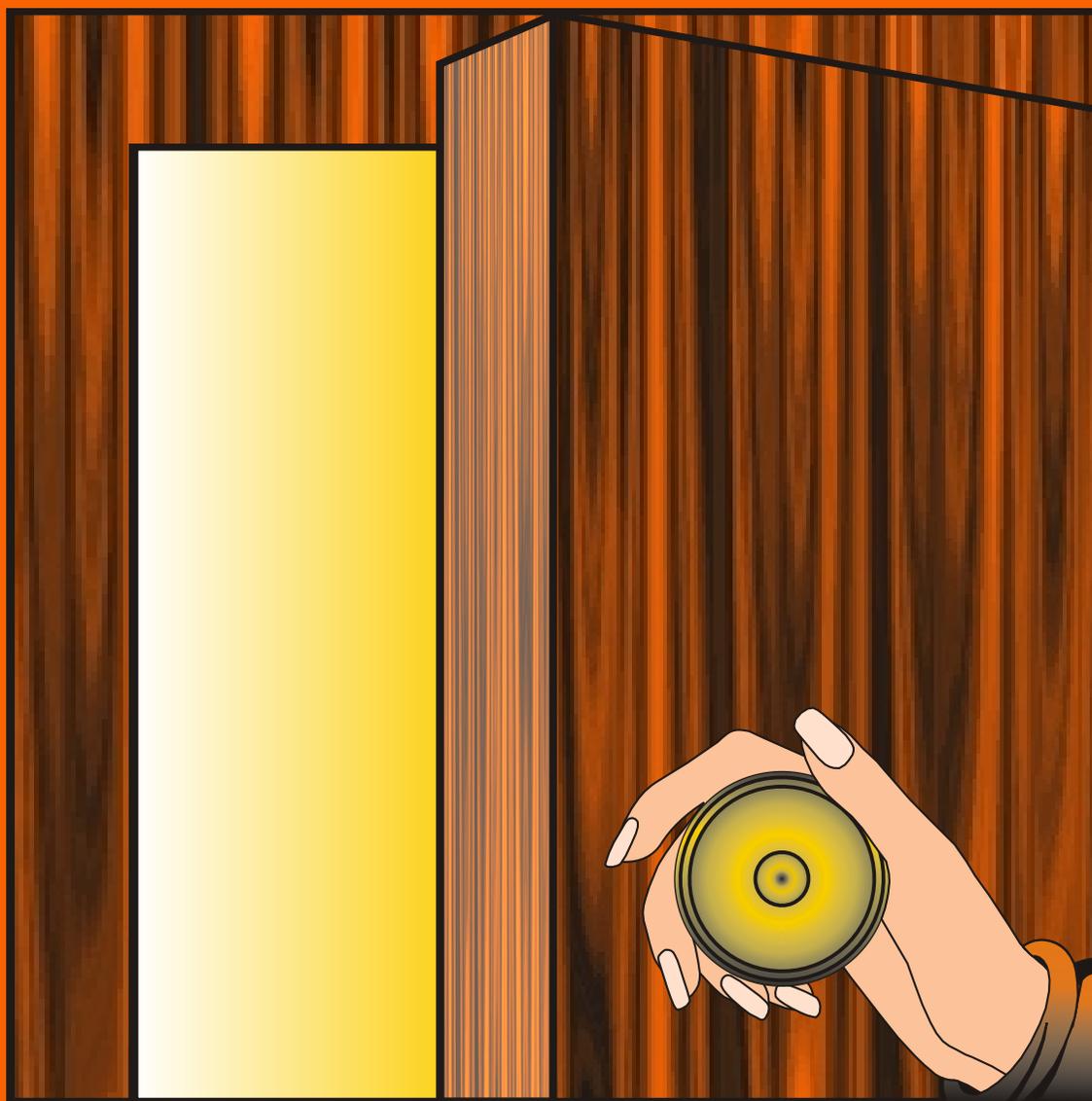


Preventing Domestic Homicide of Women

An Intervention Guide



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Centre
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interdisciplinaire
sur la violence familiale
et la violence faite aux femmes

Fédération de ressources d'hébergement
pour femmes violentées
et en difficulté du Québec



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***Preventing
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Christine Drouin

Julie Drolet

***Gilles Rondeau
Myriam Dubé
Jocelyn Lindsay
Serge Brochu
Isabelle Marchand***

***Odile Boisclair
Carolyn Bureau
Martine Gélinas
Elizabeth Harper
Lucie Hénault
Patricia Lazcano
Sofie Therrien***

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thinking further. We believe this resulted in the development of interventions that are both specific and effective in cases of domestic violence with a high lethal risk.

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Introduction

The purpose of *Preventing Domestic Homicide of Women: An Intervention Guide* is to provide workers in community settings with improved assessment and intervention skills in order to prevent intimate partner homicides. This guide was developed as a follow-up to a CRI-VIFF¹ research project conducted by Rondeau, Lindsay, Lemire, Brochu and Brodeur (2002). The study examined how various types of intervention workers managed domestic violence cases with a high homicide risk. It explored workers' intervention strategies for the purpose of developing improved approaches to prevention. The study's findings were shared with shelters throughout Québec². Shelter workers' feedback stressed the need for resources to train workers in the area of domestic homicide prevention and to raise their awareness about the problem. Also needed were resources that workers could use to raise the awareness of women seeking help in high-risk cases.

To respond to these resource needs, we initiated an action-oriented follow-up to the research project in partnership with a provincial association of women's shelters *Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec*. Together we developed this intervention guide to provide workers with the strategies they need to prevent the domestic homicide of women. Other resources created for workers include a brochure they can give women living in such high-risk situations, entitled *Are You Afraid of Your Partner? How to Identify a High-Risk Situation*.

Intervention in cases of intimate partner violence where a woman's life is in danger is an emotionally intense experience for both the worker and the woman receiving help. Both parties experience anxiety, stress, and fear, particularly since there is usually only one opportunity to intervene and mistakes can have serious consequences. Workers often need to act quickly in these highly urgent cases,

¹ CRI-VIFF is an interdisciplinary research center on family violence and violence against women, with locations in Montréal and Québec City.

² The shelters were all members of the *Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec*, a provincial association of women's shelters.

without always having the information they need to properly assess the situation and choose the best intervention.

This guide was specifically designed for the use of shelter workers. The information contained in the guide was drawn from both the domestic homicide literature and the experiences reported by various types of intervention workers in the earlier research project. The intent of this guide is to help workers identify a course of action in cases with a high homicide risk. Needless to say, a worker will still have to decide if the interventions suggested by the guide are appropriate for the situation at hand.

This guide consists of two major sections. The first presents a profile of domestic homicide, particularly some of the associated factors and explanations of the problem. The second section addresses intervention. It identifies the most appropriate interventions for emergencies and provides tools to facilitate their use. This section also contains an inventory of intervention strategies used by other professionals with whom shelter workers often collaborate in high homicide risk cases. Detachable intervention tools were placed at end of the guide for quick reference.

***A Profile of
Domestic Homicide***

Domestic homicide is part of the larger problem of domestic violence. The literature contains several definitions of domestic violence (or intimate partner violence), including one developed by the *Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la violence familiale et la violence faite aux femmes* (CRI-VIFF). This definition provides the conceptual framework for CRI-VIFF's activities and has been used to define domestic violence for this project. Domestic violence is

an abusive exercise of power, by which someone in a position of strength tries to control another person by using various means to keep that person in an inferior position, or to force the person to adopt behaviours that conform to the individual's own wishes (CRI-VIFF, 1995).

Domestic violence can entail a variety of behaviours, including an attitude of contempt, sarcasm, denigration, blame, and insults. Power can also be exercised through the use of threats, sexual violence, and physical brutality. While domestic violence is commonly understood in terms of a cycle of violence in which there is an escalation of violence, potentially deadly violence can sometimes develop without any intermediate stages.

Statistics

Intimate partner violence is difficult to quantify. While there are several sources providing information on the frequency, magnitude, and incidence of domestic violence, these statistics cannot be easily compared and are sometimes even contradictory. This kind of data must therefore be used with caution. The domestic violence statistics in this guide were taken from annual police reports and national surveys on homicide and victimization.

Domestic violence remains a major problem according to police statistics compiled by the Québec Department of Public Security. In 2001, 16,525 persons reported incidents of intimate partner violence, with women as victims in 85% of the cases.³ However, the actual number of persons experiencing domestic violence is probably much higher, since it is believed that only 27% of victims report this kind of offence.⁴ Québec's 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization estimated that 8% of the population of Canadian women experienced intimate partner violence that year.⁵

In addition to data about the magnitude of the problem, some studies asked individuals about their perceptions and fears regarding domestic homicide. For example, the recent Québec Health and Social Survey conducted in 1998 showed that almost 14% of domestic violence victims, or 17,000 women in intimate relationships, believed that their lives had at some point been in danger during the previous year.⁶

In terms of actual intimate partner homicides, 2,072 Canadian women died between 1974 and 2001 at the hands of their partners (husband/close friend/-lover/ex), for an average of 80 women per year.⁷ The majority of domestic homicides (77%) were committed by men against their female partners or ex-partners.⁸ In

³ Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec, 2003.

⁴ Pottie Bunge and Johnson, 2001.

⁵ Statistique Canada, 2000.

⁶ Riou, Rinfret-Raynor and Cantin, 2003.

⁷ Johnson and Au Coin, 2003.

⁸ Johnson and Au Coin, 2003.

Québec, 446 women were killed during this period (1974-2001), approximately 17 women each year.⁹ If we include attempted murders, this figure more than triples or quadruples (depending on the year).¹⁰

Because of the extent of this problem, we need to do everything possible to prevent these deadly acts. It is absolutely crucial that we intervene in cases of intimate partner violence where there is a high risk of homicide. This becomes even more important when we realize that in 59% of the domestic homicides of Québec women between 1991 and 2001, police had been aware of a prior history of domestic violence.¹¹

⁹ Les ministres responsables de la Condition féminine à l'échelle fédérale, provinciale et territoriale, 2002.

¹⁰ Ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec, 2002.

¹¹ Johnson and Au Coin, 2003.

Associated Factors

Our initial research discovered that “the competence of workers in cases with a high homicide risk is partly based on their levels of knowledge about violence and the risk factors associated with homicide”¹². This section of the guide thus summarizes our current knowledge about the causes as well as the factors associated with a higher risk of homicide. Since research on intimate partner homicide is a relatively new field, its primary focus has been on prevalence and risk factors. The amount of research evidence for the risk factors described below varies: for some risk factors, their link to intimate partner homicide has been demonstrated by several studies, whereas for others, this relationship has been documented by only a few studies. Furthermore, most of the research only used data from successful homicides. Very few studies included high-risk cases with outcomes other than murder. The term often used by experts for this kind of murder is “uxoricide”.

Socio-Demographic Factors

Age

Some women have a higher risk of becoming domestic homicide victims, based on certain socio-demographic indicators. In particular, research has identified age as a risk factor,¹³ with younger women at higher risk for becoming domestic homicide victims than older women. Between the years 1974 to 2000, the murder rates in Canada¹⁴ for women by age group were:

- under 25 years old: 21.2 per million couples;
- ages 25-34: 12 per million couples;
- 35-54 year-olds: 7 per million couples;
- ages 55 and over: 4 per million couples.

¹² Rondeau, Brodeur, Nadeau, Lindsay, Lemire and Brochu, 2002, p. 35.

¹³ Wilson, Johnson and Daly, 1995.

¹⁴ Statistique Canada, 2002.

There was a clear decrease in risk with increasing age. A U.S. study suggested that the higher homicide risk among young women reflected the proportionately higher overall rates of violence among young men.¹⁵

Factors Associated with the Relationship

Age differences between partners

The age differences between intimate partners can also indicate a higher lethal risk, specifically when younger women are in a relationship with an older man.¹⁶ One study found a higher risk of homicide for women who were younger than their partners by ten years or more.¹⁷

Types of intimate relationship

Certain kinds of relationships have been associated with a greater risk of domestic homicide for women. In particular, the risk of homicide is eight times higher among common-law couples than among married couples.¹⁸

A Canadian study found that the type of relationship was a key factor in understanding the context of intimate partner homicides.¹⁹ Males who committed homicides while in common-law unions or in dating relationships were younger, more likely to be unemployed, more likely to have a criminal record, and less likely to have children, compared with married men. There was also a higher probability that men in dating relationships had taken alcohol or drugs just prior to the homicide, were motivated by jealousy, or had sexually assaulted their intimate partners. Furthermore, men in dating relationships were less likely to commit suicide than married men.

When we combine the factors of age and relationship type, the homicide risk changes. The lethal risk for women in common-law unions *increased* with age in one study, but only up to a certain age level.²⁰ The risk of uxoricide for married

¹⁵ Shackelford, Buss and Peters, 2000.

¹⁶ Wilson and Daly, 1996.

¹⁷ Regoeczi, 2001.

¹⁸ Goetting, 1989; Wilson and Daly, 1993, 1996.

¹⁹ Dawson and Gartner, 1998.

²⁰ Wilson, Johnson and Daly, 1995.

women *decreased* with age, according to other studies. However, some U.S. studies found that the average age of female homicide victims varied according to marital status. Women killed by their husbands were most often in the 25-34 age group, whereas those killed by their common-law partners were in the 35-44 age group. By comparison, the average age of women murdered by an acquaintance or a stranger was between 15 and 24 years.²¹

Separation

Research has generally confirmed that the homicide risk is highest immediately before or after a relationship break-up.²² One 1986 study, for example, showed that 45% of women who were killed had left their intimate partners or were in the process of separation.²³

More specifically, homicides seem to most often occur during the year following a separation.²⁴ According to a 1993 Canadian study, half the women murdered by their ex-partners were killed in the two months after the couple separated.²⁵ U.S. studies have also found that in 75% of the cases of domestic homicide, the women left or tried to leave their intimate partners during the year preceding the lethal act.²⁶

An impending separation also increases the risk of homicide.²⁷ Women who tried to leave or threatened to leave a violent relationship were at risk for being harassed or killed by their intimate partners.²⁸ Men frequently killed their partners after an escalation of violence that occurred when the women tried to end the relationship.²⁹

²¹ Pratt and Deosaransingh, 1997.

²² Rosenbaum, 1990; Wilson and Daly, 1993, 1996; Boisvert, 1996; Frigon, 1996; Gartner, Dawson and Crawford, 1998/99; Bourget, Gagné and Moamai, 2000; McFarlane, Campbell, Wilt, Sachs, Ulrick and Xu, 1999; Block, 2000; Drouin, 2001; Hotton, 2001; Johnson and Hotton, 2003.

²³ Wallace, 1986.

²⁴ Wallace, 1986; Stout, 1993.

²⁵ Wilson and Daly, 1993.

²⁶ Block, 2000.

²⁷ Wilson, Daly and Wright, 1993; Englander, 1997.

²⁸ Frigon, 1996; Pratt and Deosaransingh, 1997.

²⁹ Kellerman and Heron, 1999.

Behaviours of the Male Partner

Prior history of domestic violence

Research has identified a higher risk of homicide in relationships with a prior history of domestic violence.³⁰ For example, in Canada between the years 1993 and 2000, previous domestic violence had occurred in:

- 74% of the homicides committed by ex-husbands;
- 57% of the homicides committed by common-law partners, and
- 41% of the homicides committed by married men.³¹

Several studies have shown that physical violence in the relationship significantly increases the risk of death for women.³² For example, one study reported that 18 of the 28 women killed by their intimate partners (64%) were physically assaulted prior to being killed. In 17 of these 28 cases (61%), excessive force was used at the time of the homicide.³³ Another study reported that 67% of female murder victims and 71% of those who were the targets of attempted homicide had been subjected to physical violence during the year preceding the incident.³⁴ In such situations, the killing of an intimate partner was often seen by the perpetrator as the ultimate conclusion to that couple's story of domestic violence.³⁵ A history of incidents of sexual assault in a relationship is also an indicator of increased lethal risk.³⁶

Stalking, harassment, and threats

Harassment and stalking are a major risk factors for assault or homicide, due to the persistence men show when they exhibit these kinds of behaviours.³⁷ They can occur during the relationship or after separation. A U.S. study linking stalking to intimate partner homicide showed that in 76% of domestic murders and 85% of attempted murders, the woman was stalked at least once by their male partners

³⁰ Block and Christakos, 1995.

³¹ Les ministres responsables de la Condition féminine à l'échelle fédérale, provinciale et territoriale, 2002.

³² Campbell, 1992; Stout, 1993; Block and Christakos, 1995; McFarlane et al., 1999; Drouin, 2001; Aldrige and Browne, 2003.

³³ Campbell, 1992.

³⁴ McFarlane et al., 1999.

³⁵ Pratt and Deosaransingh, 1997.

³⁶ Campbell and Soeken, 1999.

³⁷ Walker and Meloy, 1998.

during the year preceding the lethal act. In 2002, another U.S. study showed that 69% of female victims of attempted murder had reported harassment around the time of the attempt. These women were stalked or spied upon, or received unwanted phone calls. Similarly, their residences or belongings were vandalized and their ex-partners tried to use all possible avenues to communicate with them.³⁸

The same study reported that when harassment is accompanied by threats, the risk of turning a threat into an assault increased. The most alarming threats were: threats towards the children, threats made with a weapon (knife or other), death threats, verbal threats made to the woman or people close to her, and written messages sent to her or placed in her environment (workplace, car, home).³⁹

Suicide risk for male partners

The risk of homicide increases when a man threatens and/or attempts suicide. Therefore, if a man is believed to be at high risk of suicide, it is important to keep a close watch on the woman and her children.⁴⁰

Research has identified that separation of the couple is the most common factor associated with homicide-suicide.⁴¹ In one study, 75% of the homicide-suicides were committed during or after a separation.⁴² Other studies have shown that homicide-suicides most often occur when the aggressor is male and the act is committed with a firearm.⁴³ The probability of homicide-suicide increases further if the man is undergoing employment problems or has lost his job.⁴⁴

³⁸ McFarlane, Campbell and Watson, 2002.

³⁹ Meloy, 1996; McFarlane, Campbell and Wilt, 1999; McFarlane, Campbell and Watson, 2002; Pottie Bunge, 2002.

⁴⁰ Block and Christakos, 1995; Bourget et al., 2000.

⁴¹ Rosenbaum, 1990; Marzuk, Tardif and Hirsch, 1992.

⁴² Rosenbaum, 1990.

⁴³ Block and Christakos, 1995; Pratt and Doesaransingh, 1997; Dubé, 1998; Marleau, Poulin, Webanck, Roy and Laporte, 1999; Bourget et al., 2000.

⁴⁴ Starzomski and Nussbaum, 2000.

Data from the Québec Coroner's office show that in almost all cases where men killed their children and then committed suicide, they also murdered their intimate partners. This type of crime is called *familicide*.⁴⁵

Weapons

The availability of a firearm in a violent relationship considerably increases the homicide risk.⁴⁶ A study conducted in the U.S., with its widespread use of firearms, showed that 46% of the homicides and 42% of the suicides committed at home were carried out with a firearm. Of this number, 55% of the victims were killed by their male partners, generally during an incident of domestic violence (e.g., argument or physical violence).⁴⁷ Another study examined 142 cases of non-fatal domestic/family violence and 23 cases of domestic homicide. In situations where the aggressor used a firearm, the situation was 3 times more likely to end in homicide than if the instrument was a pointed weapon or a blunt object, and 23 times more likely to end in homicide than events involving other types of weapon or physical force.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Dubé, Hodgins, Léveillé and Marleau (2004).

⁴⁶ Saltzman, Mercy, O'Carroll, Rosenberg and Rhodes, 1992; Kellermann and Heron, 1999.

⁴⁷ Bailey, Kellermann, Somes, Banton, Rivara and Rushforth, 1997.

⁴⁸ Saltzman, Mercy, O'Carroll, Rosenberg and Rhodes, 1992.

Why Do Men Kill Their Female Partners?

In addition to identifying the risk factors for domestic homicide, researchers have also tried to understand what motivates men to kill their intimate partners. Some researchers have studied the personality traits of homicidal male partners in their search for explanatory factors.

Motives

Possessiveness and jealousy

Various motives can lead men to use deadly force against their intimate partners. Two Canadian researchers have proposed male sexual proprietariness as an explanation for domestic homicide. For some men, this proprietariness is closely linked to the notion that they can exercise property rights over their intimate partners. This may result in a “tendency to control to prevent possible infringement or usurpation of this right”⁴⁹ This possessiveness can result in jealousy, which sometimes can lead to homicide. One Montréal study used this perspective to analyze a sample of intimate partner homicides. In this study, 38 of the 66 cases of murders of women were classified under the heading of “ownership”.⁵⁰

Possessiveness has been often linked with jealousy. Gartner et al. reported that 15% of the homicides studied were motivated by men’s suspicions about their female partner’s infidelity.⁵¹ Other researchers have also corroborated the link between jealousy or suspicions of infidelity and domestic homicide.⁵² For example, one study analyzed 67 coroners’ cases of intimate partner homicide.⁵³ More than half the men showed signs of obsessive possessiveness and morbid jealousy. Sometimes their jealousy was expressed explosively whereas in other cases it built up gradually. These men viewed their partner’s withdrawal from them as a sign of betrayal (or cheating), which aggravated their violence.

⁴⁹ Wilson et Daly, 1996.

⁵⁰ Boisvert, 1996.

⁵¹ Gartner et al., 1998/99.

⁵² Rosenbaum, 1990; Weir, 1992; Eastal, 1994; Regoeczi, 2001; Aldrige and Browne, 2003.

⁵³ Websdale, 1999.

Some cases of homicide-suicide have also been explained as motivated by jealousy. A number of researchers have argued that men who commit homicide-suicides often see their intimate partners as being a part of themselves. Certain authors have therefore suggested the notion of accompanied suicide. For some men, domestic homicide may thus be an integral part of their act of suicide.⁵⁴ Other researchers believe that homicide-suicide may be considered as the ultimate act of aggression.⁵⁵

Abandonment

As mentioned earlier, the separation is a very important factor in cases of intimate partner homicide.⁵⁶ Gartner et al. reported that a recent or imminent separation was the main motive for domestic homicides in 45% of the cases studied.⁵⁷ Homicide can be motivated by a man's fear of being abandoned or his failure to accept a separation. This can occur for anticipated rejections as well as actual rejections; either situation can result in homicide. By contrast, the homicide risk is very low when it is the man who decides to end the relationship. The domestic homicide of women may thus be motivated by the male partner's rage and despair, resulting from a separation initiated by his female partner. Dutton proposed that this rage, which is at the root of the motive to kill a female partner, is related to experiences of abandonment originating in the man's earliest childhood attachments and object relations.⁵⁸

Control

Men's desire to control their female partners is another motive reported in the domestic homicide literature.⁵⁹ Separation can thus be associated with a man's loss of control over his partner. In fact, studies have shown that violence and

⁵⁴ Baumeister, 1990; Kottler, 2000.

⁵⁵ Dutton and Yamini, 1995.

⁵⁶ Rosenbaum, 1990; Wilson and Daly, 1993, 1996; Boisvert, 1996; Frigon, 1996; Gartner et al., 1998/99; Bourget et al., 2000; McFarlane et al., 1999; Block, 2000; Johnson and Hotton, 2003.

⁵⁷ Gartner et al., 1998/99.

⁵⁸ Dutton, 1995.

⁵⁹ Boisvert, 1996; Frigon, 1996; Peterson, 1999; Johnson and Hotton, 2003.

threats often do not stop after a relationship break-up. On the contrary, women are often beaten, threatened, stalked, and killed by their ex-partners. These men are extremely jealous and become desperate about the idea of not being able to maintain control over their female partners. They absolutely refuse to let them leave.⁶⁰ Wilson et al. explained that men use violence and threats as a means of establishing and maintaining control over their intimate partners, even to the point of killing them.⁶¹

While control can be a motive for intimate partner homicides, Johnson and Hotton have also used it to explain homicide-suicides. They believe that the high rate of domestic homicide-suicide represents an extreme attempt by suicidal men to control their partners' contacts with others, even after their own death. This shows how far men are willing to go to keep women under their control.⁶²

Profile of Homicidal Male Partners

Kerry's model

Gregory Kerry's binary model can help us to understand domestic homicide or the murder of women (femicide).⁶³ This model addresses the relationship between three elements: domestic homicide risk factors, the aggressor's psychological profile, and the aggressor's social context. As a binary model, it focuses on two types of aggressors, whom Kerry called "alpha" and "beta" murderers.

Men in the first group (alpha) had several characteristics in common, including low levels of self-control and frequent changes of intimate partners. Their social networks consisted of men who reinforced traditional stereotypes about social roles and control. Men in the alpha group often exhibited a general abuse of power over women.

⁶⁰ McFarlane et al., 1999; Block, 2000; Boisvert, 1996; Frigon, 1996.

⁶¹ Wilson, Johnson and Daly, 1995.

⁶² Johnson and Hotton, 2003.

⁶³ Kerry, 2001.

Men in the second group (beta) were characterized by high levels of personal insecurity and low self-esteem and a strong need for self-control. They often had a past history of suicide attempts. Their social networks were underdeveloped and they had little contact with men who expressed abusive attitudes towards women. Often, their female partner was the sole person with whom these men had intimate relationships. In most cases, the homicides had been planned and were motivated by feelings of depression, despair and abandonment. After murdering their female partners, these men often attempted to commit suicide. Men in the beta group felt remorse and guilt after they had committed their acts.

Dutton's typology

Dutton's typology refers to three types of men who behave violently towards their intimate partners: those whose behaviours are characterized by impulsivity, those who act for instrumental reasons, and those with overcontrolled emotions. He proposed that intimate partner homicides are most often perpetrated by the subgroup of overcontrolled men.⁶⁴

Personalities of homicidal male partners

A Canadian study on 90 men imprisoned for domestic homicide revealed that certain forms of personality disorders were associated with specific homicide contexts.⁶⁵ The study showed that all the men with "overcontrolled" dependent type personality disorders had committed their homicides around the time of the couple's separation. The lethal act was often perpetrated after a failed reconciliation attempt. These men were also more likely to commit suicide after killing their intimate partners. However, men with antisocial personality disorders were motivated by instrumental reasons (e.g., financial gain from insurance payouts). Their crimes were thus planned and they were less likely to commit suicide after killing their partners. In this sample, there were fewer men with antisocial personality disorders than men with dependent-controlling type disorders.

⁶⁴ Dutton and Kerry, 1999.

⁶⁵ Dutton and Kerry, 1999.

Mercy killings

Recent studies in 2001 and 2002 identified a new category of domestic homicide: mercy killings.⁶⁶ These studies showed that the homicide-suicide risk rose among older men who were caregivers of sick wives. Caregiving was associated with an increased risk for mental health problems like depression and thus also heightens the risk of homicide-suicide. For example, a study by Cohen, Llorente and Eisdorfer⁶⁷ examined 171 cases of homicide-suicide. In the group of male perpetrators 55 years and over (representing 34% of the sample), 12% of the homicides were committed by men providing care to their partners. Malphurs and Cohen also corroborated this theory in their study of 673 homicide-suicides.⁶⁸ Of the 168 homicide-suicides committed by men over 55 years old, 31.6% had been committed by men who were caregivers to their intimate partners.

⁶⁶ Malphurs, Eisdorfer and Cohen, 2001; Malphurs and Cohen, 2002.

⁶⁷ Cohen, Llorente and Eisdorfer, 1998.

⁶⁸ Malphurs and Cohen, 2002.

Intervention

This part of the guide provides a step-by-step approach to intervention with women whose lives are in danger. The following themes are addressed: key principles of intervention, intervention tools, support for workers, and information about the legal process.

We begin with an overview of the **key principles of intervention**. The first of these, the establishment of a trust relationship, is at the heart of the entire helping process. This section also includes legal information to help workers handling high homicide risk cases deal with some of the ethical issues and make appropriate decisions in accordance with the law.

The next section contains **assessment and intervention tools**. Cases with a high homicide risk are very urgent and have a short time frame for action. Our proposed intervention strategies take this into account. The *Imminence of Danger Grid* provides indicators that can help workers to identify the time frame for action. Workers can then select the appropriate tools for assessment (*Evaluation of Danger Indicators* and *Danger Assessment Scale*) and intervention (*Typology of Domestic Violence Cases with a High Lethal Risk* and *Providing Emotional Support for Actions*).

Another section covers **support for workers**. Workers need additional support when taking action in dangerous situations. They also need support if one of the women they have been helping gets killed.

The final section describes the key stages of the **judicial process** and provides a summary diagram. This information can help workers to support women who have to testify in court.

***Key Principles of
Intervention***

Key Principles of Intervention

Building a Trust Relationship

Trained and experienced workers already know that establishing a trust relationship is the starting point of any intervention. However, women experiencing domestic violence have had their trust betrayed over and over again. In order to create alliances with such women, workers need to remain attentive to trust issues throughout the intervention process. Women will only share the details of their situations and their feelings when they feel they have a close bond with their worker and can trust her. This personal connection can be an important element of a woman's survival and protection strategies, because she is then more likely to turn to the worker when in danger.

How to establish a trust relationship

- Create an environment conducive to building trust;
- Reassure the woman about the security of the premises;
- Establish the most egalitarian relationship possible;
- Affirm the woman's capacity to act on her own behalf, explaining that your role is to support her in her course of action;
- Believe in the woman and validate her potential;
- Don't judge the woman;
- Identify what actions can be taken as well as the limits of interventions;
- Validate her difficulties, ambivalence and feelings.

Sometimes women are in an emotional state that makes it difficult for them to talk about episodes of domestic violence. Experiences of violence can also cause partial amnesia or confusion in women around the time of the incidents. Creating an

environment conducive to trust can help to counteract a woman's reluctance or inability to open up. The atmosphere the worker establishes throughout the intervention process is thus as important as the instrument(s) that she uses. If a woman seems to be highly anxious, the worker can suggest doing some relaxation exercises or taking a break to help create the optimal conditions for intervention. Some women may have difficulties remembering the timing of events. The worker can sometimes help by suggesting that they talk about specific events (Christmas, her most recent vacation, her birthday, etc.). If a woman doesn't want to discuss these events, the worker should find out why. If she doesn't know, the worker can explore with her some possible reasons for this reluctance to talk about her experiences in order to help her to overcome this.

Ethical Issues

The urgency and seriousness of the situation will determine the worker's choice of intervention. We will first address some of the ethical issues typically encountered in cases with a high homicide risk. Then we will present intervention tools specifically adapted for such situations.

In this section, we will discuss a number of key ethical principles and provide some important information. It was not feasible for this guide to respond to every worker's information needs, nor could we possibly cover the entire range of problems that might arise during such cases. Furthermore, this information can never be a substitute for the worker's own experience and training, intervention skills, and perceptions and intuitions. The primary goal of this section is thus to respond to some of the questions that may arise for workers during their interventions. We will begin by presenting certain ethical and legal principles that can help workers identify the interventions needed in emergency situations or when someone's life has been threatened. Following that, we will present some assessment and intervention tools.

We strongly suggest discussing these ethical issues in team meetings, in order to develop common positions regarding intervention in cases with a high homicide risk.

Providing help to a person in danger

The need to take any and all necessary measures to protect the life of a person in danger is the key principle of action underlying this guide. At the same time, respecting a woman's right for autonomy and self-determination is central in working with any victim of violence. However, there are certain situations in which a worker may need to directly intervene with a woman's right to make her own decisions, particularly if her decision-making capacity is seriously impaired. Sometimes the woman may be incapable of taking action on her own behalf. Her ambivalence and confusion might be greater than her ability to perceive the danger she is in. In such cases, the worker must begin by assessing the woman's ability to

make her own decisions. Any interventions with the woman's right for self-determination have to be justified by the worker.

It should be noted that women who seek help from resources such as women's shelters, women's centres, crisis centres, or information and referral lines, can sometimes be in situations where they are unsure of the decisions or actions that are needed. Women may also fail to accurately perceive the danger of their situation because of their ambivalence towards their partners as well as their ambivalence about taking any action.

In Québec, several laws can be used to justify actions carried out on behalf of a woman in danger. In particular, **Article 2 of Québec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms**⁶⁹ states that "*Every human being whose life is in danger has a right to assistance,*" as well as **Québec's Bill 180,**

...modifying various legislative provisions pertaining to the communication of confidential information with the intent of ensuring the protection of persons, which allow confidential information to be communicated or protected by professional confidentiality in situations where there is an imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury to a person.⁷⁰

In situations with an imminent danger where a woman who has asked for help continues to have a lot of ambivalence about taking action, a worker may need to act on her behalf, even if this is against the woman's express wishes. In such situations, we can assume that the woman's initial request or call for help constituted an implicit consent that we provide her with such help. **It is important to know that according to Québec law, in a situation of serious and imminent danger, a worker no longer is required to obtain a person's consent in order to take action on their behalf or to share confidential information.** In fact, a worker is not only permitted to provide assistance, but is actually required to help someone in distress if there is a risk to that person, a third party, or the worker.

⁶⁹ Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec, 2002.

⁷⁰ Gazette officielle du Québec, 2002, p. 2039.

For example, a Montréal suicide crisis hotline⁷¹ requires their telephone workers to take action if their preliminary assessment reveals that a caller is at risk of imminently attempting suicide. In such cases, the worker will trace the call and forward it to the ambulance service, despite any objections by the caller. Other organizations such as Québec's provincial domestic violence hotline⁷² have a similar policy for their urgent calls. If the worker identifies a risk of imminent homicide or severe physical violence, this organization's guidelines require her to try her utmost to obtain consent to take action. However, if necessary the worker will nonetheless take action in such situations without the person's knowledge or consent.

A worker who takes action on behalf of someone whose life is in danger should do everything in her power to obtain that person's consent. However, the worker may need to act anyway in the absence of such consent, knowing that this action is legally supported:

Every person must come to the aid of anyone whose life is in peril, either personally or calling for aid, by giving him the necessary and immediate physical assistance, unless it involves danger to himself or a third person, or he has another valid reason.⁷³

In fact, "*a person who is present during an assault without intervening can, under certain circumstances, be ordered to pay punitive damages for suffering [the right to receive help].*"⁷⁴

Sharing confidential information

A number of events in Québec have led to some changes in certain laws. One of these events was a 1996 murder in the town of Baie-Comeau. A woman and her son were both killed by her ex-partner, who then took his own life. The man had clearly and repeatedly made his homicidal intentions known beforehand. To prevent such situations from recurring, Coroner Bérubé issued recommendations

⁷¹ *Suicide Action Montréal.*

⁷² *SOS Violence conjugale.*

⁷³ Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec, 2002, p.2.

⁷⁴ Brun et Brun, 2001, p. 697.

following the inquest and Bill 180 was a direct result of this event. According to Coroner Bérubé:

“In a situation of reasonable doubt as to whether a person’s security or life is in danger, the social, medical, or legal professional possessing this information, [should not hesitate] to breach professional confidentiality to contact other resources, in order to ensure the safety of the person in danger,” knowing that “the safety and protection of victimized women and children are the top priority in any intervention”.⁷⁵

Article 60.4 of Bill 180 on professional confidentiality now reads:

The professional may, in addition, communicate information that is protected by professional secrecy in order to prevent an act of violence, including a suicide, where he has reasonable cause to believe that there is an imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury to a person or an identifiable group of persons.⁷⁶

A worker is not obligated to divulge this information, but if she or he does, the information may only be revealed to the persons in danger, their representative(s), or others who are able to provide help.

Protection of children

In addition to concerns for the woman’s safety, the worker must ensure that the children are not in danger. Workers are legally obligated to report such situations under Québec’s *Youth Protection Act*. The aim of this law is to assure the protection of children who are being mistreated, such as in situations of physical abuse, neglect, psychological abuse, or sexual abuse, as well as juvenile offenders. This law requires that:

every professional who [...] has reasonable grounds to believe that the security or development of a child is or may be considered to be in danger [...] must bring the situation to the attention of the director [of Youth Protection] without delay.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Comité interministériel de coordination en matière de violence conjugale, familiale et sexuelle, 2002. p. 42.

⁷⁶ Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l’Immigration, 2003.

⁷⁷ Article 39 of the Youth Protection Act.

The law defines the following reasons for reporting situations that may constitute a threat to a child's security and development:

- The parents are deceased or do not assume responsibility for the care, education, or maintenance of the child;
- The child's mental or affective development is threatened by the lack of appropriate care or the isolation in which the child is maintained or by serious and continuous emotional rejection by the parents;
- The child's physical health is threatened by the lack of appropriate care;
- The child is deprived of the material conditions of life appropriate for the child's needs;
- The child is in the custody of a person whose behaviour or way of life creates a risk of moral or physical danger for the child;
- The child is forced to beg, to do work disproportionate to the child's capacity or to perform for the public in a manner that is unacceptable for the child's age;
- The child is the victim of sexual abuse or is subject to physical ill-treatment through violence or neglect;
- The child has serious behavioural disturbances and the parents fail to take the measures necessary to put an end to the situation.

In any such situations, it is obvious that the worker's best approach is to form an alliance with the mother and her children, in order to ensure their safety. Nonetheless, the worker must remember that the clear priority of this law is the protection and security of the children.⁷⁸

It is certainly not easy to carry out interventions with women at high lethal risk. We have included this ethical and legal information to help workers identify the most appropriate actions to be taken during such situations. However, this guide is in no way intended to replace a worker's personal responsibility for the decisions and judgments made in the course of her interventions.

⁷⁸ Direction de la protection de la jeunesse. Article of the Youth Protection Act, art. 38-38.1-39, Québec, last modified in 1994.

Intervention Tools

Imminence of Danger Grid

Cases with a high homicide risk are urgent and often have a very short time frame of time for action. A worker's choice of intervention strategies thus depends on the available time. The *Imminence of Danger Grid* contains indicators that can help workers to identify how much time is available for preventative action. This grid guides the worker to the assessment or intervention tools that can be used during this estimated time interval. For example, if the situation is one of imminent danger, the worker will take a different course of action than if more time is available.

The grid deals with three different levels of danger: imminent danger, short/medium term danger, and persistent danger. Each of these danger levels is associated with specific assessment and intervention tools in this guide. For example, a worker may use *Campbell's Danger Assessment Scale* in a case of persistent danger, but she will not have enough time to use this tool in a case where danger is imminent.

Imminence of Danger Grid

The first step is to assess the danger level, which determines the worker's choice of interventions.

Imminence of Danger		Indicators	Intervention Guidelines
Imminent Danger	Potentially severe assault is in progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Both the woman and the man are in the same location; ➤ Violence has started or is imminent; ➤ Presence of a weapon or severe physical violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rapid assessment of the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Injuries? ○ Possession of weapons? ○ Can she rapidly exit the home? ○ Can we call the police? ➤ The important thing is to offer help to the woman; ➤ Refer to pages 1 to 3 of the Typology for information on interventions.
	Post-incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An incident of severe violence has just occurred; ➤ Both the woman and the man are in the same location. 	
	Homicide scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The man has a specific plan to kill his female partner; ➤ The planned methods are available; ➤ He knows where to find his partner. 	
Short/Medium Term Danger	Homicide threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The man utters direct or indirect death threats or makes armed threats; ➤ History of severe physical violence; ➤ After a couple has separated, the man has an acute sense of having lost his female partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment of the situation with the help of the Evaluation of Danger Indicator; ➤ Make the woman aware of her danger through Campbell's Danger Assessment Scale; ➤ Develop a safety plan; ➤ Offer shelter; ➤ Refer to pages 4 and 5 of the Typology for information on interventions in cases of short/medium term danger;
	One-time risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The danger is related to a specific event. 	
Persistent Danger	Chronic danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The woman has left her male partner; ➤ The man makes obsessive attempts to find his partner; ➤ The man harasses and threatens his partner; ➤ The man has a criminal and judicial history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Refer to pages 6 and 7 of the Typology for information on interventions in cases of persistent danger.
	Continuous exposure to danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The woman is living with her dangerous partner; ➤ Death threats; ➤ History of severe physical violence; ➤ Presence of weapons in the house. 	

Evaluation of Danger Indicators

In cases with a high homicide risk, the worker's first step is to evaluate the danger level, since this will determine the choice of interventions. The assessment of danger looks for certain indicators that might be present in the situation and in the couple's relationship. Four categories of indicators emerged from worker interviews in the research phase of this project. These were indicators associated with: the situational context, the relational context, the male partner in the relationship, and the female partner.⁷⁹ Some of these indicators have been documented in the published literature and others were taken solely from the information reported by workers during the interviews.

Situational Context

The situational context may contain numerous indicators about the danger level. The elements most often mentioned in this category were the presence of a weapon, the physical proximity of the partners, and the onset of an episode of violence. If a worker receives a call in the midst of an episode of violence and hears sounds of severe physical violence or shouting, these are indicators of a heightened risk of danger. Another situational indicator is if a third party perceives there is danger, particularly if the third party is another professional. Similarly, if the woman's family or friends fear for her, or the couple's children show signs of terror, this can indicate a risk of homicide.

Relational Context

Indicators associated with the couple's relationship can also provide information about lethal risk. An important indicator is if the couple has recently separated or a separation is imminent. In particular, if the male partner has refused to accept the separation, there can be a very rapid escalation of violence and dangerosity. The homicide risk is also higher in cases where the couple has already separated and the woman has a new male partner. Another element in the danger assessment is if the relationship has a prior history of domestic violence. Other

⁷⁹ Drouin, 2001.

reliable indicators of increased homicide risk include: the severity of physical violence, the context of the couple's life together, and a rapid deterioration in the relationship.

Indicators Associated with the Male Partner

Several indicators associated with the male partner can signal that there may be a homicide risk for the woman. First, the man's own behaviours can indicate lethal risk, particularly if he utters death threats, makes ambiguous comments (indirect threats), makes armed threats, acts violently, fails to respect his release conditions, or harasses the woman or her loved ones. Another predictor of increased risk is the man's emotional state, or if he has mental health problems, substance abuse problems (alcohol and/or drugs), a criminal history and/or a history of violence, or belongs to a criminal group.

Indicators Associated with the Female Partner

Certain indicators associated with the woman might also reveal a tangible risk of domestic homicide. First, her state of health, particularly any injuries, can indicate that she is in danger. The assessment should also take into account the woman's own expressions of fear. **If a woman is in fear for her own life, this is sufficient reason to presume a lethal risk.** Further indicators of danger are if the woman is depressed, despairing, and/or expresses fatalism about the outcome of the situation. If she is ambivalent, this can also indicate a very high lethal risk. Her hesitation to leave the dangerous situation, to receive help, or to disclose the violence she is experiencing are further indicators that increase her risk of being killed. Similarly, if a woman returns to her male partner whom the worker considers to be dangerous, this is yet another factor that increases the homicide risk of homicide.

The following section of this guide is a list of indicators that can help a worker assess the level of danger. The information provided by these observational contexts and clues can lead the worker to presume that a woman's situation contains a high homicide risk. However, we must emphasize that **the level of**

danger is not directly proportional to the number of indicators found. In other words, a situation containing five indicators on the list below is not necessarily more dangerous than a situation with only one indicator checked off. **The worker should always base her assessment on all the aspects of the couple's situation taken together.**

Evaluation of Danger Indicators

This evaluation should consider all of the aspects of the couple's situation together.

Situational Context

- Weapon(s) nearby _____
- Partners are in physical proximity _____
- Worker hears shouting _____
- An episode of violence has just occurred:
 - Severe physical violence causing injuries _____
 - Illegal confinement _____
 - Armed sexual assault _____
- Physical layout of the premises
(no opportunity for the woman to escape) _____
- Situation is considered dangerous by other workers _____
- The woman's family and friends are afraid of her partner _____
- The children are terrified of the man _____
- Drugs and/or alcohol in the home _____

Relational Context

- Recent or imminent separation of the couple _____
- Male partner does not accept the separation _____
- Woman has a new male partner _____
- Prior history of domestic violence _____
- Severe past physical violence _____
- Rapid deterioration of the relationship _____
- Multiple separations of the couple _____
- Male partner's reactions during past separations _____
- Male partner continually promises to behave better _____
- The couple has moved several times in a short period _____

Indicators Associated with the Male Partner

- The man's behaviours:
 - Makes death threats (female partner and/or children) _____
 - Threatens to kidnap the children
or to kill them, leaving the female partner alive _____
 - Threatens to commit suicide _____
 - Clearly states that he wants to kill his female partner
and possibly commit suicide after _____
 - Makes threats with a weapon or a blunt object _____
 - Threatens the woman's family and friends _____
 - Clearly expresses a homicide scenario _____
 - Harassment (stalking, phone calls, letters, email) _____
 - Exercises dynamics of control with his partner _____
 - Commits violence against the children _____
 - Commits violence against other workers _____
 - Does not respect his release conditions _____
 - Attempts (at all costs) to find his partner _____
 - Acts aggressively towards or threatens to kill or injure a pet _____

- The man's emotional state:
 - Aggressivity _____
 - Impulsivity _____
 - Instability (rapid mood changes) _____
 - Desire for revenge _____
 - Depression _____
 - Suicidal thoughts _____
 - Feels humiliated by the accusations of violence _____
 - Psychological distress _____
 - Emotionally very cold and disconnected _____
 - Obsessed with finding his partner _____
 - Possessiveness and jealousy _____
 - Sudden and unexplained changes in moods and behaviours _____

- Mental health problems _____
- Substance abuse problems (alcohol/drugs) _____
- Criminal gang member _____
- History:
 - Criminal history _____
 - Dysfunctional family of origin (victim of abuse) _____

Indicators Associated with the Female Partner

- The woman's physical condition (injuries) _____
- Fears for her life _____
- Fears her partner to the point of having suicidal thoughts _____
- Emotional fragility _____
- Isolation (socially isolated) _____
- State of post-traumatic stress _____
- Ambivalence about:
 - receiving help _____
 - leaving the dangerous situation _____
 - disclosing details of the violence _____
- Denies or minimizes the danger, or sees it as part of her daily life _____
- Expresses fatalism about the outcome of the situation _____
- Has difficulty assessing if her children are in danger _____
- Decides to return to her dangerous partner _____

Danger Assessment Scale

Introduction to the Scale

The purpose of the *Evaluation of Danger Indicators* was to help workers to assess a woman's situation at the start of their intervention process; this next section is specifically designed to help women to self-evaluate their risk of becoming a homicide victim. The *Danger Assessment Scale* is a two-part questionnaire developed by Jacquelyn Campbell, a U.S. researcher.⁸⁰ The first part asks women to mark on a calendar every incident of violence committed against them during the past year, noting its duration and rating the severity of each incident. The second part consists of 15 questions about their male partner's behaviours.

The questionnaire is unable to predict the outcome of a situation. However, it can make a woman aware of the risk factors that have been identified by research and she can use these to get a more complete picture of her situation. This exercise may lead her to question her relationship with her partner and she may even decide to take action at some point.

The CRI-VIFF research team has translated Campbell's scale into French, so that workers can also use it in their practice with Francophone women with a homicide risk. Workers can use this tool to raise women's awareness in cases where it is difficult to see the lethal risk or when women minimize or fail to recognize their danger.

Utilization of the Scale

To facilitate the introduction of the assessment tool, the worker should suggest that she and the woman jointly draw up a more specific picture of her domestic violence situation. The point of this exercise is to help a woman see her danger of homicide more clearly and to make the best decisions to ensure her own safety and that of her children. This can be accomplished by asking the questions in **section B** of Campbell's instrument. The higher the number of positive responses, the more

⁸⁰ Campbell, 1986; Stuart and Campbell, 1989; Campbell, 1995.

the worker should make the woman aware of the urgency of her situation. Furthermore, by discussing each of the elements present in the woman's relationship, the worker is building an argument for the possibility of a fatal act being committed.

Where appropriate, the worker and the woman should mark on a calendar the episodes of domestic violence experienced during the past year. They should also note the intensity of each episode by using Campbell's scale (**section A** of the Danger Assessment Scale). If more than one episode of violence occurred on the same day, these should be indicated separately on the calendar.

Depending on the situation, the worker can use Campbell's instrument during her first session with the woman or during subsequent meetings.

In cases where a woman is living with her partner or decides to return to him after she has sought emergency shelter, it is appropriate to continue using the calendar with her. However, for safety reasons, the worker and the woman should agree to stay in contact and update the calendar by telephone, as a way of continuing the danger assessment.

Danger Assessment

Several risk factors have been associated with homicides (murders) of both batterers and battered women in research conducted after the murders have taken place. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of homicide in situations of severe battering and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation. (The *he* refers to your husband, partner, ex-partner or whoever is currently physically hurting you).

A. Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were beaten by your husband or partner. Write on that date how long each incident lasted in approximate hours and rate the incident according to the following scale:

1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain
2. Punching, kicking; bruises, cuts, and/or lasting pain
3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones
4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury
5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon

(If **any** of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)

B. Mark *yes* or *no* to each of the following:

- ___ 1. Has the physical violence increased in frequency over the past year?
- ___ 2. Has the physical violence increased in severity over the past year and/or has a weapon or threat from a weapon ever been used?
- ___ 3. Does he ever try to choke you?
- ___ 4. Is there a gun in the house?
- ___ 5. Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to?
- ___ 6. Does he use drugs? By drugs, I mean "uppers" or amphetamines, speed, angel dust, cocaine, "crack", street drugs or mixtures.
- ___ 7. Does he threaten to kill you and/or do you believe he is capable of killing you?
- ___ 8. Is he drunk every day or almost every day? (In terms of quantity of alcohol.)
- ___ 9. Does he control most or all of your daily activities? For instance, does he tell you who you can be friends with, how much money you can take with you shopping, or when you can take the car? (If he tries, but you do not let him, check here: ___)
- ___ 10. Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here: ___)
- 11. Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say, "If I can't have you, no one can.")
- ___ 12. Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
- ___ 13. Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
- ___ 14. Is he violent toward your children?
- ___ 15. Is he violent outside of the home?
- ___ Total *Yes* answers

Case Example: Utilization of the Scale

A woman came to a mental health crisis centre seeking help (in August 2003). She asked to see a worker, citing personal problems as the reason. She looked nervous and seemed in urgent need of help. Her right cheek was bruised. The woman disclosed her situation. She was four months pregnant and was having problems with her male partner. She wanted to understand what was going on in her relationship. She hoped to improve this relationship before the baby's birth, by identifying which of her behaviours she needed to change. In talking with the worker, she blamed the couple's problems on the unplanned pregnancy. She shared her concerns about how they would cope with their new responsibilities.

The woman reported that they had had a major fight the day before. Her partner had been drinking. She was sleeping when he came home and she refused to make love. They argued about it, and her partner punched her in the face.

She explained that her partner's behaviour had started to change when she became pregnant. Before the pregnancy, he had behaved quite considerately toward her. He was extremely happy at the idea that they were becoming a family. However, there had been occasional violent episodes even before the pregnancy. The woman explained that he was possessive and jealous. During the time she worked at an outside job (she was currently on preventive leave), he didn't really like her going out to work.

This woman also reported that she received similar bruises in the past, as well as more serious injuries. She was afraid that the violence was increasing and wanted to figure out what she could do to control it. She now needed to protect her child. The worker suggested that she complete the **Danger Assessment Scale** to get a better picture of her situation and the risks she was incurring.

The worker asked the woman to answer the 15 questions on violence (Section B). These questions were about her partner's behaviours, as well as the frequency and

severity of the violence. This tool would also provide information about her risk of domestic violence homicide.

Together, the worker and the woman marked the incidents of violence on the **calendar of incidents** and rated each one using the severity scale (Section A of the instrument). To the best of her memory, the woman recorded several incidents of violence that had occurred over the past 12-month period, noting the type of aggression as well as the severity of each incident. The worker, together with the woman, calculated the number of incidents for each month and noted the highest severity scale score for each month. Thus the woman was able to get a visual picture of the incidents of violence committed against her. She could see if there was a progression in terms of the type of violence (for example, a progression from slapping and shoving with no injuries to having broken bones) and the frequency of violent incidents.

Example of a Calendar History of Incidents

MARCH 2003

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2 <i>2 (15 min)</i>	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 <i>3 (1 hr)</i>	17	18	19	20	21 <i>2 (45 min)</i>	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Number of incidents of violence: 3

Level of danger (according to the scale): 2, 3, 2

APRIL 2003

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3 <i>3 (10 min)</i>	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 <i>2 (20 min)</i>	23	24	25	26 <i>3 (30 min)</i>
27	28	29	30			

Number of incidents of violence: 3

Level of danger (according to the scale): 3, 2, 3

MAY 2003

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Number of incidents of violence:

Level of danger (according to the scale):

JUNE 2003

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Number of incidents of violence:

Level of danger (according to the scale):

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Number of incidents of violence: _____
Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 1 (10 min)	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Number of incidents of violence: 1
Level of danger (according to the scale): 1

Typology of Domestic Violence Cases with a High Lethal Risk

The typology is based on the level of urgency of a given situation. In other words, the time frame available for action before a lethal act occurs, as assessed by the worker. This typology was developed from the 74 incidents that workers reported in Rondeau, Lindsay et al.'s (2002) study. For the purposes of this intervention guide, we have adapted the typology to the realities of women's shelters and women's centres, in order to meet these workers' needs. An advisory committee consisting of workers helped us in this process. Both the advisory committee and the researchers affiliated with the project were consulted in order to supplement the information collected through the interviews in the first study.

The typology presented below is organized into three major categories and seven sub-categories.

Imminent Danger

The worker is called for help when a severe assault has just occurred, is currently occurring, or is about to occur. The time available to prevent a homicide is measured in hours.

Potentially severe assault is in progress

Both the woman and the man involved in the incident are in the same location at the time of intervention. Furthermore, the attack has already started or is imminent and it could end with the death of the woman and her children.

Post-incident

An incident of severe physical violence has just occurred. At the time of intervention, both the woman and the man are still at the location where the assault took place.

Homicide scenario

The worker is informed that the man is preparing to kill his female partner and he has the means to do so. He also knows where he can find the woman.

Short- or Medium-term Danger

In this category, a clear risk of homicide has been identified, but it is difficult to predict when it will take place. The worker thus has more time available to intervene.

Homicide threats

The man has uttered death threats (direct or indirect) towards his female partner or ex-partner. A history of prior domestic violence makes the worker believe that he is capable of carrying out his threats.

Event-specific risk

A specific event causing conflict between the man and the woman and bringing them into close proximity can increase the homicide risk.

Persistent Danger

There is still a danger of homicide despite interventions that have put preventive measures into place.

Chronic danger

The man is seeking to find his partner or ex-partner. Despite protective measures, she or her friends and family always seem to be in danger.

Continued exposure to danger

A worker believes that a woman's relationship is at high risk. Despite being informed about the danger she is in, the woman stays with her partner.

IMMINENT DANGER

The worker must act quickly to prevent a homicide.

POTENTIALLY SEVERE ASSAULT IS IN PROGRESS

Indicators

- Presence of a weapon or severe physical violence.
- Both the woman and the man are in the same location at the time of intervention.
- Previous death threats.

If the male partner is attempting to enter the women's shelter

- Use the panic button to notify the police or dial 911;
 - Make sure that the male partner will not be able to enter the shelter;
 - Follow the shelter's safety plan to get the women and children into a secure area;
 - While keeping yourself safe and secure, monitor the man's behaviours as you wait for the police and try to get a physical description of him;
 - Once the incident is over, transfer the woman he was seeking into another shelter;
 - Schedule a period of time for workers and residents to verbalize their emotions.
-

IMMINENT DANGER

The worker must act quickly to prevent a homicide.

INCIDENT OF SEVERE VIOLENCE HAS JUST OCCURRED

Indicators

- The call occurs immediately after an episode of severe physical violence (strangling, sexual assault, armed attack).
- At the time of intervention, both partners are on the premises where the event occurred.

If the female partner is calling after the attack

- Ask the woman if she wants you to call the police;

If yes:

- Ask the woman for her address;
- Stay on the line;
- If possible, call the police from another telephone or have a colleague call.

If no:

- Ask her why she called;
- Ask what you can do for her and tell her what you can offer as help;
- Express your anxiety about the situation and explain how a police intervention works and how it can benefit her;
- Assess the danger:
 - if the male partner is in the same room with her;
 - if she is injured;
 - if she fears for her life;
 - if weapons are nearby;
 - if there are children in the house and if they are safe;
- Call the police if you think that the lives of the woman and her children are in danger;
- Develop a safety plan with the woman. For example, you should:
 - see how she can quickly leave the house;
 - see how the children can quickly leave, even if she herself is unable to do so;
 - know how to reach safety by going to a neighbour or to a public place;
 - call the worker back once she is safe, in order to get information about resources;
 - if the children are away from home when the incident occurs, make sure that they will be safe until someone can go and get them.

IMMINENT DANGER

Worker must act quickly to prevent a homicide.

HOMICIDE SCENARIO

Indicators

- The man has a specific plan to kill his female partner.
- His planned methods are available.
- He knows where to find his partner.

If the male partner is phoning the women's shelter

- Transfer the call to the director or to a colleague if you feel uncomfortable talking to the male partner (if the worker is alone, she should apply the shelter's procedures for responding to male partners);
- Ask another worker to listen in on the conversation and suggest responses;
- Listen to him and try to defuse his anger without getting into a helping relationship;
- Direct the man towards the appropriate resources (CLSC or other community health clinic, mental health crisis centre, program for violent men);
- If he calls back, tell him that you will file a complaint against him;
- Transfer the woman to another women's shelter.

If the woman discloses her partner's homicide plan

- Ensure the safety of the premises;
 - Call the police;
 - Validate the woman and convince her of the seriousness of the threat;
 - Ensure the safety of the woman and her children;
 - Intervene with the children if they are aware of the plan.
-

SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM DANGER

A risk of homicide has been clearly identified, but the worker is unable to predict when it will occur.

HOMICIDE THREATS

Indicators

- Direct or indirect death threats or armed threats.
- History of severe physical violence.
- After a couple has separated, the man has an acute sense of having lost his female partner.

The male partner is making death threats towards the woman

- Make the woman aware of the danger to her and her children;
 - Explore the possibilities of a separation (temporary or permanent);
 - Recommend that she contact the police to file a complaint;
 - If you believe that the children's lives have been threatened, explain to the woman that you are required by law to provide assistance to the children, which might require a report to child protection services.
-

SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM DANGER

A risk of homicide has been clearly identified, but the worker is unable to predict when it will occur.

ONE-TIME RISK

At court (criminal or civil)

Indicators

- The danger is related to a specific event.

The worker should:

- Ensure that the woman will be accompanied;
- Organize police transportation if possible (only for criminal cases);
- Ensure that she will be provided with a safe waiting room (CAVAC, witness room or other);
Once at court, the woman should:
 - Ask to be accompanied by a security guard;
 - During negotiations with the male partner, insist on the presence of a peace officer or that the negotiations will take place in a busy public area (cafeterias or corridors) in order to avoid being together in a small room;
 - Never speak directly to the male partner;
 - Some basic interventions:
 - Negotiate with the male partner's lawyer that his client will remain there for the time it takes her to leave the area;
 - Criminal court: leave while the male partner is signing the release conditions;
 - Ask a guard to accompany her to another exit;
 - Use the most rapid means of transport (taxi) and return later to ask for a reimbursement of transportation costs;
 - Make sure that the woman and her children are safe for the next 12 or 24 hours.

SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM DANGER

A risk of homicide has been clearly identified, but the worker is unable to predict when it will occur.

ONE-TIME RISK

Change of custody or parental access rights

Review these instructions with the woman to ensure her safety:

- Indicators**
- The danger is related to a specific event.
- Keep contact with her partner to a minimum;
 - Plan clear and short communications during contacts with her partner;
 - To avoid contact with her partner, arrange for custody changes to occur at the school or day care;
 - Inform someone of the place and time of any meetings with the father of children and ask that person to call and develop an action plan in case of a non-response;
 - Be accompanied by a third party;
 - Have a cell phone and a personal alarm;
 - Find a neutral meeting place (busy public place);
 - Try to remain continually in view of other people;
 - With the help of the worker, develop a clear safety plan with the children.

Moving personal belongings

Review these instructions with the woman to ensure her safety when she moves her belongings:

- Take a copy of the legal agreement specifying the personal belongings removed by her;
 - Make an agreement with her partner's lawyer about the time and availability of the premises (male partner to be absent from the home);
 - Create a list of the important personal belongings to be retrieved for herself and the children;
 - Request police accompaniment to her home (based on a legal agreement);
 - Have a cell phone and a personal alarm;
 - Have a safety plan in place that was prepared with the worker;
 - Call the shelter during the move or have the shelter call and put into place a plan in case she does not answer the phone.
-

PERSISTENT DANGER

A danger of homicide remains, despite preventive measures implemented during intervention.

CHRONIC DANGER

Indicators

- The woman has left her male partner.
- The man makes obsessive attempts to find his female partner.
- The man harasses his female partner.
- Presence of death threats.
- Male partner has criminal history.

The man is trying to find his female partner

- Ask the police to increase surveillance around the women's shelter;
- Apply strict security measures in the women's shelter;
- Ask the woman for a description of the male partner (and if possible, a photo) as well as a description of his vehicle (license plate number);
- Review the shelter's security plan with the residents;
- Transfer the woman to another women's shelter if there is any possibility that the male partner might know the shelter's address;
- Ensure that the woman's identity remains secret in the shelter (intervene with the children);
- If necessary, extend her stay at the shelter;
- Help the woman to organize a move to another city far from the male partner;
- In situations where the male partner was conditionally released, ensure that the woman has a copy of these conditions;
- Give a copy of the release conditions to the school, if the man is prohibited from seeing the children.

The man is harassing his ex-partner

- Make the woman aware of the risk of homicide;
- Encourage the woman to file a complaint of criminal harassment;
Review the following instructions with the woman to ensure her safety:
- In cases of telephone harassment, keep a record of the calls (discuss with the telephone company);
- Keep any letters or emails as evidence of these contacts;
- Make the neighbours aware of the situation by showing them a photograph of her partner;
- Make the school aware of the situation in order to make sure that he does not follow the children to her location;
- Establish protective measures and develop a safety plan with the children with the worker;
- In extreme cases: change her telephone number, move, change the children's schools;
- Consider staying at or returning to the women's shelter.

PERSISTENT DANGER

A danger of homicide remains, despite preventive measures implemented as part of the intervention.

CONTINUOUS EXPOSURE TO DANGER

Indicators

- The woman is living with the dangerous male partner.
- Death threats.
- History of severe physical violence or the presence of a weapon in the house.

The woman is living with her male partner

- Make the woman aware of the risk of homicide;
- Work out a safety plan. In a crisis situation, the woman should:
 - See how quickly she can leave the house;
 - Have a suitcase with clothes, money and important papers in a safe place or with a third party;
 - Find a pretext to leave the house (ex: a doctor's visit as an excuse, leave when picking up the children from school or daycare);
 - Plan for a means of transportation (money for a taxi);
 - Inform someone about the situation;
 - Inform a neighbour (agree on a code) so that someone can quickly call the police in case of emergency;
 - Use the referrals provided in advance by the worker to quickly access help;
- Stay in regular contact with the woman in order to know how the situation is developing;
- Assess the level of danger for the children;
- Make sure that the children have activities outside the home (in order to have a break from the tense situation);
- Attempt, over time, to convince the woman to leave the male partner (without pushing her) and provide her with follow-up through the separation process.

From Emotional Support to Concrete Actions...

Emotional Support

Trained and experienced workers are already aware that their primary focus of intervention should be on providing emotional support, once they have completed their assessment, before guiding her towards taking concrete action. However, this intervention priority sometimes needs to be reversed, focusing on taking action before addressing a woman's emotions. Obviously, some women will prefer to focus on taking immediate action. In other cases, women are not able to access their feelings right away and can only do so once the worker has initiated concrete interventions.

It is important to respect each woman's timing and to understand any fears that may lead her to avoid her emotions.

However, workers should still develop strategies with women in order to eventually be able to work with them on their emotions about their situation.

Providing support to the woman

- Help the woman to verbalize her emotions, normalize the woman's emotions;
- Validate her perceptions, feelings and anxieties;
- Collectivize her problem and her emotions;
- Always attribute responsibility for the violence to the person who committed it;
- Explore the woman's coping mechanisms for the violence;
- Attempt to deflect the woman's tendency to protect her male partner, instead reinforce her own abilities;
- Focus the intervention on the woman's potential and her strengths.

Appraisal of the Situation

In cases with a high homicide risk, it is very important to make an overall appraisal of the situation with the woman, once the assessment has been completed.

The worker's goal is to help the woman to more clearly see the danger she is in and to make the best possible decisions, in order to ensure her safety and that of her children.

The worker should ask the woman to share her perceptions about her situation. To help her, some of the following intervention strategies can be used:

- Ask the woman to estimate her level of danger on a scale of 1 to 10;
- Use metaphors to illustrate the woman's sense of urgency about the situation (i.e., would she take a boat or a plane to leave the situation?);
- Offer the woman a selection of pictures that might help her to talk about her situation (photo-language);
- Share the worker's own perceptions of the situation, talking about it in terms similar to the woman's;
- If the woman and the worker's perceptions about the severity of the situation differ, the worker should at least get her to agree that the situation is serious. Together they can:
 - compare the images selected by each to represent their perceptions of the danger;
 - explore the reasons behind the woman's perception of her situation;
 - discuss the indicators that led the worker to her perception of the danger;
 - identify the implications of the danger perceived by the worker;
 - discuss the worker's concerns for the woman in her situation;
 - discuss the danger for her children.

Coming to an agreement about the situation is a process that occurs one step at a time. The absence of an agreement does not mean that the intervention

has failed. Simply validating the woman for seeking help is an important step in establishing a trust relationship.

The worker should attempt to stay in touch with the woman following the intervention, in order to provide her with support if she needs it.

Concrete Actions

Once the worker has conducted an appraisal of the situation with the woman, her next step is to determine what action the woman wants to take. The worker should inform her about her rights as well as the resources available for her and her children (shelter, legal assistance, crisis line, etc.). High priority is given to the development of a safety plan.

Safety plans

Safety plans, developed jointly between the worker and the woman, are an essential intervention due to the danger inherent in these situations. Although the safety plan needs to be adapted for each woman's particular circumstances, all safety plans have certain elements in common.

If the woman lives with her male partner:

Physical premises:

- Ask the woman about the layout of her home and discuss ways that she can rapidly exit or otherwise protect herself;
- Explore the possibility of moving furniture or accessories to allow her more freedom of movement and a quicker exit.

Financial aspects:

- Suggest to the woman that she put aside some money for her departure (taxi, food, etc.).

Resource persons:

- Ask the woman to arrange a code with a relative or trusted neighbour that she can easily use as a way of letting them know she is in danger (telephone, a code-word that will alert them to call the police, a signal, etc.);
- Suggest that she memorize the phone number of a shelter or of a domestic violence crisis line.

Children:

- Go over a clear and specific plan of action with the children in case of a crisis situation (work out a visual code with them that will act as a signal to put the plan into action), in which case children should:
 - leave the room;
 - call 911;
 - run to the neighbours.
- Ensure that the children do not in any way feel responsible for the crisis.

Public places:

- Suggest that the woman arrange any exchanges of the children to occur in a public place, i.e., changes of custody or visitation with the father.

If the woman wishes to leave her male partner, the worker should:

- Instruct her not to tell her male partner or her children about her intention to leave;
- Help her to find a woman's shelter;
- Provide her with information and guidance about the judicial process and her rights;
- Ask her about any places she goes to that are known to her male partner and if he might possibly look for her there;
- Change the children's schools at the woman's shelter; if this is not possible, make an agreement with the school to inform them about the risks (provide a photo of the father and a copy of the court order that prohibits him from seeing his children);

- Help the woman to develop a safety plan for the school and go with her to meet with the school's staff in order to put it into practice;
- Work out a safety plan with the women for herself and her children;
- Help her to change her routines to thwart her partner's actions (she should not visit the same places at the same times).

It is very stressful for a worker to intervene with a woman in danger of being killed. It is thus important that the worker not have to make her intervention decisions alone. Team discussions are essential in such situations.

***Crisis Support
for Workers***

Crisis Support for Workers

Feminist approaches to practice recognize that the worker herself is the “primary instrument” for intervention. Often the core of the interventions consists of simply listening, being present to the other person, and providing support. In this kind of practice, a worker’s involvement with such women may put her into a position of compassion fatigue.

On a daily basis, these workers help women who have experienced violence. They sometimes work under emergency conditions and in an atmosphere of high emotional stress. Clearly, workers’ interventions with these women help prevent recurrences of the violence, and in some cases, even the homicide of women. However, domestic violence intervention is an extremely complex and unpredictable area. Even though a worker has carried out interventions and developed a safety plan with a woman, sometimes her male partner or ex-partner still kills her.

Considering all the interventions made by workers, there is a strong likelihood that they will sometimes get emotionally overwhelmed, which can affect both their professional and personal lives. Specialists have defined this phenomenon as the “wearing out of compassion,” secondary stress, vicarious trauma or “trauma by ricochet.”

A worker’s personal equilibrium can be temporarily unbalanced as a result of “*the stress experienced by a person helping or wanting to help a traumatized person or someone who is suffering*”.⁸¹ A worker can be affected by the accounts of atrocities committed towards another person, which can result in feelings of profound despair, loss of energy, trust, serenity, etc.

⁸¹ Figley, 1995.

Raucous Heart

...
Your images
Slice my heart into living strips
And I have no cry
To heal them

...
Michelle Larivey⁸²

It can be challenging for workers to find and maintain their emotional balance in such contexts. Workers are often motivated by a desire to help others, but they should never forget to take care of themselves. In fact, to avoid being overcome by the reality of violence towards women, a worker needs to “dedicate the same energy and passion to [her] personal health that [she] give[s] to [her] work.”⁸³ The work environment and level of team support considerably influence a worker’s personal capacity to deal with these secondary stresses. Clinical supervision and peer consultation are essential support tools to prevent workers’ practice from having too great an impact on their personal lives. Workers can receive support and comfort from colleagues if they are able to express their emotions immediately after a distressing event.

Workers should understand how important it is to always consider their own needs, limits, emotions, and resources. A worker who takes good care of herself should be able to resist feeling guilty or responsible if a lethal act takes place during her intervention with an assaulted woman.

⁸² Larivey, 2000, p.88.

⁸³ Richardson, 2001.

Inevitably, people connected with a women's shelter will experience repercussions when they hear that a current or past resident has been the victim of a domestic homicide. This news will also create a major upheaval in daily shelter life. In such situations, it is essential to implement measures that can support the shelter staff and the residents who knew the murdered woman.⁸⁴

What to do at the time of the incident:

- Immediately contact by phone the intervention team, other staff, and volunteers to arrange a meeting in order to share the news. It is best to have only one person in charge of these tasks, in order to properly position the announcement and to support the workers when they hear this kind of news.
- The person responsible for this task should understand that people's reactions will vary, depending on their personalities. Some may respond with anger or sadness, while others will not let their emotions show or will deny their feelings. It is also important to meet specifically with the worker who provided follow-up to the murdered woman, as well as with any other staff members who provided support to the woman.
- A post-incident debriefing should be held within 24 to 48 hours following the announcement of this event. It should include the shelter director or coordinator, the workers and the volunteers who knew the woman. This debriefing should take place weekly for at least two weeks.
- The post-incident debriefing may be conducted by the shelter's clinical supervisor, an external therapist in private practice, or a CLSC social worker.
- Workers should be offered individual therapy sessions with a therapist of their choice (approximately 6 sessions).

⁸⁴ The crisis management suggestions below were developed in consultation with Ms. Elizabeth Harper, who has worked in domestic violence intervention for over 20 years.

The shelter director or coordinator, who has the day-to-day responsibility for the well-being of the intervention team and the current residents, also needs an external source of support in order to express and vent her emotions.

During such events, the intervention staff will need to talk among themselves and support each other. The workers will tend to objectivize what happened. They will review the log and the woman's file and analyze the details of what happened during or after the woman's stay, etc.

An event like this can often bring about feelings of guilt, as workers question themselves whether they did everything possible to assure the woman's protection. If this occurs, the clinical supervisor can help the team deal with these kinds of thoughts. People need to be reminded that they are not responsible for what happened.

What to do in the days following the incident:

- In the days and weeks following the event, workers may experience sleep problems or they may have intrusive thoughts that give them nightmares and turn into obsessions (fixation on certain details or replaying the course of events).
- Workers affected by the event may not be in a position to work with the current residents of the house. **They are still too likely to project their own fears, anxiety and pain onto the residents. Workers must be very careful not to fall into overprotective patterns towards the residents, ex-residents, and their children.**
- **It may be appropriate to permit those workers who feel they need it to take a few days off in order to absorb the news about the homicide and to grieve.**
- Replacement workers may need to be hired for this period.

- It can be helpful for regular workers to be given certain responsibilities that directly concern the event. Some of the tasks that could be assigned to various members of the intervention team are: hiring replacement workers, contacting the women who lived in the house at the same time as the murdered woman, contacting volunteers, buying a card and flowers for the funeral, etc. Such responsibilities can help workers in their grieving process.
- One of the first steps is to contact the victim's relatives and to offer condolences and support in organizing the funeral. The shelter director or coordinator or the woman's worker would be appropriate choices for this task. (However, it is essential to maintain professional confidentiality). Recognize that anger could be among the many emotions expressed. Workers' feelings of pain and anger need to be acknowledged.
- It is important to stay vigilant to the needs of the shelter staff when providing support to others, such as the victim's family and friends, work colleagues, former residents, etc. If this type of support ends up increasing the pain and grief of the shelter staff, it would be better to refer or to accompany these people to other support resources (CLSC, grief recovery groups, etc.).
- If the woman's family and friends agree, residents who knew the woman may be given an opportunity to pay their respects. In certain cases, shelter workers may choose to accompany and support these women, so that the woman's family and friends do not have to play this role.
- It can be helpful for the staff and former residents to give the family a card or a book to share their appreciation for the woman and her special qualities. This gesture is usually highly appreciated by the family.
- **The shelter can organize its own memorial service and invite women who were acquainted with the murdered woman.**
- Child care workers who were involved with the woman's children can sometimes provide support for the children following the event, depending

on the nature of the deceased woman's network. In the absence of a social support network, the childcare worker can direct the family towards the appropriate resources. If the children are currently involved with child welfare services, their social worker should be invited to a debriefing meeting with the other workers involved with the case. The childcare worker may find it helpful to write a report about her interventions with the children.

Intervention with shelter residents and ex-residents:

- If the woman was not living in the shelter at the time of the homicide, the team should evaluate the need to share this information with residents, because it could traumatize them.
- The intervention team should decide among themselves who is the best person to contact and meet with the women who lived in the house with the victim. Because it can be very difficult to make these phone calls and meet with the women, the shelter can support the worker responsible for these tasks by providing her with supervision and intervention.
- The residents who knew the victim should be contacted as quickly as possible, to avoid their hearing of the news from other sources (media, family, etc.).
- Ideally the news should be shared in a face-to-face meeting. However, this may not always be possible. If the worker has to give someone the news over the phone, she should also invite that woman to come in and meet with her worker, in the event a crisis intervention is needed.
- This information might create post-traumatic stress symptoms in some of the women, such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, emotional distress, and memories of their own experiences of violence. They might also have heightened feelings of vulnerability and fear.
- Upon hearing this news, some women may even rethink their decision to separate from their male partners.

- It is important to follow-up with the women to see how they are coming to terms with this news in the days following the intervention. It might be appropriate to review the women's safety plan with them, which can help them to feel more secure. This is also an appropriate intervention for women still living with their male partners.
- Knowing that this can be a particularly difficult time for these women, it is important to provide them with a certain amount of follow-up.

These events often generate a lot of media interest. If the media discovers that the woman stayed in your shelter, they may want your opinion on the subject. It is best if only one person (the shelter director or coordinator) is designated to speak to the media. Your provincial association or regional delegation can also play this role and respond to media requests in your place on your behalf. Be careful to respect the confidentiality of the victim and her relatives (including the children) in any media communications. This confidentiality is especially important in order to avoid prejudicing the subsequent criminal trial.

Special arrangements can be made with other women's shelters, in order to avoid any work overloads for staff at this time. Other shelters can temporarily assume this shelter's responsibility to provide emergency accommodation upon need. This means that other shelters would take in any new residents until the workers at this shelter are able to resume their regular work.

Traumatic events like this can mobilize organizations and regional delegations to develop initiatives that aim to provide greater safety for women experiencing domestic violence. The shelter may wish to raise such a possibility with any regional or provincial associations, coalitions, or other bodies.

The police are going to request the collaboration of at least one of the shelter workers. This raises important issues relating to the sharing of confidential

information. The provincial association of women's shelters or a lawyer can advise the shelter on how to respond to these questions.

The trial will also be challenging. The victim's worker may be called upon to testify. Any trial, and particularly a homicide trial, brings up painful memories. The worker may find that the trial reopens old wounds that had already healed. The intervention team and shelter management need to be attentive in order to properly support the worker, as well as any other persons (ex-residents, other employees, volunteers) affected by the trial. Throughout this process, workers and others who are involved should not hesitate to seek help from the shelter's clinical supervisor.

***Understanding the
Judicial Process***

Understanding the Judicial Process

Helping a woman to prepare for her court appearance as a witness to domestic violence is not a simple task. The best way to assist her is to demystify the procedures around testifying and to ensure that she clearly understands her role as well as the roles of the other key players in the process. The worker must also be particularly attentive to safety and security issues when a woman goes to court.

For most women, the judicial process is full of fears and unknowns. This is why it is so important to prepare women for court, so they can have more confidence and serenity as they do what they need to do.

Women should understand some of the basic principles that guide legal proceedings:

- Under the law, the defendant is **presumed innocent** until declared guilty by a judge. It is the **prosecutor's** responsibility to prove the defendant's guilt. The state, represented by the prosecutor, assumes responsibility for pursuing the complaint made by the victim or a third party. However, women need to understand that they play the most important role in the process. The prosecutor's evidence largely depends on the woman's **testimony** regarding the events that led to the defendant's arrest.
- **Therefore, the prosecutor is not the woman's personal lawyer**, but represents the state. However, the woman's collaboration is necessary in order to present the evidence regarding the events.
- The defendant has the right to legal representation. His lawyer is referred to as the **defence attorney**. This lawyer's mandate is to sow the seeds of reasonable doubt regarding the defendant's guilt. To achieve this, the defence attorney tries to discredit the various witnesses, attempting to show that the criminal allegations against his or her client (the defendant) are unjustified.

At the end of the criminal trial, the **judge** has to decide whether or not the defendant is guilty, by evaluating the weight of the prosecutor's evidence. The judge also determines the sentence if the defendant is found guilty. Table 1 shows the various stages of the judicial process.

Preparing the Woman to Give Testimony:

1) Preparing a woman for her court appearance means also ensuring that certain **security measures** are in place:

- Anticipate the possibility that the defendant may have a violent reaction in court.
- Inquire if there is a special waiting room for witnesses and inform the prosecutor that the woman will be there.
- Arrange that the woman be accompanied to court by a family member, friend, shelter worker, worker from a woman's centre or from her local victims services organization (i.e., CAVAC in Québec).
- Encourage the woman to tell the prosecutor that she is afraid of being assaulted.
- Encourage the woman to alert the security guards, to ensure their vigilance.
- Instruct the woman to remain close to other people.
- If the police investigator will be there, the woman can sit near him or her.
- After she has finished testifying, the woman can ask the prosecutor to have the defendant's lawyer keep him from leaving the courthouse for a certain period of time, so she can depart in complete safety.
- The woman can also ask a security guard to accompany her to a more secure exit and one that is further away from the door through which the defendant will be leaving.

2) Before her testimony, the woman should know that she is allowed to reread her statement, in order to review her memory of the events. She should be advised

not to memorize her statement, in order to give her testimony as naturally as possible.

3) The process of testifying:

- The woman will give her testimony by answering the questions asked by the prosecutor. The defence attorney may cross-examine the witness after the prosecutor finishes asking his or her series of questions. At any time during this process, the judge may request clarification or details regarding the testimony.
- The woman should know that she does not have to address the defendant when responding to the defence attorney's questions. Her role is to give her account of the facts and events in order to convince the judge that they are true. **Thus she should only look at the judge when giving her testimony.** The prosecutor is supposed to ensure that the trial progresses properly and that the victim's rights are respected.
- It is important that the woman be appropriately dressed. She should speak up, relate the facts, and not come up with answers for anything she doesn't know or doesn't remember. She should act as naturally as possible and reply to questions with the utmost sincerity and truthfulness. Her testimony is not a performance. She needs to know that she has the right to show her emotions. If at any time she is tired, she can ask permission to sit down.

In some places, psychosocial professionals are available at the courthouse to help victims prepare their testimony, such as Montréal's "Côté cour" (professional services for victims of domestic and family violence in the criminal court setting). If such a service is not locally available, witnesses can ask their local victims services worker (i.e., CAVAC) for information at any time, or they can ask the prosecutor in charge of the case.

In Québec, there are currently 14 *Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels*⁸⁵ (CAVAC), as well as additional points of service. CAVAC offers free and confidential

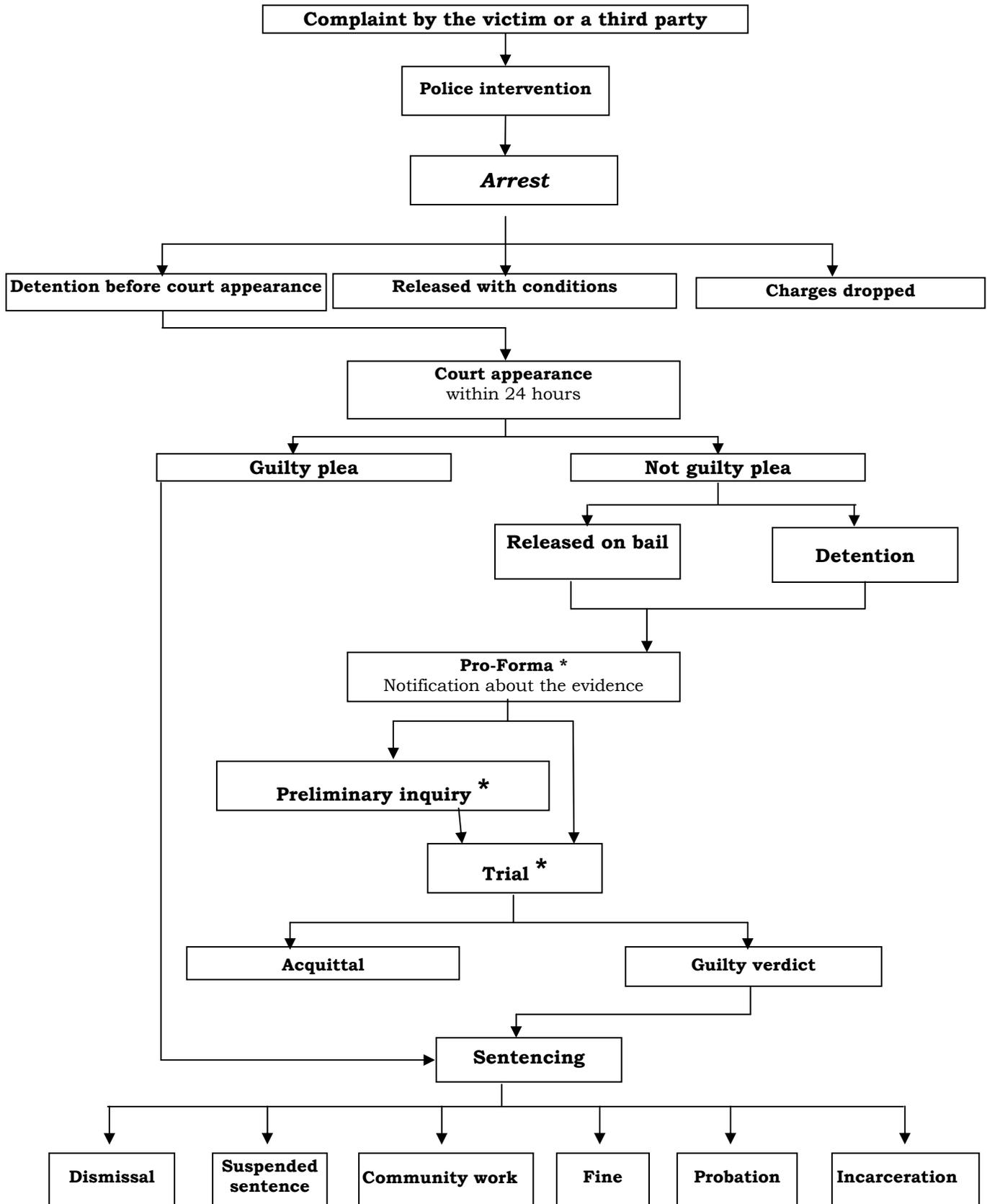
⁸⁵ "Crime Victims Assistance Centres".

services specifically for persons who have been victims of criminal acts. These centres welcome, listen to, and support victims. CAVAC workers can also provide basic information about the judicial process as well as about victims' rights and recourses. CAVAC workers are also available to accompany victims when they go to court, as well to other organizations involved with the case.

In Québec, additional information about legal procedures can be found on the Québec Department of Justice web site (<http://www.justice.gouv.qc.ca>). The *Fédération de ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec* also developed a guide and a video in 1994 entitled *Le processus judiciaire criminel et vous*⁸⁶. Their document was based on interviews with women who had experienced domestic violence as well as with workers in the community. The guide lays out the stages of the judicial process and the resources that are available to help women when they are required to testify in court. The videos are available at a cost of \$20.

⁸⁶ *The Criminal Judicial Process and You* (available only in French).

Judicial Process



*The woman may be called to testify at these stages of the judicial process.

***What Do Other
Professionals Do?***

What Do Other Professionals Do?

The information in this section refers to interventions carried out by other types of professionals in cases of intimate partner violence with a high lethal risk. This material comes from the interviews conducted in the research component of the project.⁸⁷ It was not feasible to include an exhaustive list of possible interventions by other professionals. Furthermore, some of the professionals with whom you collaborate may not use all of the interventions presented here. Finally, there may be professionals other than those described in this guide who also intervene in potentially lethal situations.

Criminal Justice Professionals

Police officers

Police officers generally get involved in cases of intimate partner violence with a high lethal risk when an incident is in progress or is about to occur. Therefore, police have to intervene very quickly to prevent homicides. They generally have three intervention points: when the call is received, when police arrive at the premises where the incident is occurring, and when they do post-intervention follow-up.

Reception of the call

Usually, the police officer's first contact with the situation is when an emergency call is received from a third party, the victim herself, or the assailant. A priority code is assigned to the call and this is often the only information available to police officers when they are called to the scene of an incident.

Arrival at the scene

Upon their arrival at the scene, the police assess the situation, subdue the assailant, and intervene with the victim. In order to assess the situation, they will observe the condition of the premises and the condition of the victim, check to see whether there are any weapons on-site, and take statements from other family

⁸⁷ Rondeau, Lindsay et al., 2002.

members or friends. Recognizing that such situations are potentially dangerous and unpredictable, some police officers prefer to arrive more discreetly on the scene in order to gather additional information that will help them to develop a better intervention strategy.

Obviously, the first priority is to subdue the assailant. Should the individual be armed or aggressive, the police will not hesitate to use the force needed to place him under arrest. Furthermore, should the man not be there when the police arrive, the officers would redirect their efforts to finding and arresting him. The individual is then taken to a police operations centre to meet with an investigator and, if necessary, to be held there overnight.

The initial police contact with the victim is intended to calm her down and reassure her. Should the woman be hurt, the police will provide first aid while waiting for an ambulance. The police officer attempts to establish trust by talking with the victim, which is essential for later police work. At this time, the police officer will also ask her questions in order to write up their incident report. The officer would normally encourage the woman to file charges, by making her aware of the danger she is in and explaining how the judicial process works, including the consequences for her partner. If the woman agrees to file charges, the police will take her formal statement, either at her home or at the police station. If the woman refuses to take legal action against her partner but the police have reason to believe that the violence has been serious, they may still file charges on behalf of the woman. However, if she refuses to testify in court this approach is very likely to go nowhere when the case is prosecuted.

Post-intervention follow-up

Sometimes the police will accompany the woman back home once the incident is over so that she can collect her personal effects. They may also take her to a women's shelter. Sometimes the officer will commit to accompany the woman to her court appearance. Police officers who intervene in cases of intimate partner violence with a high lethal risk are often subpoenaed to testify at various points in the judicial process.

Parole and probation officers

Parole and probation officers may also be called upon to manage situations of intimate partner violence with a high lethal risk. Compared with police officers, their intervention is over longer periods. The measures they use to prevent intimate partner homicides include danger assessments, suspension of parole, meeting with the man, and contacting the person in danger.

Danger assessment

In general, parole/probation officers learn about the homicidal intent of one of their clients from a third party involved with the man (i.e., worker at a halfway house or day program, psychologist), the man's intimate partner or ex-partner, or the man himself.

As soon as the worker is advised of a homicide risk, he or she assesses the level of danger for the woman. The worker confirms the information with other professionals involved with the man. The parole or probation officer may also phone the female partner or ex-partner or meet with her in a community setting to get more information about the man and any prior incidents of intimate partner violence.

Suspension of probation

The focus of intervention, once the assessment has been completed, is to act as quickly as possible to stop the man from taking action, whether by suspending his parole or terminating his probation. The parole/probation officer may also attempt to restrict the activity of the violent partner or impose more severe parole conditions, including admission to a psychiatric treatment program.

Meeting with the male partner

The parole or probation officer will meet with the male partner to lower the intensity of the homicidal crisis. A common approach is to get the man to confront himself by examining his homicidal intent and its consequences. The man may also be encouraged to explore his feelings and the reasons underlying his homicidal intent. The parole or probation officer may ask the man for a formal

agreement to not commit a lethal act. In cases where a man's parole is suspended without warning, the officer forwards the information to him.

Meeting with the female partner

Although the man's female partner has only a peripheral role in the parole or probation officer's regular work, she receives special attention when the situation is considered dangerous. The officer contacts her and alerts her to the danger she is in.

Prosecutors

When prosecutors encounter cases of intimate partner violence with a high lethal risk, their objectives are to verify the risk, stop the man from taking action, and protect the victim.

Verification of the risk

Prosecutors begin their risk assessment by verifying the information in the police report and the probation officer's assessment report.

Stopping the man from taking action

Once a prosecutor has verified the danger, his or her next step is to stop the man from taking action. First, the prosecutor evaluates the case to see if there are adequate grounds for prosecution. Next, if the accused has been released, the prosecutor ensures that the release conditions are as restrictive as possible. The prosecutor's attention then turns to preparing for the trial or for sentencing if the man pleads guilty. When a prosecutor believes that the risk could be lethal, he or she asks for a prison sentence.

Protecting the female partner

When requesting detention of the male partner, the prosecutor is acting out of concern for the woman's safety. In order to better protect the victim, the prosecutor may also ask that parole conditions be revised and may even decide to intervene in the parole hearing, if it appears necessary. In that event, the prosecutor would attempt to demonstrate that imprisonment before the trial is necessary to ensure

the safety of the victim.

As part of the prosecutor's preparations for trial, he or she explains the judicial process to the victim and reminds her of the importance of her testimony. However, given the limited availability of prosecutors due to their large caseloads, they will often refer women to psychosocial professionals at the courthouse or to the local victim services⁸⁸ organization for assistance. They may also suggest that women contact a shelter or women's centre.

During the trial, the prosecutor proceeds in the same manner as for any other case. First, he or she presents the evidence, then questions the victim and cross-examines the witnesses for the defence.

If a guilty verdict is returned, the prosecutor then has to prepare for the sentencing. In cases where a defendant has pleaded guilty, the prosecutor asks for a psychological assessment and a pre-sentencing report. At this stage, the prosecutor also checks jurisprudence in order to recommend the most appropriate sentence for the crime, taking into account the assessed level of danger and the victim's wishes.

Community-Based Workers

Workers in community mental health crisis centres

The homicidal male partner may seek help from a worker in a community mental health crisis centre.⁸⁹ The worker will assess the danger, lower the man's crisis state, provide a follow-up through the course of the crisis, and warn the partner, if it is possible for the worker to do so.

Danger assessment

This stage of intervention begins with the worker's initial contact with the man. Often, a male partner experiencing distress will mention his homicidal or suicidal intent right up-front. The worker's first task is to assess the level of lethal risk for

⁸⁸ For example, CAVAC in Québec ("Crime Victims Assistance Centres").

⁸⁹ Québec has a network of community mental health crisis centres that have a few short-term beds available for individuals in crisis. Similar resources may exist in other provinces.

the female partner. The worker will also attempt to learn what the man's plans are in order to assess the time still available for intervention.

Lowering the man's distress

After evaluating the danger, the worker will try to lower the man's distress by getting him to share the reasons behind his homicidal intent. This is done by engaging the man in dialogue, attempting to reduce his stress associated with the situation and leading the conversation towards the positive aspects of his life.

The worker also will ask certain questions to find out whether it will be necessary to alert the police, should the intervention strategies fail to lower the man's distress levels. He or she first seeks to build a relationship of trust with the person. Once that is established, the worker gets the man to agree that he will not carry out his homicidal intent. Also, the worker may offer him a place to stay at the mental health crisis centre in order to provide him with some distance from the high-risk situation and to help him with his distress.

Following up on the course of the crisis

Following up on the course of the crisis can be done through regular face-to-face meetings if the man is staying at the crisis centre. Otherwise, regular contact can be maintained through telephone appointments. These contacts can occur several times a day, depending on the level of assessed danger. The worker's contacts with the man will decrease as his homicidal or suicidal intent subsides.

Intervening with the woman

The worker will attempt to communicate with the woman, if possible, to warn her about her partner's or ex-partner's intentions. In addition, the worker makes sure that she takes the safety measures needed to assure her protection. In some cases of death threats, the worker may suggest that the woman file a complaint with the police and may refer her to organizations that can help her through this process.

Health and social services professionals

In the majority of cases described by professionals in the health and social services system, their interventions were conducted with the female partner who was in danger. Nevertheless, some professionals working in CLSC (local community health

and social services centres in Québec) or child welfare services, intervened directly with the man. The risk of homicide was generally disclosed by the client herself or himself or, in a minority of situations, by a third party.

Danger assessment

The initial intervention consists of assessing the lethal risk as well as the time available for preventing a homicide. From that point on, intervention is directed towards protecting the woman.

Protecting the woman

Once a lethal risk has been confirmed, the professional makes sure that the woman is safe. Police assistance may be requested in cases where the professional's interventions are over the phone and the situation appears to be very dangerous. Otherwise, the professional makes sure that the woman has a safety plan and that she knows how to access shelter resources should a crisis arise.

Developing awareness of the danger

The professional should ensure that the woman is aware of the possibility that her partner will carry out his threats. By sharing with the woman the indicators that might lead to this conclusion, the professional gets her to focus on the danger of the situation. In addition, she or he often encourages a woman to leave a potentially dangerous situation. The professional will also accompany the woman throughout the separation process, helping her think through her choices or develop a plan to leave the relationship safely. If a woman decides to remain with her partner, intervention is directed toward her safety.

Interventions with men

When it is the man who is the client, the emphasis is more on lowering his state of crisis, as well as closely following the course of the crisis by staying in regular contact and obtaining a clear non-homicide agreement.

Workers in Programs for Men Who Batter

Given that the policy of these organizations require that the man contact them himself to ask for their help, most of the time the client himself will admit his homicidal intent, very often during group work sessions. The worker then assesses

the danger he poses, attempts to reduce the crisis level, gets him to sign a non-homicide agreement, and in some cases may even contact his partner to warn her of the danger.

Danger assessment

Once the homicidal intent of the client is known, the first thing to be done is to assess the urgency level of the situation. After that, steps will be taken to lower the risk of lethal violence.

Reducing the crisis level

The worker then leads the discussion toward the man's homicidal intent as well as his motives for wanting to commit a lethal act against his partner. This is often accomplished by confronting the man and getting him to think through the consequences of such an act. He is also led to consider other alternatives that might resolve the situation.

The non-homicide agreement

Next, the worker may require the man to promise not to commit homicide. Sometimes the worker may ask the group to witness the man's agreement. The agreement often includes a requirement that the man regularly contact his worker to review the situation with him or her.

Interventions with the men's partner

In certain situations, the worker may have the contact information for the man's partner and can inform her of the threats made by the man. At that time, the worker makes sure that the woman is safe by referring her to the appropriate organizations.

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Imminence of Danger Grid

The first step is to assess the danger level, which determines the worker's choice of intervention.

Imminence of Danger		Indicators	Intervention Guidelines
Imminent Danger	Potentially severe assault is in progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Both the woman and the man are in the same location; ➤ Violence has started or is imminent; ➤ Presence of a weapon or severe physical violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rapid assessment of the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Injuries? ○ Possession of weapons? ○ Can she rapidly exit the home? ○ Can we call the police? ➤ The important thing is to offer help to the woman; ➤ Refer to pages 1 to 3 of the Typology for information on interventions.
	Post-incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An incident of severe violence has just occurred; ➤ Both the woman and the man are in the same location. 	
	Homicide scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The man has a specific plan to kill his female partner; ➤ The planned methods are available; ➤ He knows where to find his partner. 	
Short/Medium Term Danger	Homicide threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The man utters direct or indirect death threats or makes armed threats; ➤ History of severe physical violence; ➤ After a couple has separated, the man has an acute sense of having lost his female partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment of the situation with the help of the Evaluation of Danger Indicator; ➤ Make the woman aware of her danger through Campbell's Danger Assessment Scale; ➤ Develop a safety plan; ➤ Offer shelter; ➤ Refer to pages 4 and 5 of the Typology for information on interventions in cases of short/medium term danger;
	One-time risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The danger is related to a specific event. 	
Persistent Danger	Chronic danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The woman has left her male partner; ➤ The man makes obsessive attempts to find his partner; ➤ The man harasses and threatens his partner; ➤ The man has a criminal and judicial history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Refer to pages 6 and 7 of the Typology for information on interventions in cases of persistent danger.
	Continuous exposure to danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The woman is living with her dangerous partner; ➤ Death threats; ➤ History of severe physical violence; ➤ Presence of weapons in the house. 	

Evaluation of Danger Indicators

This evaluation should consider all of the aspects of the couple's situation together.

Situational Context

- Weapon(s) nearby _____
- Partners are in physical proximity _____
- Worker hears shouting _____
- An episode of violence has just occurred:
 - Severe physical violence causing injuries _____
 - Illegal confinement _____
 - Armed sexual assault _____
- Physical layout of the premises
(no opportunity for the woman to escape) _____
- Situation is considered dangerous by other workers _____
- The woman's family and friends are afraid of her partner _____
- The children are terrified of the man _____
- Drugs and/or alcohol in the home _____

Relational Context

- Recent or imminent separation of the couple _____
- Male partner does not accept the separation _____
- Woman has a new male partner _____
- Prior history of domestic violence _____
- Severe past physical violence _____
- Rapid deterioration of the relationship _____
- Multiple separations of the couple _____
- Male partner's reactions during past separations _____
- Male partner continually promises to behave better _____
- The couple has moved several times in a short period _____

Indicators Associated with the Male Partner

- The man's behaviours:
 - Makes death threats (female partner and/or children) _____
 - Threatens to kidnap the children
or to kill them, leaving the wife alive _____
 - Threatens to commit suicide _____
 - Clearly states that he wants to kill his female partner
and possibly commit suicide after _____
 - Makes threats with a weapon or a blunt object _____
 - Threatens the woman's family and friends _____
 - Clearly expresses a homicide scenario _____
 - Harassment (stalking, phone calls, letters, email) _____
 - Exercises dynamics of control with is partner _____
 - Commits violence against the children _____
 - Commits violence against other workers _____
 - Does not respect his release conditions _____
 - Attempts (at all costs) to find his partner _____
 - Acts aggressively towards or threatens to kill or injure a pet _____
- The man's emotional state:
 - Aggressivity _____
 - Impulsivity _____
 - Instability (rapid mood changes) _____
 - Desire for revenge _____
 - Depression _____
 - Suicidal thoughts _____
 - Feels humiliated by the accusations of violence _____
 - Psychological distress _____
 - Emotionally very cold and disconnected _____
 - Obsessed with finding his partner _____
 - Possessiveness and jealousy _____
 - Sudden and unexplained changes in moods and behaviours _____
- Mental health problems _____

- Substance abuse problems (alcohol/drugs) _____
- Criminal gang member _____
- History:
 - Criminal history _____
 - Dysfunctional family of origin (victim of abuse) _____

Indicators Associated with the Female Partner
--

- The woman's physical condition (injuries) _____
- Fears for her life _____
- Fears her partner to the point of having suicidal thoughts _____
- Emotional fragility _____
- Isolation (socially isolated) _____
- State of post-traumatic stress _____
- Ambivalence about:
 - receiving help _____
 - leaving the dangerous situation _____
 - disclosing details of the violence _____
- Denies or minimizes the danger, or sees it as part of her daily life _____
- Expresses fatalism about the outcome of the situation _____
- Has difficulty assessing if her children are in danger _____
- Decides to return to her dangerous partner _____

Danger Assessment

Several risk factors have been associated with homicides (murders) of both batterers and battered women in research conducted after the murders have taken place. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of homicide in situations of severe battering and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation. (*He* refers to your husband, partner, ex-partner or whoever is currently physically hurting you).

A. Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were beaten by your husband or partner. Write on that date how long each incident lasted in approximate hours and rate the incident according to the following scale:

1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain
2. Punching, kicking; bruises, cuts, and/or lasting pain
3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones
4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury
5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon

(If **any** of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)

B. Mark *yes* or *no* to each of the following:

- ___ 1. Has the physical violence increased in frequency over the past year?
- ___ 2. Has the physical violence increased in severity over the past year and/or has a weapon or threat from a weapon ever been used?
- ___ 3. Does he ever try to choke you?
- ___ 4. Is there a gun in the house?
- ___ 5. Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to?
- ___ 6. Does he use drugs? By drugs, I mean "uppers" or amphetamines, speed, angel dust, cocaine, "crack", street drugs or mixtures.
- ___ 7. Does he threaten to kill you and/or do you believe he is capable of killing you?
- ___ 8. Is he drunk every day or almost every day? (In terms quantity of alcohol.)
- ___ 9. Does he control most or all of your daily activities? For instance, does he tell you who you can be friends with, how much money you can take with you shopping, or when you can take the car? (If he tries, but you do not let him, check here: ___)
- ___ 10. Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here: ___)
- 11. Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say, "If I can't have you, no one can.")
- ___ 12. Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
- ___ 13. Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
- ___ 14. Is he violent toward your children?
- ___ 15. Is he violent outside of the home?

- ___ Total *Yes* answers

Calendar History of Incidents

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

FEBUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

*Preventing Domestic Homicide of Women
Danger Assessment Scale*

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

SEPTEMBER

D	L	M	M	J	V	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

OCTOBER

D	L	M	M	J	V	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

NOVEMBER

D	L	M	M	J	V	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

DECEMBER

D	L	M	M	J	V	S

Number of incidents of violence: _____

Level of danger (according to the scale): _____

IMMINENT DANGER

The worker must act quickly to prevent a homicide.

POTENTIALLY SEVERE ASSAULT IS IN PROGRESS

Indicators

- Presence of a weapon or severe physical violence.
- Both the woman and the man are in the same location at the time of intervention.
- Previous death threats.

If the male partner is attempting to enter the women's shelter

- Use the panic button to notify the police or dial 911;
 - Make sure that the male partner will not be able to enter the shelter;
 - Follow the shelter's safety plan to get the women and children into a secure area;
 - While keeping yourself safe and secure, monitor the man's behaviours as you wait for the police and try to get a physical description of him;
 - Once the incident is over, transfer the woman he was seeking into another shelter;
 - Schedule a period of time for workers and residents to verbalize their emotions.
-

IMMINENT DANGER

The worker must act quickly to prevent a homicide.

INCIDENT OF SEVERE VIOLENCE HAS JUST OCCURRED

Indicators

- The call occurs immediately after an episode of severe physical violence (strangling, sexual assault, armed attack).
- At the time of intervention, both partners are on the premises where the event occurred.

If the female partner is calling after the attack.

- Ask the woman if she wants you to call the police;

If yes:

- Ask the woman for her address;
- Stay on the line;
- If possible, call the police from another telephone or have a colleague call.

If no:

- Ask her why she called;
- Ask what you can do for her and tell her what you can offer as help;
- Express your anxiety about the situation and explain how a police intervention works and how it can benefit her;
- Assess the danger:
 - if the male partner is in the same room with her;
 - if she is injured;
 - if she fears for her life;
 - if weapons are nearby;
 - if there are children in the house and if they are safe;
- Call the police if you think that the lives of the woman and her children are in danger;
- Develop a safety plan with the woman. For example, you should:
 - see how she can quickly leave the house;
 - see how the children can quickly leave, even if she herself is unable to do so;
 - know how to reach safety by going to a neighbour or to a public place;
 - call the worker back once she is safe, in order to get information about resources;
 - if the children are away from home when the incident occurs, make sure that they will be safe until someone can go and get them.

IMMINENT DANGER

The worker must act quickly to prevent a homicide.

HOMICIDE SCENARIO

Indicators

- The man has a specific plan to kill his female partner.
- His planned methods are available.
- He knows where to find his partner.

If the male partner is phoning the women's shelter

- Transfer the call to the director or to a colleague if you feel uncomfortable talking to the male partner (if the worker is alone, she should apply the shelter's procedures for responding to male partners);
- Ask another worker to listen in on the conversation and suggest responses;
- Listen to him and try to defuse his anger without getting into a helping relationship;
- Direct the man towards the appropriate resources (CLSC or other community health clinic, mental health crisis centre, program for violent men);
- If he calls back, tell him that you will file a complaint against him;
- Transfer the woman to another women's shelter.

If the woman discloses her partner's homicide plan

- Ensure the safety of the premises;
 - Call the police;
 - Validate the woman and convince her of the seriousness of the threat;
 - Ensure the safety of the woman and her children;
 - Intervene with the children if they are aware of the plan.
-

SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM DANGER

A risk of homicide has been clearly identified, but the worker is unable to predict when it will occur.

HOMICIDE THREATS

Indicators

- Direct or indirect death threats or armed threats.
- History of severe physical violence.
- After a couple has separated, the man has an acute sense of having lost his female partner.

The male partner is making death threats towards the woman

- Make the woman aware of the danger to her and her children;
 - Explore the possibilities of a separation (temporary or permanent);
 - Recommend that she contact the police to file a complaint;
 - If we believe that the children's lives have been threatened, explain to the woman that we are required by law to provide assistance to the children, which might require a report to the child protection services.
-

SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM DANGER

A risk of homicide has been clearly identified, but the worker is unable to predict when it will occur.

ONE-TIME RISK

Indicators

- The danger is related to a specific event.

At court (criminal or civil)

The worker should:

- Ensure that the woman will be accompanied;
 - Organize police transportation if possible (only for criminal cases);
 - Ensure that she will be provided with a safe waiting room (CAVAC, witness room or other);
- Once at court, the woman should:
- Ask to be accompanied by a security guard;
 - During negotiations with the male partner, insist on the presence of a peace officer or that the negotiations will take place in a busy public area (cafeterias or corridors) in order to avoid being together in a small room;
 - Never speak directly to the male partner;
 - Some basic interventions:
 - Negotiate with the male partner's lawyer that his client will remain there for the time it takes her to leave the area;
 - Criminal court: leave while the male partner is signing the release conditions;
 - Ask a guard to accompany her to another exit;
 - Use the most rapid means of transport (taxi) and return later for a reimbursement of transportation costs;
 - After court, the worker should:
 - Make sure that the woman and her children are safe for the next 12 or 24 hours.
-

SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM DANGER

A risk of homicide has been clearly identified, but the worker is unable to predict when it will occur.

ONE-TIME RISK

Change of custody or parental access rights

Indicators

- The danger is related to a specific event.

Review these instructions with the woman to ensure her safety:

- Keep contact with her partner to a minimum;
- Plan clear and short communications during contacts with her partner;
- To avoid contact with her partner, arrange for custody changes to occur at the school or day care;
- Inform someone of the place and time of any meetings with the male partner; ask that person to call and develop an action plan in case of a non-response;
- Be accompanied by a third party;
- Have a cell phone and a personal alarm;
- Find a neutral meeting place (busy public place);
- Try to remain continually in view of other people;
- With the help of the worker, develop a clear safety plan with the children.

Moving personal belongings

Review these instructions with the woman to ensure her safety when she moves her belongings:

- Take a copy of the legal agreement specifying the personal belongings removed by her;
 - Make an agreement with her partner's lawyer about the time and availability of the premises (male partner to be absent from the home);
 - Create a list of the important personal belongings to be retrieved for herself and the children;
 - Request police accompaniment to her home (based on a legal agreement);
 - Have a cell phone and a personal alarm;
 - Have a safety plan in place that was prepared with the worker;
 - Call the shelter during the move or have the shelter call and develop an put into place plan in case she does not answer the phone.
-

PERSISTENT DANGER

A danger of homicide remains, despite preventative measures implemented during intervention.

CHRONIC DANGER

Indicators

- The woman has left her male partner.
- The man makes obsessive attempts to find his female partner.
- The man harasses his female partner.
- Death threats.
- Male partner has a judicial and criminal history.

The man is trying to find his female partner

- Ask the police to increase surveillance around the women's shelter;
- Apply strict security measures in the women's shelter;
- Ask the woman for a description of the male partner (and if possible, a photo) as well as a description of his vehicle (license plate number);
- Review the shelter's security plan with the residents;
- Transfer the woman to another women's shelter if there is any possibility that the male partner might know the shelter's address;
- Ensure that the woman's identity remains secret in the shelter (intervene with the children);
- If necessary, extend her stay at the shelter;
- Help the woman to organize a move to another city far from the male partner;
- In situations where the male partner was conditionally released, ensure that the woman has a copy of these conditions;
- Give a copy of the release conditions to the school, if the man is prohibited from seeing the children.

The man is harassing his ex-partner

- Make the woman aware of the risk of homicide;
- Encourage the woman to file a complaint of criminal harassment;
- Review the following instructions with the woman to ensure her safety:
- In cases of telephone harassment, keep a record of the calls (discuss with the telephone company);
- Keep any letters or emails as evidence of these contacts;
- Make the neighbours aware of the situation by showing them a photograph of her partner;
- Make the school aware of the situation in order to make sure that he does not follow the children to her location;
- Establish protective measures and develop a safety plan with the children with the worker;
- In extreme cases: change her telephone number, move, change the children's schools;
- Consider staying at or returning to the women's shelter

PERSISTENT DANGER

A danger of homicide remains, despite preventative measures implemented during intervention.

CONTINUOUS EXPOSURE TO DANGER	The woman is living with her male partner
<p style="text-align: center;">Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The woman is living with the dangerous male partner.•Death threats.•History of severe physical violence or the presence of a weapon in the house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Make the woman aware of the risk of homicide;➤ Work out a safety plan. In a crisis situation, the woman should:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ See how quickly she can leave the house;○ Have a suitcase with clothes, money and important papers in a safe place or with a third party;○ Find a pretext to leave the house (ex: a doctor's visit as an excuse, leave when picking up the children from school or daycare);○ Plan for a means of transportation (money for a taxi);○ Inform someone about the situation;○ Inform a neighbour (agree on a code) so that someone can quickly call the police in case of emergency;○ Use the referrals provided in advance by the worker to quickly access help;➤ Stay in regular contact with the woman in order to know how the situation is developing;➤ Assess the level of danger for the children;➤ Make sure that the children have activities outside the home (in order to have a break from the tense situation);➤ Attempt, over time, to convince the woman to leave the male partner (without pushing her) and provide her with follow-up through the separation process.

Judicial Process

