



Northwestern District Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Offender Risk Assessment Guide

The following list of abuser behaviors can be used to determine which domestic violence cases pose the most threat of serious physical harm or homicide. The behaviors are research based and can assist first responders in identifying intimate partner violence cases in need of immediate increased containment of the abuser and increased safety planning for the victim. To make a referral to the NWDA High Risk Team contact the Coordinator, Katie Rosewarne, at Katie.Rosewarne@state.ma.us or 413-512-5903.

Abuser Behavior

HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITH CURRENT PARTNER OR OTHERS

- If abuser has abused multiple intimate partners
- Especially if there is a rapid escalation of abuse from previous behavior
- If there is a new element i.e. forced sex, abuse during pregnancy, use of weapon
- If victim feels trapped

THREATS TO KILL OR HARM PARTNER

- Strangulation or suffocation
- Visible injuries
- If there is a specific articulated plan
- Has access to weapons and there are credible threats to use weapons, especially a gun
- Family/friends may recognize the danger first, as a victim may minimize threat

SEPARATION OR ATTEMPTED SEPARATION

- Including if victim goes to court, leaves the offender, has a new partner, or gets a restraining order
- Offender refuses to accept the separation "I'll never let you go"

OBSESSIVE / POSSESSIVE BEHAVIOR

- Stalking - constantly watching or checking on the victim
- Constant phone calls, text messages or posts on Facebook/other social media
- Extreme jealousy
- Controlling behavior

MAJOR LOSSES /CHANGES FOR OFFENDER

- Job loss, separation from family, financial loss, health problems, loss of reputation
- Offender believes he/she has nothing left to lose
- Discharge from active military duty

SUICIDAL THREATS AND /OR HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS

- Threats by offender to commit suicide or to kill or harm children, family or pets
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Prior attempts or well planned threats
- Offender sees him/herself as the victim
- In an agitated state or 'off his/her meds'

FREQUENT RESTRAINING ORDER VIOLATIONS

- Even if violations do not involve further physical violence
- Pressure on victim to drop order

**THE RISK INCREASES WHEN THESE FACTORS BECOME MORE FREQUENT
OR INTENSE AND THE ABUSER'S BEHAVIOR ESCALATES**