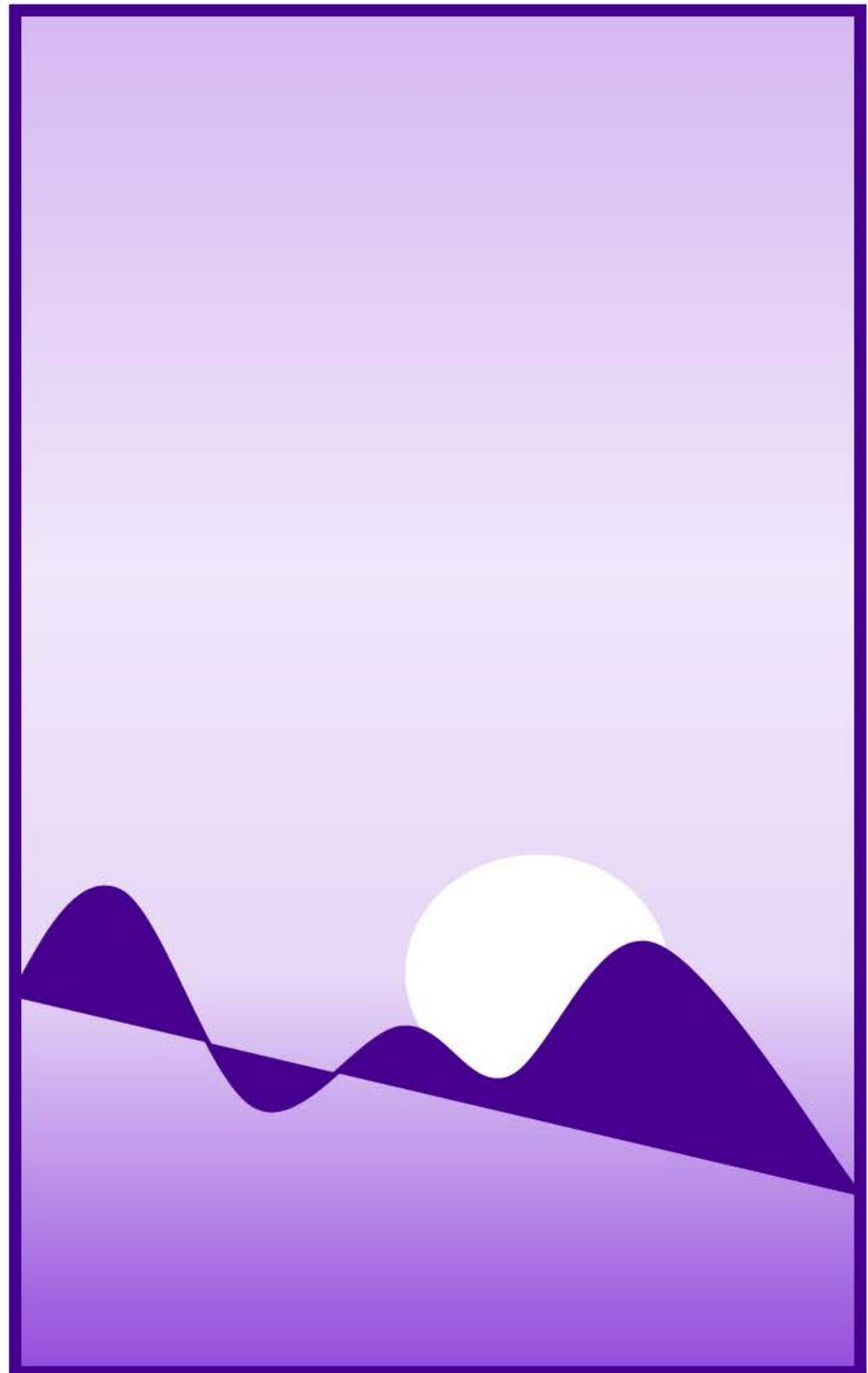


**THERE  
WAS  
NEVER  
A NIGHT  
OR  
A PROBLEM  
THAT  
COULD  
DEFEAT  
SUNRISE  
OR  
HOPE.**

- BERNARD WILLIAMS



**GREGG COUNTY  
ADULT FATALITY REVIEW TEAM**

2019-2020  
REPORT

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<b><u>GREGG COUNTY ADULT FATALITY REVIEW TEAM</u></b>	
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*We would like to acknowledge retired team members, Bunny Terrell and Kathy Cox, and thank them for their participation.*

*We would like to thank the Longview and White Oak Police Departments for their participation in case presentation and their continued efforts to serve those affected by violent crime.*

**RESOURCES**

WOMEN’S CENTER OF EAST TEXAS – [WWW.WC-ET.ORG](http://WWW.WC-ET.ORG)  
 903-295-7846 OR 800-441-5555

•••••

GREGG COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE, VICTIMS COORDINATORS  
 903-236-8440

•••••

COMMUNITY HEALTHCORE – MENTAL AND ADDICTION SERVICES - 800-838-1009

•••••

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE – [WWW.SUICIDEPREVENTIONLIFELINE.ORG](http://WWW.SUICIDEPREVENTIONLIFELINE.ORG)  
 800-273-8255

•••••

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE – [WWW.THEHOTLINE.ORG](http://WWW.THEHOTLINE.ORG)  
 800-799.SAFE (7233)

•••••

NATIONAL DATING ABUSE HELPLINE - [WWW.LOVEISRESPECT.ORG](http://WWW.LOVEISRESPECT.ORG) - 1-866-331-9474

## **INTRODUCTION – ONE WORD: “TOUGH”**

Many words could be used to describe the year 2020. 2020 has been a difficult year for all of us and we might describe it with the single word “tough.” 2020 has been tough. We have seen sickness, we have seen upheaval, we have seen unrest. We have seen the bad that can result from pain and loss, and we have seen the evil that can emerge from opportunity. We have seen hatred and greed and strife. But, we have also had glimpses of hope, and of strength and of the power of coming together. We have found something tougher than this year – ourselves.

“Tough” is not a very elegant word, but it evokes several meanings. We describe a situation of hardship as “tough.” We label a violent person as a “tough.” However, “tough” can also be used to describe a person with exceptional strength and resilience; to describe someone who can handle hardship and is determined to survive.

2020 was a tough year because it tried to control us. 2020 brought extreme change as our lives were turned upside down because life did not go as usual or as planned. We were separated from family and friends, and told to sacrifice activities to protect ourselves and others. Some of the choices that we could previously make were no longer available, and we had to learn to live in a restricted way. Some of us lost our jobs, and we had to figure out how to provide for ourselves and our families. And some of us had to figure out how to cope with the loss of loved ones because of a disease that we could not contain or control.

In surviving this year, 2020 has taught us many lessons – lessons that were tough to learn. But, two lessons are important to us here:

**TOGETHER WE ARE TOUGHER THAN THIS YEAR.**

-----

**WE ARE SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE IN TOUGH  
SITUATIONS WHO NEED SOMEONE TO REMIND  
THEM THAT THEY ARE TOUGHER  
THAN THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES.**

We do have hope, and that hope will guide us through the remainder of this year and those to come. If the clouds continue, then we will find the sun or we will make our own. We will continue to step forward together to help those who need light during the darkness and hope during hardship. In 2014, the Gregg County Adult Fatality Review Team (AFRT) was formed to help our community identify and assist those who experience times of hardship. It is the goal of the Gregg County Adult Fatality Review Team to be a continued part of this endeavor.

## **THE ADULT FATALITY REVIEW TEAM**

An AFRT is authorized under Chapter 672 of the Texas Health and Safety Code. Texas criminal laws are distributed throughout several statutory codes, but it is fitting that the establishment of an AFRT is guided by a code of laws dealing with the safety and health of Texans. This is because the purpose of the AFRT is “to decrease the incidence of preventable adult deaths” through its work of reviewing fatalities. To achieve this purpose set out in Chapter 672, the statute enables the AFRT to “review fatality cases suspected to have resulted from suicide, family violence, or abuse.”

- Suicide
- Family violence as defined by Texas Family Code Section 71.004:
  - An 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, or sexual assault or that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault,
  - Abuse by a member of a family or household toward a child of the family or household; or
  - Dating violence;
- Abuse
  - The negligent or willful infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting emotional or physical harm leading to death; or
  - Sexual abuse of an adult, including any involuntary or nonconsensual sexual conduct that would constitute Indecent Exposure or an Assault

After reviewing these incidents, the AFRT submits a report every two years on the deaths that were reviewed by the team. This report aids the team in achieving its Chapter 672 purpose of reducing deaths by:

- Promoting cooperation, communication, and coordination among agencies involved in responding to unexpected deaths;
- Developing an understanding of the causes and incidence of unexpected deaths in the county or counties in which the review team is located; and
- Advising the legislature, appropriate state agencies, and local law enforcement agencies on changes to the law, policy, or practice that will reduce the number of unexpected deaths.

The AFRT brings together members from various backgrounds in providing services to those involved in incidents of suicide, family violence and abuse. Having a vast range of experience on the team, enhances the reviews of incidents by providing viewpoints covering several different ways of evaluating an incident, its causes and its results. To further increase our effectiveness at preventing future deaths, the Gregg County team also reviews near fatalities in which a victim is seriously injured in an event that appears to have been an intended fatality.

**THE PROBLEM OF CRIME**

The ultimate goal of those who work with victims and offenders of family violence would be to work ourselves out of a job. However, the problem is massive and complicated so that this goal is one set very far away. The tables below provide a glimpse into the vastness of the family violence problem. These tables show the numbers of crimes reported to law enforcement and show the great number of family violence crimes occurring in Texas and in Gregg County.

**CRIME STATISTIC TABLES 2016-2019 – U.S.A., TEXAS AND GREGG COUNTY**

Crime Stats 2019	US	Texas	Texas's	% of TX	Gregg's	% of	
			% of US	listed		% of TX	Gregg
			crime	crimes	Gregg	crime	crimes
Population	328,239,523	28,995,881	8.8%		131,281	0.45%	
Theft	4,659,007	496,279	10.7%	49.4%	2481	0.50%	50.53%
<b>Family Violence</b>		<b>196,902</b>		<b>19.6%</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>0.50%</b>	<b>20.10%</b>
Burglary	998,474	112,405	11.3%	11.2%	634	0.56%	12.91%
Aggravated Assault	744,434	75,595	10.2%	7.5%	338	0.45%	6.88%
Auto Theft	667,300	78,687	11.8%	7.8%	303	0.39%	6.17%
Robbery	248,681	28,854	11.6%	2.9%	76	0.26%	1.55%
Sexual Assault	126,958	14,656	11.5%	1.5%	85	0.58%	1.73%
Murder	15,020	1,403	9.3%	0.1%	6	0.43%	0.12%

Texas Crimes 1,004,781 Gregg County Crimes 4910

Crime Stats 2018	US	Texas	Texas's	% of TX	Gregg's	% of	
			% of US	listed		% of TX	Gregg
			crime	crimes	Gregg	crime	crimes
Population	326,687,501	28,701,845	8.8%		131,281	0.46%	
Theft	5,232,167	491,028	9.4%	49.4%	2,413	0.49%	48.40%
<b>Family Violence</b>		<b>197,023</b>		<b>19.8%</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>0.48%</b>	<b>19.07%</b>
Burglary	1,235,013	117,513	9.5%	11.8%	836	0.71%	16.77%
Aggravated Assault	810,982	74,165	9.1%	7.5%	325	0.44%	6.52%
Auto Theft	751,904	69,730	9.3%	7.0%	318	0.46%	6.38%
Robbery	281,278	28,273	10.1%	2.8%	57	0.20%	1.14%
Sexual Assault	143,765	14,891	10.4%	1.5%	78	0.52%	1.56%
Murder	16,374	1,324	8.1%	0.1%	8	0.60%	0.16%

Texas Crimes 993,947 Gregg County Crimes 4986

Crime Stats 2017	US	Texas	Texas's	% of TX	Gregg	Gregg's	% of Gregg
			% of US	crimes		crime	listed
Population	325,147,121	27,821,692	8.6%		132,332	0.48%	
Theft	5,513,000	548,941	10.0%	50.7%	3,602	0.66%	51.73%
Family Violence		196,564		18.2%	1,194	0.61%	17.15%
Burglary	1,397,045	148,073	10.6%	13.7%	1,140	0.77%	16.37%
Aggravated Assault	810,319	72,609	9.0%	6.7%	424	0.58%	6.09%
Auto Theft	772,943	68,523	8.9%	6.3%	358	0.52%	5.14%
Robbery	320,596	33,250	10.4%	3.1%	146	0.44%	2.10%
Sexual Assault	135,666	13,320	9.8%	1.2%	82	0.62%	1.18%
Murder	17,294	1,473	8.5%	0.1%	17	1.15%	0.24%

Texas Crimes 1,082,753 Gregg County Crimes 6963

Crime Stats 2016	US	Texas	Texas's	% of TX	Gregg	Gregg's	% of Gregg
			% of US	crimes		crime	listed
Population	323,405,935	28,304,596	8.8%		132,027	0.47%	
Theft	767,290	518,414	67.6%	50.0%	2,693	0.52%	48.03%
Family Violence		195,315		18.8%	1,085	0.56%	19.35%
Burglary	1,516,405	133,145	8.8%	12.8%	892	0.67%	15.91%
Aggravated Assault	802,982	75,347	9.4%	7.3%	357	0.47%	6.37%
Auto Theft	767,290	67,285	8.8%	6.5%	364	0.54%	6.49%
Robbery	332,797	32,120	9.7%	3.1%	116	0.36%	2.07%
Sexual Assault	132,414	14,332	10.8%	1.4%	91	0.63%	1.62%
Murder	17,413	1,412	8.1%	0.1%	9	0.64%	0.16%

Texas Crimes 1,037,370 Gregg County Crimes 5607

Note: Not all crimes that occurred in the U.S.A., Texas and Gregg County are reported in this table.  
Sources: Texas Department of Public Safety Crime in Texas Reports & FBI Crime in United States Reports & local agencies

Of the crimes listed in the tables, family violence crimes generally make up 20% of those reported. While these are not all of the types of crime that are reported, these tables provide an opportunity to review the number of family violence crimes in relation to the number of other listed crimes. For those who work in the family violence prevention and response arena, it is known that there are even more family violence incidents that are not reported. It is also known that, in Texas, many aggravated assaults, burglaries, sexual assaults and homicides are related to family violence.

## **FATALITY REVIEW FINDINGS**

AFRT's exist to give special attention to deaths that occur because of violence between people who have a close, personal relationship. This is why so many entities use the term "domestic violence" to describe this type of violence. There is something different in a case where a person kills their spouse as opposed to a case in which a person kills a stranger. While each is tragic, the question remains as to why someone kills a person that is a part of their life and someone that they likely lived with and loved. Our AFRT seeks to analyze these deaths so that we can answer this question and use that answer to prevent future family violence deaths. Select findings from our reviews are listed in the boxes on this page.

### **Age**

Only one offender was over the age of 40.  
Three of the offenders were in their 20's.

### **Gender**

All of the offenders were male.  
Only one victim was male.

### **Incident Location**

Three incidents occurred at a victim's home and two occurred on public roadways. One of the incidents that occurred at the victim's home, included a visiting victim who was shot in the driveway of the home.

### **Incident Dates and Times**

The incidents reviewed occurred from 2014 to 2018. All incidents occurred in June or later in the year.

None of the incidents occurred during late nighttime. The incident hours ranged from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

In 2019 and 2020, the Gregg County Adult Fatality Review Team reviewed five fatality incidents occurring from 2014 to 2018. These cases involved five offenders, six fatalities and two seriously injured victims.

### **Witnesses**

Only one incident involved witnesses – the first victim of the double homicide was shot outside in front of neighbors at the second witness's home, and another witness escaped the home upon hearing shots. The other double homicide occurred immediately after the offender's ex-girlfriend and child left the scene.

In keeping with health guidelines for meetings, no reviews were completed after Texas declared a state of emergency in response to the pandemic. Of the cases that were reviewed, none were pending criminal investigation or prosecution. In keeping with the parameters of the statute, no names are used to maintain confidentiality.

### **Weapon**

Each fatality involved the use of a gun as a weapon. Every victim, except one, was shot in the face or head. This is the first time that the AFRT has completed reviews with only one type of weapon used.

### **Family Violence History**

All incidents involved a history of family violence between the offender and at least one of the victims of the incident. In one of these incidents, the offender said that he had previously been a victim at the hands of a deceased victim.

Only two victims were found to have previously called 911 for family violence incidents.

<b>Substance Abuse</b>
All offenders, except one, were alleged to have been involved in using and/or selling illegal drugs, or using medications which affected their behavior.
One victim had a history of drug use which led to her ongoing involvement with Child Protective Services (CPS).

<b>Prior Services</b>
All victims but one received prior services from law enforcement and/or an advocacy group to cope with family violence victimization.

<b>Criminal History</b>
Four offenders and three victims had prior criminal convictions.

<b>Criminal Court Involvement</b>
One offender committed suicide. Four offenders were prosecuted in a criminal court. Each offender was found guilty, three by plea agreement and one by trial. Two offenders were sentenced to prison for 30 and 38 years, respectively, and two offenders were sentenced to prison for life.

**CASE STATISTIC CHARTS**

<b>FATALITY EVENT</b>				
Fatality Events	Murder	Double Murder	Near Fatality-Suicide	Near Fatality
	1	2	1	1
Cause of Death (Includes suicides)	Shooting			
	6			

<b>JURISDICTION</b>	
Longview Police Department	4
White Oak Police Department	1

*Note – Agencies not listed did not have a Family Violence fatality reviewed by the AFRT.*

<b>RELATIONSHIP</b>				
Relationship Category (7 victims)	Spouse or Dating	Ex-spouse or Dating (Includes separation)	Family of Victim	Friend of Victim
	2	2	2	1
Prior Abuse Known	Family	Coworkers	Law Enforcement	
	3	1	1	

<b>CRIMINAL SYSTEM OUTCOME</b>		
Case Disposition (One offender committed suicide)	Guilty Plea	Jury Trial
	3	1
Punishment/Sentence	Penitentiary	
	4	

<b>VICTIM (7)</b>			
Gender	Male	Female	
	1	6	
Age	17-35	35-50	50+
	2	4	1
Race/Ethnicity	White	Black	Hispanic
	1	5	1
Employment	Employed	Unemployed	Enrolled in School
	1		
Children	With Offender	With Other Person	Present for Incident
	2	3	1
History of Violence with Offender	As Victim	As Perpetrator	
	4	1	
History of Violence with Other Person	As Victim	As Perpetrator	
	2		
Criminal History	3		
Substance Abuse	Alcohol	Drugs (Illegal or Prescription Drug Abuse)	
		1	
Assistance Services	Social Services	Criminal Justice / CPS	Mental Services
	3	2	1

<b>OFFENDER (5)</b>			
Gender	Male	Female	
	5		
Age	17-35	35-50	50+
	3	1	1
Race	White	Black	Hispanic
	1	3	1
Employment	Employed	Unemployed	Enrolled in School
	4	2	
Children	With Victim	With Other Person	Present for Incident
	2	1	1
History of Violence with Victim	As Victim	As Perpetrator	
	1	4	
History of Violence with Other Person	As Victim	As Perpetrator	
	1	2	
Criminal History	4		
Substance Abuse	Alcohol	Drugs (Illegal or Prescription Drug Abuse)	
	2	4	
Assistance Services	Social Services	Criminal Justice / CPS	Mental Services
		2	1

## **SELECTED INCIDENTS**

### **Case #1**

Victim #1 and her current boyfriend were preparing for church when Offender contacted Victim #1 and was upset about her relationship with her boyfriend. A friend of Victim #1 later stated that Offender may have known about the relationship due to a photograph posted on facebook. Offender was told that he could come discuss things with Victim #1. Offender texted his family members and told them that he was going to Victim #1's home to take care of the boyfriend. Victim #2, Victim #1's friend, arrived at the home. When Offender arrived, he shot Victim #2 in the driveway of the home and then went inside the residence where he shot Victim #1. Victim #1's boyfriend had heard gunshots and ran out of the home. Detectives learned from coworkers of Victim #1 that Offender had sent her threatening messages, and they learned from Victim #1's family that there had been previous violence by Offender against Victim #1. Victim #1 had spoken to a victim advocacy center to obtain help in preparing her divorce paperwork, but she had not sought domestic violence assistance and had not asked for a Protective Order against Offender.

### **Case #2**

Victim, who survived the incident, and Offender were no longer in a relationship, but lived together in the house with their shared children. According to family members, Offender was upset that Victim was speaking to another man and Victim was upset that Offender was not willing to provide a steady income for the family. Offender told a friend that Victim was belittling his manhood, and that Victim wanted Offender to assault her so that she could obtain legal status. Victim stated that Offender drove her around and told her that he would always love her, but asked her if she wanted Offender to kill her new boyfriend. Offender pushed Victim out of the car and shot and choked her, then left her on the side of the road. Offender told detectives that they had argued in the car and he had dropped her off at a park. He said that he was not the one who shot her. Offender had previously taken a domestic violence offender course. Victim had requested that charges be dropped in one of the previous family violence charges against Offender, which was an incident observed by their children.

### **Case #3**

Offender is the father of the grandchild of Victim #1 and Victim #2. Offender believed that he was being denied the opportunity to see his child. He jumped the balcony of the victims' apartment and saw his child there with her mother. Offender knocked on the sliding glass door and Victim #2 told him to leave. Offender broke the glass door and entered the apartment. His ex-girlfriend ran out of the apartment with their child. Offender fought with Victim #2 and said that Victim #1 hit him with a glass lid. Offender shot Victim #2 and then shot Victim #1 as she ran away. Detectives found a text from Offender from earlier in the day where he told his child's mother that he would sit in the parking lot with his gun until he saw his child. As a teenager, Offender had been hospitalized for anger issues.

## **RISK FACTORS**

During our case reviews, we found several risk factors that were common in more than one incident including: the victim's entrance into a new romantic relationship, unemployment or unsteady employment by the offender, and a history of minimization of previous assaults by the victim. The selling of illegal drugs played a primary part in one of the incidents in which the offender believed that the victim, who was transporting drugs for him, was stealing money from the sales and also planning to have the offender killed. All offenders, except one, had displayed signs of jealousy of the victim's relationships and/or use of their time. In three of the incidents, the offender either followed or spied on the victim. As all of the incidents occurred with a gun as a weapon, all offenders had access to a gun. Some offenders had obtained the guns recently and had told the victim or another person that they had obtained the gun for protection. Four of the incidents involved a previous history of violence where the offender had assaulted the victim, and the offender from the fifth incident stated that he had been assaulted previously by one of his victims.

## **SITUATIONAL TRIGGERS**

It can be difficult to know the immediate trigger that caused the offender to kill or attempt to kill the victim. However, our case reviews identified the following events that occurred close in time to the incident that may have been triggers:

1. Denial of access to offender's child
2. Offender learning that victim had a romantic relationship
3. Use of medication that enhanced offender's aggression

We also saw triggers which appeared to build up over time and possibly escalated to be the cause of the incident:

1. Employment stress by offender
2. Victim making comments to and about offender that he regarded as insulting to his manhood
3. Belief that victim was stealing from offender
4. Belief that victim was seeking to have offender killed

## **BARRIERS TO SERVICE**

In an effort to improve the response of those involved in preventing family violence fatality events, the AFRT reviews possible barriers to service. We analyze why a person did not receive services and why any received services were not effective. We reviewed several incidents where victims had sought domestic violence advocacy and/or shelter assistance, but did not end the relationship with the offender. Some of the victims sought partial services, such as divorce assistance, but not additionally-offered services such as protective orders or relocation assistance. Some victims contacted law enforcement for protection, but then requested that charges not be prosecuted in the court system. The greatest barrier found in the cases reviewed appeared to be the victim's minimization of prior assaults and an underestimation of the potential that Offender's behavior could lead to a near fatality or fatality event.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AFRT**

The goal of the Gregg County Adult Fatality Review Team is two-fold:

1. To work together to improve the family violence response and services provided by the community and agencies operating in Gregg County, and
2. To decrease the incidence of preventable family violence deaths and near-deaths.

In our effort to reach this goal, the AFRT reviews each fatality with a view toward what recommendations we can make for our team, the additional people and entities responsible for addressing family violence issues, and our local community. After completing our case reviews for 2019 and 2020, we make the following recommendations:

Specifically for our team, we reiterate the recommendations from our previous reports, knowing that these are top areas of advancement toward our goal.

### Recommendations for the Gregg County Adult Fatality Review Team

- Create and further relationships with agencies who work with victims or offenders of family violence who can provide expert insight into the dynamics of these relationships and provide further understanding as to why family violence fatalities occur;
- Expand communication and partnerships with agencies and individuals who can provide information on specific victims and/or offenders to conduct more thorough reviews of fatality cases;
- Involve victim or offender families in the review preparation as they are willing;
- Formulate an efficient way to identify all Gregg County fatalities caused by family violence or abuse for future review.

Our next recommendations are for the Coordinated Community Response – those who respond to family violence incidents for the purposes of prevention and/or intervention. Recommendations from a previous report are designated by “\*\*\*”.

### Recommendations for the Coordinated Community Response

- \*\*\* Offer assistance to families where mental health issues within the family result in violence, including helping families understand how to respond to and cope with someone who is not taking medication as prescribed;
- \*\*\* Victim services groups should publicize their post-relationship services offered for those who have already left a violent relationship;
- Provide training to community supervision officers on services available to offenders and victims;
- Provide training to prosecutors and their victim-service staff to ensure that they are aware of all available local services for victims;

- Continue service and intervention options that do not rely on victim involvement, such as prosecution of family violence cases where a victim does not desire prosecution because of fear of retaliation and family service support through Child Protective Services where a victim does not want to complete services;
- Advocate for open and honest victim empowerment with a priority of encouraging victims to seek safe solutions;
- Establish a way for law enforcement to follow up on criminal trespass warnings issued in response to family relationships;
- Create an individualized plan of service for family violence victims dealing with drug addiction or habitual criminality;
- Educate youth on the necessity of safety in healthy family and dating relationships;
- Conduct honest discussions about traditional views of family and dating and find ways that those views can coincide with safe relationships while retaining culture and tradition.

Lastly, we make the following recommendations for our community. As above, recommendations from a previous report are designated by “\*\*\*”.

#### Recommendations for the Community of Gregg County

- \*\*\* Know how to assist a friend, coworker or family member who may be in a relationship involving family violence or abuse;
- \*\*\* Eliminate the stigma of reporting family violence or asking for assistance;
- Build and maintain peaceful and cooperative relationships for co-parents in conducting child custody arrangements;
- Acknowledge the severity of strangulation and emphasize the importance of reporting these incidents;
- Encourage media to report efforts by those in the community to address violence;
- Learn the signs and risk factors associated with family violence and be prepared to offer help to a victim or offender.

The following websites provide lists of risk factors, signs of abuse and protective factors:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence)
- The National Network to End Domestic Violence  
[www.nnedv.org/content/red-flags-of-abuse/](http://www.nnedv.org/content/red-flags-of-abuse/)
- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
[www.ncadv.org/learn-more](http://www.ncadv.org/learn-more)

## **WHAT COMES NEXT – CHALLENGES IN A CHANGED WORLD**

This has been a tough year. And this tough year has led many of us to evaluate where we have been and where we are going. In this evaluation, we have sought to view things from differing perspectives. This is also true for the AFRT. Evaluating the work of the AFRT leads to some tough questions for how to address family violence:

- What will the effect of lockdowns have on the frequency and severity of family violence incidents? Are there those for whom a risk of injury is a greater concern than a risk of illness?
- Should a victim's right to be heard include the option to say that they do not want to prosecute? Do we protect their body or their voice, or can we find a way to protect both?
- How does a school promote healthy non-violent relationships if a child's home environment teaches violence? When can society place its own views of what is right over that of a child's parents?
- Will victims who do not ask for help go unnoticed when they are isolated from an outside world that can recognize warning signs and offer assistance? Is a face mask another opportunity for an Offender to cause hidden injuries?
- Should victims consider limiting their use of social media to avoid a potential offender from spying on their life? When should safety override freedom of speech?
- How do we prevent a family violence incident when we cannot see inside of a private home? When does a victim's safety outweigh an offender's privacy?
- How is it possible to keep a family together when it is filled with violence? How do we protect the sanctity of the family while protecting those who are hurt because of their family?

These questions are only a sampling of those that are grappled with by the members of the Gregg County Adult Fatality Review Team. While our work is challenging, we are so grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important work. We are also grateful to the agencies that work with family violence survivors and offenders to better our community. In 2021, we hope to continue our case review meetings. Fatality cases that meet the requirements for our future reviews include fatalities of parents by their children and those between people involved in, or previously involved in, romantic relationships. We also have multiple suicide incidents, some involving a fatality or near fatality of a victim. It is the hope of the AFRT that future review of these incidents will bring us closer to our goal of preventing future fatalities through providing adequate prevention and intervention services. We are prepared to face this tough work with a tough response and do what we can to end the violence.