



Throwing Victims a Lifeline

*What We've Learned Through Implementing
Lethality Assessment in Utah*



- 3 people died in the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013
- An average of 3.4 women die EVERY DAY in America from domestic violence



- 2,753 died on September 11, 2001
- 18,615 women have died from Domestic Violence crimes since that date in America
(As of September 1, 2016)

Collateral Consequences of DV

- Multiple collateral homicides
- Sexual competitor homicides
- Homelessness, drug abuse and overdoses
- Indirect deaths and near deaths
- Suicides
- Mass shooting perpetrators often have DV backgrounds
- Police officer deaths

Victim Participation

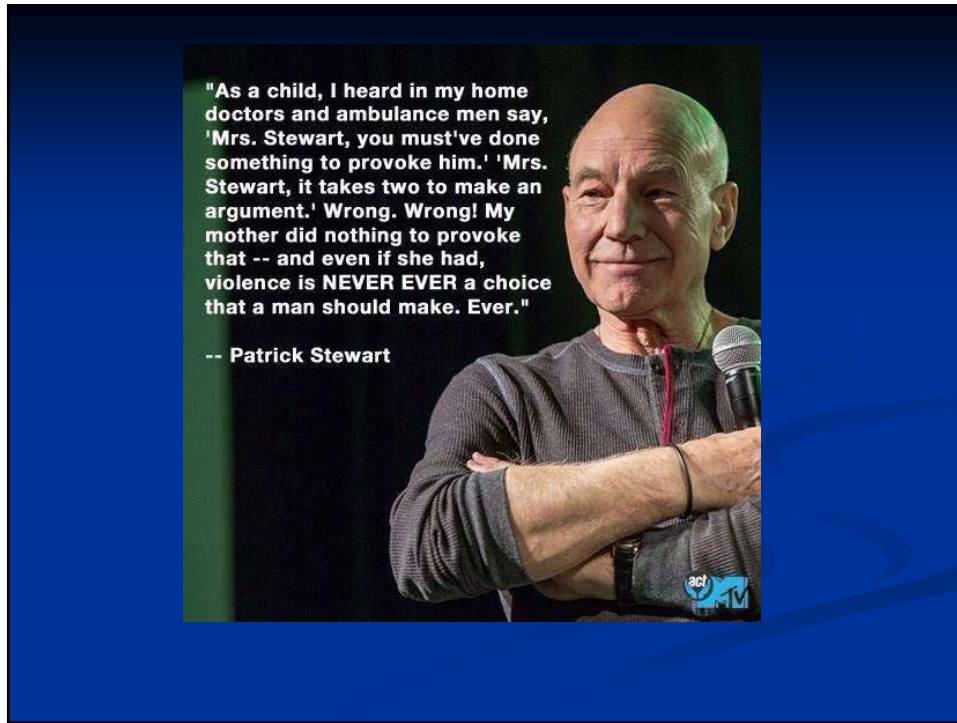
*85 per cent of DV victims
do not participate in prosecution*

Why???

It Doesn't Matter!!!

We need to do our jobs!





Why Lethality Assessment?

- Only 4 % of DV homicide victims nationwide had ever received DV services.
- Research consistently shows future assaults are reduced significantly if victim receives DV services (one study says 60 per cent reduction in serious assaults).
- 50 % of homicide victims had some previous involvement with law enforcement.
- GOAL: Connect the highest risk victims with services.

Why Lethality Assessment?

- Victims often significantly underestimate the danger they are in.
- GOAL: Assist victims in making informed decisions.
“The primary purpose of the LAP is to educate women regarding their own danger.” - *Jacquelyn Campbell, Ph D*

“Where something is
predictable, it is
preventable.”

-- Jacquelyn Campbell, Ph D

Prediction is very
hard to do, especially
if it is about the
future.

-- Yogi Berra



Jacquelyn Campbell Research



- Johns Hopkins School of Nursing professor
- Research since 1980 on common risk factors for future lethal intimate partner violence
- Risk Assessment instrument in medical setting beginning in 1985
- 20 questions and protocol – for use in a medical setting

Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) in Maryland

- Designed for LEA first responders
- Since 2005, 100 per cent of Maryland LEA use LAP
- Maryland has had a 34 per cent reduction in DV Homicides and serious DV assaults



Lethality Assessment

LAP is done by law enforcement and first responders if:

- 1) Intimate partner relationship AND:
- 2) Probable cause assault has occurred, OR
- 2) Repeat LEA calls to parties or to location, OR
- 2) 'Gut Feeling' of officer indicates

Domestic Violence Lethality Screen for First Responders



“Screened IN” Result

- Show victim the assessment and explain results to her
- Make call to DV hotline – NOT on victim’s phone
- Ask victim to speak with crisis worker
- If victim declines, emphasize importance and then ask victim to reconsider
- If victim still declines, follow next steps

“Screened OUT” Result

- Advise victims that DV is dangerous, violence is likely to continue and may increase
- Ask victims to look for signs of danger in her life
- Refer victim to services
- Give victim contact info
- Proceed with criminal case, if any

Maryland Results (So Far)

- When LAP used, 54 per cent screened in
- 59 per cent of victims screened in spoke with hotline resource worker
- 33 per cent of victims screened in sought services
- Average length of time for officers was 12 minutes at scene
- Between 2006 and 2008, number of victims who participated in services after LAP who died:
- ZERO.

Victim Statements

- “It helped me see that I have spent a lot of time minimizing my experiences so I could be normal.”
- “It helped me to know how much danger I was in and it scared me.”
- “This makes me more resolved not to go back.”
- “It made me strong in supporting my decision to be free of stress and harm.”



Ripple Effects of LAP on the system:

- New medical protocols
- New dispatch protocols
- Increased inter department collaborations
- Increased bail and release conditions
- More protective orders
- Serial batterers identified between agencies

Minnesota Bench Guide (2009)

- **How To Use The Domestic Violence Risk Assessment**
- **Obtain information regarding these factors through all appropriate and available sources**
 - Potential sources include police, victim witness staff, prosecutors, defense attorneys, court administrators, bail evaluators, pre-sentence investigators, probation, custody evaluators, parties and attorneys
- **Communicate to practitioners that you expect that complete and timely information on these factors will be provided to the court**
 - This ensures that risk information is both sought for and provided to the court at each stage of the process and that risk assessment processes are institutionalized
 - Review report forms and practices of others in the legal system to ensure that the risk assessment is as comprehensive as possible
- **Expect consistent and coordinated responses to domestic violence**
 - Communities whose practitioners enforce court orders, work in concert to hold alleged perpetrators accountable and provide support to victims are the most successful in preventing serious injuries and domestic homicides

- **Do not elicit safety or risk information from victims in open court**
 - Safety concerns can affect the victim's ability to provide accurate information in open court
 - Soliciting information from victims in a private setting (by someone other than the judge) improves the accuracy of information and also serves as an opportunity to provide information and resources to the victim
- **Provide victims information on risk assessment factors and the option of consulting with confidential advocates**
 - Information and access to advocates improves victim safety and the quality of victims' risk assessments and, as a result, the court's own risk assessments
- **Note that this list of risk factors is not exclusive**
 - The listed factors are the ones most commonly present when the risk of serious harm or death exists
 - Additional factors exist which assist in prediction of re-assault
 - Victims may face and fear other risks such as homelessness, poverty, criminal charges, loss of children or family supports
- **Remember that the level and type of risk can change over time**
 - The most dangerous time period is the days to months after the alleged perpetrator discovers that the victim
 - might attempt to separate from the alleged perpetrator or to terminate the relationship
 - has disclosed or is attempting to disclose the abuse to others, especially in the legal system
-

Utah Pilot Areas – Beginning September 1, 2015



How is the LAP being piloted in Utah?

Train law enforcement and victim service providers to partner and use the standardized, evidence-based lethality screener

Reduce duplication of effort--victims get screened once in a way that makes sense to first responders and victim advocates/emergency shelters

Evaluate and create a blueprint for expanded implementation in SFY17

The Lethality Assessment Program – Maryland Model



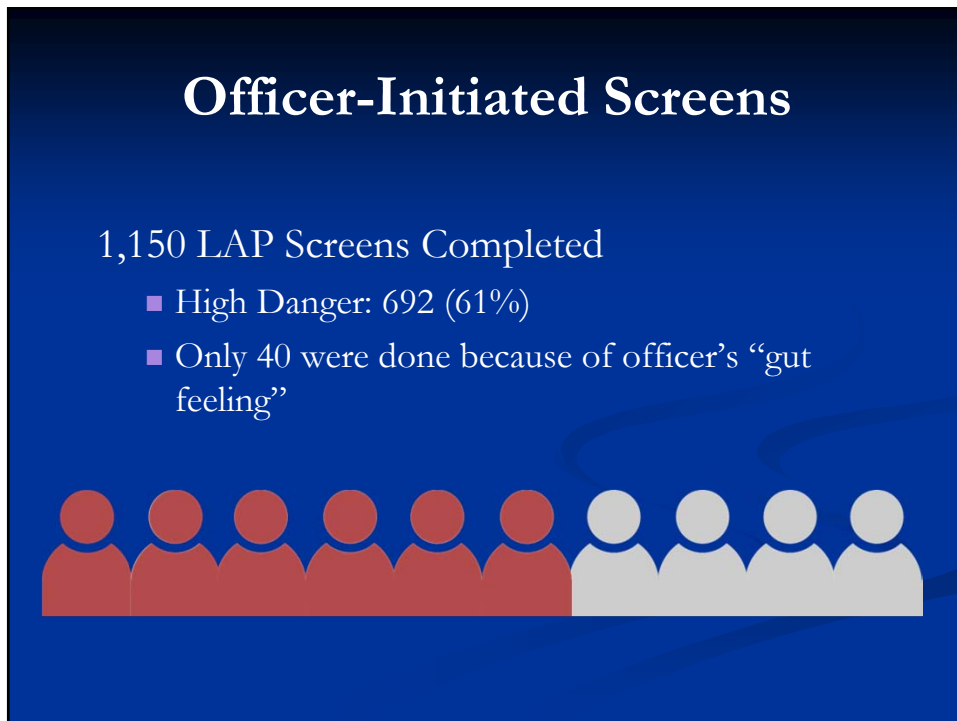
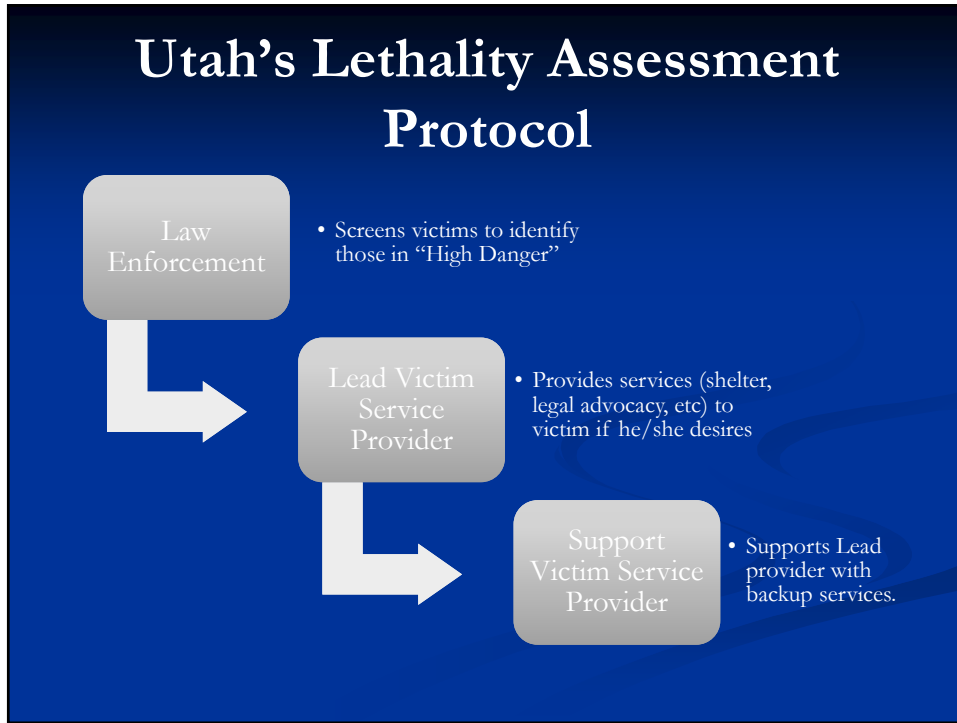
Respond
and
Assess



Connect
with
Advocate



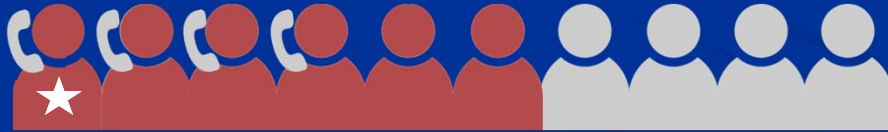
Shelter
and
Services



Officer-Initiated Screens

692 High Danger Victims

- 543 Spoke with Hotline Advocate: 224 (77%)
- 11% were Previous Clients



Officer-Initiated Screens

Accessed Services: 187 (27% of high danger victims)



68%: Crisis/Ongoing Counseling



65%: Case Management



44%: Legal Advocacy



32%: Shelter

Advocate-initiated Screens

991 LAP screens completed

- High Danger: 886 (89%)
- All spoke with an advocate
- 24% were previous clients



Advocate-initiated Screens

641 accessed services (65%)



68%: Crisis/Ongoing Counseling



88%: Case Management



13%: Legal Advocacy



62%: Shelter

Additional Benefits

Victims/Survivors

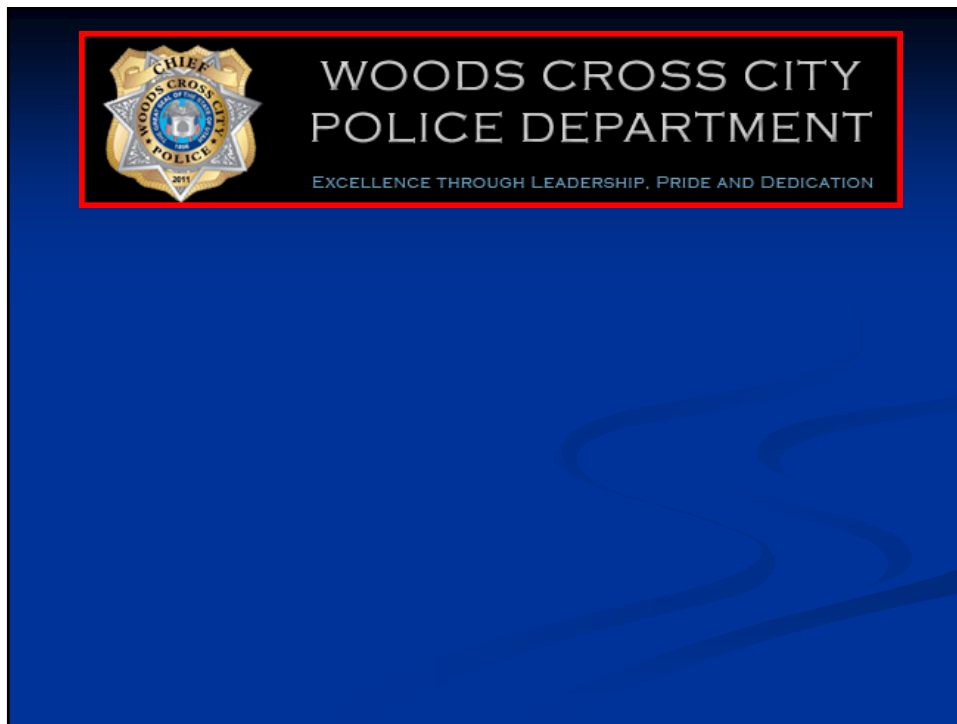
- Increased awareness of danger
- Greater access to services
- Access to immediate safety planning
- Empowerment

Law Enforcement & Victim Service Providers

- Improved relationships
- Decline in repeat calls
- Better understanding of a survivor's situation
- Encourages creativity

Future Plans

- Identifying and training new partners
 - Bringing on new victim service providers and their law enforcement partners
- Identifying challenges and problem-solving to make the LAP a success
- Most importantly, reducing the domestic violence related homicide in Utah



Woods Cross Police Department



Lethality Assessment Case Study

I freed a thousand
slaves. I could have
freed a thousand more
if only they knew they
were slaves.

-- Harriet Tubman

