

Teen Victims of Domestic Violence Homicide in Washington State

Washington State Domestic Violence Fatality Review

March 2012

- Between 1997 and 2011 in Washington State, 38 victims killed by husbands and boyfriends were under 21 years old.

- 100% of victims under 21 were female.

- 37% of victims under 21 were living with the abuser or had lived with him.

- At least 45% of victims under 21 had ended the relationship or was in the process of leaving.

- At least 34% of victims under 21 had a child or had been pregnant.

8.9% of domestic violence homicide victims in Washington State were under 21 at the time they were killed.

On average, homicide perpetrators were 5.8 years older than victims who were under age 21.



The chart above illustrates the age difference between DV homicide perpetrators and victims who were under 21.

WASHINGTON STATE COALITION

WSCADV

AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Find more online at wscadv.org

- Get up-to-date statewide fatality statistics.
- Learn more about WSCADV's work to prevent domestic violence.
- Find resources for teens, parents, advocates, and educators.

In-depth homicide reviews showed ...

Abusive relationships started early.

Thirty-one percent of victims in reviewed fatality cases were under 21 when they first became involved with their abusive partners. Several met in high school or middle school. Education about healthy relationships and dating violence in schools was not sufficient and often started too late.

Having a child in common reinforced abusers' control. In reviewed cases, 73% of victims who began dating abusive partners before age 21 had been pregnant or

had a child in common with the abuser. Recent studies show that domestic violence is associated with birth control sabotage, coercion to get pregnant, and unintended pregnancy.¹

Prevention is key. In most cases, abusers committed homicide or suicide years or even decades after the relationship began. As violence and control escalate, victims' choices narrow. By the time a homicide occurs, options for effective intervention are slim. Fatality Review panels in every county have called for focused efforts to prevent abuse before it starts.

¹Elizabeth Miller et. al. "Pregnancy coercion, intimate partner violence and unintended pregnancy" *Contraception* 81:4, 2010

Resources



In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence Participants in this interactive training tool learn what dating is like for today's teens by becoming a teen character, making choices about their relationship, and seeing the results. Order a copy or find a DV program to lead this training for your agency at wscadv.org.

That's Not Cool is a national public education campaign that uses digital examples of controlling, pressuring, and threatening behavior to raise awareness about and prevent teen dating violence.



Help teens think critically about the music they listen to and the movies they watch with tools from startstrongteens.org.

Check out youth-written and professionally produced videos at scenariosusa.org. Topics include relationships, gender, and violence. They have great lesson plans and ideas for classrooms to go along with their videos.

