



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

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 **UPDATE:** *Shared with all Community Partners to include with Safety Planning*
- Alert Employers about Protective Orders, stalking issues and make sure security has a photo of the suspect **UPDATE:** *Shared with Community Partners to include with Safety Planning and Education Depts. to include in training workplaces.*

Education

- Include training on Healthy Relationships so victims can recognize what an unhealthy relationship is. **UPDATE:** *HCDVCC started including Healthy Relationship information in trainings and shared with community partners to do the same.*
- 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

UPDATE: *Shared with Community Partners*

- More education on help for male victims of DV **UPDATE:** *Shared with Community Partners*
- Train OB/GYNs to get a complete social history and include questions about strangulation. Make sure they have referrals available for their patients **UPDATE:** *None at this time.*
- Possible use body camera footage for training law enforcement officers **UPDATE:** *Shared with HPD and HCSO*

Intervention

Law Enforcement

- Flag strangulation cases and get them to a Victim Advocate as soon as possible **UPDATE:** *None at this time*
- Make sure a bi-lingual advocate gets in touch with a victim and/or surviving family members as soon as possible (not days later). **UPDATE:** *Shared with Leadership at Victim Services at HPD and HCSO*

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. **UPDATE:** *Mona Pena is now a Team member and is working on assisting DV victims through the Parole Process*
- Ensure the Texas Youth Commission has services that address DV **UPDATE:** *None at this time.*
- Ensure someone (MHMR?) is monitoring medication for defendants with mental health issues **UPDATE:** *None at this time.*
- Hold those who “lend” guns, to those who are not legally allowed to have them, accountable **UPDATE:** *None at this time*

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