



United States Department of Justice

Office on Violence Against Women

Working Together to End the Violence

The **Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)**, a component of the U.S. Department of Justice, provides national leadership in developing the nation's capacity to reduce violence against women through the implementation of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and subsequent legislation.

Created in 1995, OVW administers financial and technical assistance to communities across the country that are developing programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In addition to overseeing 12 federal grant programs, OVW often undertakes a number of special initiatives in response to areas of special need, dedicating resources to develop enhancements in areas requiring particular attention or in communities facing particularly acute challenges.

What is Domestic Violence? Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.

What is Sexual Assault? Sexual assault can be defined as any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient of the unwanted sexual activity. Falling under the definition of sexual assault is sexual activity such as forced sexual intercourse, sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape.

What is Dating Violence? Dating violence is defined as violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship

- The type of relationship

- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

What is Stalking? Stalking can be defined as a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

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