

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
ANNUAL DVDRT REPORT  
OCTOBER 2019**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Sacramento County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) is presently chaired by District Attorney (DA) Anne Marie Schubert, represented by Assistant Chief Deputy D.A. Paul Durenberger.

The DVCC has three active subcommittees: The Community Subcommittee, also known as the Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration (DVPC); the Law Enforcement Subcommittee; and the Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT). Each subcommittee is comprised of agency and/or community representatives with expertise in these distinct areas. The subcommittees work independently and are multi-disciplinary in nature.

**DVCC SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

The DVPC continues to be very active in addressing the needs of domestic violence victims in Sacramento County and was a strong supporter of the creation of the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC).

Last year, the SRFJC Legal Help Center served clients inside the Sacramento William Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse. The SRFJC Collaborative Service Center opened across the street from the Legal Help Center offering free space for community service providers willing to work with clients visiting the SRFJC. WEAVE, My Sister's House and Lao Family Community Development are the first nonprofit community-based partners to dedicate full-time team members at the SRFJC. Child Protective Services (CPS), Sacramento County Special Assault Forensic Evaluation (SAFE) Center and law enforcement agencies are also in-house partners. The SRFJC continues to provide services for new and existing clients. The breakdown of the number of clients served by geographic location of residence and ethnicity, displayed in graphs below, detail the community impact of the SRFJC. Since opening in July of 2016, over 5,600 new and returning clients have received services at the SRFJC.

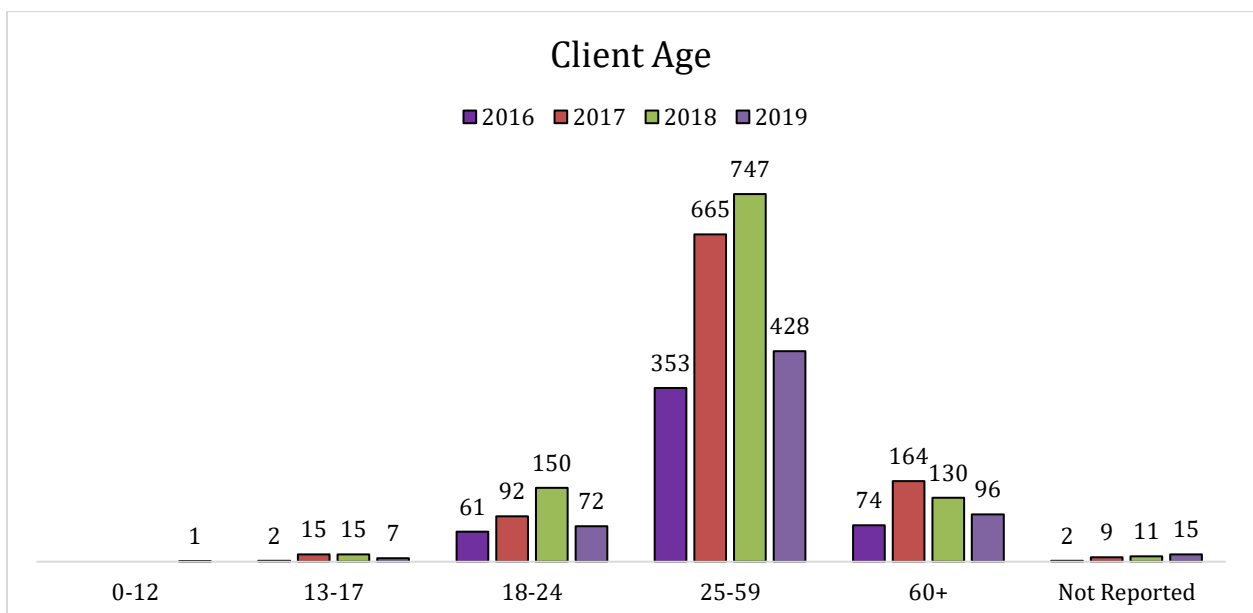
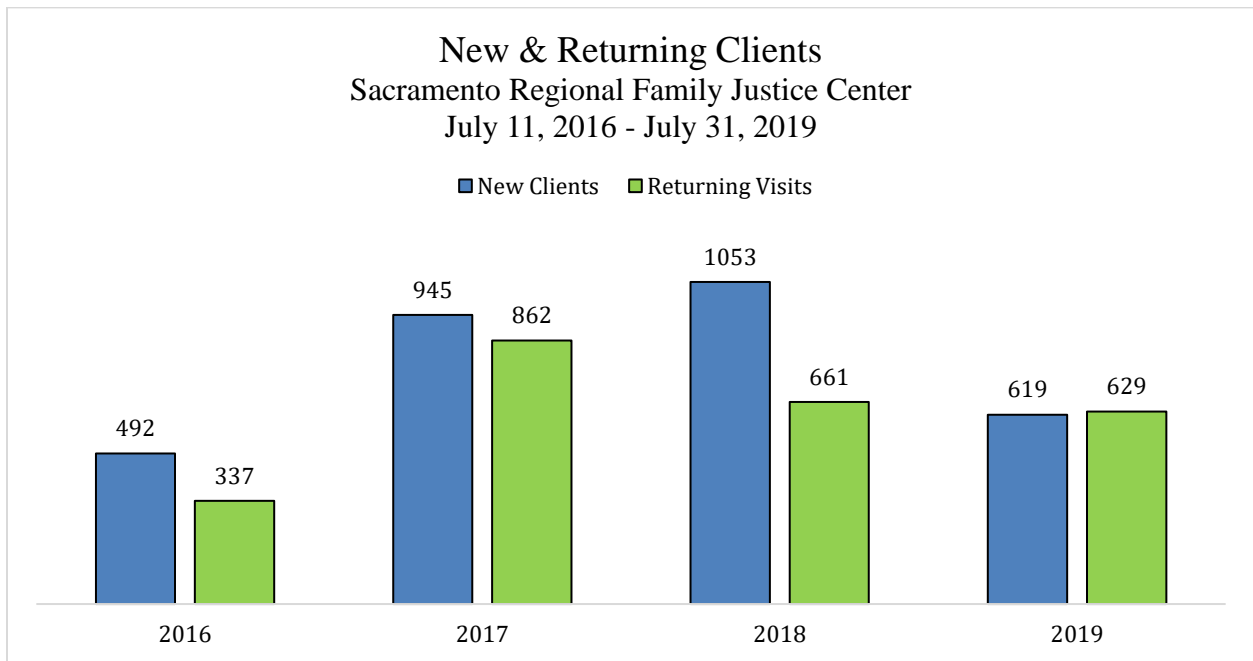
The SRFJC strategy focuses on two primary goals: (1) reducing systemic barriers for all victims of interpersonal violence, family violence, human trafficking, and elder abuse, and (2) creating a collaborative framework to enhance community partners and relationships which will lead to positive social and systemic change. The SRFJC believes this focus is the most effective approach to reach underserved communities.

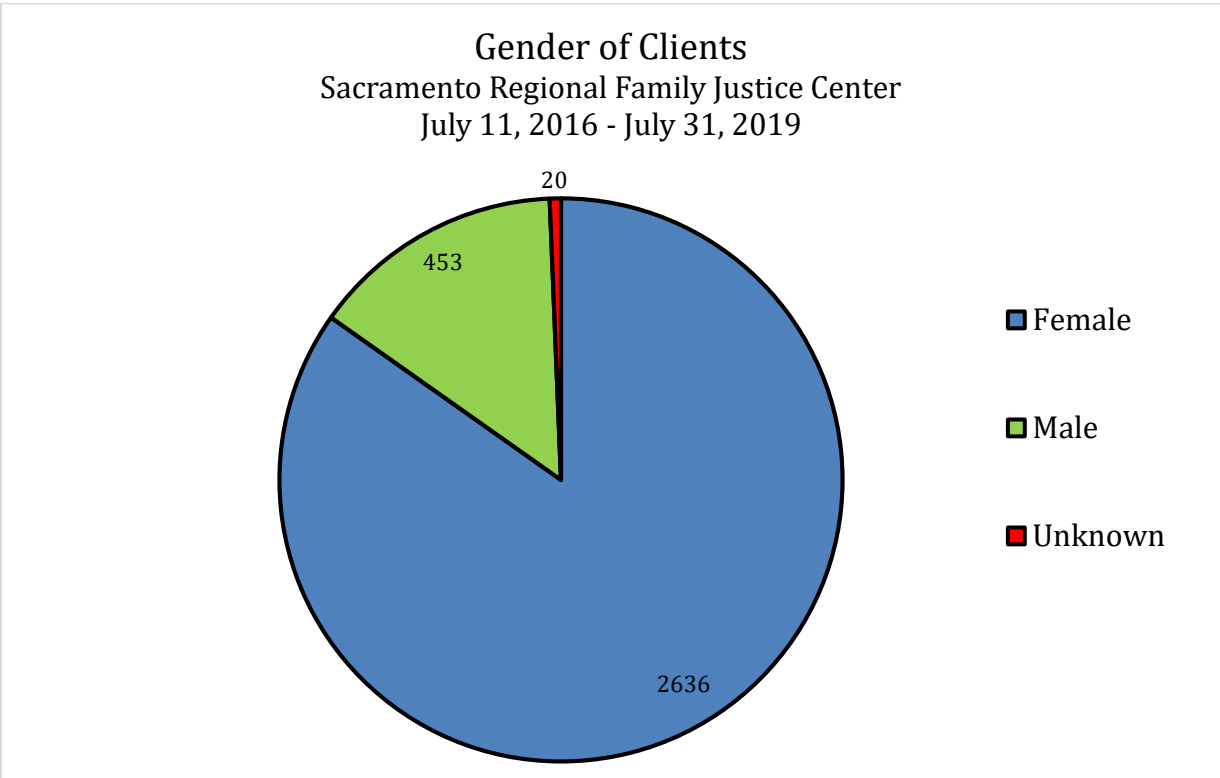
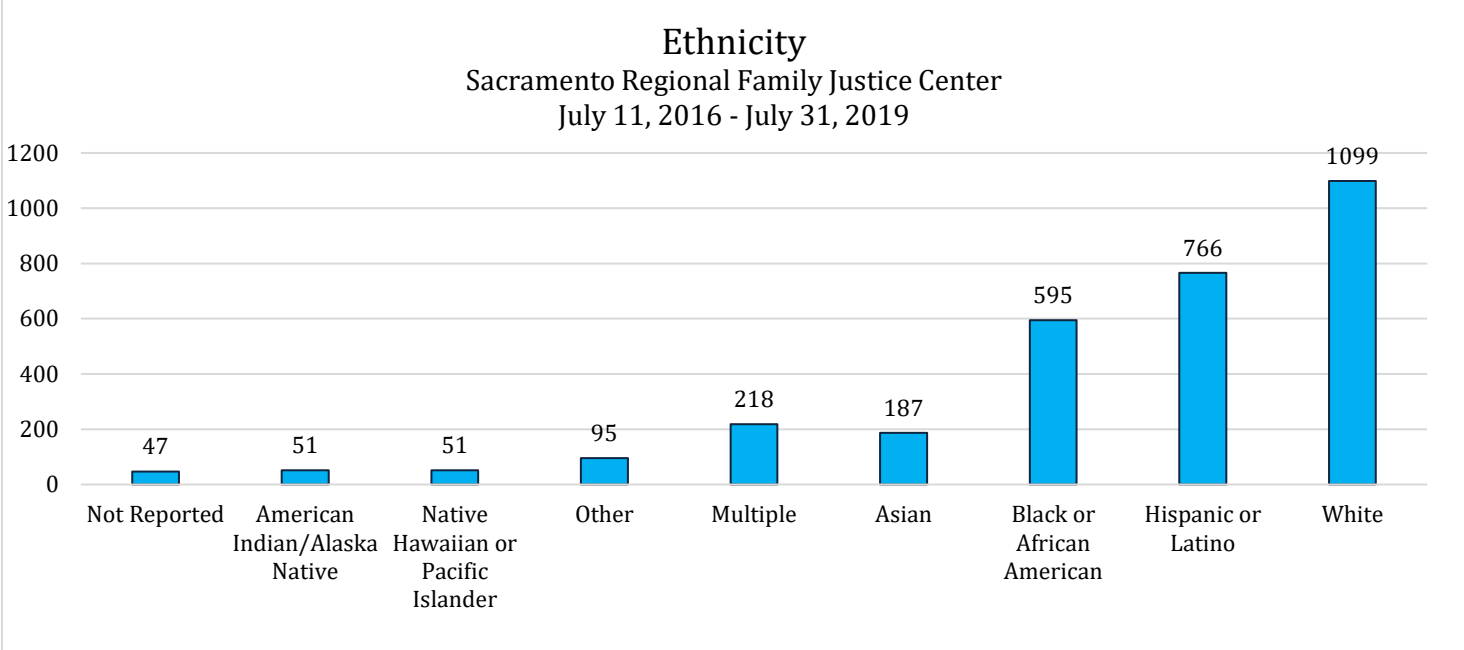
The mobile team that provides civil legal services and case worker support for victims at SRFJC and partner agency locations is enhanced by the Dignity Health sponsored SRFJC Mobile Therapy Team. This Dignity Mobile Therapy Team provides group and individual therapy and art therapy programs at City of Refuge, Community Against Sexual Harm (C.A.S.H.), My Sisters House, Chicks in Crisis, The Bridge Network and WEAVE. This program provides more

convenient services for victims in underserved communities, promotes collaboration and establishes positive personal and systemic change for victims in need of therapy services.

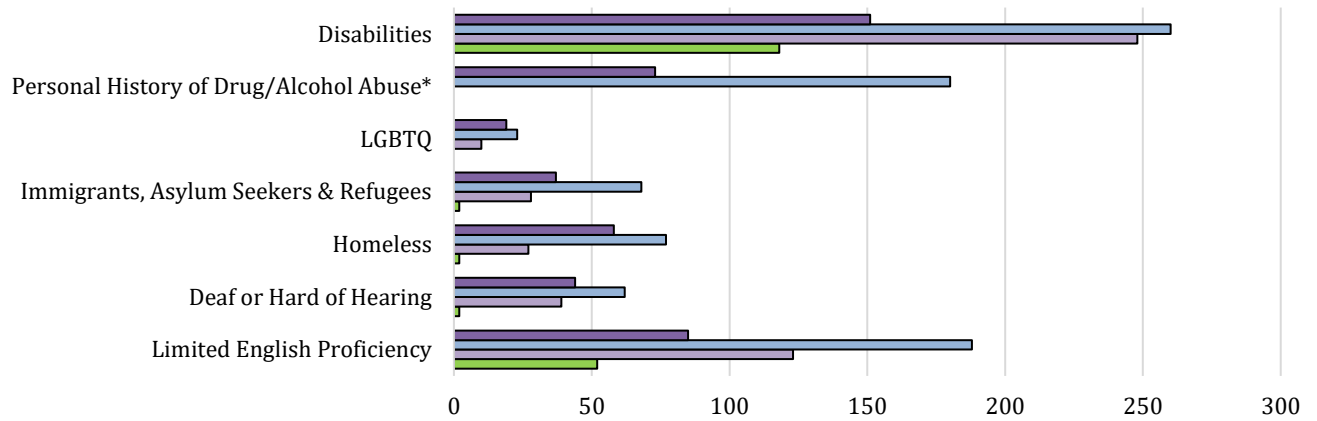
This year, Camp HOPE America- Sacramento, a SRFJC program, the first evidence-based camp for children who have experienced the trauma of family violence, was able to send 24 children to Camp HOPE America.

Below, a series of charts and graphs detail the SRFJC’s client data between July 11, 2016 and July 31, 2019.





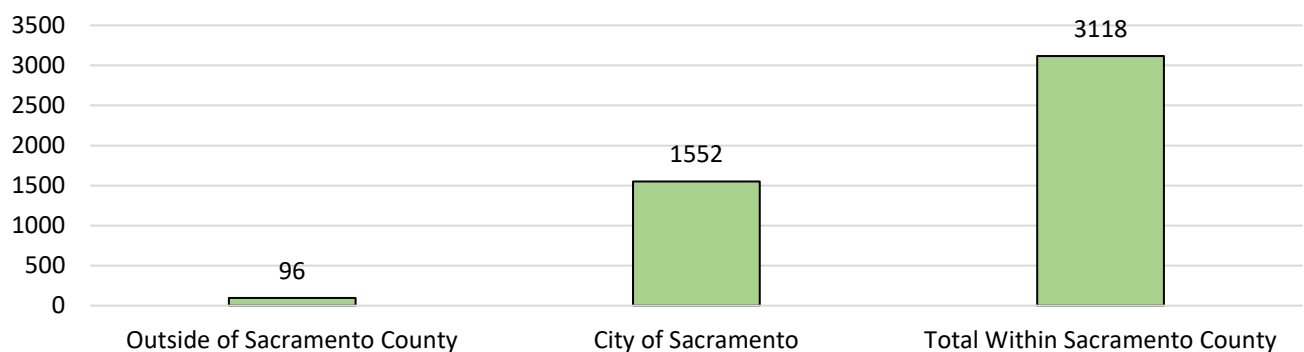
### Additional Client Classifications Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center July 11, 2016 - July 31, 2019



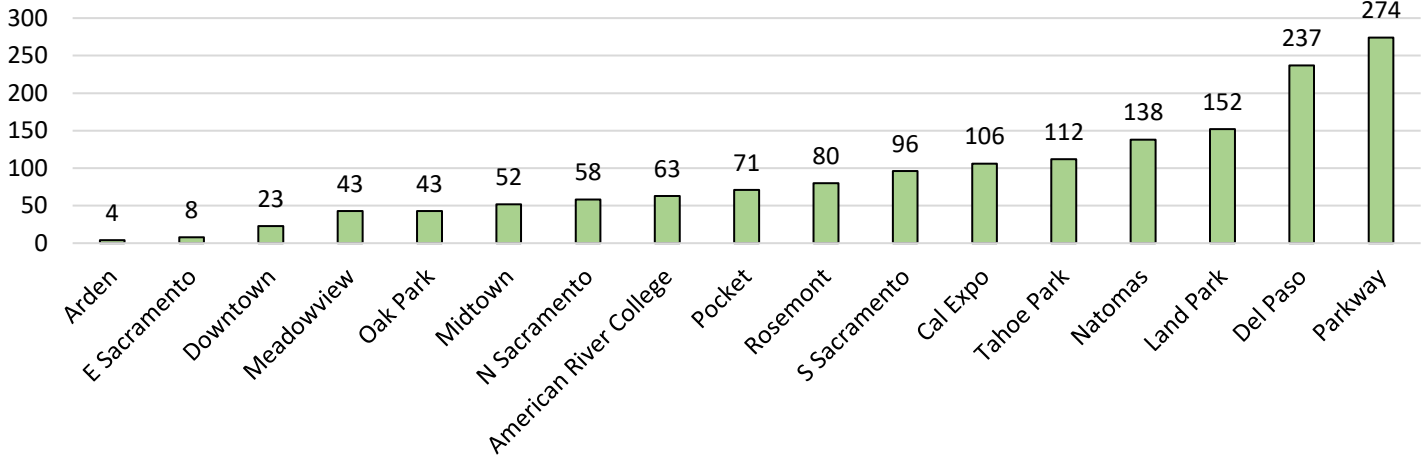
	Limited English Proficiency	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Homeless	Immigrants, Asylum Seekers & Refugees	LGBTQ	Personal History of Drug/Alcohol Abuse*	Disabilities
2019	85	44	58	37	19	73	151
2018	188	62	77	68	23	180	260
2017	123	39	27	28	10	0	248
2016	52	2	2	2	0	0	118

*\*SRFJC began collecting data on Personal History of Drug/Alcohol Abuse in April 2018.*

### Zip Codes of Clients Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center July 11, 2016 - July 31, 2019



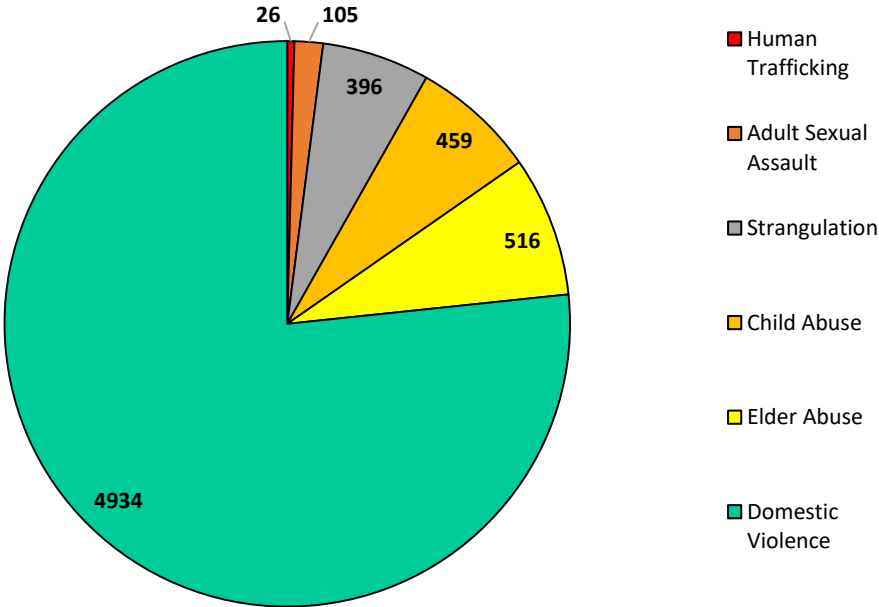
### Clients in the City of Sacramento - Neighborhood Breakdown Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center July 11, 2016 - July 31, 2019

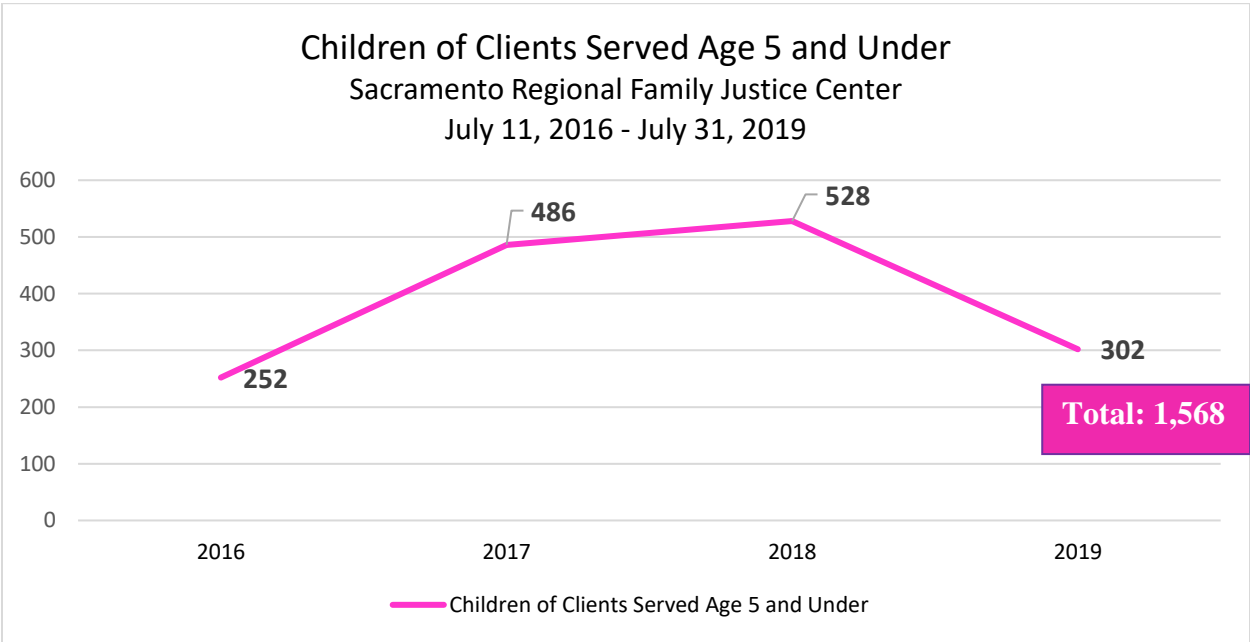
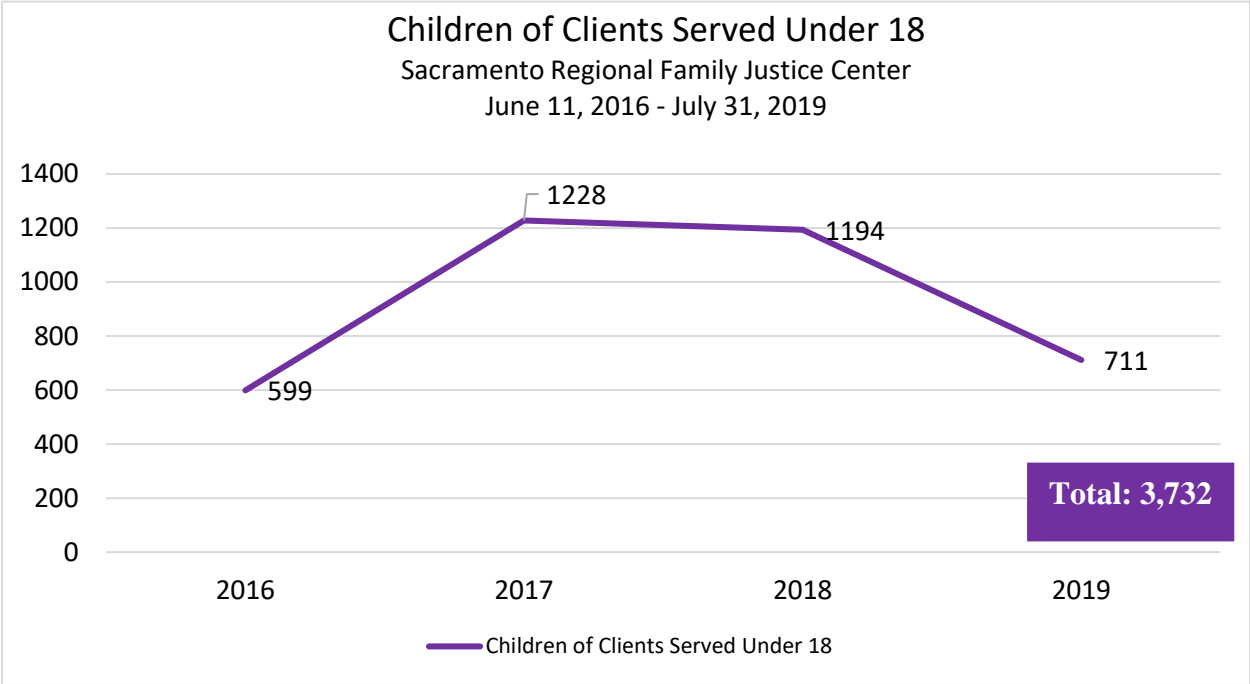


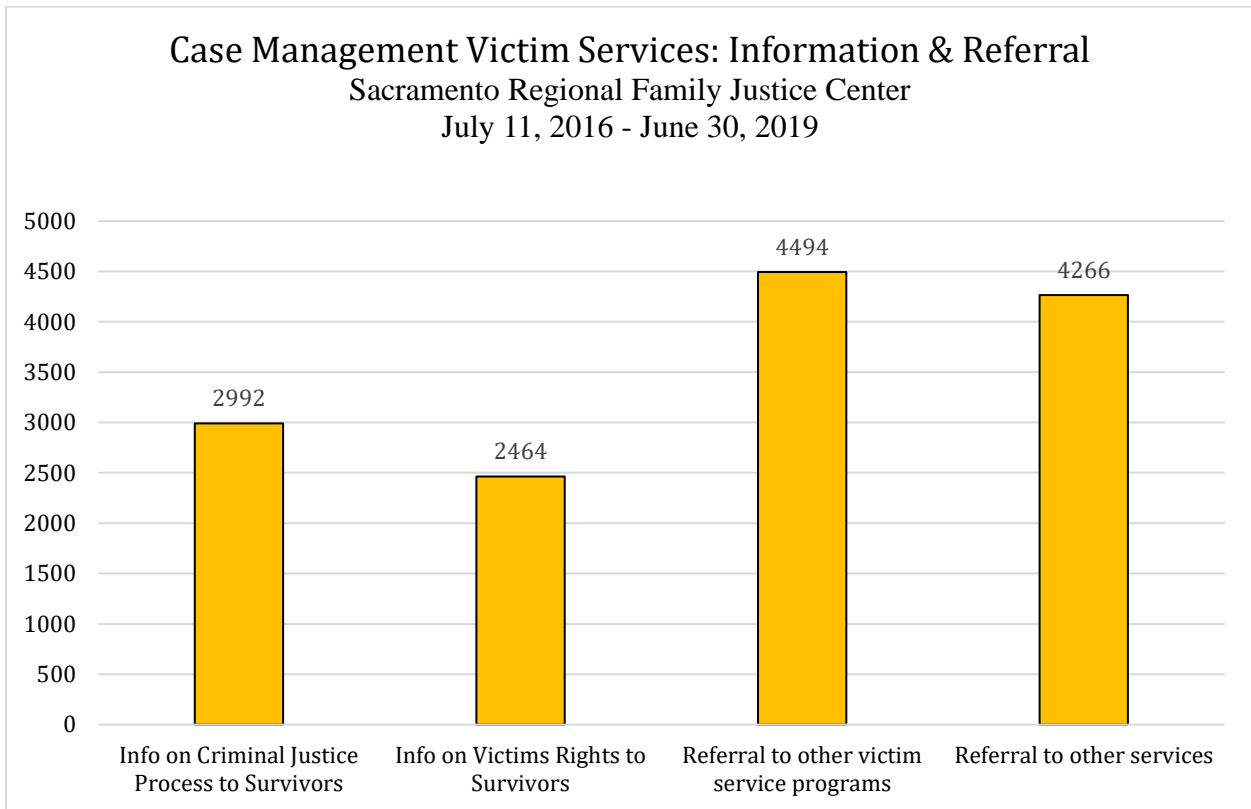
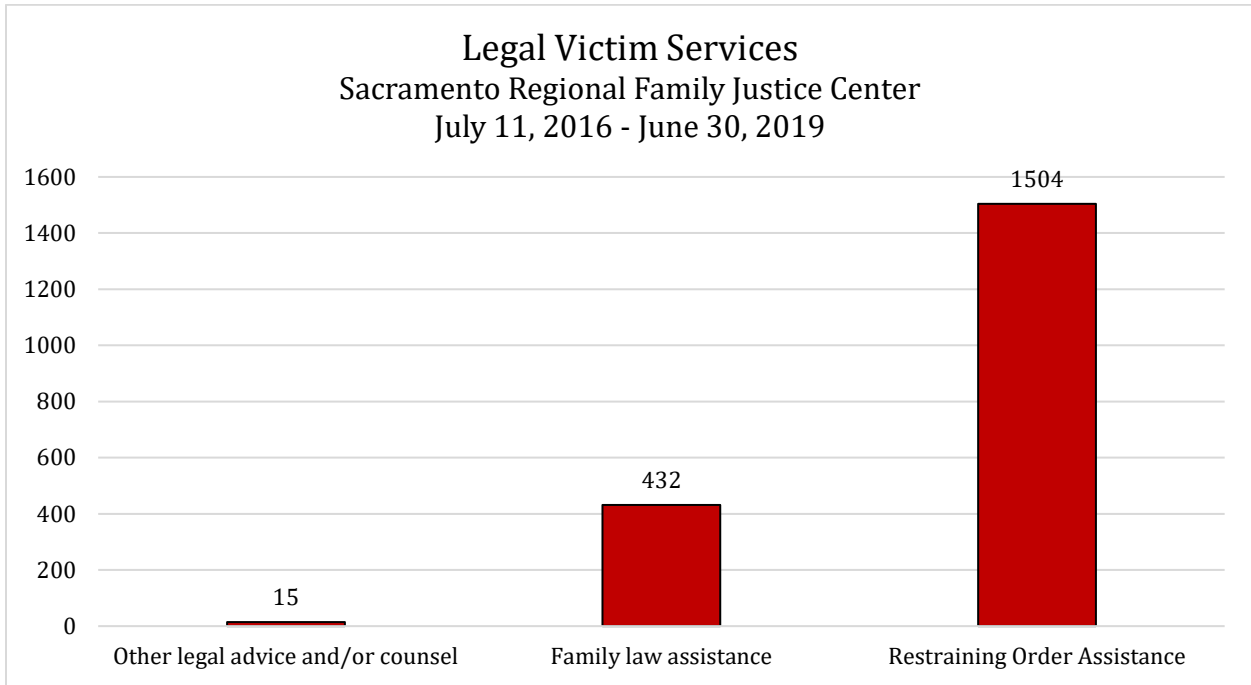
Between July 11, 2016 and July 31, 2019, the SRFJC served a total of 1,560 clients who reported their addresses within the above Sacramento neighborhoods. Some data points within neighborhoods are technically outside of Sacramento city limits.

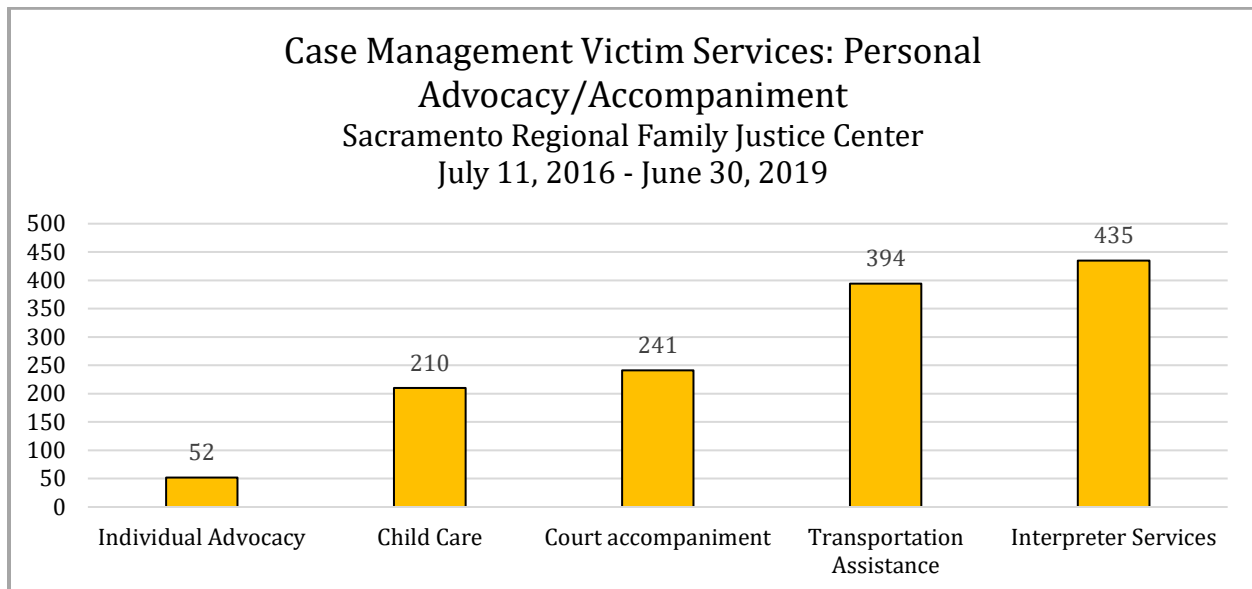
### Victimization Types

Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center  
July 11, 2016 - July 31, 2019









**The Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT)** is a subcommittee of the Sacramento County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC). The DVDRT was established in 1998 pursuant to Penal Code section 11163.3 and meets monthly.

This is the DVDRT's 20<sup>th</sup> annual report. The reports are released in October to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The team is presently chaired by District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, represented by Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney Paul Durenberger.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The DVDRT is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary organization which reviews information from law enforcement, public health, social services, coroner, child welfare, public and private medical organizations and domestic violence advocacy organizations. The current participating organizations are:

- Sacramento County District Attorney's Office
- Sacramento County Coroner's Office
- Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
- Sacramento City Police Department
- Sacramento County Probation Department
- Elk Grove Police Department
- Citrus Heights Police Department
- Law Enforcement Chaplaincy- Sacramento
- Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services
- Sacramento County Counsel
- Kaiser Permanente
- University of California, Davis Medical Center
- Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services
- Sutter Health



- Dignity Health
- WEAVE
- My Sister's House
- A Community for Peace
- Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the DVDRT is to bring together a multi-disciplinary team to review domestic violence related homicide cases (including homicide-suicide cases) in Sacramento County. The team meets to develop strategies, policies and procedures to improve regional system responses to domestic violence, aiming to reduce and prevent future incidents of domestic violence related homicides and injuries. Domestic violence continues to be a widespread problem in our county. In the last 12 months, local law enforcement agencies submitted to the District Attorney's Office approximately 3,920 fresh domestic violence related arrests and 1,837 warrants. The District Attorney's Office filed 2,022 cases in that same time-period; 70 percent of those cases were fresh arrests and the other 30 percent were arrest warrants. The primary reason a case was submitted for an arrest warrant rather than fresh arrest was that the perpetrator fled the crime scene before law enforcement arrived.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Pursuant to Penal Code section 11163.3, the meetings of the DVDRT are confidential. Every representative of a constituent agency or institution who attends DVDRT meetings signs an agreement of confidentiality.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

To fulfill its mission, the DVDRT:

- Reviews domestic violence homicides in the county to determine if any systemic improvements should be made;
- Develops and recommends strategies to reduce and prevent domestic violence related homicides and homicide-suicides;
- Develops and recommends strategies to deal with the aftermath of domestic violence and domestic violence deaths;
- Acts as a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary team with regular meetings;
- Operates with the confidentiality principles outlined in Penal Code section 11163.3 (requiring a signed confidentiality agreement for all team participants);
- Maintains a database of all records reviewed; and
- Interacts with agencies and community-based organizations to help achieve its goals, using the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council as a point of contact and interaction.

## **SELECTION AND REVIEW OF CASES**

Any DVDRT member who has knowledge of a domestic violence related death in Sacramento County (that is not currently being prosecuted) may ask for the case to be reviewed. Most cases are referred by either law enforcement or the District Attorney's Office. The DVDRT chair selects which of the referred cases will be reviewed. If a case is being prosecuted, the team reviews the case after the case has been adjudicated.

Once a case is selected, the District Attorney's Office provides identifying information to the other members of the team regarding the victim, the perpetrator, and any biological or custodial children that either party had prior to the homicide. Each committee member is responsible for reviewing the records of their agency to identify relevant information regarding the case and/or parties involved. At the time of review, the District Attorney's Office or law enforcement agency provides details of the homicide and each member agency provides additional information they may have about the case.

In some cases, the DVDRT invites the prosecutor, law enforcement agency detective, or victim advocate assigned to the case to participate in the case review. When necessary, a member of the group may be assigned to contact members of the victim's or perpetrator's family to develop a better understanding of the underlying relationships. Family members and witnesses have been asked occasionally to attend DVDRT meetings to give direct input to the team.

With the limitations of the selection process, the time constraint placed on the team to ascertain records and the inability of the DVDRT to gather information from every possible source, the database of cases reviewed cannot be considered exhaustive or statistically representative for research purposes. Nonetheless, the data collected can reveal important lethality factors and systemic insufficiencies which when evaluated by experts, representatives from local agencies and members of the DVDRT, can lead to constructive improvements in systemic and community responses through DVDRT recommendations.

## **CASES REVIEWED**

This year the DVDRT team reviewed seven homicides. Each case review requires a thorough exam by the team to evaluate all contributing factors. The murder-suicide cases, where no criminal prosecution is possible, require more effort to ascertain essential family history information. Law enforcement agencies generally are not inclined to investigate all background lethality factors and domestic violence history reviewed by the DVDRT in murder-suicide cases.

Below is a chart identifying the number of cases, in each supervisorial district, reviewed by the DVDRT for the 2019 annual report. A map is also included depicting the geographical locations of cases reviewed within each district.

**DVDRT Cases Reviewed in 2018-2019 by Supervisorial District**

	<b>District 1 Serna</b>	<b>District 2 Kennedy</b>	<b>District 3 Peters</b>	<b>District 4 Frost</b>	<b>District 5 Nottoli</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2019</b>	3	1	1	1	1	<b>7</b>

**CASE SUMMARIES**

The review of these seven cases reaffirms some of our previous findings and conclusions; specifically, domestic violence affects all age ranges, races, religions and economic levels of society. One conclusion that can be gleaned from these cases is that a domestic violence homicide victim or perpetrator can be either male or female, and abusers come from all walks of life.

**Age Ranges:**

The victims ranged in age from 24 to 79 years old. The perpetrators ranged in age from 25 to 83 years old.

**Education Levels:**

Education levels of victims and perpetrators ranged from high school dropout to college attendance.

**Employment:**

In the cases reviewed this year, employment for victims ranged from unemployed to retired. Employment for perpetrators included an IHSS worker and a courtesy clerk at a big box store.

**Murders Witnessed by Family:**

In two of the seven cases, children witnessed the murders.

### **Premeditation and Deliberation:**

In two of the cases there was evidence of pre-planning by the perpetrator. All but one of the cases reviewed had multiple recognized signs of lethality prior to the actual lethal event.<sup>1</sup>

### **Prior Domestic Abuse:**

In all seven of the cases our team became aware of some of the relationship history of the perpetrators and victims. All of the victims disclosed incidents of verbal or physical abuse to someone they trusted. Although the prior histories showed multiple cases with multiple incidents of physical abuse, not all of the prior histories included an increased abuse level prior to the lethal incident. In one case where our team found no prior physical abuse documented, there was a communication of fear by the victim and increased verbal abuse prior to the homicide.

One case had a prior violent family history that included an inter-family murder. When the current murder victim was still a child in her parent's home, her older sister and her unborn child were shot and killed by her brother in response to a verbal argument/confrontation with her sister's husband. The sister's husband, the focus of the attack, survived. After the murder the current victim became apathetic and had long episodes of uncontrollable negative behavior. No system intervention was documented at the time of the prior murder.

### **Alcohol/Drugs or Prescription Medications:**

Alcohol and/or drug use was a contributing factor in six of the seven cases. In addition to the predominant involvement of alcohol, multiple cases involved methamphetamine.

### **Gun Use:**

Handguns were used in five of the seven cases. In three of the five murders, the perpetrators had criminal convictions that prevented them from legally possessing the firearm.

The following map and charts summarize the locations in the County and some of the key factors and information seen repeatedly in domestic violence homicides.

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#### **<sup>1</sup> Lethality Factors:**

Lethality factors in interpersonal/ family violence cases have been documented through research led by Dr. Jackie Campbell of Johns Hopkins University. Lethality factors are defined as factors that are present in a violent relationship that increase the likelihood that a subsequent lethal event will occur. The higher number of lethality factors that are present, the higher the lethality danger.

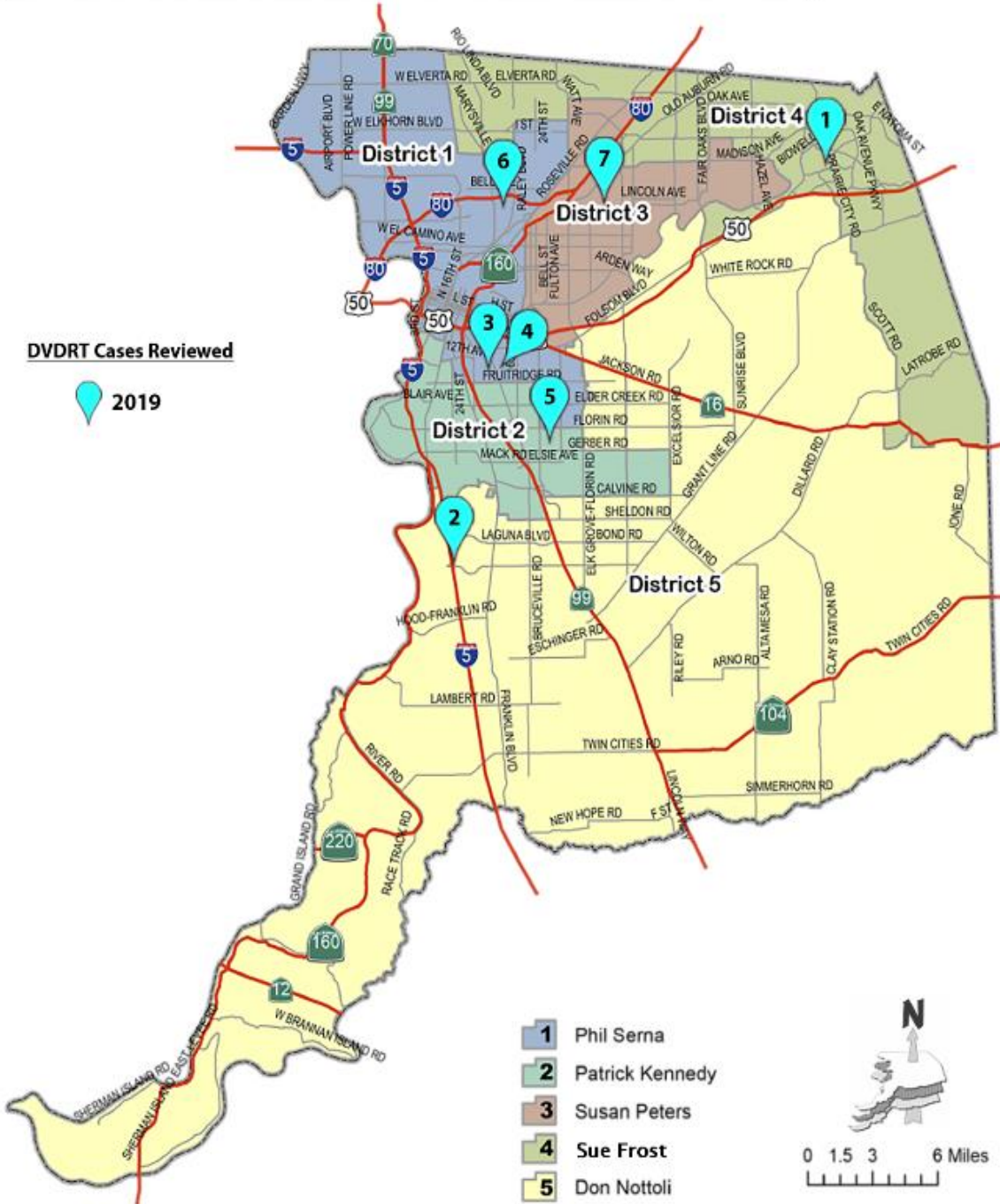
Dr. Campbell's research has developed factors that can be used as a tool to identify victims who are at a greater risk of being killed by an intimate partner. The lethality factors identified by Dr. Campbell are:

Strangulation  
Threat to Kill  
Forced Sex  
Attempt to Control All Activity  
Taking Illicit Drugs  
Child Abuse  
Violence in Public/Outside the Home

Use of a Weapon  
Violently & Constantly Jealous  
Firearm in House  
Drunk Almost Every Day  
Recent Increase in Violence  
Beaten While Pregnant  
Threat to Commit Suicide



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICTS



Cases numbered 1 through 7 in blue drop-point denote case order of review by the DVDRT and corresponds to the subsequent graph with facts and pertinent information to each case.

### DVDRT CASES REVIEWED IN 2018-2019

V = Victim  
P = Perpetrator  
BF = Boyfriend

GF = Girlfriend  
H = Husband

Case	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7
Age of Victim	43 V-2 = 34	31	35	48	24	49	79
Age of Perpetrator	36	29	34	35	25	41	83
Children Together?	0	4	1	0	1	0	2
Children - V	1	5	3	4	1	2	2
Children - P	2	4	2	0	1	3	2
Children Witness Violence?	Yes -1 Saw murder.	No	Yes -2 saw murder. Children said they were "always yelling & fighting."	No	Yes- 4-year-old present for past verbal and physical abuse.	No	No
Relationship Status	Killer is ex-BF of V-2 V-1 current BF of V-2	Common Law Marriage	Cohabiting	Cohabiting	Married	Cohabiting	Married
Weapon Used	Handgun	Handgun	Handgun	Knife/Pipe	Handgun	Pipe	Handgun
Facts	Former BF drives to V's house; confronts, shoots and kills V-1 in garage. Shooter then kills self. V-2 and her child present during shootings- flee into house- both uninjured.	H and wife argue while driving. H stops van - shoots and kills her then kills himself. Meth in car.	Female shooter argues with BF and when BF gets in car to leave she follows him to car. She shoots and kills him while he sat in driver's seat.	V and P were dropped off at the hotel. In the morning the maid finds V's body beaten and stabbed. Witnesses and physical evidence link P to killing.	V tells P she is leaving marriage and wants him to move out. P drinks, gets gun, threatens suicide and then shoots and kills her.	V & P are homeless and squatting in house. Neighbors find V's body beaten to death. P footprints found in her blood.	H visits V in dementia care facility- shoots her and then himself.

**DVDRT CASES REVIEWED IN 2018 cont.**

V = Victim  
P = Perpetrator  
BF = Boyfriend

GF = Girlfriend  
H = Husband

<b>Case</b>	<b>#1</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>#4</b>	<b>#5</b>	<b>#6</b>	<b>#7</b>
Prior DV History	Prior stalking, P entered V-2's apartment when V-2 was away - broke down her door in a separate incident. V-2 was in fear of P. V-2 reported P was jealous and possessive. P posted nude photos and videos of V-2 online.	Yes. Family reports many instances of DV by P. 10 years ago, V's pregnant sister was killed by her brother who was trying to shoot V's sister's husband.	Prior abuse by V and P.	Long history of DV by P on V. P abused V's daughter who he previously dated (15-20 reported incidents). P was physically abusive to prior partners.	Neighbors and family report both verbal and physical abuse history by P.	P had long history of abuse on previous partners.	V communicates fear and rising verbal abuse prior to shooting.
Prior Suicidal Ideation	Yes- prior threat of murder/ suicide.	Unknown	Unknown	Yes, P had prior suicide threats	Yes, P had previously threatened suicide during arguments or when V tried to leave relationship.	Unknown	No
Education – V	H.S. Diploma	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	College	Unknown	Unknown

**DVDRT CASES REVIEWED IN 2018 cont.**

V = Victim  
P = Perpetrator  
BF = Boyfriend

GF = Girlfriend  
H = Husband

Case	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7
Education – P	H.S. Diploma	Unknown	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	H.S. Diploma	Unknown	Unknown
Mental Health Diagnosis	Unknown	P: Evidence of addiction and mental health issues and concerns by family.	Both P & V had Addictions (Alcohol + Narcotics) and depression + PTSD.	Both P & V had Mental Health issues combined with drug use.	P: Alcohol abuse V: Depression	P: Mental Health issues: possible schizophrenia.	None
Employed V	UPS Worker	Stay at Home Mom	Victim was in the Air Force Reserves.	Stay at Home Mom	Unknown	No	Retired
Employed P	Concrete Worker	Unknown	IHSS Worker	Drug Dealer	Big Box Store: Courtesy Clerk	Collecting SSI	Retired
Drugs/ Alcohol- (Prior Use/ History & use at time of crime if known)	Alcohol – P was intoxicated at time of crime. V-1 and V-2 had ingested meth just prior to shooting.	Meth found in van. Meth had been ingested by P & V just prior to the murder. V had two children who were Pos-Tox for meth at birth.	Drugs and alcohol used by both on day of incident – both had histories of alcohol and drug abuse.	Both P & V had long history of Meth and alcohol use. Both V and P used both alcohol and meth the night of the murder.	Alcohol by P ingested prior to shooting.	Prior history of drugs and alcohol for both V and P.	Unknown
Race	Both White	V: Vietnamese P: Hmong	Both African American	Both Hispanic	P: White V: Hispanic	P: African American V: White	Both White



## **FINDINGS and RECOMENDATIONS**

Finding #1: Substance abuse is a factor that increases the likelihood of lethality in domestic violence situations. As alcohol and drug abuse increases in our community, domestic violence incidents will also occur more frequently.

Recommendation #1:

Community organizations working with survivors of domestic violence or with abusers need to collaborate with alcohol and narcotic abuse programs. Our county should encourage programs serving interpersonal violence victims and their families to work with substance abuse recovery programs. Additionally, agencies working with drug and alcohol dependent clients should inquire whether their clients feel safe at home and in their relationships. Drug and alcohol recovery programs should work with domestic violence agencies to ensure client safety is properly addressed.

Finding #2: Homeless domestic violence is increasing and can lead to lethal consequences. This population is often overlooked and judged harshly due to their life circumstances.

Recommendation #2:

As Sacramento County continues to develop its response to homelessness issues, domestic violence agencies need to be included to help ensure that homeless domestic violence victims are protected.

Finding #3: The domestic violence murders reviewed this year resulted in twelve (12) children being impacted by the loss of a parent. Sacramento County should support programs that help treat children who suffer this kind of trauma. Studies have shown that children who witness domestic violence are negatively impacted. Programs like Camp HOPE America-Sacramento help children heal from this type of trauma.

Recommendation #3:

The DVDRT encourages Sacramento County to continue to support Camp HOPE America-Sacramento and other programs focused on reducing childhood trauma.

Finding #4: Many domestic violence murders are committed by individuals who were prohibited by law from possessing guns. A domestic violence arrest or family court restraining order often results in an abuser being ordered not to own or possess firearms or ammunition.

Decades of research verify that the presence of lethality factors, including firearm possession, substantially increases the likelihood of a subsequent lethal attack.

The DVDRT has reviewed cases in the past where abusers were released from custody, ignored the court order prohibiting possession of firearms, and used a firearm to murder their abuse victim. These orders are often ineffective because there is no mechanism in place to ensure the abuser does not have access to a firearm.

Recommendation #4:

Pretrial release programs are being developed in Sacramento County. Any pretrial release plan for interpersonal violence abusers must include court review and documentation of lethality factors. One of the major lethality factors verified by the research is possession of a firearm by an abuser. Abusers likely to strike again in a lethal attack should not be released from custody due to the danger they pose to the victim and the community.

Currently, when domestic abusers are arrested, law enforcement contacts a judge and asks for a temporary Criminal Protective Order. When a victim of abuse successfully files a temporary restraining order in family court this also bars an abuser from possessing a firearm. However, proactive enforcement of these orders is currently nonexistent.

Frequently family court abusers are on parole or probation and can be legally searched for weapons. Possession of a firearm in violation of a valid court or family court order is a felony. If a firearm is possessed by the abuser, and a valid reason for searching for weapons is available, a proactive plan must be implemented that directs probation and other law enforcement agencies to search for and seize illegally possessed weapons.

Ideally, county law enforcement will dedicate personnel to proactively search for guns that are illegally possessed by domestic violence offenders. Sacramento Superior Court and county law enforcement efforts to prioritize this plan will ensure the safety of domestic violence victims.

**CONCLUSION**

**The DVCC will continue to actively work with our domestic violence partners, including law enforcement, community organizations, businesses, educators, faith-based organizations and local government to better address the issues of domestic violence in Sacramento County. The DVDRT looks forward to the Board's continued support during the next year as it explores new ways to address these issues.**