

Recommendations for Domestic Violence Task Forces

Task forces 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.

Act as a Hub for Protocol Development

- + Communities should evaluate mechanisms for reducing the likelihood a lethal abuser has access to firearms. Develop a protocol to address firearms access for abusers in your community.
 - Establish how each agency will cooperate to restrict access to firearms by domestic violence offenders and protective order Respondents.
 - Prioritize removing firearms from abusers who have made homicidal or suicidal threats.
 - Georgia's communities must carry the torch for this important issue until legislative and legal system actions catch up with the risk firearms pose to citizens of our state.
- + Implement a court watch program to gain insight into judicial response to domestic violence and stalking.
- + Ensure that local service providers and businesses have information about supportive services available to victims in your area. Consider making distributing brochures or posters a project of the task force.
 - Develop contacts and materials which enhance the probability of warm referrals to domestic violence advocates for ongoing supportive services and safety planning.
- + Evaluate community resources available to families who have lost a loved one to homicide, and the process for making families aware of them.
 - Connecting children who have been exposed to domestic violence and/or survived domestic violence homicide to services is imperative to break the cycle of domestic violence and prepare children to have healthy relationships.
 - Communities should develop protocols for outreach and response to child witnesses of domestic violence



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and for child survivors of domestic violence homicide. Protocols should make certain children are referred to counseling with therapists who specialize in grief and trauma, and ensure surviving family members who are raising children are aware of kinship care resources, the Crime Victims Compensation Program, and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence's Support for Survivors of Murder-Suicide Project.

- Protocols should also include strategies for conducting follow-up with families at six months, one year, 18 months and two years after the homicide. Consider reviewing the model protocol "When Children Witness Domestic Violence Parental Homicide," developed by the House of Ruth (Maryland) and the Baltimore City Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team to assist with this process.
- + Work to institute age-appropriate healthy relationships discussions in Georgia's school curriculum. Programs are available to teach students to recognize healthy, safe qualities and behaviors in relationships. 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 to download the program's materials for students grades 6–12. 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.
- + Examine agency policies and practices which may prevent members of underserved populations from accessing services. Examine programs' intake forms, questionnaires and outreach materials for accessibility and visibility for different languages, abilities and cultural representations.
 - Ensure Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act is being followed.
 - Develop a language access plan to ensure language services are provided for all Limited English Proficient (LEP) people and develop a plan to better serve victims with disabilities during systems contacts including crisis or 911 calls, initial law enforcement response, follow-up investigations, prosecution-based case preparation and decisions, court proceedings, court and prosecutor-based victim advocacy services, and in written materials such as outreach letters and TPOs.
 - For adequate translation, use "I Speak" booklets to help identify which languages the victim and perpetrator speak, available for download at dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/crcl/crcl-i-speak-booklet.pdf.

Outreach and Education

- + 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. Domestic violence programs and task forces should consider developing materials such as palm



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cards, resource guides, and other awareness materials which can be distributed in their communities. Posters and other awareness resources are also available for download at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.

- 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.
- + Include messages 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.
- + Expand awareness that co-occurring issues such as mental health and substance abuse issues increase risk of lethal incidents of domestic violence. Conduct an awareness campaign and continuing education for stakeholders which includes messaging that while other issues co-occur with intimate partner violence, they do not cause it.
- + Cultivate membership with organizations and groups that serve traditionally marginalized populations in your area, including LGBTQ groups, and service providers who work with immigrant and refugee populations.
- + Ensure there are adequate resources to provide FVIP in all areas of the state. In circumstances where no FVIP program is present, judicial and prosecutorial leadership should encourage local providers or other agencies to apply for certification. Knowledgeable stakeholders have a duty to educate those in positions of influence regarding the difference between FVIP and anger management classes, and encourage policies which require FVIP attendance by abusers.
- + To comprehensively address the problem, system 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.

Develop Community-wide Training Initiatives

- + 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 all responders receive ongoing culturally specific training and information addressing the intersection of domestic violence and marginalized and underserved communities.
 - For training on supportive interventions involving the LGBTQ community visit <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/lgbtq-ipv/>, <https://www.glaad.org/publications/talkingabout>, <https://forge-forward.org/>



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- To learn more about how to provide advocacy for victims with disabilities check out the End Abuse of People with Disabilities Webinar Series (Formerly The Bridging the Gap Webinar Series at <https://www.endabusepwd.org/publications/end-abuse-pwd-webinar-series/>)
- Skills can be developed for working with communities of color by visiting sites including <https://casadeesperanza.org/>
- Many types of training and technical assistance are available online at <https://ta2ta.org/directory.html>
- + Develop collaborative relationships and trainings among individuals and agencies responding to domestic violence
 - Conduct training to local stakeholders on services available to victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking in your community.
 - Collaborate with local mental health programs and counselors for cross-training about the co-occurrence of domestic violence, suicide, and mental health issues.
- + Develop relationships with and build capacity of local school boards, teachers, faith agencies with youth groups, after-school program, camp counselors, coaches, and teen parent program staff to provide resources and programs on children witnessing abuse at home.
- + Sponsor workplace trainings. With help from domestic violence experts and their local Chamber of Commerce, employers can develop a plan for addressing domestic violence which makes sense for their company. This plan may include the development of a model domestic violence in the workplace policy such as those found at WorkplacesRespond.org. Request the Domestic Violence in the Workplace Train the Trainer Toolkit at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com.
- + Provide domestic violence training to faith leaders and engage them in the work to end domestic violence. Safe Sacred Space: A Training Guide for Family Violence Task Forces is available for download at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com and additional information can be obtained at FaithTrustInstitute.org.
- + Cross-train professionals responding to domestic violence, substance abuse or mental health incidents. Because of the high likelihood that their respective populations of clients will experience multiple co-occurring issues, Georgia's professionals should be equipped not only to provide triage to a co-occurring issue outside of their expertise, but also be knowledgeable on the local, state and national resources appropriate to provide additional support alongside their targeted interventions.
- + Ensure responders from across the spectrum receive training on the issue of intimate partner stalking. 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.



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- + Ensure housing protections for victims of domestic violence are in place and observed. Local landlords, property managers and housing authorities should be trained on domestic violence and relevant state laws protecting victims' housing rights.

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.
- + Incorporate into Strategic Planning
 - o Use the recommendations as a tool for strategic planning.
 - o If you work in a nonprofit agency, share the fatality review reports with your board of directors.
 - o Identify other agencies with which you want to collaborate, and discuss specific goals you can work toward together.
- + Develop Task Force Initiatives
 - o As a group, identify areas in which the community is doing well and areas in which improvement is needed.
 - o Identify two to four recommendations that are priorities for your community and implement them.



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- 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/.
- + Write a Grant
 - Use fatality review statistics and recommendations in grant proposals.

