

NEWSPAPER

The Truth About The Impact Covid-19 Pandemic Has On Domestic Violence: The Dark Side



Domestic violence rises during Covid-19 lockdown

More domestic violence helplines and shelters across the world are reporting rising calls for help. In a number of countries, domestic violence reports and emergency calls have surged upwards of 25 percent since social distancing measures were enacted. Such numbers are also likely to reflect only the worst cases.

Some organizations have altered the services that they provide in order to help remove the individual from the situation. One in Pennsylvania worked with the county solicitor to provide hotel rooms for applicants whose protection-from-abuse orders prevent them from living with an abuser.

Domestic violence is a global public health problem. It takes many different forms and leads to significant physical and psychological consequences for the victim and the whole family.

Situations that may prompt episodes of violence in the family include stress, emotional disappointment, economic factors, bad and cramped housing, and alcohol or drug abuse.

How does the government's forced home isolation to contain Covid-19 infections impact this type of abuse?

Domestic violence is abusive behavior occurring in a family or a couple relationship that presupposes cohabitation. Violence within the home can be perpetrated in various forms:

- Physical (beatings, torture, murder)
- Sexual (unwanted intercourse harassment, sexual jokes)
- Psychological (manipulation, threats, humiliations, intimidation)
- Economic (obsessive control of finances money subtraction)
- Stalking (persecution, obsessive control of phone calls or messages)



Ensuring Domestic Violence Survivors' Safety - The Need for Enhanced Structural Supports During and After the Coronavirus Pandemic

BY: TERRY HUGHEY

Anyone can be a victim of abuse in a relationship. However, the literature demonstrates that women and children are most at risk, while elderly and disabled people suffer negligence or neglect more often.

Therefore, a multitude of behaviors, often subtle, which aim at controlling the other person, fall within the scope of domestic violence.

Mistreatment does not always manifest itself openly but generally follows a 'scale of violence' that begins with intimidation, continues with isolation, devaluation, and finally full-blown abuse.

In most cases, the perpetrator does not suffer from a recognized psychiatric condition. On the other hand, in cases where the abuser suffers from a full-blown psychological or psychiatric disorder, the restrictions due to the pandemic could be used as an excuse to evade psychological support or taking psychotropic drugs, making the disorder more acute and dangerous.

Analysis of the intra-family setting reveals a relational dynamic of chronic frustration, stress and disappointment, which is driven by the abuser's possessive and destructive control.

To escape this spiral, it is essential that the victim recognizes she/he lives in a violent relationship, but frequently the victim never brings a complaint for fear of

repercussions or because they fear the impact on the family.

The failure to report these crimes means they are too often underestimated and go unpunished which enables the abuse to continue and to damage undermining the psycho-physical health of the victim and the home environment.

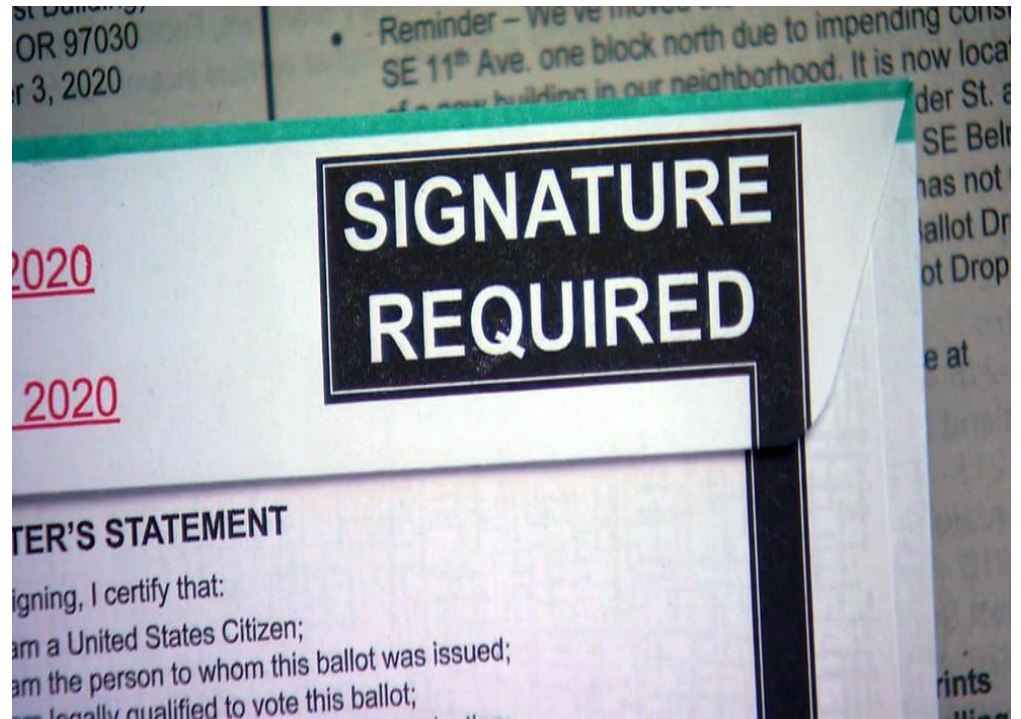
Today, the forced isolation of families in their homes due to the Covid-19 pandemic may create a dangerous situation with the potential to trigger domestic conflicts and episodes of abuse within the family which risk going unpunished, given the increased opportunities for an abuser with his captive cohabitants and reduced contact outside the home.

The forced cohabitation of many families around the world has shown signs of a real 'emergency in an emergency'.



The statistical data that emerged from China, (for now at least) of the extraordinary isolation measures, have prompted increased instances of reports of domestic abuse, especially of women. **(continued on pg 3)**

An Important Signature: Yours.



Vote November 3rd, 2020. Your vote counts!

By: **JAMES S. OFFENHARTZ**



Many voters are voting by mail in this election, because of Covid-19. To keep the integrity of the election, all voters' signatures have to be verified by election officials. In fact, 30 states and Washington, D.C. require people in charge of the election to verify the signature of the mail-in ballot to make sure it matches the signature on the voter's driver's license or one's signature from previous elections.

Eighteen states mandate the voters be contacted if there is a difficulty with the signature so the person voting can correct it. There are different opinions on absentee ballots though: President Donald J. Trump stated the system (absentee ballots) is fraudulent. Trump stated, "There's no verification. It is a disgrace that this [absentee voting] can happen." There is no evidence that this is true.

Democrats, on the other hand, believe many valid absentee ballots will be thrown out due to a person's changed signature. However, "Election expert Nate Persillis says, "There are not going to be millions of ballots discarded because of signature mismatches." To verify, in 2016, "0.3 % of all 33,000,000 ballots cast that year, only about 87,000 were not counted due to reported signature mismatch." So, the Democrats are incorrect also.

In Pennsylvania, this system may be changed. The Pennsylvania government will not currently allow votes to be thrown away if signatures don't match. However, the final decision on signature matches are already in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. But both Republican and Democratic voters in all states are concerned.

To clarify, fifty percent of voters from both parties aren't confident their mail-in ballots will be counted. Experts are advertising absentee voters to make sure the signature on their mail-in ballot matches the signature on their Driver's License. One is also allowed to call the office of election in their state to verify their absentee ballot has been received and verified. We should all do this. Let's make sure our voices are heard and our votes are counted in this important election.

Domestic Violence: The Dark Side (continued)



Amid the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, victims are locked in with their abusers, with little recourse to leave the spaces in which they are being abused.

They were forced to live for months within an abusive relationship. Many newspapers reported episodes of couple violence that followed with dramatic abuse vented on their children.

Forced isolation inside very small apartments or houses, like those in China where there was a daily fear of abuse, caused great stress and psychological harm.

In addition, there was lack of police surveillance for this type of abuse due to the need to manage public order issues.

In the USA, as the emergency developed, there was a rush to purchase firearms and alcohol (a dangerous combination). How will all of this impact a family currently isolated in their home with an abuser?

In Italy, which is still in the midst of the emergency and isolation measures, we are witnessing a diametrically opposite phenomenon, namely a drop in calls to toll-free anti-violence numbers.

It is clear that the decrease in reports does not reflect a reduction in violent incidents, but that, on the contrary, the greatest risk during the Covid-19 pandemic is that the victim remains trapped inside the home with the abuser, with no escape route or the opportunity to contact outside help.

The same applies to children who are the victims of violence and where isolation has prevented them going to school and abuse being reported by teachers or friends. The data that show a decrease in the number of reports of violence are an alarm call.

It is reasonable to believe that personal restriction measures during the pandemic pose a dangerous risk factor for domestic violence which may be fueled by elements such as:

- Close contact between the victim–abuser in terms of shared space and time.
- The increase in stress caused by social, economic, psychological factors.
- The lack of opportunities for the victim to escape abuse.
- A reduction in the victim's contacts with outsiders.

We believe that it is essential that the competent authorities and the associations in charge remain vigilant and find and maintain new communication strategies with victims.

Accordingly, we propose that information programs and support initiatives through all mass media (TV, social networks, cell phones) are increased:

- Promote the reporting of violence during the rare moments the abuser is absent.
- Maintain online contact between teachers and educational institutions with young people, even during periods of isolation.
- Allow faster reporting by victims by sending simple codes or symbols to dedicate toll-free numbers.
- Encourage the reporting of cases by family members, acquaintances, neighbors who have news or suspicions
- Protect victims who report episodes of violence.

Greater focus should be directed towards families in which there have been previous episodes of violence and who are already known to the authorities.

In these cases, it would be desirable to set up an online social assistance service that intervenes periodically and compulsorily, even where there is no current active request for help, in order to verify the security of the family environment.

If these initiatives are adopted, they would both protect victims and bring to light hidden instances of domestic violence, and some crimes would be prevented altogether.

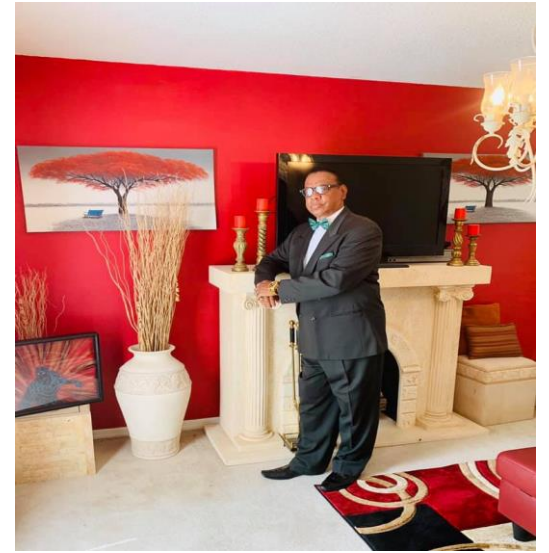
Prior to the pandemic, it was estimated that one in three women will experience violence during their lifetimes, a human rights violation that also bears an economic cost of \$1.5 trillion.

Many of these women are now trapped at home with their abusers and are at increased risk of other forms of violence as overloaded healthcare systems and disrupted justice services struggle to respond.

Women especially essential and informal workers, such as doctors, nurses and street vendors are at heightened risk of violence as they navigate deserted urban or rural public spaces and transportation services under lockdown.

JUST MY OPINION

BY: TERRY HUGHEY



“Commitment”

When we commit to a goal, no matter what it may be for us, it's a moment in your life that will define how true you may be to yourself.

Commitment is something that is required to achieve a goal.

People who are pretending to be committed are wasting precious time for themselves and whomever or whatever it may be that they are attempting to achieve.

That, in itself is a selfish act. One of the most vital essentials to success for any type of achievement is commitment.

This is true for many aspects of your life; once you allow yourself to not put your all into things or situations, you will find you are always asking yourself, why is it that I can't find success in my life?

And you may be in situations where it could be because of others and if that's the case, you have to look to move on, because holding on to things that are not working for you will always drag you down, not lift you up.

Even when it's a struggle, if you are committed, whether it's in a marriage or a career, if you're surrounded with likeminded people, you have a much better opportunity to achieve the goal.

We all must commit to many things in life to find our happiness and to feel accomplished, but we all have to understand what it takes “Commitment”.

The achievement of your goal is assured the moment you commit yourself to it

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Parents Of 545 Children Separated At U.S.-Mexico Border Still Can't Be Found



A TWO-YEAR-OLD HONDURAN ASYLUM SEEKER CRIES AS HER MOTHER IS SEARCHED AND DETAINED NEAR THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER IN MCALLEN, TEXAS, JUNE 12, 2018

BY: **CHERYL HUGHEY**



Despite a federal judge's order that the government reunite families who had been separated at the U.S.-Mexico border under the Trump administration's "no tolerance" migration policy, the parents of 545 children still can't be found, according to a court document filed Tuesday by the U.S. Justice Department and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Thousands of families were separated under the policy before the Trump administration ended the practice in 2018. The ACLU successfully sued the government, winning a court order to reunite families. Thousands of parents and children were reunited within weeks.

But about 1,000 families who had been separated in a pilot program in 2017 were not covered by the initial court order — reunification of this group was ordered only last year. The passage of time has made finding both parents and children more difficult.

"What has happened is horrific," says Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project, who has been leading the litigation. "Some of these children were just babies when they were separated.

Some of these children may now have been separated for more than half their lives. Almost their whole life, they have not been with their parents."

The update on reunification efforts was filed ahead of a status conference scheduled for Thursday before U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego.

The filing estimates that two-thirds of the separated parents are believed to have returned to their home countries.

Nongovernmental groups appointed by the court have "engaged in time consuming and arduous on-the-ground searches for parents in their respective countries of origin," according to the filing, but those efforts were halted by the coronavirus pandemic and are only now resuming in limited fashion.

NPR's Joel Rose reports that the children initially went into a shelter system before being placed with sponsors across the country and that many will likely try to remain in the United States. The ACLU's Gelernt says about 360 of the children still have not been located.

SPORTS

E-SPORTS STREAMING PLATFORMS LIKE TWITCH ARE REACHING NEW AND YOUNGER AUDIENCES

BY: TERRY HUGHEY



We didn't know if there would be live sports this year. The coronavirus pandemic kept the world in limbo for months. It was shocking when the NCAA announced the cancellation of March Madness, which feels like a decade ago — and in its wake we've seen hundreds of events cancelled, altered or modified to try and make sports return as safely as possible, with mixed results.

Whether through simulated crowds or altered camera shots to direct attention away from the lack of fans, sports broadcasts are evolving during the crisis. Leagues are turning online to engage fans in real time as they look to make them feel closer to sport, even when they can't be there in person.

The idea of fan involvement beyond cheers and waves may be new to traditional sports, but it's a technique that has been honed and cultivated for over a decade in esports.

Broadcasters are innately aware of their online audience, legions of fans are accustomed to chatting in real-time, and it's all happening on a platform where the same people calling the action can see what those fans are saying. Involving the crowd in the action has become a critical part of the esports experience, and now traditional leagues are trying to mimic the experience for a new generation of consumers.

Jeff Eisenband began his career in traditional sports broadcasting, now he's working with the NBA as a commentator for the NBA 2K League. He's worked with crowds live and online, seeing the differences in both sides of broadcasting. He believes there's going to be a greater shift into esports-style announcing in the future.

"Twitch is very Gen Z-centric," Eisenband says, "I think that one thing you learn in media is that people react very highly to feeling like their voice is heard." When Eisenband is calling a game in the 2K League he keeps an eye on Twitch chat during the event, because much is added to the experience by involving fans. "If there's something interesting, or a fan made a good point, then I'm going to say something to make those fans feel like they're being heard, that they're being seen by the broadcasters."

That level of engagement hasn't existed before, and for younger generations the feedback loop of feeling like they're part of the broadcast is critical. It's one of the reasons why, at a time where traditional TV viewership is in decline, Twitch continues to thrive. As of July, the platform boasted 55 million active monthly viewers, as more and more people get their entertainment from individual content creators and online broadcasts rather than traditional media.

"You used to have two traditional broadcasters with a sideline reporter," Eisenband says, "They had no way to follow what the pulse of fans were talking about."

He believes the proliferation of Twitch will, "Keep traditional broadcasters on their toes," forcing them to adapt to the new medium. Tearing down the wall between broadcast and viewer may be scary, but it's also critical to how sports are received moving forward.

With this comes a necessary evolution, should current broadcasters want to excel in the new landscape.

"[They] have to get snappier, and we're seeing — whether it's the NBA with specific 'follow LeBron James' broadcasts or anything like that, but we're going to see microtargeted programming in traditional sports."

This "microtargeting" may sound like a buzzword, but it's really just a way to get fans the content they want, in the way they want. College Football has embraced this with its playoff format, offering fans a variety of different broadcasters to choose the announce team they want. In a lot of ways, it's a throwback to days of silencing the TV and simulcasting announcing over the radio, with fans choosing to listen to their local announcers over national voices.

It makes the product feel more personal, which in turn is more engaging — and that includes leaning on Twitter to make everything more fun.

The first step in making the transition needs to be having networks embrace the shifting nature of modern broadcasting, and train its talent in it. This doesn't need to be a case of getting rid of the old guard, but rather better educating them on how to carry a crowd in new ways. Eisenband says that one of the major differences in dealing with an online game without a live crowd is adapting to not having thousands of people as a crutch.

The next move is on traditional sports to adapt. In the end, the forced adaptation caused by the Covid pandemic could be what saves traditional sports broadcasting. It's better to evolve early and find new audiences than wait too long and try to find revenue when audiences have left. This isn't a moment of peril, but an opportunity for salvation — assuming broadcasters are smart enough to see it.

LOCAL NEWS

Man, woman shot and killed at Fort Pierce apartment complex – Police searching for shooter



BY: JEANNETTE BAECHLE



Police are looking for the person who shot and killed a man and woman at a Fort Pierce apartment complex overnight.

Spokesman Mike Jachles said officers were called to the Madison Cay Apartment Homes shortly before 1 a.m. Wednesday for a reported shooting.

When they arrived, they found a man and woman who appeared to have been shot near the complex's parking lot.

The couple was transported by the St. Lucie County Fire District to Lawnwood Regional Medical Center, where they died from their injuries.

The female victim was identified as Emily Marie Gordon, 25, of Fort Pierce. Police have not released the name of the 26-year-old man who was killed in the shooting.

Police said the shooter is described as a black man with a large build, about 5 feet 6 inches tall, possibly with hair twists. He was last seen wearing a black hooded sweatshirt and orange shorts.

Anyone with information in the case should call Detective Jasmin Mojica at 772-302-4807.

Tips can also be reported anonymously to Treasure Coast Crime Stoppers at 800-273-TIPS (8477) or online at TCWatch.org.

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