

THE CRIME OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Training and Discussion Facilitation Guide

The purpose of *The Crime of Domestic Violence* training video is to present information regarding the complexities of domestic violence and how law enforcement and partners can effectively respond to victims and hold perpetrators accountable. This discussion guide is designed to reinforce key information highlighted in the video, encourage discussion on additional topics and promising practices, and assist law enforcement in applying this information to their local community.

SEGMENT 1: CRITICAL CONTEXT

1. Define domestic violence/interpersonal violence. Review local/state/tribal/campus statute on domestic violence.
2. What tactics do perpetrators of domestic violence employ to gain and maintain power and control over victims?
3. There may be victim behaviors that seem counterintuitive or frustrate individuals responding to domestic violence cases.
1) Discuss these behaviors; 2) identify reasons why they may occur; and 3) consider strategies to effectively support victims and proceed with the case when these behaviors are present.
4. Why may a victim of domestic violence hesitate to reach out for support or help?
5. How is domestic violence “a relationship that evolves over time?”
6. Why is it critical to capture the history of the relationship and abuse, physical and non-physical, that has occurred?
7. What additional barriers/challenges may individuals in the following communities have to leaving an abusive relationship or contacting law enforcement (be sure to discuss the

intersectionality of communities and experiences)? What specific needs during initial response and/or after contacting law enforcement may these individuals have?

- Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Individuals who are gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, or gender non-conforming
- Adolescents/teens
- Individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities
- Older adults
- Immigrants/non-English speakers

SEGMENT 2: ON-SCENE RESPONSE

1. How do incident based crimes differ from course of conduct crimes? Why is it critical to investigate domestic violence as a course of conduct crime?
2. While on scene of a call for domestic violence, what steps should law enforcement take to properly identify the predominant aggressor? What are the potential consequences of not identifying the correct person?
3. Discuss offensive and defensive injuries. How can responding officers distinguish between these injuries?
4. What questions may be helpful to ask victims in order to gather additional information, identify potential risks, and best support victims? What questions may be harmful or have a negative impact on victims?
5. Victims of domestic violence may be significantly impacted by the traumatic event that occurred. How might this affect the way they present to law enforcement? How may this impact their memory and recollection?
6. Discuss perpetrator behaviors that may not be criminal, but can be threatening to or cause fear in a victim of domestic violence.
7. How can a victim's decision not to participate in a case serve as evidence?
8. What ways can law enforcement show their support and understanding of victims of domestic violence when on scene?
9. What critical information should responding officers capture in

domestic violence reports? How may information from previous incidents involving the same individuals impact officers who respond at a later date?

10. Why is it critical that officers thoroughly and accurately document statements that occur before the start of an official interview? (Refer to *Crawford v. Washington* and *Davis v. Washington*.)
11. What crimes may co-occur in the context of domestic violence?
12. What are the signs and symptoms of strangulation? What questions can officers ask a victim to identify if strangulation occurred?
13. Discuss the statement: “Leaving a violent relationship is not an event, but a process.”
14. If children are at the scene, what additional actions or protocols should officers consider?

SEGMENT 3: OFFENDER REALITIES & THREATS TO OFFICERS

1. What tactics do perpetrators of domestic violence employ to gain and maintain power and control over victims? How may perpetrators use these tactics on responding officers?
2. How may law enforcement be seen as a “problem” to perpetrators of domestic violence?
3. Discuss what information law enforcement should have before arriving on the scene of a domestic violence call. Why is this information important? What details are pertinent to increasing officer safety?
4. What information can law enforcement elicit from a victim and witnesses that may increase officer safety?
5. What may an increase in calls to law enforcement or frequency in the incidents of abuse indicate?
6. Discuss various challenges that officers in rural and urban areas may face when responding to domestic violence calls.
7. How may information from previous incidents impact officers who respond at a later date?
8. Discuss strategies that may increase officer safety when responding to domestic violence calls.

SEGMENT 4: WORKING TOGETHER

1. In the film, it was stated: “Everyone can play a role that is meaningful to the victim.” When working with victims of domestic violence, how can forming community partnerships benefit victims? Law enforcement?
2. Discuss how victim advocates can support law enforcement investigations.
3. What needs may a victim of domestic violence have after leaving an abusive relationship?
4. How can community partnerships strengthen the response to:
 - Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
 - Individuals who are gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, or gender non-conforming
 - Adolescents/teens
 - Individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities
 - Older adults
 - Immigrants/non-English speakers
5. What resources or organizations are available in your community to support victims?
6. What community organizations has your department developed relationships with in order to support victims of domestic violence? What partnerships can be established to better support victims of domestic violence?
7. What effective practices or programs has your department implemented to better support victims?
8. What can law enforcement agencies and officers do to build rapport and trust with various communities within their jurisdiction?
9. How do you access your state victims’ compensation programs?

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

Flagstaff Police Department (AZ) • Prescott Police Department (AZ)
Pitt County Sheriff’s Department (NC) • Putnam County Sheriff’s Department (WV)
Cleveland Municipal Court (OH) • Glendale Advocacy Center (AZ) • Branches, Inc. (WV)
Post Falls Police Department (ID) • Baltimore Police Department (MD)
Nashville Public Television (TN)

**AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS AND SURVIVORS
WITHOUT WHOM THIS VIDEO WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.**