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NEWSLETTER

**Before It Becomes a Fatality:
The Power of Proactive Intervention**



“Proactive, not reactive.”

It’s the phrase on our training presentations, on every flyer and brochure we distribute, and something we say in nearly every conversation we have about the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP). But what exactly does “proactive, not reactive” mean?

The idea of being proactive rather than reactive is incredibly common in policing. However, when we talk about being proactive through the use of LAP, there is a different perspective.

LAP is an intimate partner homicide risk assessment. One of our team members often asks, would you rather spend 15 minutes asking a few questions that could potentially lead to a phone call, or hours on the scene of a homicide later?

That is the reality of this tool.

LAP does not predict homicide. Rather, it is a preventive intervention tool designed to identify elevated risk and connect victims with resources before violence becomes deadly. The intervention is driven by two distinct components: notification of risk and connection to victim service providers.

Bring LAP Training to Your Community

Partner with Us to Strengthen Your Response to IPV

Our LAP Training is CLEET-Approved for two (2) hours of continuing education or mental health. If your agency or community is interested in strengthening your response to intimate partner violence, we would be happy to provide a LAP training. Our team offers in-person and virtual sessions tailored to law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers. To request a training or learn more, please fill out the form below—we’re here to support your team in implementing a proactive, coordinated approach to victim safety.

[Training Request Form](#)

Notification of Risk

The notification of risk gives victims an opportunity to better understand the danger they may be facing and to engage in safety planning if they experience violence again. And statistically speaking, they may face danger again.

One of the hardest parts of this conversation is understanding that victims may not leave simply because they are experiencing a high level of danger. In fact, leaving an abusive relationship can be one of the most dangerous times for a victim. It takes an average of seven times for a victim to leave an abusive relationship. (Oregon Health & Science University [OHSU], n.d.)

That does not mean there is nothing that can be done.

Safety planning allows a victim to better understand their immediate safety needs, identify who they can contact when they need help, determine where they can go if they need to escape, and begin preparing for the possibility that they may decide to leave in the future.

Victims who understand their risk and are connected with a local victim service provider are more likely to seek medical treatment following an act of abuse. This connection is especially important in cases involving strangulation, as strangulation does not always leave visible physical injuries.

Numbers to Know

Oklahoma has consistently ranked in the Top 10 in women being murdered by men in single victim/single offender incidents since 1996. The most recent state rankings ranked Oklahoma as 2nd in the nation when analyzing 2020 homicide data.

Violence Policy Center. (2023). When men murder women: A review of 25 years of female homicide victimization in the United States. Retrieved from: <https://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2023.pdf>

Victims may also be more likely to take additional steps to increase their safety, such as removing or securing their partner's weapons, obtaining a victim protective order, or developing a plan for where they can go if they need to leave quickly.

That is proactive.

The notification of risk creates an opportunity for action before the next crisis occurs. As Dr. Campbell, the leading researcher on intimate partner violence (IPV) risk assessments and LAP, has emphasized, "All of the systems that interact with battered women—healthcare, criminal justice, and social service—need to keep in mind the 'duty to protect' as well as the duties to warn."

Connection to a Victim Service Provider

The connection to a victim service provider is another critical reason LAP works.

This connection shows victims that there is more available to them than the complex criminal justice system directly in front of them. There are tribal and non-tribal community-based organizations and trained professionals who can provide support, resources, advocacy, and safety planning.

We also have to recognize that this connection may not happen flawlessly every single time. But regardless, the victim is being given information about available victim services and an opportunity to access those services when they are ready or when they need them.



Research has shown that “women benefit the most when the criminal justice system and nonprofit and community-based agencies collaborate and coordinate their efforts.” ([NIJ](#)).

That is exactly what this connection represents: the criminal justice system and community-based agencies working together toward a shared goal – victim safety.

LAP creates an opportunity to interrupt the cycle of violence before it becomes deadly. That is what it means to be proactive.

In Summary

Being “proactive, not reactive” means so much more than we may realize. There is tremendous opportunity packed into those three simple words.

There is an opportunity to notify victims of their risk.

There is an opportunity to connect victims with a victim service provider.

There is an opportunity to create a safety plan before the next crisis occurs.

And when those opportunities are applied correctly, they can save lives.

That is why it is so important that we remain proactive, not reactive, when responding to intimate partner violence.



The Lethality Lens

Breaking down each LAP question to better understand indicators of high danger.



The Question

Has the person ever tried or threatened to kill him/herself?



The Lens

Perpetrator suicidal ideation or attempts are strongly linked to murder-suicide events in domestic violence cases. A desire to end their own life often precedes attempts to kill the victim as part of a final, fatal act.



The Research

" During the six-month period tallied in this study, there were 237 suicides—yet the total number of deaths was 526. More people died from murders associated with the suicide—289—than from the suicides themselves. These numbers call into grave question the common belief that suicide, especially firearms suicide, is a solitary act that affects only the shooter."

Violence Policy Center. American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States (2026).

OFFICE OF THE OKLAHOMA ATTORNEY GENERAL
LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL (LAP) TEAM



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“ —
The Lethality Assessment Protocol represents one of our most critical tools in protecting vulnerable Oklahomans. This partnership between law enforcement and victim advocates isn't just procedure - **it is a lifeline that saves lives.**”



GENTNER DRUMMOND
Oklahoma Attorney General