

**Recommendations from the Harris County Adult Violent Death Review Team 2021**

The Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council was designated by the Harris County Commissioner’s Court in August of 2003 to officially facilitate the Harris County Adult Death Review Team (AVDRT). Each month, AVDRT conducts system-wide reviews of selected cases, that have been adjudicated, of unexpected adult deaths that have been caused by intimate partner violence in the Houston/Harris County Area. At the end of each year, AVDRT generates recommendations gleaned from the information learned at the case reviews. Below are the Recommendations for 2021 and the status of the Recommendations from 2020.

The AVDRT’s 2021 Recommendation can be summed up in 2 categories: Prevention and Intervention.

Prevention

Safety Plans

* + Make sure Safety Planning is done around when the victim is leaving or around breaking up
	+ Alert Employers about Protective Orders, stalking issues and make sure security has a photo of the suspect

Education

* + Include training on Healthy Relationships so victims can recognize what an unhealthy relationship is.
	+ Train Employers about Domestic Violence including what it could look like, i.e.: calling in sick, late, drug/alcohol abuse, poor job performance. Update policies and procedures to include a DV Policy and make sure it is known to employees. A good resource [www.workplacerespond.org](http://www.workplacerespond.org)
	+ More education on help for male victims of DV
	+ Train OB/GYNs to get a complete social history and include questions about strangulation. Make sure they have referrals available for their patients
	+ Possible use body camera footage for training law enforcement officers

Intervention

Law Enforcement

* + Flag strangulation cases and get them to a Victim Advocate as soon as possible
	+ Make sure a bi-lingual advocate gets in touch with a victim and/or surviving family members as soon as possible (not days later).

Other

* + Parole- have Parole create a High-Risk Caseload to help ensure they are complying with their conditions that should include DV or BIPP classes.
	+ Ensure the Texas Youth Commission has services that address DV
	+ Ensure someone (MHMR?) is monitoring medication for defendants with mental health issues
	+ Hold those who “lend” guns, to those who are not legally allowed to have them, accountable

Follow-up to 2020 Recommendations

1. For CPS – Recommend DV/Healthy Relationship classes for all referred- work in progress
2. For Probation- Screen all for DV history regardless of charge- working with Dr. May to find a tool to do this
3. Courts- Make BIPP mandatory for all convicted and placed on probation- no progress
4. Jail- provide BIPP in jail- If defendants attend BIPP before they are adjudicated then could be admitting guilt. However, the Jail re-entry program is screening for DV and will help with placement when released on bond
5. Consider a Batterer’s 24 -hour hotline- City of Houston established one using COVID money but has yet to report on numbers