

## Appendix 3

### Domestic Violence – Risk and Lethality Indicators

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*Fatality prediction in domestic violence cases is an inexact process, but certain issues are associated with an increased risk of death. Domestic violence offenders may become lethal without demonstrating any of these indicators, but a significant number of indicators identified in a particular situation and an increased level of intensity may indicate the need for additional victim protections. The following list of questions can assist in the process of assessing risk and lethality, but are not meant to be used as a comprehensive assessment tool.*

#### **Frequency and Scope of Violence:**

When did the most recent abusive incident occur?

How often has the offender been physically violent?

Has the offender harmed or threatened to harm the children?

Has the offender called you offensive names?

Have there been forced sexual encounters?

#### **Homicide/Suicide Risk:**

Does the offender have access to weapons?

Has the offender made threats to kill you or family?

Has the offender described homicidal fantasies?

Has the offender threatened suicide?

Has the offender increased risk taking behaviors?

#### **History of Violence:**

Did the offender witness domestic violence in his family of origin?

Was the offender violent in previous intimate partner relationships?

#### **Legal History:**

Has the offender been charged with or convicted of violent crimes?

Is there a history of prior civil orders of protection?

Has the offender been incarcerated for prior acts of domestic violence?

#### **Violence Outside the Home:**

Has the offender been violent to others outside the home?

Is the offender involved in violence in his occupation (military, police, bouncer, etc.)?

#### **Isolation:**

Does the offender control where you go and whom you see?

Do you have a formal or informal support system?

Does the offender have a support system?

**Substance Abuse:**

Does the offender use alcohol/drugs?

Has the offender abused you when intoxicated or under the influence?

Has the offender ever received substance abuse treatment?

**Proximity of Victim and Offender:**

Are you currently living together?

Is there a current civil protective order in place?

If you are not currently living together, how long since you separated?

**Attitudes Toward Violence:**

Does the offender feel remorse about the violent behavior?

Has the offender indicated a desire to change?

What are the offender's attitudes toward the opposite gender?

Does the offender consider violence an acceptable form of expression?

**Life Stresses:**

Has the offender recently lost a job or had a cut in pay?

Have either of you been significantly physically ill?

Are there significant problems in the relationship other than the violence?

**Mental/Physical Functioning:**

Is the offender currently seeing a mental health professional?

Is the offender currently taking psychotropic medications?

Has the offender ever had a psychiatric hospitalization?

Does the offender have any chronic health problems or physical challenges?

**The level of risk increases dramatically when a victim leaves. Enforcement of existing legal protections and coordination of community resources are particularly important at this time.**

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