



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GUN VIOLENCE IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Guns and Violence Against Women in the Black Community

Black women comprise 14% of the U.S. population and 31% of domestic violence fatalities and are statistically nearly 3x more likely than white women to be killed by an intimate partner (Violence Policy Center, 2022).

Black women are twice as likely to be shot and killed by an intimate partner in comparison to white women (Petrosky et al., 2017).

According to the FBI, Black women between the ages of 18 and 34 are at the greatest risk and are 3x more likely to be shot and killed by an intimate partner than white women in the same age group (Everytown for Gun Safety, 2019).

Gun violence has been deemed a social determinant of mental health that warrants increased consideration and attention (Smith et al., 2020).

Gun violence occurs in 61% of domestic violence homicides, however firearms are used in 72% of domestic violence homicides in the Black community (Violence Policy Center, 2022).

Children Exposed to Trauma and Gun Violence

The impact of intimate partner gun violence is especially damaging to children, causing severe PTSD, behavioral problems, suicidal thoughts, and poor school performance (Everytown for Gun Safety, 2019).

Firearm homicides of younger children often occurred in multi-victim events and involved intimate partner or family conflict, with Black kids 10x more likely than white kids to die from gun violence (Fowler, 2017).

Necessity of Culturally Specific Strategies

Black and Latinx communities are 24% more likely to be exposed to gun violence, subsequently suffering from higher rates of psychological distress, depression, suicidal ideation, and psychosis due to homicide in the community (Smith et al., 2020).

The development of culturally-informed strategies aimed specifically at diverse communities of color is required to effectively address interpersonal violence and homicide (Bent-Goodley, 2021; Waller & Bent-Goodley, 2022).

“Homicides occur in women of all ages and among all races/ethnicities,

but young, racial/ethnic minority women are disproportionately affected. Addressing violence will require an integrated response that considers the influence of larger community and societal factors that make violence more likely to occur.” (Petrosky et al., 2017).

The Impact of COVID-19 on Firearm Ownership

Firearm ownership and access is inextricably linked to increased rates of intimate partner homicide and is considered to be the greatest risk factor of this type of violence (Stansfield & Semenza, 2019; Spencer & Stith, 2018).

During the COVID-19 global health pandemic, millions of Americans purchased firearms. According to research on the number of background checks, it is estimated that people purchased 22 million guns in 2020 which is a 64% increase over 2019 (Everytown Research & Policy, 2022b).

According to the FBI, background checks for gun purchases set a new record of 39.69 million in 2020. Of those who purchased firearms in the first half of 2020, Black men and women increased their rate of purchase by 58.2%, the highest rate of increase for any demographic (Smith, 2021).



“This significant increase in purchase and possession of firearms by Black people makes it imperative for advocates and attorneys to have a confidential discussion about the presence and use of firearms in order to effectively strategize and safety plan with survivors of IPV” (Ujima Inc.).

Studies show that women living in households with a firearm are at greater risk of homicide. There is no research to support the idea that women’s gun ownership increases their safety, regardless of whether they are IPV victims (Everytown Research & Policy, 2022a).

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