1. Review each data element in Column A.
2. Do you happen to know the answer? Write it in Column B.
3. Do you know where to find the information? Where would you look? Who would you talk with? Note that in Column C.

| **Section 1: Sexual violence in our community** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Data element** | 1. **NUMBERS** (most recent year) | 1. **Where would you look? Who would you talk with?** |
| **Law enforcement** | | |
| Sexual assaults reported to police |  |  |
| Open cases – no arrest |  |  |
| Open cases – arrest made |  |  |
| Closed as unfounded[[1]](#footnote-1) (false)[[2]](#footnote-2) |  |  |
| Closed as unfounded (baseless)[[3]](#footnote-3) |  |  |
| Exceptionally cleared[[4]](#footnote-4) |  |  |
| Closed – no charges, no arrest |  |  |
| **Prosecution** | | |
| Charged by prosecution |  |  |
| Declined by prosecution |  |  |
| Dismissed after charging – victim’s req |  |  |
| Dismissed after charging – other reasons |  |  |
| Guilty plea as charged (sexual assault) |  |  |
| Guilty plea to lesser charge |  |  |
| Guilty plea to non-sexual assault charge |  |  |
| Trial & guilty verdict to sexual assault |  |  |
| Trial & guilty verdict to non-sexual assault |  |  |
| Trial & acquittal – not guilty verdict |  |  |
| **Advocacy** | | |
| Crisis/help line calls |  |  |
| Reported sexual assaults |  |  |
| Accompaniments to ER, hospital, clinic |  |  |
| **Women/survivor stories – lived experience** | | |
| Descriptions of the harm caused by sexual violence |  |  |
| The response of community systems to that harm |  |  |
| A clear picture of how survivors’ needs are met |  |  |
| A clear picture of how survivors’ needs are *not* met |  |  |
| What are the culturally distinct communities within our wider community? |  |  |
| Is the response working for all women/survivors in all communities?   * If yes, how do we know that? * If no, how do we know that? |  |  |

| **Section 2: Battering & other forms of domestic violence in our community** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Data element** | 1. **Numbers**   (most recent year) | 1. **Where would you look? Who would you talk with?** |
| **Law enforcement** | | |
| DV homicides (intimate partner or collateral) |  |  |
| DV homicides (non-intimate partner) |  |  |
| 911 calls (following or similar codes):   * Domestic violence/abuse * Stalking * Sexual assault * Bail violations (DV charge) * Order for protection violations * Domestic abuse – “verbal only” |  |  |
| Patrol response: no arrest – report written |  |  |
| Patrol response: no arrest – no report |  |  |
| Patrol response: suspect gone-on-arrival |  |  |
| Patrol response: arrest   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Cases referred to investigator for follow-up |  |  |
| Referred to prosecutor   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Arrests of female offenders (intimate partner relationship)   * Male victim * Female victim |  |  |
| Arrests of male offenders (intimate partner relationship)   * Female victim * Male victim |  |  |
| **Prosecution** | | |
| Charged by prosecution as:   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Declined by prosecution   * Misdemeanor arrest charge * Felony arrest charge |  |  |
| Dismissed after charging – victim’s request   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Dismissed after charging – other reasons   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Guilty plea as charged   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Guilty plea to lesser charge   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Trial & guilty verdict   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Trial & acquittal – not guilty verdict   * Misdemeanor * Felony |  |  |
| Diversion / deferred prosecution agreement |  |  |
| Cases prosecuted with female offender (intimate partner relationship)   * Male victim * Female victim |  |  |
| Cases prosecuted with male offender (intimate partner relationship)   * Female victim * Male victim |  |  |
| **Advocacy** | | |
| Crisis/help line calls |  |  |
| Requests for emergency shelter |  |  |
| Legal advocacy – assistance with protection order process |  |  |
| Legal advocacy – court accompaniment (criminal case) |  |  |
| **Victim/survivor stories – women’s lived experience** | | |
| Descriptions of the harm caused by battering and other forms of domestic violence |  |  |
| The response of community systems to that harm |  |  |
| A clear picture of how survivors’ needs are being met |  |  |
| A clear picture of how survivors’ needs are *not* being met |  |  |
| Are battered women being arrested? |  |  |
| What is happening to battered women who are arrested? |  |  |
| What are the culturally distinct communities within our wider community? |  |  |
| Is the response working for all survivors in all communities?   * If yes, how do we know that? * If no, how do we know that? |  |  |

1. “Baseless” and “False” report determinations are most often reported together under the single category of “Unfounded” in Uniform Crime Report Data. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “False” is determined by the intervening agency as a crime that was not committed or attempted. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Baseless” is defined as not meeting the elements of the offense or initially improperly coded. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Exceptionally cleared involves four criteria: 1) defendant is identified, 2) there is enough evidence to support arrest, 3) offenders location is known, and 4) offender no longer possible to arrest (deceased, incarcerated in another state, etc.). This has been known to be inappropriately applied when some of the elements are present, but not the others. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)