



**SALLY  
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FOR SHERIFF**

**A working comprehensive draft plan to ensure  
that Travis County makes assault family violence  
cases a priority**

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This policy paper is for information purposes only. For assistance, help, or a shelter please call SafePlace at 512.267.7233 or click [here](#) and [here](#). For emergencies please call 911.

## **Assault Family Violence**

### **What Is Family Violence?**

Family violence is defined in the Texas Family Code Sec. 71.004 and is as:

[A]n act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, sexual assault or that is a threat that reasonable places the member in fear of imminent physical harm bodily injury,

assault, or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself<sup>1</sup>

Family violence commonly takes the form of domestic violence and sexual assault.

### **What Is Domestic Violence?**

According to No More, a campaign aimed at ending domestic violence and sexual assault, domestic violence “is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another person through fear and intimidation, often including the threat or use of violence.”<sup>2</sup>

### **What Are Some Signs of Domestic Violence?**

Some signs of domestic violence are<sup>3</sup>:

- Exerting strict control (financial, social and/or appearance).
- Needing constant contact including excessive text and calls.
- Emotional abuse including insulting a partner in front of other people.
- Showing fear around a partner.
- Isolation from family and friends.
- Frequent canceling of plans at the last minute.
- Unexplained injuries or explanations that don’t quite add up.
- Threatening to out a partner’s sexual orientation.<sup>4</sup>

### **What Is Sexual Assault?**

According to No More, sexual assault “is forced or coerced sexual contact without consent. Consent is the presence of a clear yes, not the absence of a no.”<sup>5</sup>

### **What Are Some Signs Of Domestic Violence?**

Some signs of domestic violence are<sup>6</sup>:

- Rape
- Incest
- Child Sexual Abuse/Molestation
- Oral sex
- Exposing/flushing

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<sup>1</sup> TX. Fam. Code §71.004(1)

<sup>2</sup> *Resources*, THE NO MORE PROJECT, no date, <http://nomore.org/resources/>

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Know More And Talk About These Issues Openly*, THE NO MORE PROJECT.

<sup>5</sup> *Resources*.

<sup>6</sup> *Resources*.

- Forcing a person to pose for sexual pictures
- Fondling or unwanted sexual touching above and under clothing
- Force which may include but is not limited to:
  - ▶ Use or display of a weapon
  - ▶ Physical battering
  - ▶ Immobilization of the victim

### **LGBTQ Partner Violence<sup>7</sup>**

Assault family violence occurs in LGBTQ partnerships. It can take the form of:

- Threatening to “out” you.
- Ridiculing one’s gender identity, voice, appearance, or dress.
- Portraying the violence as mutual between two “equals.”
- Stating no one will help you because of your sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **The Costs of Family Violence**

There are many costs to family violence. For example, children may learn to use violence to solve conflicts.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, careers and jobs may be lost or stalled due to an abusive relationship.<sup>9</sup> More importantly, violence can result in death.<sup>10</sup>

### **Assault Family Violence Statistics<sup>11</sup>**

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men experience violence from their partners in their lifetimes.
- 1 in 3 teens experience sexual assault or physical abuse or threats from a boyfriend or girlfriend in one year.
- 1 in 5 women are survivors of rape.
- 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lives.
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men were sexually abused before the age of 18.

### **Why Don’t People Leave?**

Leaving an abusive relationship may be a dangerous time for victims. The aggressor in the relationship might feel that they are losing power and control. This may lead them to react in a manner that results in injury to the victim or puts the victims life at risk. People do not leave because they are afraid of what will happen if they leave or they

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<sup>7</sup> *Partner Violence in the LGBTQ Community*, THE SAFE ALLIANCE, no date.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Resources.*

may believe that their relationship is normal. Further, a person may not leave because they are ashamed of the situation they are in. A victim may not have or feel that they have the resources to escape the relationship thereby feeling helpless. Finally, there are cultural, religious, immigration, language, and disability reasons why a person does not leave. What we, in law enforcement can do, is make sure that they have the resources necessary to leave an abusive relationship and that we respond and follow up in a prompt manner.

**My Plan To Support Travis County Families:**

- Make assault family violence investigations a priority.
- Implement a policy that requires detectives to promptly follow up with victims.
- Inform victims about the available resources in Travis County.
- Require U Visa and victim training for Sheriff employees.
- Find opportunities to reduce the turnaround time for U Visa certification requests.