

Harm Beyond the Home

2025 HOMICIDE REPORT

Relationship Abuse in Minnesota



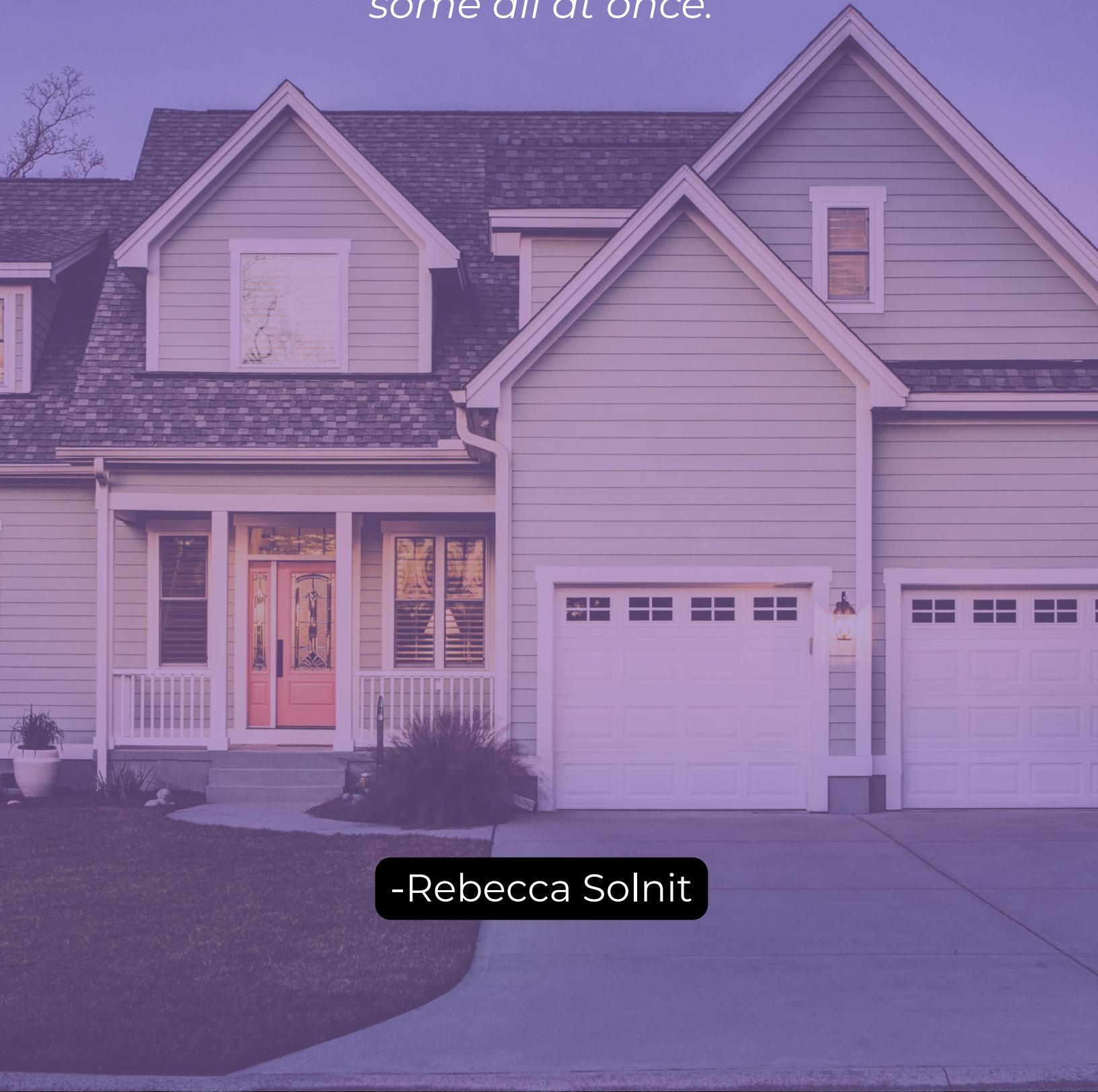
VIOLENCE FREE
MINNESOTA

Survivors deserve to be safe *everywhere*.



We Remember 2025

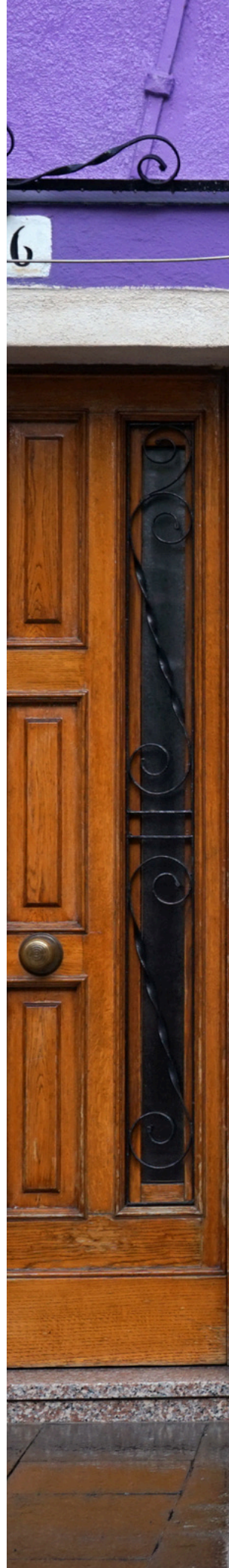
“Such deaths often come after years or decades of being silenced or erased in the home, in daily life, by threat and violence. Some get erased a little at a time, some all at once.”



-Rebecca Solnit

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A Note on Theme: Harm Beyond the Home

Before the domestic violence movement of the 1970s, domestic violence was seen as a private matter, if it was thought of at all. **Women of color have been at the forefront of efforts to change the narrative and response** to domestic violence from that of an individual issue best resolved through the criminal legal system, to that of a public health and social justice issue demanding broad prevention and community-wide responses.

Despite decades of efforts, the “privacy” and invisibility of relationship abuse remains on many levels. At doctors’ offices and clinics, patients are often asked if they feel “safe at home.” Victim/survivors are not only *not* safe at home, they are far too often not safe in their workplaces; their cars; public parking lots; public parks; restaurants; hotels; and countless other spaces. Domestic violence is not confined to the home—it bleeds through the cracks and foundations; through the windows and doors and walls. **Power and control extends into public life.**

Victims who manage to leave their relationships must **often contend with stalking, harassment, and break-ins** that persist for months and even years after the fact. **Tabitha Leigh Trescott’s** abuser murdered her and her boyfriend **Justin Paul Reinarts** after breaking into their home. Other victim/survivors, like **Falus Ali** and **Mariah Samuels**, were assaulted, taken hostage, and/or killed in their cars. Some victims, like **Sam Nordquist**, were murdered in hotels or motels. **Kimberly Ann Brandenburg** was evicted and forced to stay with her abuser in his home, where he murdered her.

We cannot view domestic violence as a private issue when **the majority of mass shootings in America involve a backdrop of domestic violence**; when victims are murdered in broad daylight in front of traumatized onlookers; when domestic violence seeps into hospitals, legal systems, and businesses. Scholars and activists have reframed domestic violence as a public crisis, a private concern made public, and a pervasive issue that **disrupts the idea of a public/private dichotomy.**

When we view relationship abuse as a private matter, we abdicate responsibility for solving it. Domestic violence is everyone’s business. In 2025, and in every year in Minnesota, women comprise the majority of intimate partner homicide victims. It is no coincidence that women, often shut out from owning property, are still viewed as men’s literal property.



Introduction & Acknowledgments

In 2025, Minnesota lost **at least 31 community members to relationship abuse, and at least two more whose deaths we consider suspicious.**

These deaths have a profound statewide impact, forever changing the lives of victims' loved ones, neighbors, coworkers, and strangers.



Intimate partner violence homicides in Minnesota display consistent and predictable patterns: women, like **Crystal Marschel** and **Anissa Cope**, compose the majority of victims. Misogyny and control remain the most frequent motivations. Women of color, like **Mariah Samuels** and **Amy Doverspike**, are overrepresented. Firearms, which men used to murder **Shantell Rosario** and **Chrissy Morris**, are overwhelmingly the most commonly used weapon.

Thank you to Violence Free Minnesota's IPV Homicide Committee for writing several of the prevention recommendations in this report, and to Standpoint and Phumulani Minnesota African Women Against Violence for writing the two contributed sections.

Despite these constants, intimate partner violence homicides are characterized as isolated events, devoid of their social and historical context. Of the 31 known victims in 2025, **25 were women** killed by partners. A 26th woman, **Kayli Grace Arseth**, was murdered by a male acquaintance who refused to accept she did not want a romantic relationship. Two men were killed by partners, and three bystanders and intervenors were murdered. The disproportionate representation of women, a third of whom were Black women, is staggering. **This should bring us all to our knees.**

Women in Minnesota deserve our collective commitment to naming, addressing, and dismantling the systemic drivers of so many of these deaths: misogyny, anti-Blackness, and male entitlement. As we remark in “A Note on Theme,” these homicides are not private events. Women have been decapitated, shot in the back while fleeing, stabbed, and beaten to death in Minnesota in front of horrified onlookers. **These are not anomalies; they are part of the fabric of American life for women.**

We write this report in the aftermath of “Operation Metro Surge,” which caused profound, enduring trauma to immigrant communities in our state, including immigrant survivors. We write this report in the wake of many recent femicides of Black women in the U.S., including Dr. Cerina Fairfax, Nancy Metayer, and Tammy McCollum; the murders of eight children in Louisiana; and many more. We write this report at a time in which the Pelicot trial continues to shed light on gender-based violence and sexual violence as horrifically systemic issues, and in a time in which the discovery of the “rape academy” underscores misogyny as an enduring, deeply entrenched cultural concern. **Not a single domestic violence homicide occurs in isolation. Women cannot be safe at home when they are not safe outside the home, and vice versa.**

We ask that every person reading this report be explicit about why these deaths continue to happen. Tell everyone you know. **Grant every person in this report context. Give them dimension.** They are not “*something that happened to someone else, somewhere else.*” They are **Joseph Johnson**, a brother, son and father with a huge heart who died intervening in domestic violence. They are **Kinsley Prinsen**, an “always happy” 2-year-old; **Hulda Bochere Mosiori**, “the nicest person”; **Shantell Rosario**, a “fairy, spirited, and full of light.” They are **Shaniya Thompson**, who was “real, selfless, and unconditional,” and **Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj**, a mother of nine children. They are **Tayah Ehnes-Giles**, who was “always there when you needed her.” Every single person in this report should still be there when their loved ones need them.

WE REMEMBER: MEMORY KEEPING

Memory keeping is an essential practice for addressing and responding to intimate partner homicide. We share memorials of the victims to uplift their lives and stories rather than only the ways they died. They were behavioral technicians, caterers, nurses, teachers, parents, artists, chefs, cousins, and siblings, who brought joy, wisdom, and laughter to their loved ones. Their lives were cut far too short, but they touched so many others.

As we share these victims' stories and the statements and memory keeping rituals of their loved ones, we must not forget our communities' capacities for healing and resilience. We bear witness to so many thoughtful, beautiful peacekeeping efforts made by communities who have confronted grief and loss in their efforts to build a violence free Minnesota. **We choose to start rather than end our report with Memory Keeping in order to begin with how each victim lived, not how they died. We hope you will remember them how they are remembered here.**



Kristi Joy Gardner

Kristi Joy Gardner was remembered in a Facebook post by Lake Crystal Ambulance Service, which provided services throughout Kristi's community. Lake Crystal Ambulance Service shared that Kristi's *"caring nature comforted patients and coworkers"* and that she lived with *"grace, strength, empathy, and love."*



Tabitha Renee Justice

Tabitha Renee Justice was honored in Lakes Crisis and Resource Center's Break the Silence Memorial Display, a visual representation of Minnesota's victims of intimate partner homicide, with silhouettes and stories representing each victim. The display was available for viewing in October 2025 at Detroit Lakes City Park.



Sam Nordquist

Kayla Nordquist, Sam's sister, spoke in honor of Sam with their mother Linda at Violence Free Minnesota's annual Intimate Partner Homicide Memorial on January 30, 2026 at the St. Paul College Club.



Sefiya Churiso Datu

Comfort Dondo, Founder and Executive Director of Phumulani Minnesota African Women Against Violence, honored Sefiya and shared her story at Violence Free Minnesota's annual Intimate Partner Homicide Memorial on January 30, 2026 at the St. Paul College Club.



Janet Vercruysse

Charles Hempeck, Executive Director of Anna Marie's Alliance, a domestic violence agency in St. Cloud, honored Janet and shared her story at Violence Free Minnesota's annual Intimate Partner Homicide Memorial on January 30, 2026 at the St. Paul College Club.

WE REMEMBER: MEMORY KEEPING



Hulda Bochere Mosiori

Hulda was honored with a final send-off at United Central SDA Church in May 2025. During the send-off, Hulda was described by her colleagues as incredibly kind, generous, and compassionate. Loved ones shared that she was very devoted to her children and was a dedicated nurse practitioner.



Christine “Chrissy” Morris

Women from Pride and Power, an online community Chrissy created for women, gathered in Hopkins several days after her murder to honor her with a balloon release.



Danielle Grace Warren

Zealous Paintings LLC created a custom painting of Danielle for her children, signed by many of her friends and loved ones.



Kinsley Prinsen

The Minneapolis City Council and Mayor honored Kinsley in their Resolution Recognizing October 2025 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the City of Minneapolis. Kinsley was honored in the Resolution as *“always happy”* and *“a beautiful angel.”*



Anonymous

Anonymous was honored with a celebration of life in August 2025 in Minnesota. Memorial trees were planted in her honor.



Kayli Grace Arseth

In July 2025, Electro Abi’s, a restaurant and music venue in Minneapolis, hosted a femme-forward DJ showcase dedicated to Kayli’s memory. To honor her life, Electro Abi’s DJs incorporated some of Kayli’s favorite artists into their sets. They also shared her family’s GoFundMe to help support them.



Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff

Lindsey was honored with a memorial silhouette as part of Lakes Crisis and Resource Center’s annual Break the Silence Memorial in October 2025 at City Park in Detroit Lakes.

WE REMEMBER: MEMORY KEEPING



Melissa Hunt

Melissa's loved ones created this beautiful t-shirt in her memory for Violence Free Minnesota's Clothesline Project. It was displayed at our 2025 Homicide Memorial.



Anissa Cope

Anissa was honored with a memorial silhouette as part of Lakes Crisis and Resource Center's annual Break the Silence Memorial in October 2025 at City Park in Detroit Lakes.



Crystal Marschel

Crystal was honored with a memorial silhouette as part of Lakes Crisis and Resource Center's annual Break the Silence Memorial in October 2025 at City Park in Detroit Lakes.



Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese

Loved ones gathered in New Brighton in September 2025 to host a tribute to Melia, with words from her mother, father, brother, sister, friends, and faith community. Loved ones shared that they admired her patience, courage, love, and joy; that she loved babies and dogs; and she made everyone feel *"understood and valued."*



Connie Lea Pollock

One of Connie's loved ones made stuffed bears for Connie's grandchildren in Connie's memory, so they will always have something to remember her by.



Joseph Johnson

Joseph's life was celebrated by friends and family at a gathering with balloons and photo collages. Many of his loved ones described him as their best friend who frequently checked in on his friends and was *"always smiling, happy, goofy, and bright-eyed."*



Jennifer Rose Millons

Jennifer's best friend shared, *"Jennifer was an amazing woman with a beautiful heart. She was compassionate, funny, generous, and fiercely loved her family and friends. She had a way of making people feel seen, accepted, and cared for. Her motto was, 'Love Always Wins.' She deserved a lifetime of happiness and the opportunity to watch her three daughters grow up."*

WE REMEMBER: MEMORY KEEPING



Mariah “Riah” Samuels

In September 2025, hundreds of community members and loved ones held a march to honor Mariah, leading from the home where she was fatally shot, to the Minneapolis Fourth Precinct police station. In October 2025, Mariah’s loved ones spoke outside of the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis to raise awareness of her murder. Later that day, Hennepin County leaders and domestic violence advocates held a press conference to both honor Mariah and demand accountability for her murder.



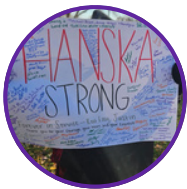
Falus Ali

Ambers Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic violence and bringing public awareness to abuse, walked in honor of Falus at Agape Oasis’s 2025 Awareness Walk in Minneapolis.



Tabitha Leigh Trescott

Tabitha was honored with a celebration of life in November 2025 in Madelia. Many of Tabitha’s loved ones attended, and the Hanska Fire Department, where her boyfriend Justin Paul Reinarts had served, also attended.



Justin Paul Reinarts

The entire Hanska Fire Department participated in Justin’s final send-off in November 2025 in New Ulm. The funeral procession included fire trucks and paramedic units from Hanska, as well as St. James, Lake Crystal, Madelia, Sleepy Eye, Courtland, and New Ulm. Justin served with the Hanska Fire Department for 17 years. Jackpot Junction Casino in Redwood Falls, where Justin had also worked floor security, put together a fundraiser in his honor.



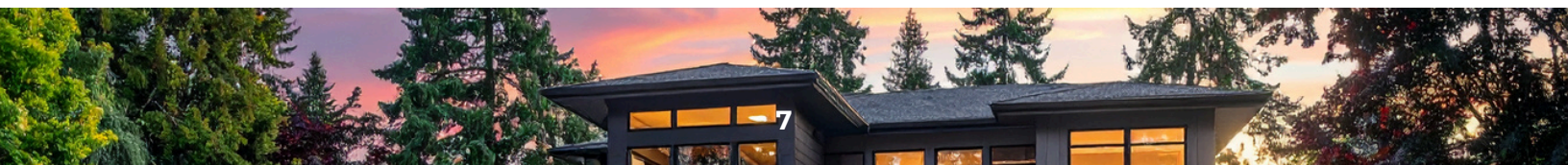
Anonymous

Anonymous was honored with a memorial service and many fond remembrances from loved ones. She was remembered as kind, patient, and devoted to her children.



Shantell Rosario

Shantell’s loved ones honored her with a memorial service, and in her obituary drew attention and awareness to the devastating impact of domestic violence.



WE REMEMBER: MEMORY KEEPING



Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj

Desirae was honored with a public memorial service held by her loved ones. She is deeply missed and was a mother to nine children.



Kimberly Ann Brandenburg

We remember Kimberly Ann Brandenburg.



Quinton McKay Hughes

We remember Quinton McKay Hughes.



Amy Doverspike

Amy Doverspike is remembered by loved ones as a talented chef who loved her dogs. She had degrees in culinary arts and criminal justice, and previously worked as a correctional officer. Amy leaves behind several children.



Shaniya Thompson

Shaniya was honored by loved ones with a balloon release in Minnesota in December 2025, where her loved ones raised awareness of domestic violence. Shaniya was also remembered with a homegoing celebration in January 2026 in Michigan.



Tayah Ehnes-Giles

Tayah's friends organized a "Together for Tayah" fundraiser and memorial event in January 2026 at Celts Pub in Farmington, with funds going to her family and young children. Tayah previously worked at Celts Pub. Loved ones who planned the event remembered Tayah as "a sweet, lovable person" and "very family oriented."



We Remember: Memory Keeping

Suspicious Deaths



Julia Marie Marthaler

In May 2025, the Babinski Foundation, an animal shelter in Pequot Lakes, Minnesota, honored Julia, who was one of their beloved volunteers. The Foundation shared that *"Julia was a shining light in our community—compassionate, kind-hearted, and deeply devoted to the wellbeing of both people and animals."* The Foundation created a donation campaign in her honor to support the work of rescuing and restoring stray and abandoned animals.



Barbara Ann McBride

Barbara is remembered as having an infectious laugh and smile. She enjoyed bonfires, camping, and cruising around on golf carts. She dedicated 22+ years of service to her job at Advanced Wireless.

suspicious deaths legislation

Violence Free Minnesota has collaborated with the family members of some suspicious deaths victims to draft **"Allison's Law," named after 2023 suspicious death victim Allison Lussier, a Native woman.** This bill, which has not yet passed, is inspired by a California law called "Joanna's Law," and would ensure that apparent suicides, overdoses, and accidental deaths that occur in a domestic violence context receive a full criminal investigation up to the point of a medical examiner's opinion on the true cause of death.



Allison Lussier (image credit to Jana Williams)

WE REMEMBER

INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDES IN MINNESOTA: 1989–2025

1989

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

1990

At least 15 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

1991

At least 9 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 6 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 2 bystanders/intervenors died

1992

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 5 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

1993

At least 24 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 5 bystanders/intervenors died

1994

At least 14 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse

1995

At least 23 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 2 bystanders/intervenors died

1996

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

1997

At least 13 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

1998

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 1 bystander/intervenor died

1999

At least 19 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 11 bystanders/intervenors died

2000

At least 29 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

2001

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 5 bystanders/intervenors died

2002

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse

2003

At least 13 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 bystanders/intervenors died

2004

At least 12 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 5 bystanders/intervenors died

2005

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence

2006

At least 17 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 men died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 bystander/intervenor died

2007

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 bystanders/intervenors died

2008

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 4 bystanders/intervenors died

WE REMEMBER

Intimate Partner Homicides in Minnesota 1989–2025

2009

At least 12 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

2010

At least 14 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 men died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

2011

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 child died due to relationship abuse
At least 6 bystanders/intervenors died

2012

At least 15 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

2013

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 6 men died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 7 bystanders/intervenors died

2014

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

2015

At least 22 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 men died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 5 bystanders/intervenors died

2016

At least 18 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 1 bystander/intervenor died

2017

At least 21 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 6 bystanders/intervenors died

2018

At least 10 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 4 bystanders/intervenors died

2019

At least 16 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 3 bystanders/intervenors died

2020

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 6 bystanders/intervenors died

2021

At least 20 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 children died due to relationship abuse
At least 4 bystanders/intervenors died

2022

At least 21 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 2 bystanders/intervenors died

2023

At least 26 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 3 men died from intimate partner violence
At least 11 bystanders/intervenors died

2024

At least 12 women died from intimate partner violence
At least 1 man died from intimate partner violence
At least 11 bystanders/intervenors died
At least 3 deaths are considered suspicious

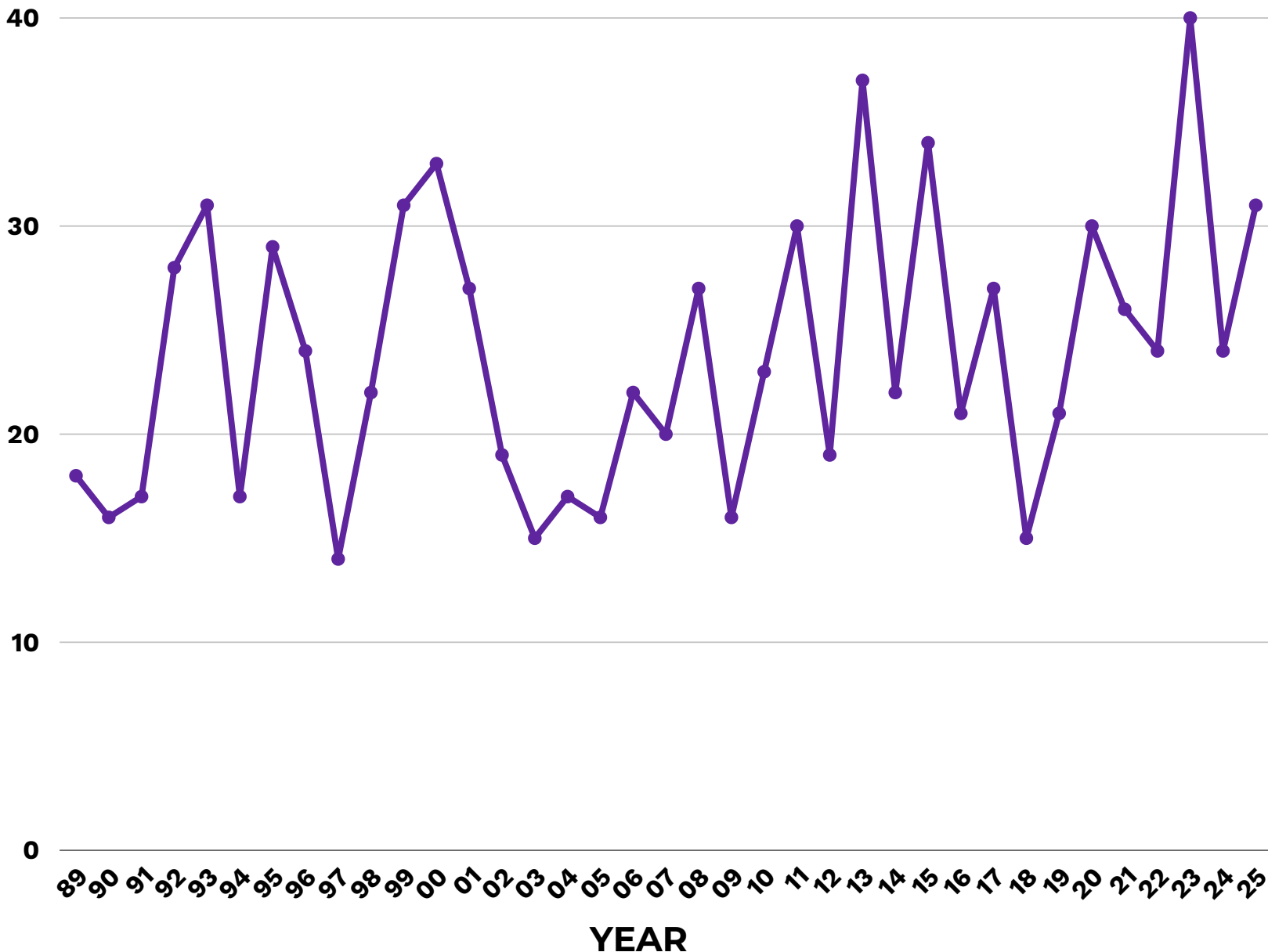
2025

At least **25 women** died from intimate partner violence
At least **1 woman** died from rejection violence
At least **2 men** died from intimate partner violence
At least **1 child** was killed to punish their mother
At least **2 bystanders/intervenors** died
At least **2 deaths are considered suspicious**

TOTAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES IN MINNESOTA 1989–2025



*INCLUDES: INTIMATE PARTNERS, FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS,
AND BYSTANDERS/INTERVENORS*



VICTIM TOTAL: 882

Victims and Relationship to the Alleged Perpetrators

Key Intimate Partner Homicide Statistics: 2025 All 31 Domestic Violence-Related Homicide Victims

Current/Former Intimate Partner 26 victims

Kristi Joy Gardner
Tabitha Renee Justice
Sam Nordquist
Sefiya Churiso Datu
Janet Vercruysse
Hulda Bochere Mosiori
Christine "Chrissy" Morris
Danielle Grace Warren
Anonymous
Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff
Melissa Hunt
Anissa Cope
Crystal Marschel
Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese
Connie Lea Pollock
Jennifer Rose Millons
Mariah "Riah" Samuels
Falus Ali
Tabitha Leigh Trescott
Anonymous
Shantell Rosario
Kimberly Ann Brandenburg
Quinton McKay Hughes
Amy Doverspike
Shaniya Thompson
Tayah Ehnes-Giles

Rejection criteria 1 victim

Kayli Grace Arseth

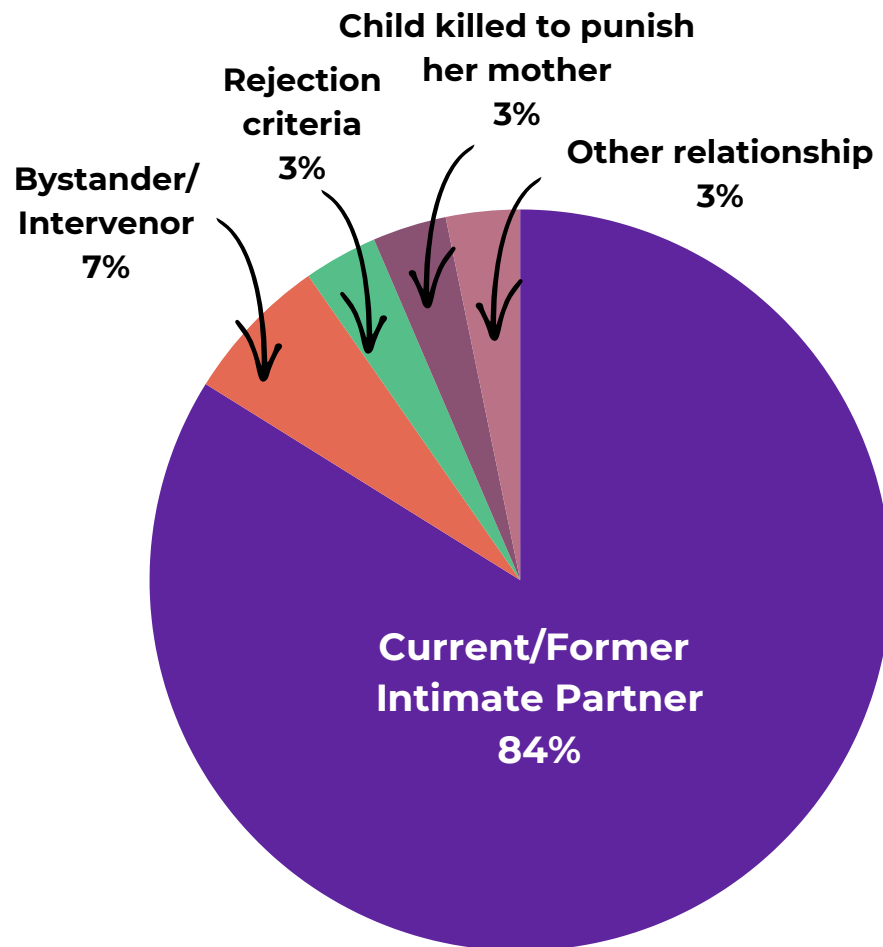
Kayli was killed by a male acquaintance after he refused to accept she did not want to date him.

Child killed to punish her mother 1 victim

Kinsley Prinsen

Bystander/intervenor 2 victims

Joseph Johnson
Justin Paul Reinarts



Other relationship* 1 victim

Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj

**Desirae was killed by a man during an alleged one-time sexual encounter.*

We know that dynamics of exploitation, coercion, and harm often exist within such sexual encounters.

For data purposes, for the remaining pie charts in this section, Desirae will be included alongside the adult IPV victims.

Cause of Death

Key Intimate Partner Homicide Statistics: 2025 Adult Victims Murdered by Their Current or Former Intimate Partner

2025 IPV VICTIMS : 27

GUNSHOT: 18

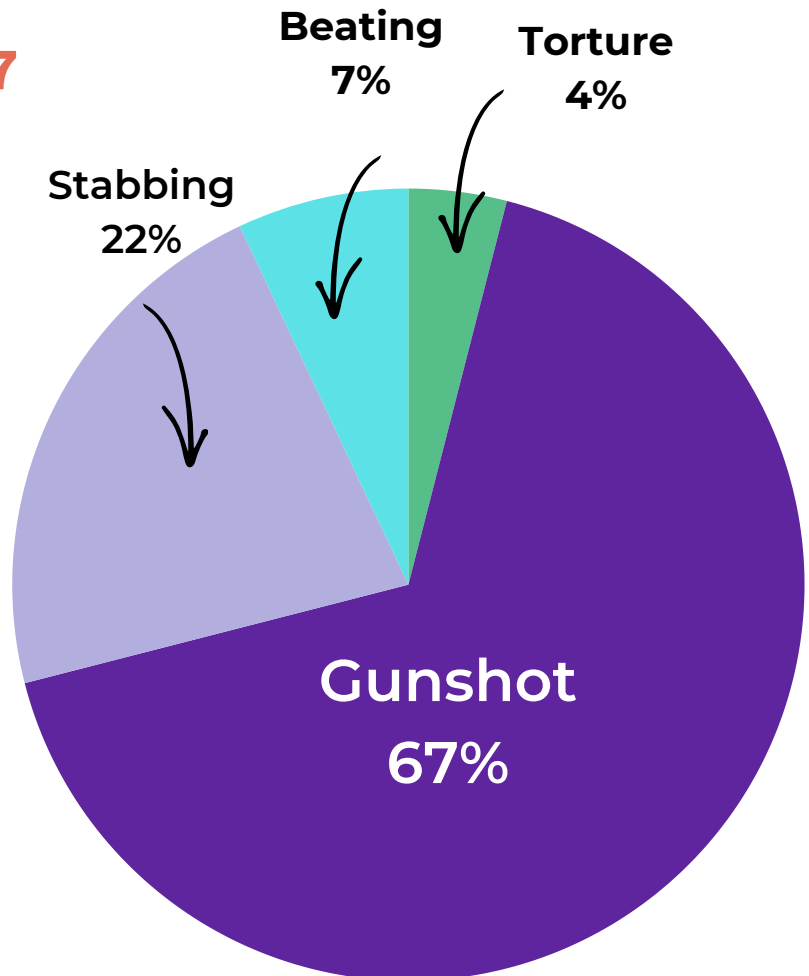
Kristi Joy Gardner
Tabitha Renee Justice
Janet Vercruysse
Hulda Bochere Mosiori
Anonymous
Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff
Melissa Hunt
Crystal Marschel
Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese
Connie Lea Pollock
Mariah "Riah" Samuels
Tabitha Leigh Trescott
Anonymous
Shantell Rosario
Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj
Amy Doverspike
Shaniya Thompson
Tayah Ehnes-Giles

BEATING: 2

Kimberly Ann Brandenburg
Jennifer Rose Millons

TORTURE: 1

Sam Nordquist



STABBING: 6

Sefiya Churiso Datu
Christine "Chrissy" Morris
Danielle Grace Warren
Anissa Cope
Falus Ali
Quinton McKay Hughes

Victim Was Separated from Abuser or Attempting to Leave, Or They Were Still Together/Unknown

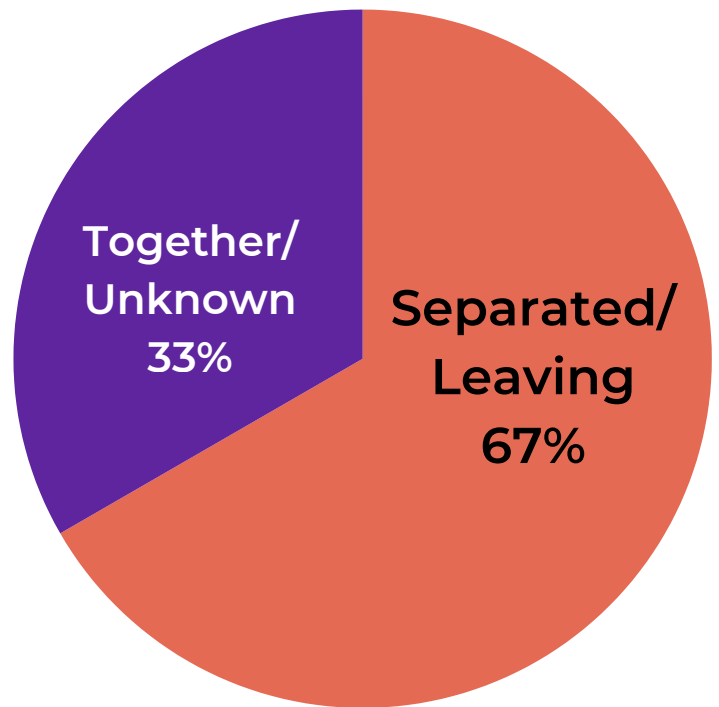
Key Intimate Partner Homicide Statistics: 2025 Adult Victims Murdered by Their Current or Former Intimate Partner

2025 IPV VICTIMS : 27

TOGETHER/UNKNOWN: 9

Sefiya Churiso Datu
Janet Vercruysse
Anissa Cope
Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese
Connie Lea Pollock
Anonymous
Shantell Rosario
Quinton McKay Hughes
Tayah Ehnes-Giles

Kristi Joy Gardner
Tabitha Renee Justice
Sam Nordquist
Hulda Bochere Mosiori
Christine "Chrissy" Morris
Danielle Grace Warren
Anonymous
Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff
Melissa Hunt
Crystal Marschel
Jennifer Rose Millons
Mariah "Riah" Samuels
Falus Ali
Tabitha Leigh Trescott
Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj
Kimberly Ann Brandenburg
Amy Doverspike
Shaniya Thompson



SEPARATED OR ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE: 18



History of Violence

Key Intimate Partner Homicide Statistics: 2025 Adult Victims Murdered by Their Current or Former Intimate Partner

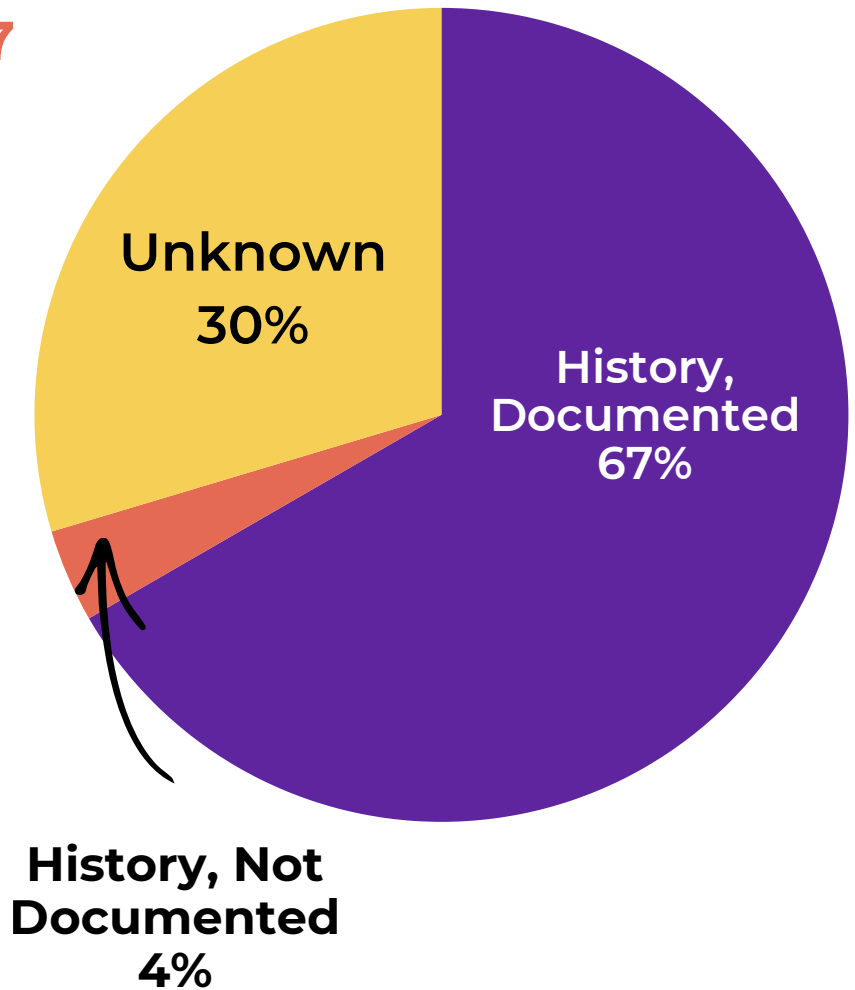
2025 IPV VICTIMS : 27

HISTORY WITH DOCUMENTATION: 18

Kristi Joy Gardner
Tabitha Renee Justice
Sam Nordquist
Christine "Chrissy" Morris
Danielle Grace Warren
Anonymous
Melissa Hunt
Anissa Cope
Crystal Marschel
Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese
Jennifer Rose Millons
Mariah "Riah" Samuels
Falus Ali
Tabitha Leigh Trescott
Shantell Rosario
Kimberly Ann Brandenburg
Amy Doverspike
Tayah Ehnes-Giles

UNKNOWN: 8

Sefiya Churiso Datu
Janet Vercruysse
Hulda Bochere Mosiori
Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff
Connie Lea Pollock
Anonymous
Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj
Quinton McKay Hughes



HISTORY, NO DOCUMENTATION: 1

Shaniya Thompson

**History of violence includes abusers' violence against previous partner(s)*

Geographic Location of Victim

Key Intimate Partner Homicide Statistics: 2025 Adult Victims Murdered by Their Current or Former Intimate Partner

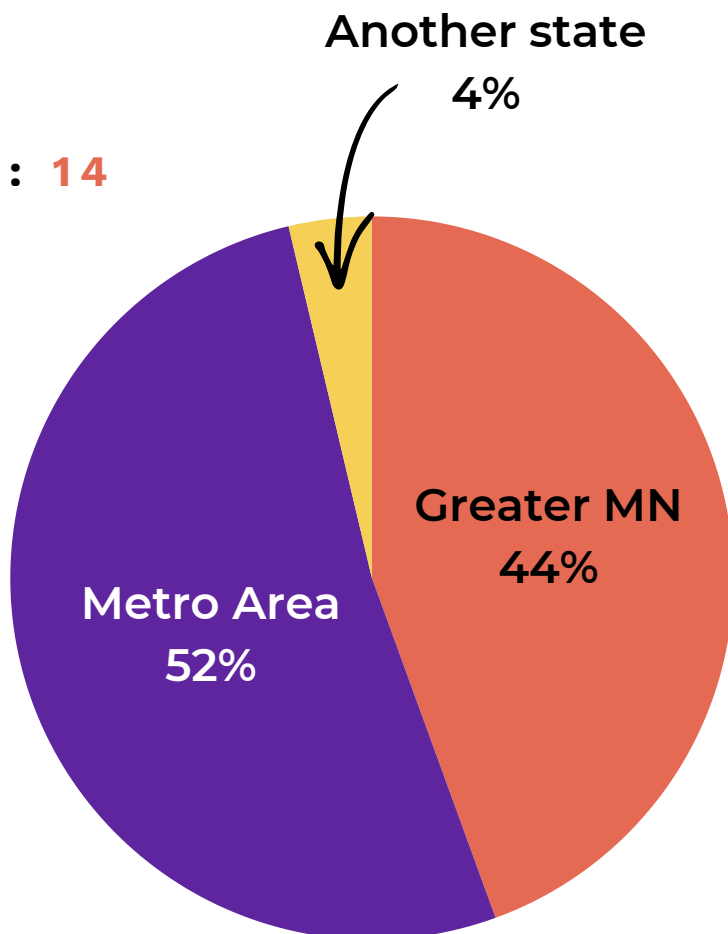
2025 IPV VICTIMS : 27

TWIN CITIES METRO AREA: 14

Sefiya Churiso Datu
Hulda Bochere Mosiori
Christine "Chrissy" Morris
Danielle Grace Warren
Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese
Jennifer Rose Millons
Mariah "Riah" Samuels
Anonymous
Shantell Rosario
Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj
Kimberly Ann Brandenburg
Amy Doverspike
Shaniya Thompson
Tayah Ehnes-Giles

GREATER MINNESOTA: 12

Kristi Joy Gardner
Tabitha Renee Justice
Janet Vercruysse
Anonymous
Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff
Melissa Hunt
Anissa Cope
Crystal Marschel
Connie Lea Pollock
Falus Ali
Tabitha Leigh Trescott
Quinton McKay Hughes



ANOTHER STATE: 1

Sam Nordquist (Sam lived in Oakdale, Minnesota and was visiting his girlfriend in New York when he was murdered).

Race and Ethnicity Demographics of Victims

Key Homicide Statistics (2025) for Adult Victims Murdered by Their Current or Former Intimate Partner

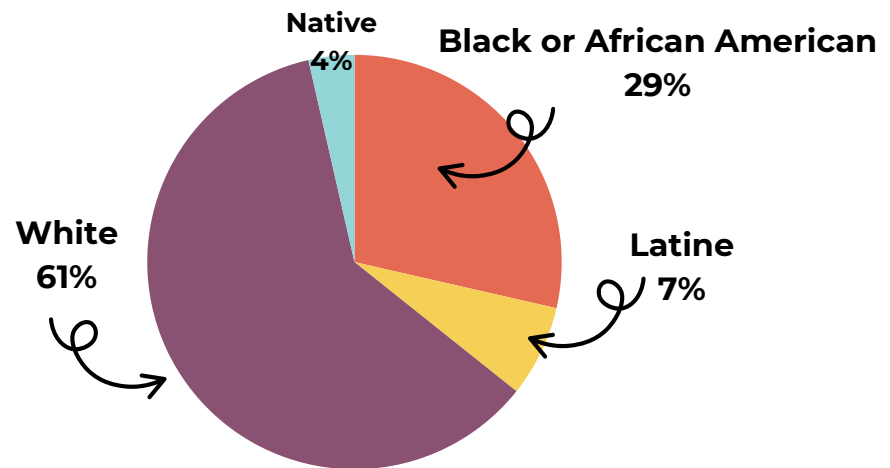
2025 IPV VICTIMS : 27

BLACK OR AFRICAN-AMERICAN: 8

LATINE: 2

NATIVE: 1

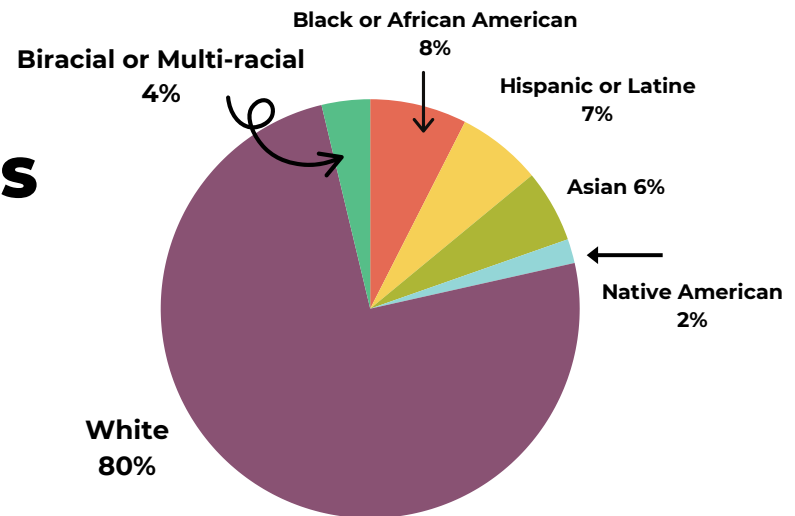
WHITE: 17



2025 MINNESOTA CENSUS DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Minnesota QuickFacts

**Percentages sum to over 100% due to individuals reporting across multiple categories.*



Note: We have made every effort to document victims' racial and ethnic identities by prioritizing victims' self-identification and, when not available, identifications made by family, friends, and peers. In the event that these options were unavailable, we relied on medical examiners' reports and media reporting, which should be considered with the understanding that medical and media documentation of racial and ethnic identity is often inaccurate due to bias. In order to most succinctly demonstrate disproportionality in our data, we use the categories used by the U.S. Census.

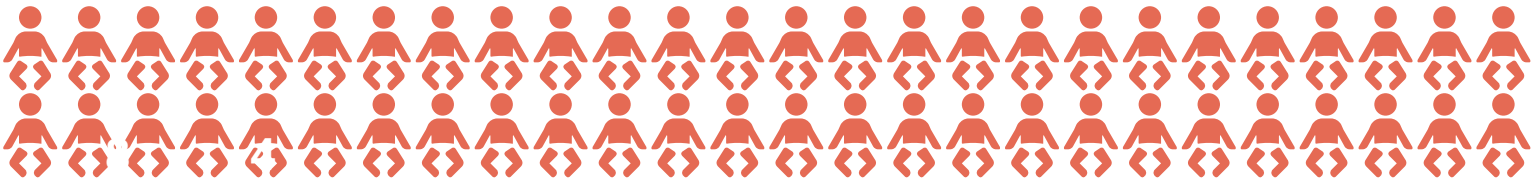
We collect this data to draw attention to racial disparities within intimate partner homicides in Minnesota. According to the U.S. Census, which itself is not immune to bias and inaccuracy, in 2025, 80% of Minnesota's population reported identifying as white alone, while 8% reported as Black or African-American. **Yet Black or African-American victims and Native victims are significantly over-represented within Minnesota's 2025 intimate partner homicide numbers.**

Children

At least **67 children** lost a parent due to intimate partner violence in 2025*

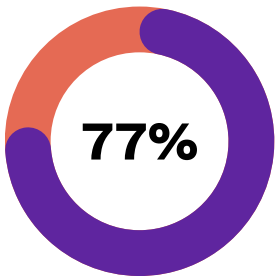
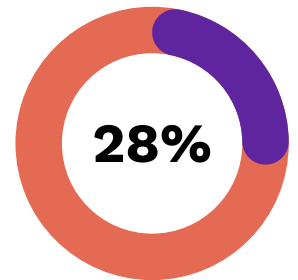


15 adult children



52 minor children

At least **19 of those 67 children (28%)** witnessed their parent murdered, or found the body*



At least **24 victims (77%) of the total 31 confirmed victims** in 2025 had children*

*Numbers based on information available to us, and what we have confirmed. It is likely that some may actually be higher than indicated here.

**2025
victims
who were
known
parents
(24 victims)**

Kristi Joy Gardner
Tabitha Renee Justice
Sefiya Churiso Datu
Janet Vercruysse
Hulda Bochere Mosiori
Christine "Chrissy" Morris
Danielle Grace Warren
Anonymous
Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff
Melissa Hunt
Crystal Marschel
Connie Lea Pollock

Joseph Johnson
Jennifer Rose Millons
Mariah "Riah" Samuels
Falus Ali
Tabitha Leigh Trescott
Justin Paul Reinarts
Anonymous
Shantell Rosario
Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj
Amy Doverspike
Shaniya Thompson
Tayah Ehnes-Giles

Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide

Violence Free Minnesota analyzes intimate partner homicides with a focus on five key risk factors that are **associated with significantly increased risk** for a victim to be killed by a current or former partner.

If we had access to confidential court records, medical records, and interviews with loved ones, **we would find additional information** pertaining to these risk factors.

While risk factors are often considered in a criminal-legal context, we believe that by **placing them in a public health framework**, they can illuminate important patterns. These indicators should be addressed through **culturally responsive systems and services**, including public health, community-based services, and housing.



These risk factors indicate a very real possibility of significant danger and death. Victim/survivors must be taken seriously by all systems.

Violence Free Minnesota DOES NOT intend for our analysis of these risk factors to be used for the creation of new crimes or the enhancement of criminal penalties.



Victim's Attempts to Leave the Abuser

***Harm Beyond the Home:** Sam was held against his will and tortured in a motel for weeks. Across the years, several Minnesotans have been killed in hotels or motels as a result of domestic violence. Relationship abuse isn't confined to the home. It happens all around us.*

Case Story: Sam Nordquist

Sam Nordquist, 24, was killed around February 13, 2025 as a result of torture **from seven people**. Sam traveled to New York from Oakdale, MN in September 2024 to see his girlfriend, Precious Arzuaga. Sam's family gradually lost contact with him. On December 4, 2024, they were notified by social services that Sam went to their offices expressing that **Arzuaga was controlling his cell phone use, and he wanted to come home**. His family last heard from him on January 31, 2025. His body was discovered in a field in New York on February 13, 2025.



Attempts to Leave

Complex barriers often prevent victim/survivors from leaving, and leaving is not every victim/survivor's goal. **Some of the many barriers include:**

- Fear of losing love or belonging (**present in Sam's case**);
- Visiting or living in an unfamiliar location (**present in Sam's case**);
- Intense surveillance (**present in Sam's case**);
- Fear of criminalization;
- Fear of losing custody.

Leaving or preparing to leave often carries a heightened risk of homicide, as abusive partners may escalate to try to regain control. **At least 67% of the victims killed in 2025 were attempting to leave or had left. In 33% of cases, not enough information was available to know.**



Abuser's Threats to Kill the Victim

Harm Beyond the Home: Falus was not safe at home. In 2026 in their notice of intent to seek an aggravated sentence, the State of Minnesota wrote that Falus was killed “in a location in which [she] had an expectation of privacy” and that her child witnessed her murder. Her partner had a history of breaking into her home and assaulting her there; holding her hostage in her home; and showing up at her mother’s home and refusing to leave. Domestic violence often crosses multiple homes and spills out of the home.



Case Story: Falus Ali

Falus Ali, 24, was fatally stabbed on September 23, 2025 in a home in St. Cloud. She was 17 weeks pregnant; her unborn child did not survive. In July 2026, Saleebaan Abdirisaaq, 26, the father of her three-year-old, was convicted on charges of second-degree intentional murder and second-degree felony murder of an unborn child.



Abdirisaaq was charged with threats of violence against Falus in 2024. During that incident, he took Falus hostage in her car for eight hours while threatening to kill her. He later violated the resulting Domestic Abuse No Contact Order (DANCO).

Threats to Kill

Abusers' threats to kill the victim, as well as the victim's belief the abuser will kill them, are among the most reliable indicators of lethality, yet criminal and civil legal systems often overlook these threats. **Racially biased perceptions of “credible” victims result in failures to believe and protect Black survivors, Native survivors, and survivors of color.** Because these threats are not always made public, we believe our numbers for this risk factor are much lower than in actuality. **Threats to kill preceded at least 32% of the 31 homicides in 2025.**

In our [Intimate Partner Homicide During Pregnancy Report](#), which chronicled homicides during pregnancy from 2012–2022 in Minnesota, we found that **at least two of the nine pregnant women killed during that timeframe were murdered by a partner who had threatened to kill them.**



Abuser's Access to Firearms

Harm Beyond the Home: Mariah's abuser harassed her at home and work, and threatened her loved ones at their homes. In her Order for Protection petition, she wrote that his abuse caused a "stressful living environment." He murdered her in her car. Everyone should be safe in their homes and cars. When one person is unsafe at home, often others around them are, too.



Case Story: Mariah Samuels

Mariah Samuels, 34, was fatally shot outside her home on September 14, 2025 in Minneapolis. In April 2026 her ex-boyfriend David Wright, 50, was sentenced to life in prison for her murder. Mariah had an Order for Protection against Wright after he **stalked, strangled, pistol-whipped, and threatened to kill her**. After that assault, Mariah called the police, and a risk assessment determined Wright posed a serious threat to her safety. But the Minneapolis Police didn't assign an investigator to her case. Three weeks later, she was murdered.

Wright was previously convicted of assault for **threatening another girlfriend with an illegally possessed firearm** in 2002. At the time of Mariah's murder, Wright was on supervised release after being sentenced in the U.S. District Court in Minnesota in 2009 to a 15-year term for **illegal gun possession**. **Restricting abusers' firearm access saves lives.**



Abuser's Access to Firearms

Every year in Minnesota, firearms are overwhelmingly the most common means of intimate partner homicide. **In 2025, 58% of the 31 victims were killed with a firearm.** According to a 2024 survey conducted by the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the Battered Women's Justice Project, of female survey respondents who had been subjected to gender-based violence, 68% had partners with access to firearms. Of those women, **24% of their partners had illegal firearms access.**

Firearms restrictions must be enforced for abusive individuals who are not legally allowed to possess firearms. **Lack of enforcement empowers abusers to continue to harm their partners** because they know they will not be held accountable.



Abuser's History of Violence

***Harm Beyond the Home:** Kimberly was not safe at home, because she didn't have one. When survivors are evicted, they are at much greater risk of violence and death.*



Case Story: Kimberly Ann Brandenburg

Kimberly Ann Brandenburg, 54, was fatally beaten inside her boyfriend's apartment in Minneapolis around December 1, 2025. Scott Carlson, 67, Kimberly's boyfriend, was sentenced to 12.5 years in prison in April 2026 for murder. **Kimberly was staying with Carlson after being evicted** from her apartment in February. A neighbor told police that Kimberly confided Carlson was abusive. The neighbor had seen Kimberly with bruises, and posted a domestic violence hotline on the building's community board in hopes Kimberly would see it. A day before Kimberly was killed, she asked the neighbor if she could stay with her, but the neighbor said no.

On July 8, 2025, Kimberly went to the hospital and reported that **Carlson beat and sexually assaulted her**. On October 18, 2025, she again went to the hospital, and reported that **Carlson strangled and beat her**. Police investigators submitted the July 8, 2025 assault case to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for charging on Sept. 18, 2025 — more than two months later. The October 18, 2025 assault case was never forwarded to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for potential charges.



Abuser's History of Violence

- Violence intersects with barriers victim/survivors face to safety, including a lack of housing. Even when survivors seek out safe shelter, these needs cannot always be met. According to the [National Network to End Domestic Violence 20th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Summary](#), on September 10, 2025, victims in Minnesota made 793 requests for services that programs could not provide. Approximately 36% of these unmet requests were related to housing.
- **Many survivors criminalized in relation to abuse report significant housing instability.** The [Advocates for Human Rights](#) found that housing instability was "pervasive" for many of the 327 criminalized victims whose cases they monitored through their WATCH program in June 2024 through February of 2025 in Hennepin County criminal court.



Abuser's History of Strangulation

Harm Beyond the Home: Homes are not automatically made safe just because a survivor leaves. Often, they have to deal with repeated stalking, including breaking and entering, just like Tabitha Leigh Trescott.



Case Story: Tabitha Leigh Trescott and Justin Paul Reinarts

Tabitha Leigh Trescott, 32, and her boyfriend **Justin Paul Reinarts**, 50, were fatally shot on November 2, 2025 in their home in Hanska. Tabitha's ex-boyfriend Randy Zimmerman, 45, was charged with second-degree murder. He was charged with felony stalking in July 2025 for harassing and stalking Tabitha at her home and workplace, including breaking into her home. Zimmerman has domestic assault convictions from 2015, 2023, and 2024, and was charged with domestic assault by strangulation in 2013. For the 2013 domestic assault charge, he strangled his ex-girlfriend in her apartment and threatened to kill her 10-year-old son.



Many women in our Homicide Reports over the years were killed by someone who had a history of strangulation against previous partners. Many of these individuals escalate their violence over time against multiple partners. Because strangulation is so dangerous, it should always be viewed as a potential risk factor for domestic violence homicide against current and future partners.



History of Strangulation

Nationally, strangulation is a leading risk factor for intimate partner homicide. **At least 29% of victims killed in Minnesota in 2025** were killed by a current or former partner who used strangulation as the means of death; or had previously strangled them prior to killing them by other means; or had strangled a previous partner. This is undoubtedly an undercount.

Strangulation is both a risk factor for future homicide through other means, and a lethal form of violence on its own.

Despite strangulation's frequent occurrence in abusive relationships and its lethality, it is often overlooked and minimized by the criminal legal system and, due to racial bias, is often missed by healthcare professionals examining dark skin. **The frequency and severity of strangulation demands that systems always take it seriously.**

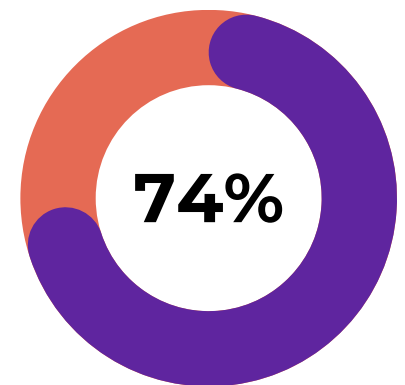


Multiple Risk Factors

Often, the five homicide risk factors we mentioned co-occur, which increases the likelihood of homicide. **In 2025, at least 74% (23 victims) of the total 31 victims' cases involved multiple risk factors.** This provides us with insight into victims' experiences, and reveals points of intervention that may prevent homicides.

The following list includes victims who were killed by a current or former partner, as well as bystanders or intervenors killed. For bystanders or intervenors, we looked at whether the perpetrator's current or former partner met multiple risk factors for homicide.

- **Kristi Joy Gardner (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Tabitha Renee Justice (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Sam Nordquist (2)**
 - Attempts to leave; history of violence
- **Hulda Bochere Mosiori (2)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms
- **Christine "Chrissy" Morris (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; history of violence
- **Danielle Grace Warren (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; history of violence
- **Anonymous (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff (2)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms
- **Melissa Hunt (4)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Anissa Cope (3)**
 - Threats to kill; history of violence; strangulation
- **Crystal Marschel (4)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms; history of violence; strangulation
- **Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese (3)**
 - Threats to kill; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Joseph Johnson (4)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; history of violence; strangulation
- **Jennifer Rose Millons (2)**
 - Attempts to leave; history of violence
- **Mariah "Riah" Samuels (5)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; access to firearms; history of violence; strangulation
- **Falus Ali (4)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; history of violence; strangulation
- **Tabitha Leigh Trescott and Justin Paul Reinarts (5)**
 - Attempts to leave; threats to kill; access to firearms; history of violence; strangulation
- **Shantell Rosario (2)**
 - Access to firearms; history of violence
- **Kimberly Ann Brandenburg (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; history of violence; strangulation
- **Amy Doverspike (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Shaniya Thompson (3)**
 - Attempts to leave; access to firearms; history of violence
- **Tayah Ehnes-Giles (3)**
 - Access to firearms; history of violence; strangulation





2025 ANALYSIS

FEAR

“I am scared to be in my home alone. I keep all my doors and windows closed and locked. My shades are shut. My family has been unable to come to my home.”

“I feel like he’s waiting for me in the woods.”

We read multiple Orders for Protection petitions women in this report filed prior to their deaths, and petitions filed by their abusers’ former partners. One theme stood out above all others: **fear**. Deep, enduring, all-consuming fear. Women were terrified to leave their homes *and* to return to their homes.

They felt unsafe *everywhere*.

STALKING

Many men who murdered women in this report had histories of **severe stalking** against the women they killed, as well as against former partners, female coworkers, and female acquaintances, sometimes even female strangers. **The stalking can only be described as relentless.** It surrounded and invaded victims' homes, garages, workplaces, cars, and online accounts.

Gary Rodewald, who murdered **Kristi Joy Gardner**, repeatedly broke into her home and harassed her. He falsely filed multiple Harassment Restraining Orders and Orders for Protection against his ex-girlfriends. He stalked a female coworker to the point of **messaging her about the cars in her driveway**, and messaged the coworker's ex-boyfriends to make false accusations about her current boyfriends.



John Peterson, who murdered **Tabitha Renee Justice**, found a female stranger on Facebook. He repeatedly reached out to the woman's friends through multiple Facebook accounts; would show up to her apartment and refuse to leave; **broke into her neighbor's apartment; stood outside her apartment building for over 6 hours;** and stood outside her home for hours staring at her legs and body.



Women in our reports described experiencing incessant stalking from their current and former partners that reached a level so frequent and so terrifying that multiple women told the courts they believed these men would murder them. Sometimes, these men specifically told the women they would kill them. And then they did. This is male entitlement and misogyny. This is not mental illness. **Believing women is not optional. It does not "ruin men's lives." It saves women's lives.**

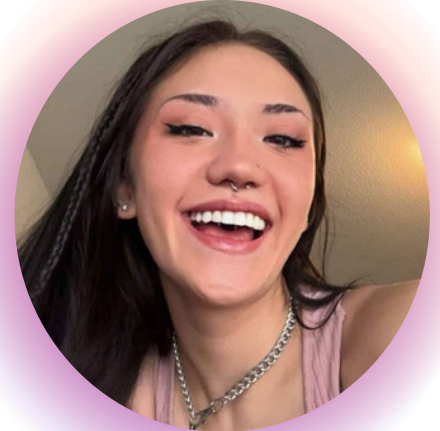


When Men Murder Women Who Say No: Why We Recognize Rejection Killings

***Harm Beyond the Home:** Across many cultures and times periods, women have been considered men's property, both literally and metaphorically. In the United States, women have faced significant barriers to economic independence and homeownership. Jose Luis Lopez Xique viewed Kayli as his property, and he broke into her home to kill her.*



The Homicide of Kayli Grace Arseth



On page 13, we noted that **Kayli Grace Arseth**, 22, was killed by a male acquaintance because he refused to accept she did not want to date him. We recognize her as a victim of **rejection killing** rather than an intimate partner homicide victim.

Kayli was killed in her apartment in Richfield on June 16, 2025. Kayli and Jose Luis Lopez Xique, 27, who is charged with second-degree murder, had recently met online, but the relationship was not romantic or sexual. Xique pushed for a romantic relationship despite Kayli repeatedly telling him no. **On June 16, Kayli again told Xique she did not want a relationship.** At some point during this conversation, **Xique broke into her apartment** and was texting her from there. She was found dead the following day of a gunshot wound to the head.

In 2018, feminist activist Jessica Valenti wrote an essay for *Medium* titled "Rejection Killings Need to Be Tracked," referring to them as **"sickeningly familiar" amid a rise of explicitly misogynistic crimes.** Eight years after her essay, no comprehensive tracking system exists for this specific form of killings, and yet they are so common that an online blog titled "When Women Refuse" has documented thousands of such cases over many years. **Every year, women are beaten, stabbed, shot, tortured, raped, maimed, and killed by men after saying no.**

Over the many years we have documented domestic violence homicides in Minnesota, we have also documented rejection killings in our state. These, among several more, have included a man fatally shooting his coworker in a parking lot because he refused to accept she did not want to date him, and another man stabbing his female coworker 30 times with a hunting knife because he refused to accept she did not want to meet up with him.

We intentionally use the language of "refused to accept" because these women were not murdered as a result of their own actions; they were murdered by entitled men enabled by centuries-long notions of ownership. **"Toxic masculinity is a primary contributor to rejection violence,"** writes Lily Katherine Thacker in her 2019 dissertation "The Danger of 'No.'"



Continued: When Men Murder Women Who Say No

Continued: The Homicide of Kayli Grace Arseth

It is profoundly unacceptable that murders like Kayli's continue to happen. We cannot divorce rejection killings from the social and cultural context in which they occur. Kayli's murder occurred in a country where a former, and now current, president was credibly accused of sexual assault by over two dozen women; where police officer Daniel Holtzclaw sexually assaulted over a dozen Black women he'd arrested; where news coverage of the Epstein files is inescapable; and where too many male doctors sexually assault hundreds of women and girls without being held accountable for years, if ever.

Kayli's murder occurred in a country where the "manosphere" is on the rise, where *Roe v. Wade* was repealed, and where a history of sexual assault perpetration is so commonplace among male elected officials that it feels like a prerequisite to holding public office. We live in a country where some men were so irate at the number of women who feel safer in the woods with a bear that they retaliated by asking their male peers if they would choose "a woman or a tree." Women's claims that bears feel safer to be around in a culture where men routinely sexually assault, harass, torture, injure, threaten, and murder women are apparently not an opinion women are allowed to hold in response to this reality.

Kayli Grace Arseth was murdered because a man refused to accept her "no," and his refusal to accept her "no" exists because our gendered social norms create the conditions for violent displays of male entitlement.

Kayli should have been safe at home. Instead, the man who killed her broke into her home and murdered her there. For women, there is no real distinction between public and private violence. Public violence occurs when men assault and kill women in public, and it occurs when men message women repeatedly pushing back against their boundaries before breaking into their homes and violently ending their lives. Our culture not only creates and sustains such thinking and behaviors; it encourages them through online "Men's Rights Activists" forums; misogynistic social media comments; and rape culture.

As [Lily Katherine Thacker](#) writes, "These are not isolated incidents, and the fact that they are so often treated as such makes them even more dangerous; when we fail to recognize the validity of rejection violence as a problem in women's lives, we fail to analyze its causes and therefore to provide solutions." **So we will continue to document these deaths, and we will continue to draw attention to the social norms, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that enable them.**



When Men Kill Children to Punish Their Mothers:

The Homicide of Kinsley Prinsen

Over the past many years, Violence Free Minnesota has included children in our Homicide Reports when they are killed as bystanders or intervenors to domestic violence, and/or when they are killed by an abusive partner to punish or control the child's parent. **We believe that the latter occurs much more frequently than we are able to document.**



The murder of **Kinsley Prinsen**, 2, by her father Scott Devery, 50, in Minneapolis on June 9, 2025, is one such tragic example. Devery fatally shot Kinsley in front of her mother, telling her mother that he was **"going to make sure that [she] live[s] in misery the rest of [her] life without [her] baby girl and without him,"** before killing himself.

There is little research on this form of abuse, but some experts refer to it as "revenge filicide" or "spousal revenge filicide." Most perpetrators are male. Dr. Hayley Boxall, a domestic violence researcher, states that the motivation for such homicides **is to make the mother suffer.**

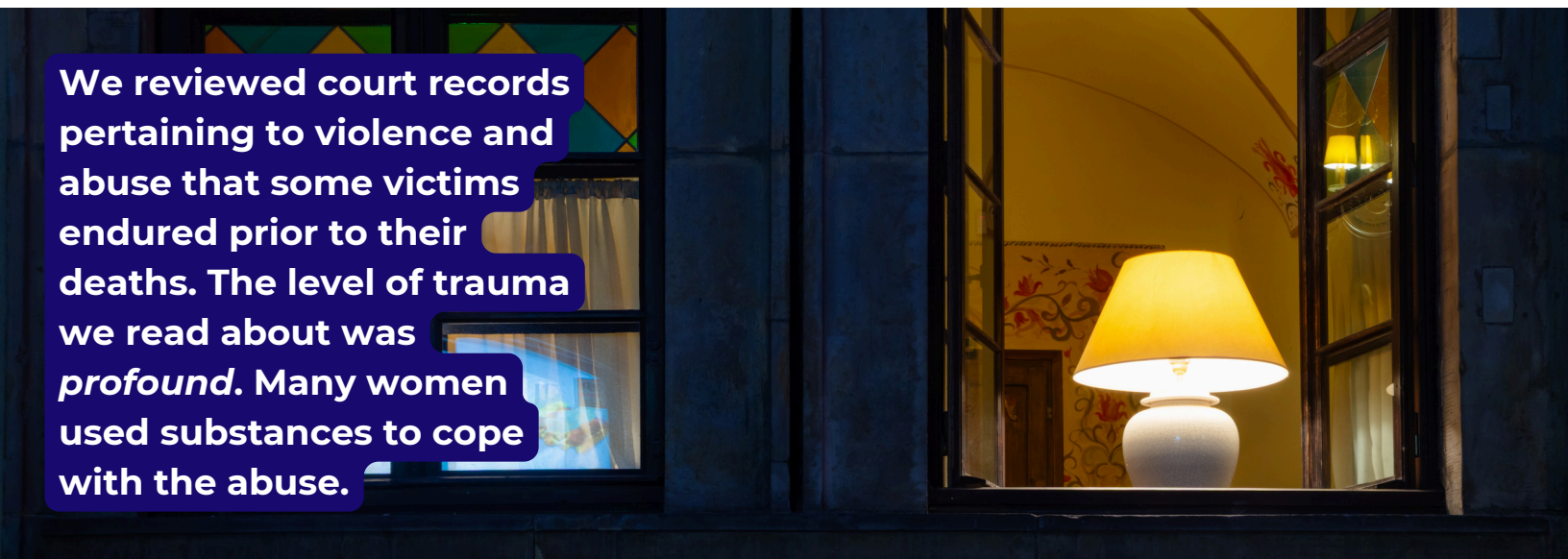
And suffer they do. In 2018 in Texas, Amanda Simpson's ex-boyfriend Justin Painter murdered her three children and new boyfriend in front of her and deliberately left her alive to punish her for leaving him. Amanda told the media that Painter told her, "Seth's dead. The kids are dead. And you're going to have to live with it." **Amanda said that Painter "took everything" from her.**

We do not know if Scott Devery had a history of violence against Kinsley's mother. However, we do know that **killing a child to punish the child's parent is explicitly an act of abuse rooted in power and control.** In Kinsley's case, her murder is also rooted in male entitlement and misogyny.

Kinsley was described by her loved ones as "always happy" and "a beautiful angel." The fact that she is no longer here is a result of our society's failure to value the lives of women and girls and to eradicate misogyny. Every woman and girl deserves to be safe at home.



Trauma and Substance Use



We reviewed court records pertaining to violence and abuse that some victims endured prior to their deaths. The level of trauma we read about was *profound*. Many women used substances to cope with the abuse.

One victim endured repeated intervention from the courts and child welfare services during her abusive relationship with the man who would later murder her. She told a social worker that she used substances to **“feel numb.”** **One of her children was then placed with her abusive boyfriend, despite his history of sexual abuse.**

Another victim was repeatedly charged with disorderly conduct and driving under the influence while experiencing abuse from her boyfriend. **Her drinking escalated in direct correlation with the abuse she was experiencing, including assault and threats.**

Another victim experienced her husband breaking into the substance use treatment facility where she was staying, where he stalked and threatened her.

One victim began using substances to cope with the death of a loved one; her boyfriend, who later murdered her, would use substances with her. Later, **she tried to leave the relationship and seek help for her substance use,** but he would not accept her decisions. Instead, he killed her.

Another victim, who experienced multiple successive abusive relationships, struggled with severe substance use. One of her abusive boyfriends “introduced” her to a new substance, which led to her being criminalized. In court records, she is noted as **using substances specifically to self-medicate.**

Almost every woman in our report who used substances to cope with trauma was criminalized; experienced intrusive intervention from child welfare services; and was **castigated, shamed, and punished** by police officers and systems workers who did not place their substance use within the context of the abuse they were experiencing.

According to the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health, abuse **increases a victim’s risk for substance use disorder six-fold**, and a large percentage of survivors report that their abusers **often threaten to report their substance use to authorities to punish them.**

Housing and Domestic Violence



Written by Bailey Hovland and Raelene Caswell of Standpoint

At least two of the 31 total homicide victims in Minnesota in 2025 had experienced evictions prior to their deaths, including Kimberly Ann Brandenburg, whose eviction was a direct contributor to her death.

Safe and stable housing is essential for victim/survivors of domestic violence, as they experience high rates of homelessness and unstable housing. One of the first questions a victim/survivor must ask when preparing to leave an unsafe situation is: Where will I go? Although Minnesota has many amazing shelters, they remain at capacity most of the time. A 2003 study by the Wilder Research Center demonstrated that **46% of homeless women in Minnesota reported that they had previously stayed in abusive relationships because they had nowhere to go.**¹

The Wilder Research Center's 2024 study indicated that 46% of survey participants in greater Minnesota reported staying in an abusive situation because they had no alternative housing options, highlighting intersections between geography, resource access, and housing availability.² **Despite two decades between these studies, it remains incredibly difficult to flee violence.**

Thus, many victim/survivors are faced with the choice of either fleeing to escape violence (often without financial resources) or staying and enduring further harm. A choice between continued domestic violence and homelessness is not a true decision.

According to FreeFrom, **99% of victim/survivors have experienced financial abuse**, and their access to money, employment, or credit has been harmed, making it incredibly difficult to secure stable housing.³ **Even when victim/survivors successfully secure stable housing, many endure continued violence, stalking, property damage, and are often at risk of losing their housing as a result of domestic violence incidents.**

The National Healthcare for the Homeless Council has consistently found that **unsheltered individuals are at increased risk of victimization** for domestic violence, sexual violence, and other violent crimes. The organization has also observed a nationwide trend of violence against homeless persons, finding 1,923 reported cases of violence from 1999–2022 resulting in 558 deaths total.⁴ It is clear that victim/survivors are at increased risk for homicide and homelessness, and that **homeless individuals are at greater risk of domestic violence and homicide**, creating a self-perpetuating cycle. These systemic barriers pile on, exacerbated by lack of affordable housing, transportation access and costs based on the location of available housing, and the stigma of being unhoused.

So, what is needed for victim/survivors immediately? Access to funds without strings attached can help victim/survivors get current on their rent, pay moving costs, restore credit, or to simply be able to pay the bills. On a broader scale, victim/survivors need long-term investment in safe and affordable housing, including increased funding for shelters to meet immediate safety needs, subsidized housing programs that account for the unique needs of victim/survivors, more affordable housing opportunities, and easier pathways to home ownership **so all Minnesotans can thrive.**

Housing and Domestic Violence



Written by Bailey Hovland and Raelene Caswell of Standpoint



Citations

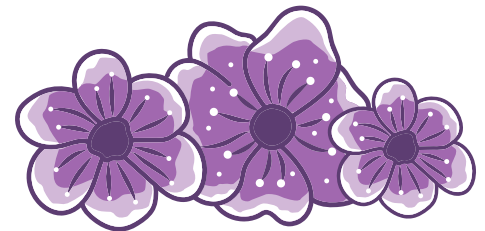
¹Wilder Research Center, *Homeless in Minnesota* 2003 22 (February 2004).

²Wilder Research Center, *Single Night Count of People Experiencing Homelessness: 2023 Minnesota Homeless Study Counts Fact Sheet* (March 2024).

³Freefrom, *Survivors Know Best: How to Disrupt Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 and Beyond* (January 2025).

⁴National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, *Violence and Hate Against Unhoused Americans: 2020–2022* (May 2024).

*In memory
of Kimberly*



The excerpts below are from Kimberly Ann Brandenburg's eviction proceedings and the criminal complaint against her abuser, Scott Carlson. Her full story can be found on page 24. She deserved so much better.

YOU ARE SUMMONED to appear before this Court for a hearing on the attached Complaint.

The Plaintiff/Landlord has filed an eviction complaint against you and the original complaint is attached and is on file with the court. This means you have to appear for court. If you do not appear for court, the Plaintiff/Landlord may automatically win. This means you could lose your home.

Officers spoke to a neighbor who lived in the same hallway. The neighbor told officers she knew both Defendant and Victim, and that Victim had been living with Defendant for approximately 5–6 months after she was evicted from another unit. The neighbor reported that Victim had confided in her on more than one occasion that Defendant had been physically abusive, including that he punched her and had strangled her.

Honoring and Remembering African and Immigrant Women and Investing in Culturally Specific Domestic Violence Services

*Written by Comfort Dondo, Founder & Executive Director
of Phumulani: Minnesota African Women Against Violence*



I bring greetings on behalf of Phumulani: Minnesota African Women Against Violence—from our survivors, our staff, our elders, our children, and the African immigrant and refugee communities we are privileged to walk alongside.

In my language, Shona, we have a saying: *Kusatenda uroyi*. It means that failing to give thanks—to recognize the hands that have carried you—is a profound failure of community.

So today, I begin where our ancestors taught us to begin: With gratitude. But I also begin with remembrance. Because in the African tradition, we do not rush past our dead to talk about our accomplishments. We say their names.

We honor **Sefiya Churiso Datu**, an Oromo woman and survivor who was killed at just 29 years old. She was the mother of an infant.

We honor **Hulda Bochere Mosiori**, 42 years old. A healer herself. A mental health nurse. A woman who spent her life caring for the minds and spirits of others, whose own life was taken by her partner in Ramsey County.

We honor **Shaniya Thompson**, 29 years old.

And we honor **Falus Ali**, only 24 years old, of St. Cloud. Falus Ali was 17 weeks pregnant. She was the youngest of these women and within her she carried the youngest life. Seventeen weeks.

In many of our African traditions, when a young woman dies, the community does not simply say that a family has lost someone. We say the village has lost a daughter. When a mother dies, children do not grieve alone.

The village grieves. The village gathers. The village remembers.



From left to right: Sefiya Churiso Datu, Hulda Bochere Mosiori, Shaniya Thompson, and Falus Ali

And then the village has a responsibility to ask:

What happened among us that our daughter could not find safety? That is the question I bring into this room today. Not simply: Why didn't she leave? But: Where could she go?

Could she speak about violence in the language in which she understood her pain? Could she tell someone what was happening without first having to translate her culture? Could she seek safety without fearing that she might lose her children, her housing, her immigration status, her community—or be detained herself? Could she walk into our systems and recognize herself?

That is why culturally specific services matter.

At Phumulani, we ask a different question: What does safety look like when the survivor herself gets to define it?

Honoring and Remembering African and Immigrant Women and Investing in Culturally Specific Domestic Violence Services

Continued



We are survivor-led and culturally rooted. We serve African immigrant and refugee survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, forced marriage and other forms of gender-based violence.

We understand something that our ancestors have always understood: A person does not heal outside of community. *Ubuntu* tells us: *I am because we are*. And [our 2025 Impact Report](#) shows what happens when that philosophy becomes practice. In one year, Phumulani supported 412 survivors, responded to more than 1,250 hotline and WhatsApp crisis contacts, served 215 young people, supported 78 families in stabilization, trained 1,370 professionals, and reached more than 42,000 community members.

Our survivors came from 12 African countries, and our report records that 100% reported increased emotional and physical safety. We held 64 Healing Circles grounded in African cosmology and storytelling, with participants reporting decreased isolation, stronger emotional regulation, strengthened cultural identity and communal healing. **Those numbers matter.**

But I never want us to become so impressed by numbers that we forget what they represent. 412 is not a number. It is 412 human beings. It is a mother sleeping safely for the first time. A woman answering a WhatsApp message at 2 a.m. because calling a hotline feels too dangerous.

A child returning to school. A survivor sitting in a Healing Circle and realizing: I am not the only one. I am not alone. There is still a village for me.

And that is why I want to say something clearly today: **When we ask you to invest in culturally specific organizations, we are not asking for charity. We are asking you to invest in life-saving infrastructure.**

Culture is not decoration. Language is not decoration. Food is not decoration. Spirituality is not decoration. Immigration knowledge is not decoration.

Knowing how an auntie enters a conversation, how shame operates within a community, how family hierarchy works, how displacement changes identity, and how violence follows women across borders none of that is decoration. **It is intervention. It is prevention. It is safety. And sometimes, it is the difference between whether a woman reaches out at all.**

And then came 2026.

This year, our work has grown but so has the weight our community is carrying. Phumulani has continued expanding culturally specific advocacy, sexual violence response, youth prevention, Healing Circles, survivor retreats, professional training and partnerships across systems.



Honoring and Remembering African and Immigrant Women and Investing in Culturally Specific Domestic Violence Services

Continued



Our 2025 vision was to move into a new era through the Phumulani Healing Center—a place for trauma-informed restoration, culturally grounded healing, youth and family services, somatic practices and community ceremony.

But 2026 also forced us to confront another reality:
What happens when a survivor is caught between interpersonal violence and the immigration system?

Today, Phumulani is sponsoring seven women navigating deportation proceedings. Some of the survivors we are supporting are still detained by ICE.

Think about what that means. A woman can be navigating domestic violence. Trauma. Separation from her children. Housing instability. Legal proceedings. And the possibility of deportation all at the same time.

For culturally specific organizations, Metro Surge was not simply a news cycle.

And I need to say this plainly: ICE is still here.

The cameras may have moved on. The headlines may have changed. But the crisis did not leave when the cameras left. Its aftermath is still sitting in our offices. It is still ringing our phones. It is still entering our WhatsApp.

It is still sitting at our kitchen tables.
It is still keeping mothers awake at night.

So I have a loving challenge:

Check on your culturally specific siblings.
Not only when you need us to translate.
Not only when you have a difficult case.
Not only when you need community engagement.

Check on us.

Ask what our advocates are carrying.
Ask what our organizations are absorbing.
Ask what our survivors need.
And sometimes please don't come with another form.
Don't come with another report.
Don't come with another deliverable asking us to prove that our pain exists.
Come with a container.
Come with resources.
Come with flexible dollars.
Come with partnership.
Come ready to carry something with us.
Because *Ubuntu* cannot mean "*I am because we are*" only when the village is celebrating.

Ubuntu* must also mean: When one part of the village is carrying too much, the rest of us move closer. And that brings me back to where I started. *Kusatenda uroyi.

Honoring and Remembering African and Immigrant Women and Investing in Culturally Specific Domestic Violence Services

Conclusion

To every Violence Free Minnesota member program that has answered our calls, shared resources, helped a survivor with rent, made a referral, opened a door or simply reminded us that Phumulani is not standing alone: Tinotenda. Thank you.

Every email. Every connection. Every rental resource. Every response when another crisis landed at our door. Those things might look small on a spreadsheet. They are enormous in the life of a survivor. A rental payment can mean children don't become homeless. One returned email can mean an advocate doesn't have to carry a crisis alone. One relationship can become the bridge between danger and safety.

That is movement work.

So I hope we stop asking culturally specific organizations to prove why culture matters. We already know. Our survivors have told us. Our communities have shown us. And our outcomes demonstrate it.

The Phumulani report calls our work “Healing the Memory, Restoring the Village.”

That is what I believe our entire movement is being called to do. Restore the village. Restore the places where women can run and know somebody will open the door. Restore the circles where grief can be witnessed.

Restore the systems where an immigrant woman does not have to surrender her identity in exchange for safety. And invest in the people who already hold the trust of their communities. Because culturally specific organizations should not have to become endangered before somebody decides we are worth saving.

Fund us before the crisis. Partner with us before the emergency. Trust us before you need us. And when the crisis comes, let the village already be standing.

For Sefiya.

For Hulda.

For Falus—and the tiny life she carried.

For every woman whose name never reached a memorial.

For every survivor sitting in detention today.

For every woman who has not yet found the courage—or the safe place—to whisper: “I need help.”

May she find us ready.

May she find us resourced.

May she find us believing her.

And above all—may she find a village.

Kusatenda uroyi. Tinotenda. Siyabonga.
Thank you.

And may we never become so comfortable inside our own circle of safety that we stop asking:

Who is still outside the circle—and what will each of us do to bring them home?

Comfort Dondo, Founder & Executive Director, Phumulani: Minnesota African Women Against Violence





2025 Suspicious Deaths

Suspicious Deaths

Nearly every year, Violence Free Minnesota tracks suspicious deaths where the circumstances **suggest a likely connection to domestic violence as the sole or contributing factor**, but where domestic violence has not been officially determined as the sole or contributing factor to the death. Reasons for this may include a medical examiner's inability to determine the cause or manner of death; lack of media coverage; the person's body is missing, etc.

As a result, for our 2023 Homicide Report, we updated our report inclusion criteria to include **a new suspicious deaths category**. This category is **intended to expand public understanding** of the impacts of domestic violence in Minnesota, and **the factors that may contribute to a lack of clarity around certain deaths**.

It is important to note that **Indigenous women, Black women, women of color, and trans and gender expansive individuals are frequently overrepresented in the suspicious deaths cases we track**, often for the reasons noted above.

Details of the suspicious deaths criteria can be found in the Report Methods section later in this report.



Harm Beyond the Home: In 2024, Schafer was found by police in a hotel room with Julia in violation of a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order she had against him. As mentioned previously, domestic violence doesn't just occur in the home. Sometimes it occurs in "homes away from home."

Julia Marie Marthaler: 2025 Suspicious Death



Julia Marie Marthaler, 23, died under suspicious circumstances on May 15, 2025 in Sherburne County. Johnathan Schafer, 35, Julia's boyfriend, was sentenced to two years in prison, stayed for three, after pleading guilty to DUI and failing to stop after a collision resulting in injury or death. Schafer told police he and Julia met for dinner at a bar and had some drinks. He claimed that Julia didn't want to go home, so they drove around backroads. Schafer then told police that they started arguing, and claimed that Julia jumped out of his truck. She was found on the side of the road with severe head trauma, and was pronounced deceased.

At no point did Schafer render aid to Julia or call 911. Julia had an active Order for Protection (OFP) against Schafer. He was convicted for violating the OFP stemming from an incident in November 2024. He was convicted again in March 2025 for another gross misdemeanor OFP violation.

While we know that Schafer had a history of violence against Julia, the exact circumstances of her death are unclear. We do not currently know whether Schafer pushed Julia out of the truck and/or assaulted her. Because of this, we honor Julia under our suspicious deaths category until or if we learn further information.



2025 Suspicious Deaths, Continued

Barbara Ann McBride: 2025 Suspicious Death

Barbara Ann McBride, 66, died as a result of homicidal violence on August 30, 2025 at Mac's Park Place in Mazeppa. Her death was ruled suspicious on September 2, 2025, though the manner of death was later ruled homicide. She was found dead in a camper, naked. Her injuries included significant bruising on her body, including her neck; a cut inside her mouth; and petechiae in her eyes, which are caused by ruptures in the eyes and are sometimes associated with strangulation. A bloody vase was found nearby.



The day after her body was found, a police officer interviewed the man she was with, who said they were friends and had no romantic relationship. The man told police he stayed the night with Barbara on August 28 and they drank together the night of August 29, and that he did not remember going to bed or waking up in the morning. He had recent scratches on his hands and arms.

On February 26, 2026, the man who was with Barbara was identified as Stanley Munstermann, 69; he was arrested and charged with two counts of second-degree murder and one count of first-degree manslaughter. Media articles about his arrest noted that police found photos on Munstermann's phone of a man sexually assaulting a woman while putting his hands around her neck, though it is unclear who the man and woman were.

At this time, we do not have clear information about the relationship between Barbara and Munstermann. Witnesses reported observing Munstermann and Barbara “flirting with each other” and kissing, though Munstermann claims they were friends and were not romantically involved. Because we are unclear about the status of the relationship between them, we honor Barbara under our suspicious deaths category until or if we learn further information.

Harm Beyond the Home: As with Sam Nordquist, Barbara was killed in a “home away from home,” in a public park used by the general public as a restaurant, bar, and campground. The fact that victims are killed on campgrounds and in hotels and motels further emphasizes the fact that domestic violence is not a private, personal matter confined to the home. What should be spaces for vacation, fun, and enjoyment are often spaces of harm and fear for victims and survivors.





RECOMMENDATIONS

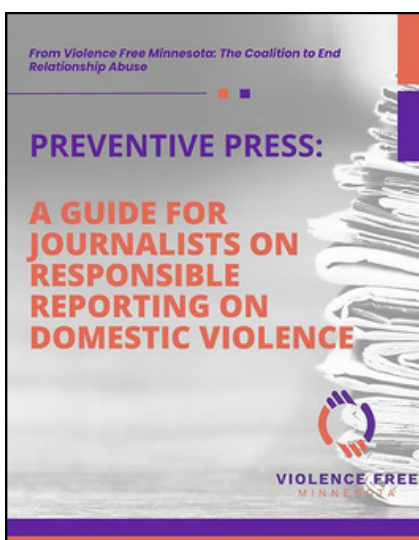
Intimate partner violence is a **public health crisis** and a social issue. **It is often predictable and preventable.** Like any public health crisis and social issue, implementing policy changes to our systems and institutions, and resourcing community supports and shifting cultural norms can lead to positive outcomes, including fewer instances of intimate partner violence and safer communities. Survivors, community-based advocacy programs, and programs led by and for culturally specific communities should be at the center of all policy recommendations, from inception to implementation. **Because domestic violence is not a private, individual matter, it requires a public, collective solution.**

Together, we can end relationship abuse. Together, we can move closer towards a more expansive horizon for all.



RECOMMENDATION: Media agencies should read [Violence Free Minnesota's Preventive Press media guide](#) on ethical reporting on domestic violence; share the guide with media partners; incorporate the recommendations into their practice; and engage in relationship building with domestic violence agencies.

- Journalists should **consult domestic violence experts** for articles and proactively **invest time in covering domestic violence across multiple timepoints and topics (such as coercive control, tech abuse, etc.)** rather than only reacting to specific deaths or incidents;
- Journalists should include the **statewide Day One Hotline (Call: 1.866.223.1111, Text: 612.399.9995)** in ALL domestic violence stories and include local resources, which can be found at <https://www.vfmn.org/find-a-program>;
- Journalists should ensure that all articles refrain from victim-blaming, honor the victim, and **place deaths within a context of abuse**;
- Journalists should always discuss and include the **domestic violence context of murder-suicides rather than only and inaccurately framing them as mental health issues**;
- Journalists should **advance equitable media coverage for all lives lost, particularly Black and Native women and gender diverse individuals' lives**; and not focus *exclusively* on high-profile, sensationalized cases. Media's narrative power signals whose lives have value;
- Media agencies should practice **ongoing relationship building** with domestic violence agencies serving BIPOC victims, 2SLGBTQIA+ victims, victims with disabilities, immigrant victims, and male victims, and make efforts **to enhance the quality, frequency, and respect** of their reporting involving these communities.



EXAMPLE: Violence Free Minnesota's *Preventive Press* media guide for journalism on relationship abuse includes best practice guidelines, sample imagery, headline examples, and language tips.

[Read the guide on our website here.](#)



Healthcare

RECOMMENDATION: All health settings should create and institutionalize policies and procedures for addressing domestic violence. Every health professional has a role to play in responding to domestic violence; every interaction is a possible intervention point.

- All healthcare settings should consider transitioning from checklist screenings for domestic violence to a universal education method such as **CUES** that reduces power imbalances and does not rely on patient disclosure to receive resources. Healthcare settings should **be prepared to make warm referrals to community advocacy partners;**
- Healthcare settings should ensure that their domestic violence training (such as that offered by the **Health Partners on IPV and Exploitation Center**) is comprehensive, mandatory, and ongoing for all staff, and includes content on **strangulation and brain injuries**, as well as robust education on ways to assess and identify bruising and injuries on survivors of color;
- All health settings should **establish mutually beneficial relationships** with local domestic violence agencies, be knowledgeable of services offered and cultures served, and engage in referrals and cross-training;
- The state should **improve accessibility to healthcare services** specifically for domestic and sexual violence survivors, and eliminate barriers to care, such as fees for exams;
- Community advocacy groups, funders, and public servants should **collaborate to increase access** to health and wellbeing services like mobile medical care and **doula services** (birth, postpartum, fertility, abortion, and prison doulas), and to increase public awareness of doulas as a support option that state insurance may cover. Culturally competent doula care, more Black and Brown doulas, more doulas in rural areas, reducing (DONA) certification cost barriers, and buy-in from medical systems/hospitals are critical for **increasing doula access.**

EXAMPLE: The Minneapolis Mobile Medical Unit was launched in August 2026. The Unit provides wound care, vaccinations, behavioral health referrals, and culturally specific support services.

The Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, for example, has developed a partnership with the Unit for onsite medical care.

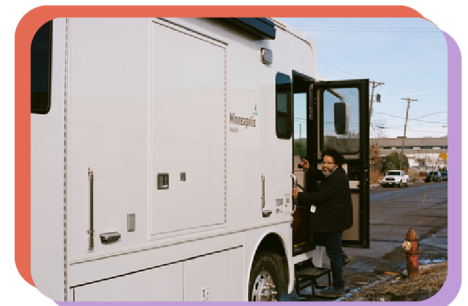
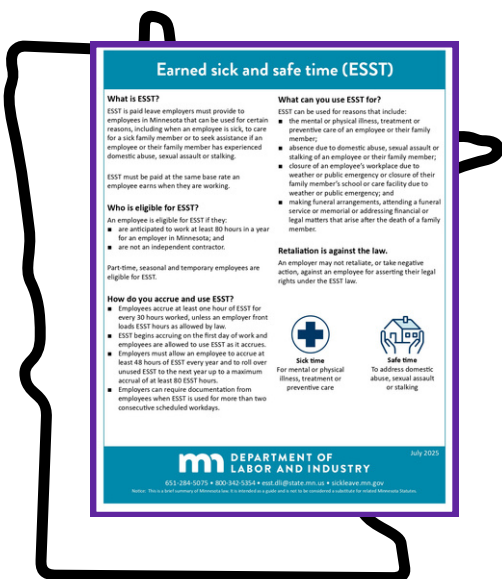


Photo from the City of Minneapolis website

Housing & Economic Justice

RECOMMENDATION: All levels of government should recognize that **domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness and economic instability**; that all people experiencing housing and economic instability deserve support and care; and that this large-scale crisis in our nation will require a large-scale solution.

- The Child Support Division at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families **should clarify and realign the Good Cause policy** to ensure a consistent, victim-centered approach across MN, and should develop and implement **policies and procedures that increase victim/survivors' ability to safely access child support services**. These policies should be developed in partnership with domestic violence programs and victim/survivors;
- Housing funders should continue to fund and support apartment-style shelter to **increase inclusivity for male victims and 2SLGBTQIA+ victims**;
- Funders should offer **more flexible and low-barrier funding** to meet survivors' immediate needs, address crises, and maintain established supports. **Rapid response and contingency funds** are equally needed to prevent disruption of safety and stability;
- All employers should consult with local domestic violence agencies to **establish a domestic violence policy and procedure**. Examples can be found at <https://workplacesrespond.org/>;
- **Continuums of Care (CoCs) should partner with their local domestic violence organization(s)** to create or strengthen an access point for victims/survivors to safety planning and services;



EXAMPLE: Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time Law became effective in 2026. This is paid leave employers must provide to employees in Minnesota that can be used for certain reasons, including if an employee or their family member has experienced domestic violence. In addition, Minnesota's Paid Family Medical Leave includes Safety Leave for Minnesota workers who need time off to respond to domestic or sexual violence for themselves or a loved one.

[Learn more about Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time Law](#)

[Learn more about Paid Family Medical Leave](#)

Equity & Racial Justice

RECOMMENDATION: The state should prioritize funding for culturally specific domestic violence services.

- Government and private grant funders should simplify grant application processes and **remove barriers that have a disproportionate impact on culturally specific programs.**

RECOMMENDATION: Victim services programs should internally evaluate the ways that victims' rights have been historically used to justify racialized harms, and should work to address those harms.

- Victims are often leveraged and exploited as the stated justification for "tough on crime" approaches** to justice, which have led to mass incarceration, mass deportation, and disparate impacts on communities of color and immigrants. Victim services providers should understand where they fit in this narrative and how they can challenge this narrative.

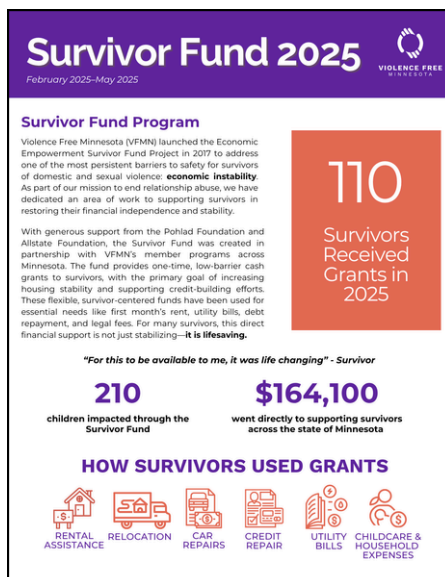
RECOMMENDATION: Every step of policy making should include a robust analysis of intended, unintended, and unannounced consequences.

- Policymakers, legislators, lobbyists, advocacy organizations, human resources professionals, and others who help draft law and policy should **always apply an equity lens to any policies that impact victim/survivors** to identify marginalized communities who may not receive the full benefit of the policy based on historical evidence. These communities include, but are not limited to: racial and ethnic, disabled, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.



EXAMPLE: In 2025, the Women's Foundation of Minnesota awarded \$425,000 in general operating grants to 22 organizations through its Fund for Safety, 68% of which were led by Black, Indigenous, and women of color.

EXAMPLE: Violence Free Minnesota's Economic Empowerment Program, supported by the Pohlada Foundation, gave \$164,100 to 110 survivors in MN in 2025, 88% of whom identified as Black/of African descent.



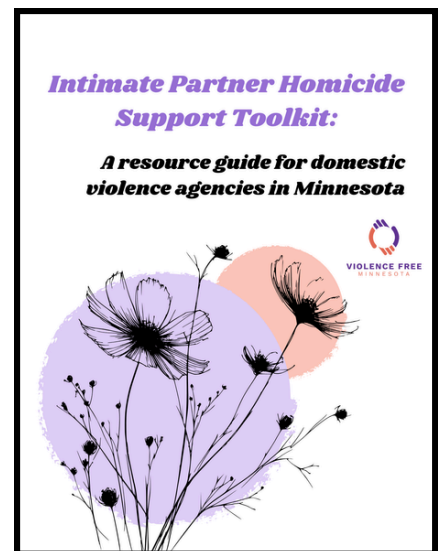
Community

RECOMMENDATION: Social institutions and communities play a critical role in victim/survivor safety and support, and accountability for people using harm. Institutions and communities should take proactive, collaborative measures, including:

- All K–12 schools should implement **standardized, ongoing, age-appropriate curricula** on consent, social and emotional learning, and healthy relationships. Schools should proactively establish relationships with their **local domestic violence agencies** who can offer this training;
 - Funders should **invest in advocacy agencies' prevention, education, and training efforts** to allow ongoing and comprehensive training in schools and communities, as one-time or short-term funding is not enough for meaningful change;
 - **Faith communities should partner with local domestic violence organizations** to offer resources, support groups, and educational programs to their leadership and members, including support for children; and within faith-based settings should promote messages of safety, respect, and equality in relationships;
- **Daycare centers, crisis nurseries, and supervised visit/safe exchange facilities** should develop policies for responding to domestic violence experienced by clients;
 - Individuals and families should be prepared to have **supportive conversations with loved ones who may be experiencing abuse**. Shame and isolation contribute to staying in abusive relationships;
 - Individuals and families should be prepared for and equipped to have conversations with loved ones who may be harming a partner; **men in particular should be actively engaged** in preventing and ending gender-based violence among their peers and in their communities (in online spaces as well).

EXAMPLE: A Call for Change Helpline is a hotline and email service to coach and support people who are questioning if they are being abusive; want to talk to a friend who is being abusive; or want to support someone experiencing abuse.

Free, confidential, anonymous help.
Call 877-898-3411 or email us at
Help@ACallForChangeHelpline.org



EXAMPLE: The IPV Homicide Support Toolkit was developed by Violence Free Minnesota's Homicide Committee, and contains resources, guidance, information, and suggestions to support advocacy programs and victims' loved ones after domestic violence homicide.

[Read the report on our website here.](#)

Firearms

RECOMMENDATION: The state of Minnesota must prioritize ongoing efforts to end intimate partner violence involving firearms.

- **Community-based domestic violence advocates should seek training on firearm safety** to support victim safety planning around firearms in their home, including sharing information about safe storage, and potentially having gunlocks available on-site to provide to victims;
- Cities and/or counties should establish **a clear line of responsibility for implementation of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)** to ensure that family and household members in their communities inquiring about ERPO relief are reliably referred to a city employee with knowledge about the mechanisms of filing an ERPO in their community;
- **ERPOs are a new, important crisis response mechanism** to address homicide and suicide risk involving firearms. The state should increase public awareness of ERPOs as a safety tool that can be utilized by family and household members as well as law enforcement and prosecutors' offices;
- **Gun violence and intimate partner violence organizations should acknowledge the overlap between gun violence and intimate partner violence** and establish ongoing relationships to support one another with initiatives such as policy advocacy; data gathering; and discussion of emerging needs and trends.

EXAMPLE: On August 1, 2026, a new Minnesota law was enacted that generally requires follow-up court hearings to ensure compliance in cases of individuals being required to give up their firearms and file proof of doing so.

Additionally, a new law was enacted that establishes standardized procedures for court-ordered firearm surrenders.

Every year, firearms are overwhelmingly the most common means of intimate partner homicide in Minnesota.

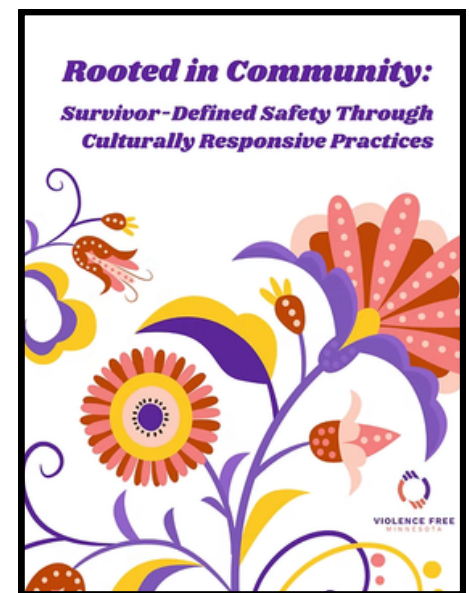


Criminal Legal System

RECOMMENDATION: All levels of Minnesota’s criminal legal system (embedded social workers; defense attorneys; probation, law enforcement; the bench, etc.) should advance education, policy, and practice to improve survivor safety, well-being, and access to justice, with a larger goal of ensuring consistency and uniformity across the state.

- All law enforcement agencies **should implement a validated lethality assessment and protocols to ensure victim/survivors who are at risk of homicide are connected as early as possible with local community-based advocacy.** Assessments must be paired with protocols that increase victim safety. The development of these policies must be done in partnership with community-based advocacy;
- All criminal legal system actors should **develop ongoing relationships with local community-based advocacy services**—including culturally-specific domestic violence and sexual assault agencies—and warm referrals to these agencies should be standard practice;
- Law enforcement should **connect domestic violence homicide victims’ families with their local advocacy services for support;**
- All criminal legal system actors must **develop an understanding of how survivors may be criminalized as a result of their attempts to survive, protect themselves, or respond to abuse.** Agencies must implement policies and practices designed to reduce misidentification of survivors as offenders; prevent future criminalization; and victimization should be part of sentencing considerations;
- All criminal legal system actors should follow recommendations from, and support and collaborate with the **Office of Missing and Murdered Black Women and Girls and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office.**

EXAMPLE: Violence Free Minnesota partnered with culturally specific advocacy organizations across MN to conduct focus groups with survivors of domestic violence from diverse communities, including Black, Indigenous, Hmong, Latin@, immigrant and refugee, LGBTQ+, and justice-system-involved survivors. Survivors shared their experiences with abuse, barriers to seeking safety, and interventions they believe could have made a difference. The findings underscore the importance of investing in survivor-centered, culturally responsive approaches. The result of these focus groups is the *Rooted in Community* report.



[Read the report on our website here.](#)



Victim Stories



Age 57
Lake Crystal
January 9, 2025



Kristi Joy Gardner

Kristi Joy Gardner, 57, was fatally shot by her partner Gary Rodewald, 64, in a home in Lake Crystal on January 9, 2025. Rodewald died of self-inflicted injuries from that day on January 11, 2025. Rodewald had an extensive history of domestic violence against multiple women dating at least as far back as 1999. He frequently counter-filed false Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders against his current and former partners as a tool of control.

Kristi was a nurse at the Mankato Clinic for nearly three decades, and was “an awesome nurse and kind friend” and “a wonderful person” who enjoyed cooking, gardening, and puzzles. She leaves behind five children.



Age 24
From Oakdale,
MN; Sam died in
New York
February 13, 2025



Sam was “a friend without limits,” “a giving person, a loving person,” “full of life,” and a “beautiful human being.” He loved TikTok, puma sweatshirts, cooking, and trick-or-treating.



Age 46
Jordan
January 28, 2025



Tabitha Renee Justice

Tabitha Renee Justice, 46, was found deceased from a gunshot wound to the head on January 28, 2025 in Jordan after being reported missing. Officers found her body when they went to her last known address.

On April 16, 2026, John Peterson, 41, was indicted on a charge of first-degree murder. Tabitha had been dating Peterson and had at some point been living with him. Tabitha's friends said Peterson was “physically aggressive,” “very controlling,” and that he kept “finding and following” Tabitha. Peterson was legally prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Tabitha Renee Justice was described as “beautiful and funny; such a sweet and loving person.” She leaves behind several children.

Sam Nordquist, 24, was killed around February 13, 2025 as a result of torture. Precious Arzuaga, 38; Jennifer Quijano, 30; Kyle Sage, 33; Patrick Goodwin, 30; Emily Motyka, 19; Kimberly Sochia, 29; and Thomas Eaves, 21, were charged with first-degree murder. In September 2026, Arzuaga and Quijano were sentenced to life in prison.

Sam traveled to New York from Oakdale, MN in September 2024 to meet his girlfriend, Precious Arzuaga. Sam's family gradually lost contact with him. On December 4, 2024, Sam's family was notified by social services that Sam had gone to their offices expressing that Arzuaga was controlling his cell phone use, and that he wanted to come home and was trying to come up with an “escape plan.” He never showed up for a December 19 appointment. His body was found in a field in New York on February 13, 2025.



Age 29
St. Paul
February 26, 2025



Sefiya Churiso Datu

Sefiya Churiso Datu, 29, was fatally stabbed in St. Paul on February 26, 2025. Sefiya's husband, Kedu Husen Buseri, 34, is charged with second-degree murder. On February 26, Buseri called 911 and said someone had killed his wife.

Officers found Buseri covered in blood and Sefiya with a knife near her head. A baby and a woman were present but uninjured. Buseri told police he and Sefiya had an argument and he slapped her, then began cutting her. Sefiya died as a result of multiple sharp force injuries, including a large cut across her throat so deep it pierced her jugular vein, cuts on her face, and a cut on her bicep. As of February 2026, there is an ongoing civil commitment proceeding involving Buseri. **We remember Sefiya Churiso Datu.**



Age 42
Ramsey
April 22, 2025



Hulda Bochere Mosiori

Hulda Bochere Mosiori, 42, was fatally shot by her former partner Mel Melchizedek, 51, who then killed himself, on April 22, 2025 in Ramsey, Minnesota. On April 22, police received a call indicating that Melchizedek confronted a neighbor with a gun before returning to a home nearby. A shelter-in-place order was issued for the surrounding area. When police entered the home, they found Hulda and Melchizedek deceased.

Hulda was a psychiatric nurse practitioner in Maple Grove who was described by loved ones as “the nicest person” and the “biggest supporter, role model and provider.” She leaves behind four children.



Age 36
Waite Park
April 12, 2025



Janet Vercruysse

Janet Vercruysse, 36, was fatally shot inside a home in Waite Park on April 12, 2025 by her boyfriend De'Mico Elyea-Goss, 29, who then shot and killed himself. On April 12, police were across the street on a separate call and heard gunshots. Janet's 5-year-old child and 8-year-old child ran out of the home and alerted police to the murder-suicide. When police entered, they found Janet and Elyea-Goss deceased. Multiple firearms were also found inside.

Janet was a “caring and adventurous” person who was generous and friendly and loved spending time with her family and three cats.

Loved ones said she had a “contagious laugh” and loved dressing up in her favorite colors of pink, leopard print, and purple. Janet worked at a nursing home and was fondly remembered by coworkers. She leaves behind two children.



Age 33
St. Paul
May 2, 2025



Christine "Chrissy" Morris

Christine "Chrissy" Morris, 33, was fatally stabbed in St. Paul around May 2, 2025. Her boyfriend Joseph Davis, 34, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder with intent. On May 2, police were called to a welfare check at the home they shared, where they found Christine deceased. Her two-year-old daughter was present.

Davis was sentenced in May 2023 and January 2024 for gross misdemeanor domestic assault against Christine, and had violated a no contact order prohibiting him from contacting her. Davis also had a prior domestic assault conviction in 2018 for abusing another woman. In September 2024, Christine told a friend she was worried Davis would kill her. His ex-girlfriend wrote the same in her 2018 petition for an Order for Protection against Davis.

Christine "Chrissy" Morris was described as "a beautiful soul who touched many lives with her love, strength, and smile." She ran her own catering business for Jamaican food, and also worked as a realtor. She leaves behind a two-year-old daughter.



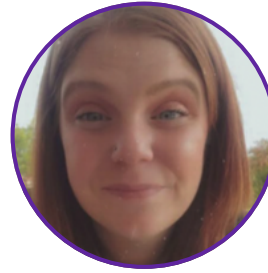
Age 2
Minneapolis
June 9, 2025

Kinsley Prinsen



Kinsley Prinsen, 2, was fatally shot inside her home in Minneapolis on June 9, 2025 by her father Scott Devery, 50, in front of her mother. Devery then fatally shot himself. Kinsley's mother told the media that Devery held her and Kinsley hostage in their home, and that she was unable to call 911 for fear of him seeing her phone. She said that before Devery killed Kinsley, he stated he was "going to make sure that I live in misery the rest of my life without my baby girl and without him."

Kinsley Prinsen was a "beautiful angel" who was "always happy" and "as young as she was, she made a difference in a lot of people's lives. She could cheer anyone up."



Age 32
Burnsville
May 7, 2025



Danielle Grace Warren

Danielle Grace Warren, 32, was fatally stabbed on May 7, 2025 in her home in Burnsville while several children were home. Her boyfriend Jason Filas, 48, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in September 2026. If his plea is accepted, he will be sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

Earlier in 2025, a no-contact order was issued against Filas after a March 13 assault in which he grabbed Danielle by the hair and took her cellphone. In the court filing for the order, Danielle noted she was afraid of Filas and was concerned he would hurt her. Police found him in violation of the order on April 2, 2025 while in a car with Danielle. He was set to be sentenced for that violation on July 9, 2025, but a judge vacated the no-contact order on April 23. Filas also has a history of abuse against his ex-wife, including near-daily physical and verbal abuse. He once threatened to burn his ex-wife's house down.

Loved ones said Danielle "did anything in the world" for her children and had a great sense of humor. She leaves behind three children.



Minnesota
June 2025



Anonymous

This person was killed by their partner. Their partner had an extensive history of domestic violence against them over many years, and repeatedly violated Domestic Abuse No Contact Orders that were put in place. **We honor and remember this person.**



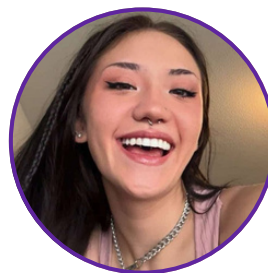
Age 29
Chisholm
June 17, 2025



Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff

Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff, 29, was fatally shot on June 17, 2025 in a home in Chisholm, Minnesota. Lindsey's ex-boyfriend Leo Schweiss, 34, fatally shot Lindsey and shot another man who was present. Schweiss then fatally shot himself. When police arrived on scene, they found Lindsey and Schweiss dead. The other man was taken to the hospital for his injuries, and survived.

Lindsey was described as someone with an "infectious laugh, boundless energy, and kindness." She was pursuing education in social work and criminal justice, and loved being a mother. **Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff leaves behind two young children.**



Age 22
Richfield
June 16, 2025



Kayli Grace Arseth

Note: While we document intimate partner homicides, we also document homicides that result from a perpetrator's refusal to accept romantic rejection, as these deaths frequently occur in a context of misogyny and overwhelmingly impact women. Kayli was not in a relationship with the man who killed her, and he chose not to accept this.

Kayli Grace Arseth, 22, was fatally shot in her apartment in Richfield on June 16, 2025. Jose Luis Lopez Xique, 27, is charged with second-degree murder. Kayli and Xique had recently met online, but the relationship was not romantic or sexual.

Xique repeatedly pushed for a relationship despite Kayli repeatedly telling him no. On June 16, Kayli again told Xique she did not want a relationship. Xique had already broken into her apartment and was texting her from there. She was killed when she arrived home, shot at close range in the head. On June 17, officers responded to a welfare check and found her deceased. Xique was arrested on July 3. Police found a Glock 9mm firearm, a red dot sight adapter plate, and a "Tactical Media Acquisition Kit" containing camera accessories, hard drives, and flash drives in his home during their search.

Kayli Grace Arseth is remembered as "a vibrant spirit" who had "unwavering compassion for others." She loved music, going to raves with friends, art, and restoring her motorcycle. She was a beloved nanny and babysitter, and a Behavioral Technician. Her energy **"brought light to everyone."**



Age 36
Wabasha County
June 18, 2025



Melissa Hunt

Melissa Hunt, 36, was beaten and fatally shot in Wabasha County, Minnesota on June 18, 2025. Craig Hameister, 44, Melissa's ex-partner and the father of her youngest daughter, was sentenced to 34.5 years in prison in May 2026 for second-degree intentional murder.

On June 18, police were called to the West Newton area, where Melissa was found badly injured. She had been beaten and shot in the face, and passed away in the hospital. Hameister was arrested on June 19 after hiding from the police. He was found with a pistol. Hameister has a history of domestic violence, including stalking, terroristic threats, and domestic assault charges and convictions dating at least as far back as 2006.

Melissa Hunt was described as “such a light,” “a beautiful soul,” and someone who “had a big heart and loved life.” She leaves behind two daughters.



Crystal Marschel

Crystal Marschel, 32, was fatally shot in a home in Pierz, Minnesota on July 18, 2025 by her boyfriend John Gans, 34, who then killed himself. Gans had a history of violence against Crystal and his former wife, including strangulation, hitting, and using suicide threats as a form of coercive control.

Crystal Marschel was “a warm, vibrant soul” and “proud mentor” whose children were “the center of her universe.” She loved the Vikings and was a physical education and health teacher at Isle High School, as well as the girls track coach. She was honored in May 2025 as the Isle High School staff member of the month. She leaves behind two children.



Age 32
Pierz
July 18, 2025



Anissa Cope

Anissa Cope, 49, was fatally stabbed on June 28, 2025 in her home in Duluth. Anissa's husband Corddarro Cope, 37, is charged with second-degree murder. On June 28, a neighbor called 911 indicating that they heard a woman screaming for help and being “thrown around” while a man told her to shut up. First responders found Anissa dead with multiple stab wounds. In September 2025, Corddarro Cope was found incompetent to stand trial due to mental illness or cognitive impairment, and criminal proceedings were suspended.

Wisconsin court records show Corddarro Cope pleaded guilty to violent offenses against a different partner several years ago. One of these assaults occurred in 2018 and another in 2019. In both cases, Cope faced multiple felony charges—including felony strangulation—but pleaded down to misdemeanor domestic battery.

Anissa Cope was a “kind, compassionate soul” who “made the world brighter.”



Age 49
Duluth
June 28, 2025



Age 26
Minneapolis
August 11, 2025



Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese

Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese, then 23, was shot in the head on November 25, 2022 in Plymouth. Austin LeClaire, then 27, Daisy's boyfriend, called 911, claiming he was on the phone with her and heard a gunshot. Daisy survived with serious injuries. Surveillance video showed LeClaire shooting her. One hour before the shooting, LeClaire texted someone a misogynistic remark about Daisy and wrote "she going to die." In 2023, he was sentenced to 18 years for shooting her.

In July 2023, Daisy filed for an Order for Protection against LeClaire, writing that she had suffered catastrophic damage as a result of the shooting, and that LeClaire had a history of "ongoing and repetitive threats" against her that involved firearms. She died on August 11, 2025 at age 26. The medical examiner determined her death was a direct result of complications from the gunshot wound in 2022. On December 29, 2025, LeClaire, now 30, was charged with second-degree murder. **We remember Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese.**

Joseph Johnson



Maplewood
September 2025



Age 56
Outing
August 13, 2025



Connie Lea Pollock

Connie Lea Pollock, 56, was fatally shot by her husband Jack Pollock, 63, in a residence in Outing, Minnesota on August 13, 2025. That morning, first responders received a report of a structure fire. When they arrived at the residence, it was engulfed in flames, and Connie and Jack were deceased inside. Connie died from a gunshot wound to the chest, while Jack died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

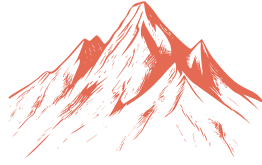
Connie was described as a "loving friend" and a respected oncology nurse at Riverwood Healthcare Center. She leaves behind several children. We remember Connie Lea Pollock.

Joseph Johnson was killed in September 2025 while intervening in domestic violence. Lloyd McKenzie, 52, is charged with two counts of second-degree murder and one count of second-degree assault. Joseph attempted to protect a woman who had been assaulted, strangled, threatened, and kidnapped by McKenzie. He was stabbed to death while doing so. McKenzie was convicted of domestic assault in 2024 for an incident in March 2024 during which he assaulted the same woman in the same apartment, threatened her with a knife, and followed her around. McKenzie has numerous other domestic assault charges and convictions.

Joseph Johnson was a brother, son, and father, who had a big heart and a kind soul. Loved ones stated that he was a "protector" who lived with courage and compassion.



Age 37
Richfield
September 7, 2025

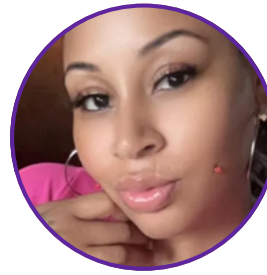


Jennifer Rose Millons

Jennifer Rose Millons, 37, was beaten to death on September 7, 2025 in a home in Richfield. Shay Benson, 37, the father of one of her children, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in September 2026 and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after 30 years. First responders found Jennifer lying in the shower with a deep laceration on her head, black eyes, and a broken nose. Her two-year-old daughter was asleep in the bedroom and had blood spatter on her arm. Benson's description of what happened did not match the evidence.

Benson has an extensive history of violence against multiple victims. In April 2010 he was convicted of second-degree criminal sexual conduct and was sentenced to more than six years in prison, more than three years of supervised release and 10 years of conditional release, and was required to register as a predatory offender. In November 2006 he was convicted of domestic assault by strangulation, and in August 2008 he was convicted of violating an order for protection. In August 2026, he pleaded guilty to first-degree murder for Jennifer's murder, and in September 2026, he was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole after 30 years.

Jennifer Rose Millons previously lived in Montana and at one point worked at Hennepin Technical College. She was a beloved mother and friend, and leaves behind three daughters. Her best friend shared, "Jennifer was an amazing woman with a beautiful heart. She was compassionate, funny, generous, and fiercely loved her family and friends. She had a way of making people feel seen, accepted, and cared for. Her motto was, "Love Always Wins." She deserved a lifetime of happiness and the opportunity to watch her three daughters grow up."



Age 34
Minneapolis
September 14, 2025



Mariah "Riah" Samuels

Mariah "Riah" Samuels, 34, was fatally shot on September 14, 2025 outside her home in Minneapolis. In April 2026, Mariah's ex-boyfriend David Wright, 50, was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.

A few hours before she was killed, Mariah texted her sister that Wright was violating the Order for Protection she had against him. On August 26, 2025 Mariah petitioned for the Order for Protection in court, and wrote that on August 21, Wright appeared outside her home and threatened to blow up her home. He then stalked her to a home a few blocks away where she was dropping off her son. There, he repeatedly hit her with a gun, strangled her, and threatened to shoot her. Minneapolis police did not forward a case for consideration of charges from this assault to the County Attorney's Office.

Wright was previously convicted of assault for threatening another girlfriend with a firearm in 2002. He was legally prohibited from possessing a firearm at that time. He was again convicted of domestic assault in 2010 for an offense in 2008. Another woman was granted Orders for Protection against him in 2020 and 2022 for stalking. At the time of Mariah's murder, Wright was on supervised release after being sentenced in the U.S. District Court in Minnesota in 2009 to a 15-year term for illegal gun possession.

Mariah worked as a dog groomer and was "very loving with her animals," which included four cats and two lizards. She was described as "sweet, outgoing, and free-spirited," and a "devoted mother, cherished daughter, loving sister, and friend." She leaves behind two sons.



Age 24
St. Cloud
September 23, 2025



Falus Ali

Falus Ali, 24, was fatally stabbed on or around the night of September 23, 2025 in a home in St. Cloud. Police responded to a 911 hangup call at the home and found Falus lying in the living room in a pool of blood with a kitchen knife next to her. She had been stabbed 34 times. She was taken to St. Cloud Hospital, where she died. Falus was 17 weeks pregnant and her unborn child did not survive. Saleebaan Abdirisaaq, 26, the father of her three-year-old child, was arrested. Their three-year-old child witnessed her murder.

Abdirisaaq was charged in 2024 in Hennepin County with threats of violence against Falus. During that incident, he took Falus hostage in her car for eight hours while threatening to kill her. A Domestic Abuse No Contact Order was put in place. He was later convicted of violating that order. Falus had also previously been granted a Domestic Abuse No Contact Order against Abdirisaaq out of Sherburne County for prior violence.

On July 10, 2026, Abdirisaaq was convicted of second-degree intentional murder and second-degree felony murder of an unborn child.

Falus graduated from McKinley Area Learning Center in St. Cloud in 2020. She wrote that she was planning to attend college and wanted to become a nurse to help children. Falus Ali leaves behind a three-year-old child.



Ages 32 and 50
Hanska
November 2, 2025



Tabitha Leigh Trescott Justin Paul Reinarts

Tabitha Leigh Trescott, 32, and her boyfriend **Justin Paul Reinarts**, 50, were fatally shot on November 2, 2025 in their home in Hanska, Minnesota. Tabitha's ex-boyfriend Randy Zimmerman, 45, was charged with second-degree murder. In August 2026, Zimmerman pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree murder. He will be sentenced to life in prison.

On the morning of November 2nd, Tabitha's son called 911 and stated he had awoken to Zimmerman, who had broken in, yelling a misogynistic profanity at Tabitha, followed by a firearm discharging. Zimmerman pointed a gun at Tabitha's son and ordered him to return to his bedroom. Her other son told police that Zimmerman texted him to state he had killed Tabitha and Justin.

Zimmerman has domestic assault convictions from 2024 and 2023; a domestic violence-related assault conviction from 2015; and was charged with domestic assault by strangulation in 2013. In July 2025, he was charged with six counts of stalking against Tabitha. In her petition for a Harassment Restraining Order against him, Tabitha wrote that he broke into her residence multiple times a week, harassed her constantly, and often threatened her.

Tabitha Leigh Trescott was described as "a bright, joyful soul who filled every room with laughter." Loved ones said she "loved music, treasured her friendships, and held tightly to her faith." Tabitha Leigh Trescott leaves behind two young sons. Justin Paul Reinarts was described as "one of the nicest guys." He served as a firefighter for the Hanska Fire Department for 17 years, and worked floor security at Jackpot Junction Casino in Redwood Falls. He loved animals, broomball, and working on demo cars. Justin Paul Reinarts leaves behind two sons.



Minneapolis
November 2025



Anonymous

In November 2025, a woman was found fatally shot in a home in Minneapolis. Investigators determined her husband killed her and then himself. She has not yet been publicly identified. We know she loved sports, learning languages, and volunteering. She leaves behind two children. **We remember this woman. She deserved safety, respect, and love.**



Age 42
Minneapolis
November 5, 2025



Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj

Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj, 42, was fatally shot in an apartment in Minneapolis. Raymond Jones, 65, with whom she'd allegedly had a one-time sexual encounter, was convicted of second-degree unintentional murder in September 2026 and sentenced to over 10 years in prison. Desirae was shot in the heart while she tried to leave his apartment. **Desirae leaves behind nine children and is deeply missed.**



Age 34
Roseville
November 5, 2025



Shantell Rosario

Shantell Rosario, 34, was fatally shot in a car in Roseville by the father of her children in a murder-suicide on November 5, 2025. He had a history of violence against a previous partner, and also used the legal system against his ex-partner to control her.

Shantell was described as a loving and devoted mother, and a beloved sister, daughter, cousin, and friend. She had a "generous heart" and a "contagious laugh" and was a "fairy, spirited, and full of a light that made every room brighter." Purple was her favorite color. She leaves behind four children.



Age 54
Minneapolis
December 1, 2025



Kimberly Ann Brandenburg

Kimberly Ann Brandenburg, 54, was fatally beaten inside her boyfriend's apartment in Minneapolis around December 1, 2025. Scott Carlson, 67, her boyfriend, was sentenced to 12.5 years in prison in 2026 for second-degree murder. Kimberly was staying with Carlson after being evicted from her apartment in February 2025.

On July 8, 2025, Kimberly went to the hospital and reported that Carlson punched, slapped, burned, and sexually assaulted her after accusing her of sleeping with other men. On October 18, 2025, she again went to the hospital with injuries, and reported that Carlson strangled and pushed her and pulled her hair.

Police investigators submitted the July 8 assault case to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for charging on September 18 — more than two months after the crime occurred. The October 18 assault case was never forwarded for potential charges. Carlson was charged with third-degree assault for the July 8 assault on December 1, the day Kimberly was found dead. She was killed before the charges were officially filed. Carlson had a history of domestic violence against previous partners in addition to Kimberly.



Age 25
St. Cloud
December 8, 2025



Quinton McKay Hughes

Quinton McKay Hughes, 25, was fatally stabbed in his girlfriend's apartment on December 8, 2025 in St. Cloud. Katerina Markiv, 23, his girlfriend, is charged with two counts of second-degree murder.

On December 8, Quinton told 911 dispatchers that Markiv stabbed him during an argument. Markiv was heard admitting to stabbing him. He died after police arrived. Markiv told police that she wanted to have sex, but Quinton did not, so she punched and stabbed him. Both Quinton and Markiv worked at the same location. Coworkers told police that Markiv was "known to frequently get upset or angry at work," and that she once admitted she sometimes gets so upset that "she could kill somebody," but did not say who.

Quinton McKay Hughes was described as "a loving soul who made people laugh."

Shaniya Thompson



Age 29
St. Paul
December 11, 2025



Shaniya Thompson, 29, was fatally shot in her apartment in St. Paul on December 11, 2025. Wesley Koboi, 33, the father of her children, faces two counts of second-degree murder.

Koboi came over during a birthday party for his and Shaniya's daughter and told the children to go to their rooms. The children heard a scream and a thud. Shaniya and Kobo's daughter later told police that Kobo had been pointing a gun at Shaniya's head. Kobo then fled, taking their five children to Michigan before leaving by himself to enter Canada. Once in Canada, he booked a flight to Mexico. On December 16, Toronto police took Kobo into custody at the Toronto airport. According to Shaniya's neighbors, Kobo had previously pointed a gun at Shaniya's head on July 4.

Shaniya was a devoted mother and a beloved daughter and sister. Loved ones shared that she was "the glue that held their family together" and her love was "real, selfless, and unconditional."



Age 55
Maplewood
December 10, 2025



Amy Doverspike

Amy Doverspike, 55, was fatally shot in her apartment in Maplewood on December 10, 2025. Joseph Wiggins, 57, the father of one of Amy's children, is charged with one count of second-degree murder.

On December 10, police found Amy lying in the hallway. A SWAT team found Wiggins with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He survived his injuries. Apartment building staff told police that Wiggins was married to a different woman, but the marriage was ending. Wiggins wanted to be in a relationship with Amy, but she didn't want that. Wiggins' wife told the police that he texted her he had killed Amy and was planning to kill himself, and blamed her. He had a history of violence against multiple women.

Amy was a talented chef who loved her dogs. She had degrees in culinary arts and criminal justice, and previously worked as a correctional officer. She leaves behind several children.



Tayah Ehnes-Giles

**Age 26
Castle Rock Township
December 24, 2025**



Tayah Ehnes-Giles, 26, was fatally shot on her 26th birthday in her home in Castle Rock Township on December 24, 2025.

Demarco Jones, 29, Tayah's partner and the father of her children, was charged with second-degree murder. On December 24, police found Tayah dead in the home. Jones was found alive with a self-inflicted gunshot wound and was taken to the hospital for treatment. Tayah's family told police that Jones admitted to shooting Tayah and then himself. Tayah and Jones's two children were in the home when she was killed, and alerted family members after hearing two gunshots.

Jones has a documented history of domestic violence against multiple women. In 2022, he was charged with domestic assault for hitting and strangling Tayah. In 2018, he was convicted of disorderly conduct for assaulting a family member who confronted him after he took his former fiancée's child from her arms. His former fiancée told police he had a history of slapping her, yelling at her, and sitting on her. In April 2026, Jones was indicted on two counts of first-degree murder in Tayah's murder. If convicted of these charges, he will be sentenced to life in prison.

Tayah was a waitress for eight years at the Lakeville Buckboard and loved bonfires, her children, and hosting family events. She was described as a loving mother, daughter, sister, aunt, niece and friend. Tayah Ehnes-Giles leaves behind two children.

We ask that as you finish reading these stories, you take a moment of silence to honor all the names and stories we do not know and may never know; and all the lives lost to domestic violence whose stories and humanity were not seen, reported on, or investigated with the care they should be. Many of these lives and stories belong to Black women, Indigenous women, immigrant women, disabled women, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

We Remember

- January 9, 2025: Kristi Joy Gardner, 57, was killed by gunshot in Lake Crystal.
- January 28, 2025: Tabitha Renee Justice, 46, was killed by gunshot in Jordan.
- February 13, 2025: Sam Nordquist, 24, was killed by torture in New York.
- February 26, 2025: Sefiya Churiso Datu, 29, was killed by stabbing in St. Paul.
- April 12, 2025: Janet Vercruysse, 36, was killed by gunshot in Waite Park.
- April 22, 2025: Hulda Bochere Mosiori, 42, was killed by gunshot in Ramsey.
- May 2, 2025: Christine “Chrissy” Morris, 33, was killed by stabbing in St. Paul.
- May 7, 2025: Danielle Grace Warren, 32, was killed by stabbing in Burnsville.
- May 15, 2025: Julia Marie Marthaler, 23, died as a result of severe head trauma in Sherburne County.
- June 9, 2025: Kinsley Prinsen, 2, was killed by gunshot in Minneapolis.
- June 2025: Anonymous was killed by gunshot in Minnesota.
- June 16, 2025: Kayli Grace Arseth, 22, was killed by gunshot in Richfield.
- June 17, 2025: Lindsey Kaye (Adams) Graff, 29, was killed by gunshot in Chisholm.
- June 18, 2025: Melissa Hunt, 36, was killed by gunshot in Wabasha County.
- June 28, 2025: Anissa Cope, 49, was killed by stabbing in Duluth.
- July 18, 2025: Crystal Marschel, 32, was killed by gunshot in Pierz.
- August 11, 2025: Daisy Olga Melia Colonnese, 26, was killed by complications of gunshot from 2022.
- August 13, 2025: Connie Lea Pollock, 56, was killed by gunshot in Outing.
- August 30, 2025: Barbara Ann McBride, 66, was killed by homicidal violence in Mazeppa.
- September 2025: Joseph Johnson was killed by stabbing in Maplewood.
- September 7, 2025: Jennifer Rose Millons, 37, was killed by stabbing and beating in Richfield.
- September 14, 2025: Mariah “Riah” Samuels, 34, was killed by gunshot in Minneapolis.
- September 23, 2025: Falus Ali, 24, was killed by stabbing in St. Cloud.
- November 2, 2025: Tabitha Leigh Trescott, 32, was killed by gunshot in Hanska.
- November 2, 2025: Justin Paul Reinarts, 50, was killed by gunshot in Hanska.
- November 2025: Anonymous was killed by gunshot in Minneapolis.
- November 5, 2025: Shantell Rosario, 34, was killed by gunshot in Roseville.
- November 5, 2025: Desirae Brown Argueta-Joj, 42, was killed by gunshot in Minneapolis.
- December 1, 2025: Kimberly Ann Brandenburg, 54, was killed by beating in Minneapolis.
- December 8, 2025: Quinton McKay Hughes, 25, was killed by stabbing in St. Cloud.
- December 10, 2025: Amy Doverspike, 55, was killed by gunshot in Maplewood.
- December 11, 2025: Shaniya Thompson, 29, was killed by gunshot in St. Paul.
- December 24, 2025: Tayah Ehnes-Giles, 26, was killed by gunshot in Castle Rock Township.

**Purple text denotes
a suspicious death*



We Remember 2025

Violence Free Minnesota's Homicide Report: Purpose and Methods



How we define and track intimate partner violence-related homicides:

We annually document intimate partner homicides. These are homicides in which the perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner of the victim, or the homicide is the result of domestic violence against current or former intimate partners. The latter includes family members, friends, bystanders, and intervenors killed as a result of intimate partner violence.

We primarily use news articles and court records for tracking. Sometimes, victims' loved ones and community members will directly notify us of deaths.

Why we document these homicides:

We have been documenting intimate partner homicides in Minnesota since 1989, and remain the only agency in the state to document the full scope of these deaths. We collect this information to first and foremost memorialize and honor the lives lost, and to illuminate patterns in homicides; identify intervention opportunities; and amplify prevention and policy recommendations to prevent further homicides.

Our vision is to end relationship abuse in Minnesota. Doing so requires understanding its scope and impact.

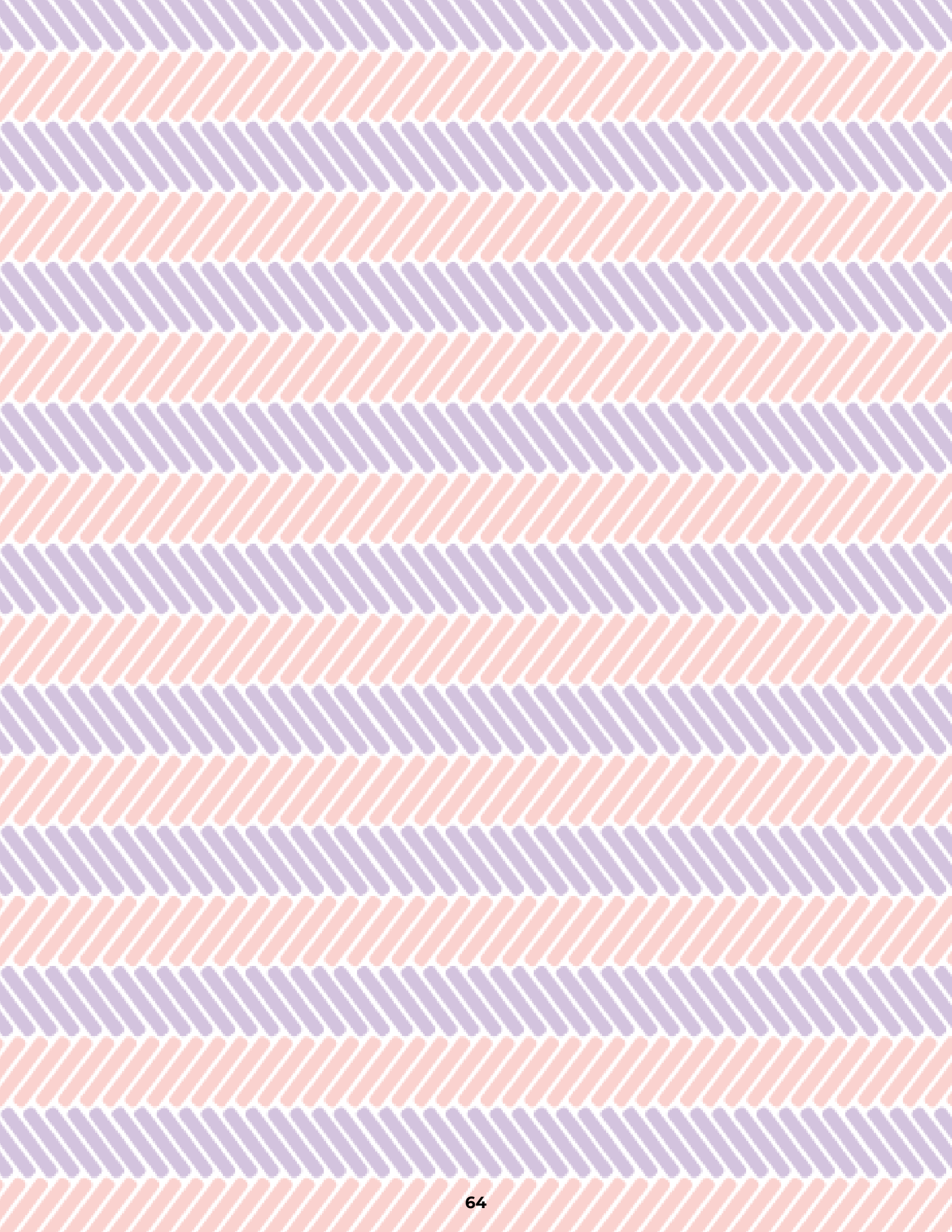
Limitations of the report:

We use the phrase "at least" when describing the number of people killed each year, because we cannot be certain we have recorded all homicides since we rely primarily on news accounts. The news often underreports on the murders of Black women, Native women, immigrant women, people living in poverty, disabled people, rural women, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, sex workers, and people who are sexually exploited.

Who we include in our annual Homicide Reports:

- Individuals killed by a current or former partner (sexual, dating, and/or spousal relationship);
- Bystanders and intervenors killed during intimate partner violence incidents;
- Children killed by a parent's current or former partner as an act of abuse against the parent;
- Individuals killed by someone who refused to accept their rejection of romantic interest;
- Sex workers killed in connection to their work;
- Victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation killed in connection to the exploitation;
- Individuals killed in Minnesota; or if their body was found in Minnesota; or if their body was found in a nearby state but the circumstances surrounding their homicide began in Minnesota;
- Suspicious deaths likely connected to intimate partner violence (not included in the total victim count)

To the best of our ability given the often limited information we have access to, we do NOT include individuals in our reports who were killed by a partner who was using self-defense or resistive violence. We know that abuse is incredibly complex, and news accounts often do not tell the full story. Self-defense laws also regularly fail to account for women's experiences of abuse.





RACE EQUITY STATEMENT

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

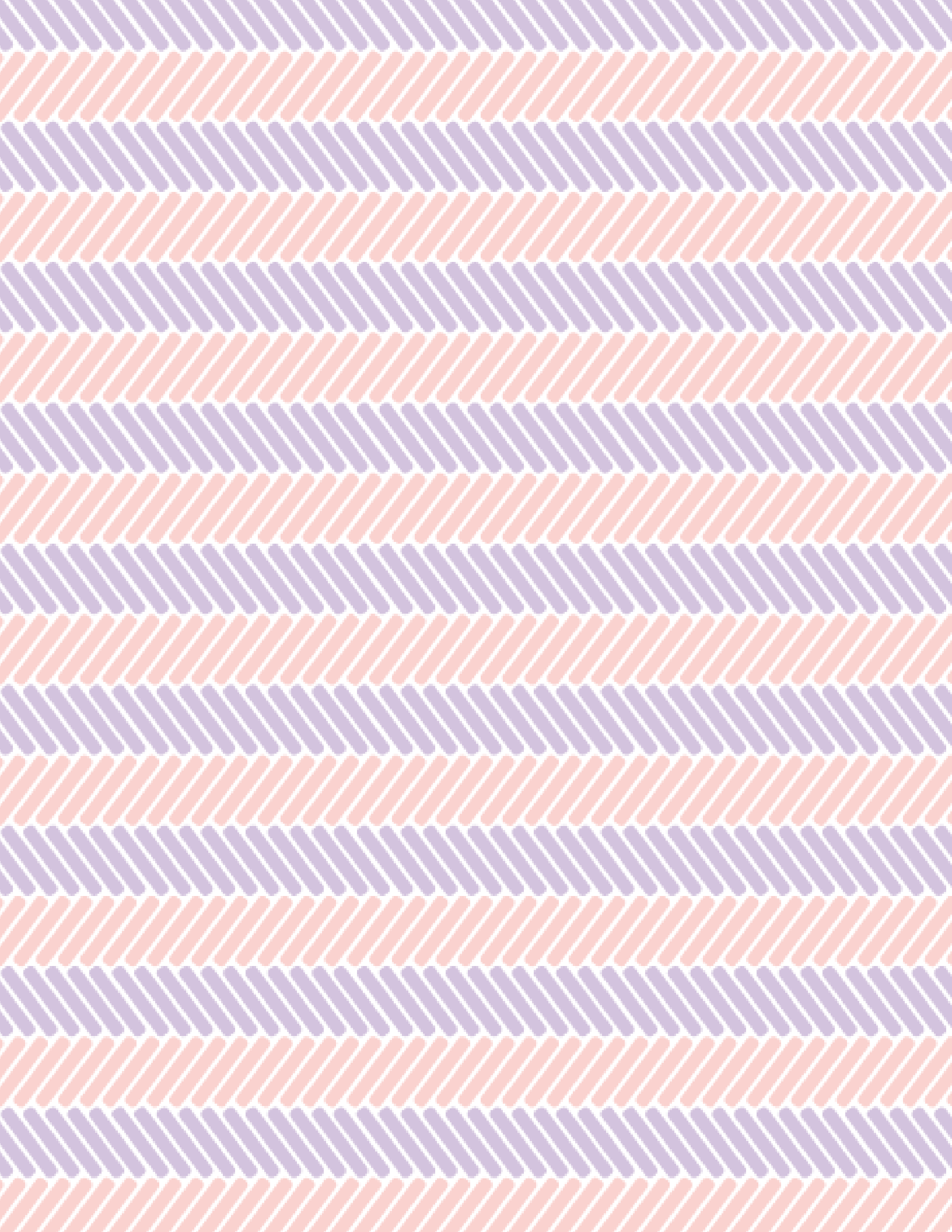
Violence Free Minnesota, the coalition to end relationship abuse, believes that race equity is the intentional process of prioritizing and honoring the voices and advocacy of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC) as powerful decision-makers in determining the priorities that guide our movement to end relationship abuse.

VFMN is committed to the collective work of transforming systems and organizations that have historically excluded and harmed BIPOC communities — impeding their access to safety, stability, economic resources, and opportunities.

As part of this commitment VFMN will continue to:

- **maintain a diverse staff and Board of Directors, and create leadership development opportunities** for advocates from historically marginalized communities in Minnesota;
- **highlight racial disparities** in intimate partner violence and in services for BIPOC victim/survivors in our conversations with policymakers and stakeholders in the work to end IPV;
- **transform the mainstream narrative around relationship abuse** from that of a crime allegedly best prevented through policing and punishment to that of a public health and social justice issue rooted in oppression;
- **transform the narrative of what it will take to end relationship abuse** when providing leadership and guidance to partners and stakeholders across the state, acknowledging the human capacity for change and centering BIPOC-led prevention initiatives;
- **continually uplift the stories** of historically excluded groups in our community;
- **dismantle the habits of white supremacy culture** in our work with one another, with members, and partners of all kinds across the state.

We believe that achieving race equity through shared power, ongoing accountability, and liberation for all is necessary to end relationship abuse. We are committed to being part of the change in Minnesota.





VIOLENCE FREE

MINNESOTA

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

**If you are experiencing abuse,
contact Day One
to connect with services.**

Phone call: 1.866.223.1111

Text: 612.399.9995

Email: safety@dayoneservices.org

Violence Free Minnesota
www.violencefreeminnesota.org