

## THE TEAM

The Domestic Violence High Risk Team (HRT) was developed in 2010 as a result of the Northwestern District Attorney's Safety and Accountability Audit findings.

The audit findings, combined with a district wide increase in serious domestic violence offenses, led to the need for a targeted program to identify and monitor high risk cases.

The HRT is a collaboration of the district attorney's office, police departments, probation, parole, sheriffs' departments, emergency dispatch, bail commissioners, Department of Children & Families, batterer's intervention and victim advocates.

Evidence-based research shows that a set standard of high risk behaviors, perpetrated alone or together, substantially increases the level of risk for victims.

The HRT works to identify these behaviors in order to maximize victim safety and offender accountability.

## HIGH RISK ASSESSMENT

*If we first accept that there is no such thing as low risk in domestic violence, then we conclude that there is only risk and higher risk. Our charge is to identify the risk level and take steps to minimize that risk.*

High risk assessment is the identification and management of dangerous behaviors, using indicators identified through evidence-based research.

By identifying high risk behaviors and sharing information, the HRT makes recommendations to maximize victim safety and offender accountability and to increase safety for first responders.

### Recommendations may include:

- priority prosecution
- GPS
- batterers intervention referral
- parole denial
- enhanced probation conditions
- maximum supervision
- police safety checks
- increased safety planning for victims

## HIGH RISK BEHAVIORS

Threat to Kill

Strangulation

Use or Threat to use Weapon

Suicidal Ideation / Mental Health Issues

Escalation of Violence

History of Intimate Partner Violence  
(multiple victims/restraining order violations)

Child Abuse / Violence during Pregnancy

Animal Abuse

Sexual Assault

Alcohol or Substance Abuse

Stalking Behaviors

Visible Injuries

**If you have a concern for a victim's safety,  
refer to the HRT for evaluation.**

**There were 48 Intimate Partner Homicide Victims in Massachusetts from 2016 to 2018.**

**48 Intimate Partner Homicide Victims:**

- 39 Female
  - 6 Male
  - 1 Male Associate of Victim
  - 2 Children
- Jane Doe, Inc. 2019

**In the Northwestern District**, Franklin & Hampshire Counties and the town of Athol, there have been **23 domestic violence related homicides since 1984**; most recently 1 in 2017 and 1 in 2019.

**However, the Northwestern District has seen an overall decline** with 2 DV homicides over the past 7 years, compared to 5 over the prior 7 years, and a five year period with no DV homicides from June 2012 to June 2017.

**When we collaborate as a team we create a safer community.**

May 2019

**“He seemed like such a nice guy.”**

People are often shocked after a domestic homicide. No individual is dangerous at all times to all people. Individuals who commit domestic violence are typically most dangerous to their intimate partners.

## **TO MAKE A REFERRAL**

If you are aware of an offender who exhibits high-risk behaviors please make a referral to the HRT for consideration.

Contact the High Risk Team Coordinator at the Northwestern District Attorney’s Office:

- (413) 774-3186 ext. 5903
- (413) 773-3278 – fax

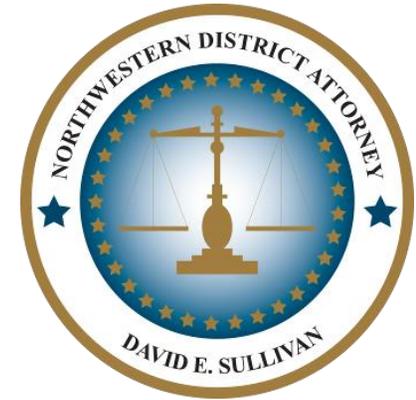
To download our risk assessment tool visit our website at [NorthwesternDA.org](http://NorthwesternDA.org)

**WHEN IN DOUBT REFER**  
*You may save a life!*

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## **Domestic Violence High Risk Team**

*A Multidisciplinary Team of the Office of Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan*



**A Guide for First Responders**  
**Do You Know How to Assess High Risk in an Intimate Partner Relationship?**

**Building Safer Communities by Increasing Offender Accountability and Maximizing Victim Safety**

**[NorthwesternDA.org](http://NorthwesternDA.org)**