

Recommendations for Schools and Boards of Education

School personnel and Boards of Education are uniquely positioned to impact safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project has developed recommendations geared to reduce incidents of domestic violence and domestic violence-related homicide. To affect change, local communities must work diligently to implement these recommendations, which were developed by fatality review teams across the state. Acting on established best practices and calls to action from the Project's 15-year history is how Georgia will see real change in the future.

Address Abusive Behaviors Among Students

- + Partner with the local domestic violence program to incorporate nationally recognized teen dating violence curricula into school programming. Three suggested curricula include Safe Dates, Love Is Not Abuse, and The Fourth "R."
- + Institute age-appropriate healthy relationships discussions and implement school-based prevention programs targeting bullying, interpersonal conflict, sexual violence, and dating violence. Programs are available to teach students to recognize healthy, safe qualities and behaviors in relationships.
 - o Collaborate with your local domestic violence program(s) to develop an informed program to address healthy relationships, teen dating violence, and domestic violence response.
 - o Suggested curricula include Safe Dates, Love Is Not Abuse, and The Fourth "R." Many, including the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's "Take a Stand FOR Healthy Teen Relationships" are designed for in-school use. Visit [NCADV.org/teens4healthyrelationships](https://www.ncadv.org/teens4healthyrelationships) to download the program's materials for students grades 6–12.
 - o School personnel including teachers, counselors, School Resource Officers, office staff, coaches and school leadership should also receive training on identifying and responding to relationship violence among students.
- + Increase awareness of resources available to teens, such as textlines. Georgia teens can contact the Breaking Silence Teen Textline any time at (706) 765-8019 for confidential support. Love Is Respect also offers teens a safe place to connect with an advocate via text. Users can text "loveis" to 22522 to receive assistance from a peer advocate.
- + Provide adequate funding to ensure at least one part-time social worker is available at each school.
- + Provide parents and guardians with information on teen dating violence warning signs and resources for help.



- + To comprehensively address the problem, systems responders must assess their unique position to determine how they can impact change. All stakeholders must take immediate steps to address abusers' issues of non-compliance with court orders or new incidents of abuse.

Ensure School System Employees are Educated

- + Develop and implement policies and protocols for responding to domestic and dating violence among students, families, and staff.
- + Partner with a local domestic violence program to educate teachers, administrators, counselors, and health care providers on domestic violence, dating violence, and the warning signs of abuse.
- + Include messaging in public education and outreach efforts directed to family members and friends. Incorporate tips for how to support a victim, where to call for help, and recognizing signs of escalating danger. Provide supportive resources which assist bystanders in processing helpful ways to support someone close to them experiencing or perpetrating violence.
- + Make contact information for domestic violence programs available on a widespread basis in all of Georgia's communities. Both traditional and non-traditional systems will benefit from referral information for supportive services such as the statewide domestic violence hotline 1-800-33-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836) and local domestic violence programs.
 - o Provide warm referrals to domestic violence advocates for ongoing supportive services and safety planning.
 - o Make brochures and materials on domestic violence program services available in school offices and teachers lounges.
- + Secure basic safety planning training for all responders and service providers. Training on safety planning provides an excellent opportunity to bridge the gap between domestic violence programs and other agencies in contact with victims, and enhances the coordinated community response to intimate partner violence.
- + Ensure responders from across the spectrum receive training on the issue of intimate partner stalking, particularly in regard to digital abuse in dating relationships. The training should incorporate both the identification of stalking behaviors and how to respond to intimate partner stalking in accordance with best practices within their field.
- + Work in partnership with other community service providers to develop new resources and services which benefit child witnesses of abuse. Proactive responses to children exposed to domestic violence require significant commitment from their community and local service providers. Every system can play a role in assisting children exposed to



domestic violence. Family connections, local school boards, teachers, faith-based youth groups, after-school programs, camp counselors and coaches are each positioned to develop resilience in children and to provide warm referrals to existing resources. Every system should promote programs for children and teens which teach coping skills, positive and healthy relationships and how to identify and manage emotions.

School Resource Officers

- + Ensure school resource officers have the resources, training and information they need to respond to relationship violence. Because officers are often the first point of contact victims will have with “the system,” how their case is handled often sets the tone for future requests for assistance or intervention by victims. Ensuring officers have a dynamic understanding of the problem of domestic violence and how to intervene is vital. Providing any additional resources and support they need to do their job effectively is imperative.
 - + Read and implement recommendations for law enforcement officers available at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com
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Use the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report

- + Read and Remember
 - o Read the fatality review reports and remember the stories of those who have lost their lives to domestic violence.
 - o Share victims’ names and stories at events that honor domestic violence victims and survivors.
- + Share with Others
 - o Copies of this report and prior reports are available at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com. Email the link to coworkers, advocates, judges, police officers, mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, attorneys, health care workers, religious leaders, teachers, family, and friends.
 - o Print the sections you think are relevant to others’ work and share these sections with them.
 - o Print sections as handouts and use them in community presentations.
- + Discuss with Coworkers
 - o Discuss the report during a staff meeting at your workplace.
 - o Identify which recommendations are most relevant to your agency, and develop specific steps forward and work toward their implementation.



FATALITY REVIEW PROJECT

+ Incorporate into Strategic Planning

- Use the recommendations as a tool for strategic planning.
- If you work in a nonprofit agency, share the fatality review reports with your board of directors.
- Identify other agencies with which you want to collaborate, and discuss specific goals you can work toward together.
- Use fatality review statistics and recommendations in grant proposals.

+ Develop Task Force Initiatives

- As a group, identify areas in which the community is doing well and areas in which improvement is needed.
- Identify two to four recommendations that are priorities for your community and implement them.
- Create a subcommittee for your priority areas and report your progress to the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

+ Increase Community Awareness

- Create discussion groups in your community to talk about the fatality review reports and recommendations for change. These groups can be interdisciplinary groups of professionals or groups of community members interested in making their communities safer and healthier.
- As a group, identify action steps toward implementing the recommendations in this report.
- Contact the Georgia Commission on Family Violence or the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence for further conversations and presentations.

+ Alert the Media

- Alert the local media about fatality review findings, recommendations, and local work being done to help victims of domestic violence.
- For additional suggestions about working with the media download our Domestic Violence and The Media tip sheet here GeorgiaFatalityReview.com/resources/.

