

# 5 Years of Data (2000-2004)

## Lessons about Sexual Violence in Virginia

### Are the concerns of victims of sexual violence the same as victims of domestic violence?

Consistently over the last 5 years, **the primary concerns for victims of sexual violence were coping with the trauma and recovery from the victimization.**

**The primary concerns for victims of domestic violence were locating safe housing and the impact of the violence on their children.**

### Do Sexual Violence Service Providers serve only women?

**Over the last 5 years, Sexual Violence Service Providers had 2,220 contacts with male victims and 31,534 contacts with female victims of sexual violence.**

### Is there a Sexual Violence Service Provider in every city and county in Virginia?

There are **37** Sexual Violence Service Providers serving all cities and counties in Virginia. Most Sexual Violence Service Providers serve multiple cities and localities in Virginia with limited resources.

### Is it true that most sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone the victim knows?

**At least 91% of the assaults reported to Sexual Violence Service Providers over the past 5 years were perpetrated by someone the victim knew.** Nearly **63%** were perpetrated by a family or household member.

Over the past 5 years, only **9%** of the sexual assaults reported to Sexual Violence Service Providers were perpetrated by strangers.

### Are boys just as likely as girls to be victims of child sexual abuse?

Exact numbers cannot be determined; however, Virginia's **Sexual Violence Service Providers provided counseling and advocacy to more than 4,326 child victims of sexual violence between 2000 and 2004. Approximately 69% were girls and 30% were boys.**

### Violent crime in Virginia is reportedly on the decrease – does this mean there are fewer sexual assaults taking place?

Sexual violence is one of the most underreported crimes; therefore, it is impossible to know if it is decreasing or increasing. But, what we do know is the need for sexual assault services continues to increase.

In 2004, Sexual Violence Service Providers served at least **6,262 women, children, and men who reported accessing services for the first time since their victimization: approximately 1 victim every 90 minutes.**

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## Lessons about Domestic Violence in Virginia

### How do victims of domestic violence know how to find a shelter?

Thanks to strong laws in Virginia, **law enforcement officers are the leading source of referrals to hotlines**—victims are twice as likely to get a shelter number from a law enforcement officer as from a phonebook! Law enforcement increased from 2,751 or 7% of all referrals in 2000 to 4,635 or 10% of all referrals in 2004.

### Where do victims of domestic violence go when they leave shelters--don't most of them return to their abusers?

Despite limited alternative housing, **only 9% of victims return to the home with the abuser present upon leaving the shelter.** About 1/3 of the victims leave to what we consider “stable” housing—to a new home they are able to pay for, to transitional housing, or to a home where the abuser is no longer present.

### What can family and friends do to help?

**More than 75% of victims of domestic violence who turn to Domestic Violence Service Providers for help first sought help from their family or friends.** At least 25% of families leaving domestic violence shelters go to stay with family and friends.

If you want to help a friend or family member, learn about how domestic violence affects people, learn about the resources in your community, let the victim know you are concerned for her/his safety, and let the abuser know that the abuse must stop. For more information go to [www.vsdvalliance.org](http://www.vsdvalliance.org).

### How do you know when domestic violence is really dangerous?

**Any time that there is a pattern of abuse and control in a relationship, there is the potential for danger.**

- In the wake of a separation, there is higher risk.
- If a weapon is present, as it was for over 30% of the victims served over the last 5 years, the risk is higher.
- If the abuser threatens homicide or suicide, as was the case for nearly 60% of the victims served, there is also a higher risk.

### Are children also victims of domestic violence?

**In 2004, Virginia's Domestic Violence Service Providers provided advocacy services to 5,815 women, 231 men, 3,816 children, and 4 transgendered persons.**

The children reported being threatened by the batterer (37%), being injured by the batterer (24%), and considering suicide as a means to escape the violence (7.5%).

Clearly, domestic violence has a profound effect on the lives of children.

