

# Tennessee Domestic Violence Report

2009-2011



Prepared by the  
Tennessee Bureau of Investigation  
Crime Statistics Unit





**Bill Haslam**  
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**Mark Gwyn**  
Director

October 12, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Each year the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation releases annual reports of crimes reported by law enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program in five different reports. The TIBRS data contains a wide range of incident level information including victim and offender demographics. In addition to the usual annual reports, the Crime Statistics Unit focused on a data subset of domestic violence victims of crime for the last three years of reported data.

The issue of domestic violence is, by no means, a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitates continued awareness about this issue. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) uses the following definition of domestic violence “the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another. It is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background.” (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2012) In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related from 2009-2011 were examined.

Sincerely,

Mark Gwyn  
Director



## **Introduction**

The issue of domestic violence is, by no means, a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitates continued awareness about this issue. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) uses the following definition of domestic violence “the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another. It is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background.” (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2012) In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related from 2009-2011 were examined.

## **Domestic Violence Research**

At the national level, the NCADV reports that approximately 1.3 million women are victims of domestic physical assault yearly. The 2005 National Crime Victimization Survey found that one in every three victims reported being physically attacked while two-thirds of domestic violence victims were threatened with attack or death. One report highlighting the impact of domestic violence on the state of Tennessee defines domestic violence as “a pattern of abusive behaviors used by one individual intending to exert power and control over another person in an intimate relationship. It can be physical, sexual, or psychological.” (Tennessee Economic Council on Women, 2006, p.2)

Domestic violence has often been documented as having far-reaching consequences. Not only have the emotional and psychological effects of domestic violence on victims and witnesses been intimately researched, other outcomes have also been examined. Domestic violence, though a crime against an individual, has significant effects on the greater local and state community. Perhaps not as widely known as the psychological, physical and emotional damage are the economic consequences of domestic abuse. Previous national and state-level studies have effectively quantified just such effects in dollars and cents. Results reveal that millions of dollars are lost each year in lost wages, sick leave, and absenteeism with one study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reporting 727.8 million dollars lost annually in work productivity as a direct result of domestic violence. (Tennessee Council on Women Impact Study, 2006)

According to NCADV, intimate partner violence costs over 5.8 billion dollars per year and 18.5 million mental health care visits annually. In the state of Tennessee alone, an estimated \$33 million in annual healthcare costs can be attributed to known domestic violence cases. (Tennessee Council on Women Impact Study, 2006) Given the significant negative physical, psychological, social, and economic effects domestic violence has been proven to have on victims, witnesses, and even the greater community, it is imperative to evaluate the problem of domestic violence.

There is a plethora of research literature examining various facets of domestic violence ranging from victimization surveys to offender profiles. Due to the nature of domestic violence with close

interpersonal relationships between victim and offender there exists underreporting of such offenses. The unfortunate result is that documented incidents by law enforcement agencies are usually not an accurate reflection of domestic violence within any particular jurisdiction. As such, much research on the topic relies heavily on self-reporting via victimization surveys. This seems to be the preferred method of data collection of domestic violence information based on the premise that respondents are more likely to respond openly and honestly to survey questions when able to do so anonymously and without potential negative consequences or retaliation from his/her abuser. States that have recently utilized victimization surveys to assess domestic crimes include Minnesota (2010) and Indiana (2010).

It should be noted that there may be some discrepancy when comparing studies and their findings as much of the domestic violence literature focuses solely on "intimate partner" violence often defined as the victim and offender being spouses, ex-spouses, partners, or ex-partners. The current study utilizes a more broad definition of domestic violence by including the previously stated intimate relationships as well as several familial relationships. Also, some research studies focus solely on female victims of domestic violence. The current study is based on incidents submitted to TIBRS by law enforcement agencies across the state of Tennessee as domestically related and includes both male and female victims.

### **Overall Findings**

Upon initially examining the TIBRS data submitted for domestic violence offenses, several parameters for the study were established. The data included in this study met the following criteria: Crimes Against Persons offense(s); offense(s) flagged by the law enforcement agency as being domestically related; and victim gender cannot be reported as Unknown. A count of domestic violence victims reported from 2009 through 2011 in the state of Tennessee totaled 255,155. Of those, 254,903 reported a known gender and will serve as the total population for the study. It should be noted that individuals who reported domestic abuse in more than one incident during the study period will be duplicated accordingly in this study's victim count. The majority of these victims were female (72.2%) outnumbering the male victims by almost 3 to 1. Analysis of race breakdown revealed that White victims were consistently the race majority for all offenses each year 2009 to 2011 accounting for as much as eighty percent of victims for the following offenses: Sexual Assault with an Object (88.1%), Incest (78.1%), and Statutory Rape (74.6%). In addition to sex and race, victim age was also analyzed. A total of 25,465 juveniles, or individuals under age eighteen, were reported as victims during the study period accounting for approximately 10 percent of all victims.

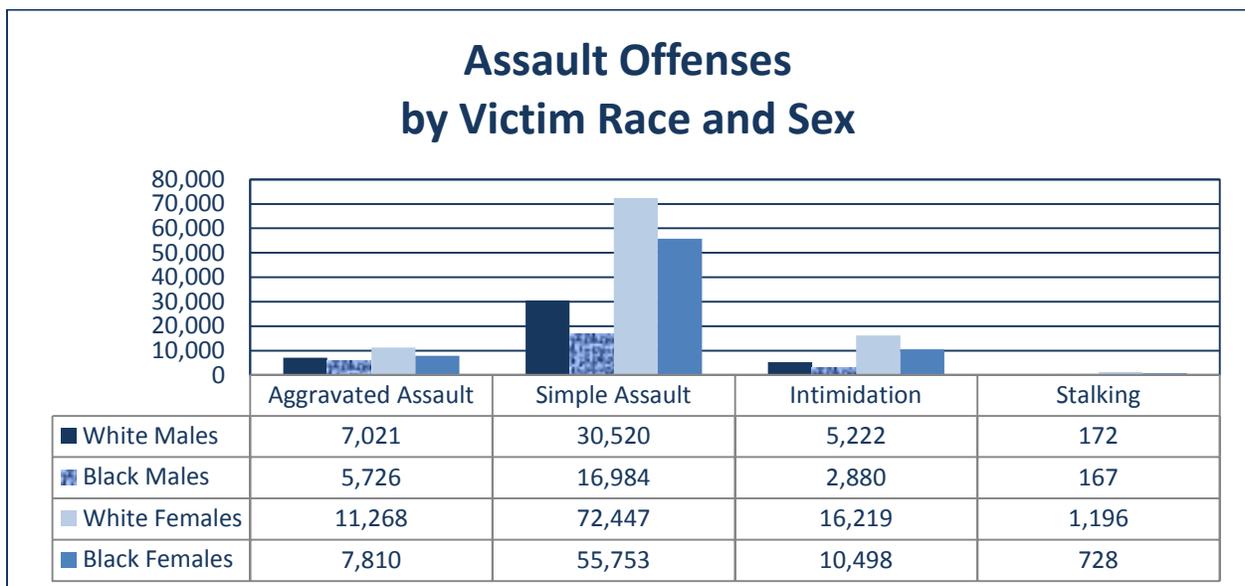
Though the overall numbers reveal a decrease in total reported offenses each year from 2009 to 2011 involving domestic violence, this trend should be cautiously interpreted. Over the three year period, domestic violence decreased by a total of only 1.1 percent. In 2010, domestic related offenses decreased by a fraction of a percent (.3) to 85,163 from the previous year's total (85,475). The year 2011 revealed the greatest year to year decrease seen during this study period reporting 646 fewer offenses than 2010. Three of the four TIBRS Assault Offenses combined account for ninety-six percent of all domestic violence reported during the time period. These findings will be further examined later in the study.

## Domestic Violence Offenses

Crimes identified as domestically related in TIBRS must always have the victim type of Individual. Crimes Against Society and Crimes Against Property cannot be flagged as domestic violence in TIBRS. There are 14 offenses considered to be Crimes Against Persons. Of the 14 offenses, twelve were included in the study with the two omitted offenses being Negligent Manslaughter and Justifiable Homicide. The remaining offenses reported to TIBRS between the years of 2009 and 2011 as domestic violence were analyzed.

Results revealed that Simple Assault accounted for the greatest majority of all domestic offenses at 69.6%. Intimidation and Aggravated Assault were the second and third most frequently reported offenses accounting for 13.8% and 12.6% respectively. These three assault offenses accounted for 96.0% of all domestic violence offenses reported during the study period. The percentage of both Simple and Aggravated Assaults in relation to all offenses stayed relatively stable from year to year. The remaining assault offenses, Intimidation and Stalking, showed a decrease of at least 5.0% over the time period.

Homicides determined to be the result of domestic violence decreased by 11.1% with 96 homicides reported in 2011 as compared to 108 in 2009. Three of the four TIBRS Forcible Sex Offenses showed an elevated percent change from 2009 to 2011: Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, and Sexual Assault with an Object. The domestic violence offense showing the greatest percentage increase during the study period was Sexual Assault with an Object at 16.3%. Though this offense decreased from 2009 to 2010 by 7.0%, reported incidents increased from 2010 to 2011 by 25.0% (the greatest year to year percent change in this study). Forcible Fondling was the only Forcible Sex Offense that showed reduction in reported offenses changing by -5.3%.

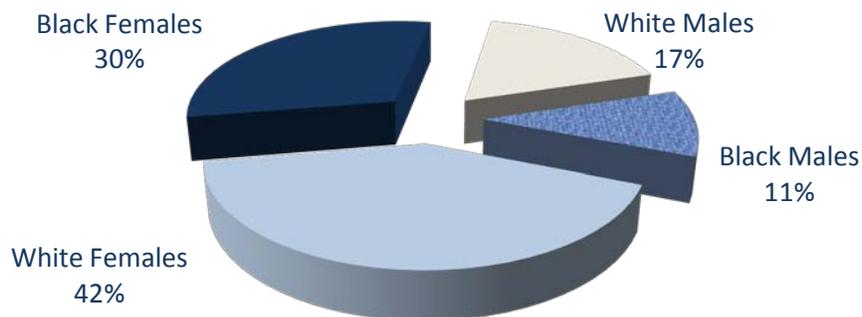


## Domestic Violence Offenses by Gender (2009-2011)

OFFENSE	Female		Male		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Murder/Non-negligent Homicide	164	55.4	132	44.6	296	0.1
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,550	73.0	574	27.0	2,124	0.8
Forcible Rape	1,821	98.7	24	1.3	1,845	0.7
Forcible Sodomy	201	42.9	268	57.1	469	0.2
Sexual Assault with an Object	233	87.6	33	12.4	266	0.1
Forcible Fondling	1,532	79.9	385	20.1	1,917	0.8
Aggravated Assault	19,267	60.0	12,854	40.0	3,121	12.6
Simple Assault	129,514	73.0	47,976	27.0	177,490	69.6
Intimidation	26,993	76.7	8,189	23.3	35,182	13.8
Stalking	1,950	85.0	343	15.0	2,293	0.9
Incest	110	82.1	24	17.9	134	0.1
Statutory Rape	725	84.6	41	5.4	766	0.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184,060</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>70,843</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>254,903</b>	<b>100.0</b>

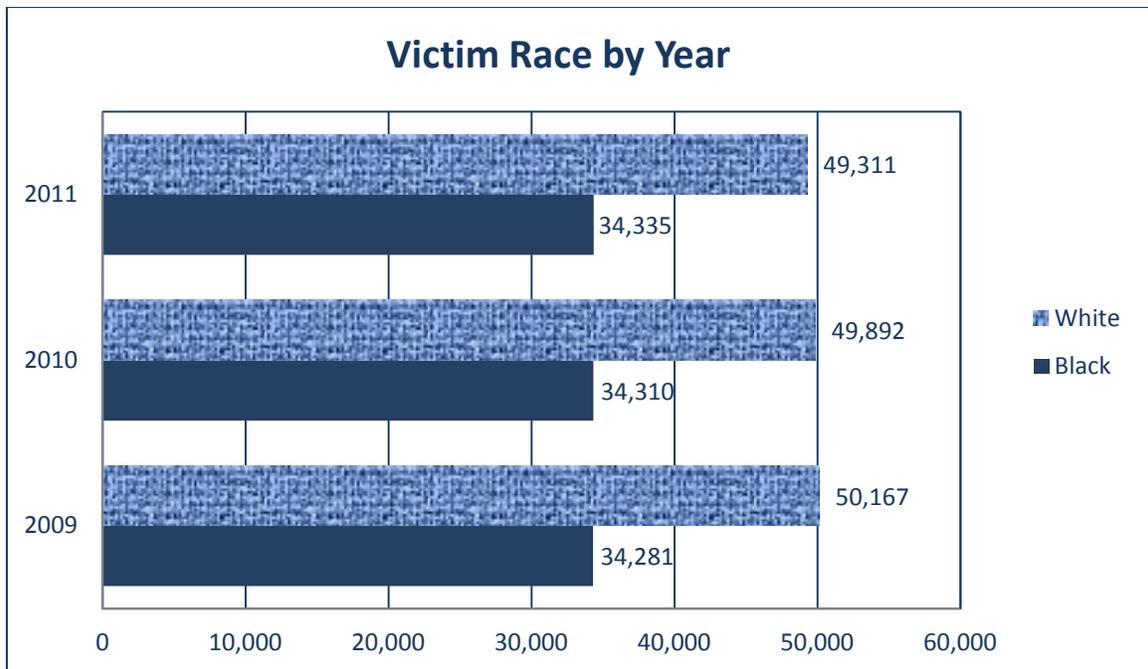
Domestic violence may often be perceived as violence against women. There are numerous agencies nationally and locally that advocate specifically for battered and abused women. The current analyses of domestic offenses in the state of Tennessee supports this notion that domestic violence is most often perpetrated on female victims. Data collected from TIBRS revealed that women were consistently the primary victims of domestic violence offenses each year from 2009 through 2011 with the exception of one offense, Forcible Sodomy (11B). Of the domestic violence offenses, Forcible Rape had the highest number and percentage of Female victims each year with 559 (98.8%) in 2009; 648 (98.3%) in 2010; and 614 (99.0%) in 2011. Male victims accounted for 27.8 percent of all domestic violence victims. As such, females in Tennessee are three times more likely than males to become victims of domestic abuse.

## 2011 Domestic Violence Victims by Race & Sex



### Domestic Violence Victims by Race

Secondary analysis of the TIBRS data element Race found that of the 254,903 domestic abuse victims reported during the study period, those identified as having a Race other than Black or White accounted for less than one percent. As a result, Black and White victims will be specifically highlighted in this study. Though not omitted from the total victim count, due to the very low representation, other victim races (i.e. Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Unknown) will not be detailed in the current study. Black males were the least likely to be victimized. Though with very little percentage change, the overall number of Black victims increased each year (2009 – 34,281; 2010 – 34,310; 2011 – 34,335) while the total number of White victims decreased (2009 – 50,167; 2010 – 49,892; 2011 – 49,311).



Though Whites were victimized at a higher rate than Blacks by a margin of 31.6 percent, there were several offenses that showed even greater disparity between these two racial groups in terms of victimization. Of the Incest victims, 88.1% reported their race as White; 81.2% of Sexual Assault with an Object offenses had White victims; and a total of 74.0% of Murder/Non-negligent Homicides flagged as domestically related identified victim race as White. Over the three year period, 928 victims of Kidnapping/Abduction were Black accounting for 45.0% victims of that particular offense. This offense presents the highest percentage of Black victims during the study. Black victims accounted for 43.1% of all Aggravated Assaults and 42.0% of all Simple Assaults.

## **Intimate Relationships**

Though domestic violence victims and offenders can have various interpersonal relationships, the intimate relationship is most often the center of attention when addressing domestic abuse. Intimate relationships may present as formal relationships such as marriage or less formal relationships such as dating. The National Violence Against Women Survey revealed that 25 percent of female respondents acknowledged that they “were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, or date at some time in their life” as compared to 7.6 percent of male respondents (NVAWS, 2012). To examine just such relationships, one particular TIBRS data element was used. TIBRS collects information concerning the particular relationship between the victim and offender. This element, Victim to Offender (V-O) relationship, was used. More specifically, the intimate V-O relationships of Spouse, Ex-Spouse, and Boyfriend/Girlfriend were analyzed.

### ***Spouse/Ex-Spouse***

The Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships were examined together for comparison purposes. Results revealed that the number of domestic abuse victims reporting Spouse as the V-O relationship greatly outnumbered Ex-Spouse relationships each year by approximately 6 to 1. Over the three year period, a total of 44,834 domestic violence victims reported their relationship to the offender as Spouse; and 7,041 victims reported their V-O relationship as Ex-Spouse. Spouses were reported as offenders of domestic violence approximately four times more often than Ex-Spouses. Black males were the least likely to be reported victims of domestic violence abuse by a spouse (6.2%) or ex-spouse (5.6%). Black females were victimized at a higher rate than their male counterparts accounting for 18.3% of victims reporting Spouse V-O relationship and 16.1% of victims with Ex-Spouse relationship. The researchers found that White males were only slightly less often reported as domestic abuse victims in one of the two V-O relationships than Black females. White males reported a Spouse relationship in domestic violence offenses 18.7% (only .4 % difference from Black female victims) and Ex-Spouse 18.6%.

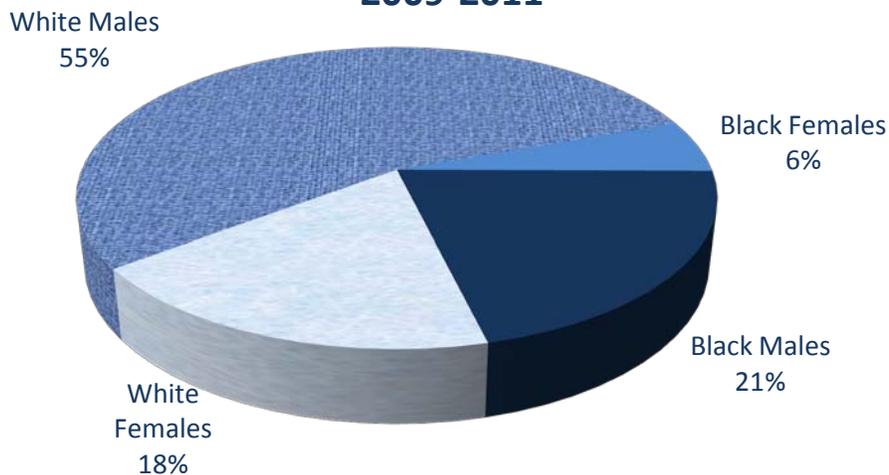
Of all the victims reporting Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships with their domestic abuse offenders, White females account for over half of all victims (55.2% - Spouse V-O; 59.3% Ex-Spouse V-O). Further examination of the data reveals that their white male counterparts reflect similarly as the offenders of domestic abuse against Spouse and Ex-Spouse. 54.1% of white male offenders were reported as being married to the victim and 56.3% were reported as an Ex-Spouse during the study period. The group least likely to commit domestic violence offenses against a Spouse or Ex-Spouse was Black females, who were reported as offenders in 5.6% of all Spouse V-O relationships and 4.5% of Ex-Spouse.

**Spouse/Ex-Spouse Relationship by Sex and Race**

Victim to Offender Relationship	2011		2010		2009	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
<b>Spouse</b>	<b>14,850</b>		<b>14,629</b>		<b>15,355</b>	
Male	4,129	27.8%	3,577	24.5%	3,578	23.3%
Black	1,014	6.8%	894	6.1%	887	5.8%
White	3,065	20.6%	2,650	18.1%	2,651	17.3%
Female	10,721	72.2%	11,052	75.5%	11,777	76.7%
Black	2,571	17.3%	2,726	18.6%	2,930	19.1%
White	7,973	53.7%	8,129	55.6%	8,651	56.3%
<b>Ex-Spouse</b>	<b>2,274</b>		<b>2,323</b>		<b>2,444</b>	
Male	578	25.4%	529	22.8%	587	24.0%
Black	136	6.0%	103	4.4%	125	5.1%
White	436	19.2%	417	18.0%	455	18.6%
Female	1,696	74.6%	1,794	77.2%	1,857	76.0%
Black	381	16.8%	367	15.8%	383	15.7%
White	1,300	57.2%	1,416	61.0%	1,457	59.6%

**Please note:** Totals include Races of all victims reported as having a known gender. Adding only given figures for Black and White victims will not give an accurate total. Totals in dark blue are accurate totals for all victims reporting the given relationship and gender.

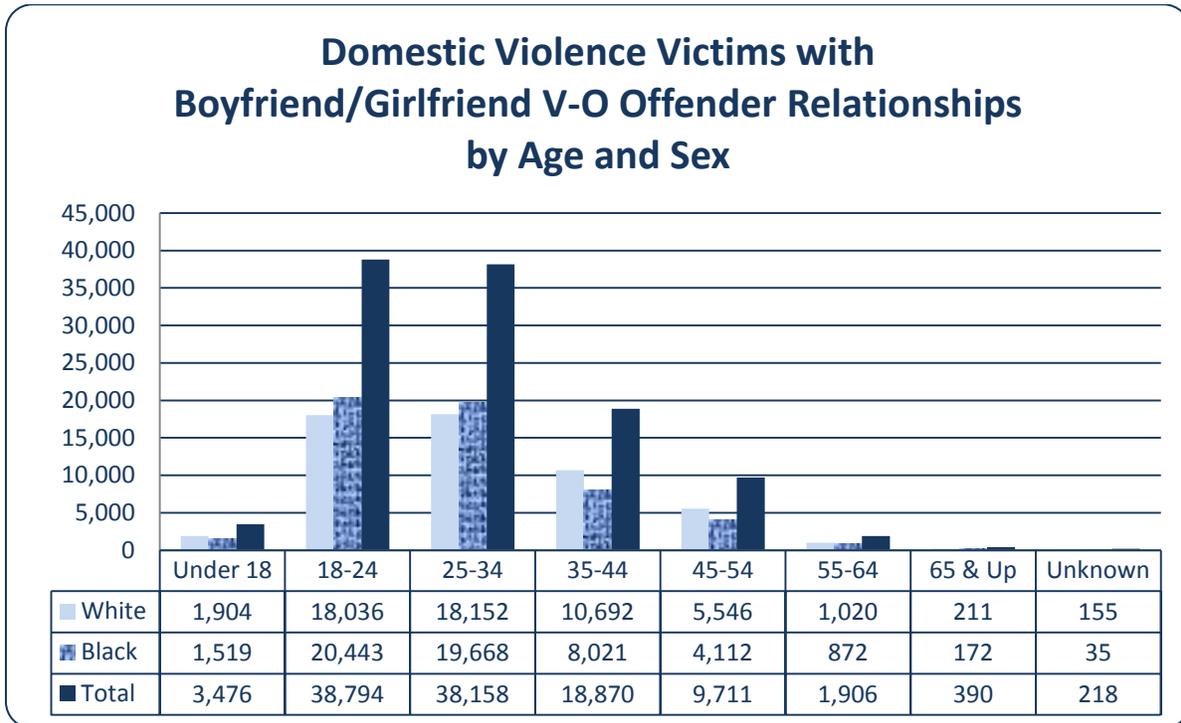
**Domestic Violence Offenders with a Spouse Relationship to Victim  
2009-2011**



**Boyfriend/Girlfriend**

The research literature often documents the relationship between domestic victims and their abusers as Boyfriend/Girlfriend. From 2009 to 2011, Tennessee law enforcement agencies reported 111,523 Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationships flagged as domestic violence incidents. Specific demographic information of both victims and offenders was examined to better understand domestic abuse within Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships. Of these victims, 50.0% identified their Race as White and 49.2% were Black combined for 99.2%. Victims reporting their offender as a Boyfriend/Girlfriend were most frequently Females. Of the 111,523 abuse victims reporting this relationship, 89,112 were Females accounting for 79.9%. When adding in the factor of Race, analysis revealed only a one percent difference between White and Black female victims at 40.0% and 39.1%. Similarly, only a fraction of a percentage separated Black and White male victims reporting 9.9% and 10.0% respectively. A breakdown of age groups showed age ranges 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 had the highest frequency of domestic abuse victims reporting Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships to his/her abuser.

Perpetrators of domestic violence against a Boyfriend or Girlfriend were most often documented as Black males accounting for 46.0% of reported offenders followed by White males at 33.3%. Offenders aged 25 to 34 years old accounted for 35.8% of offenders, the largest age group. When cross examining the demographic variables of Race and Age, results revealed the largest group of offenders was identified as Black within the age group of 25 to 34 at 20.4%.



A more recent emergence in the domestic violence literature focuses on domestic abuse among juveniles. More specifically, teen dating violence has been addressed as a rising issue in our society. This study utilizes the TIBRS V-O data element to expose the presence of juvenile domestic violence in

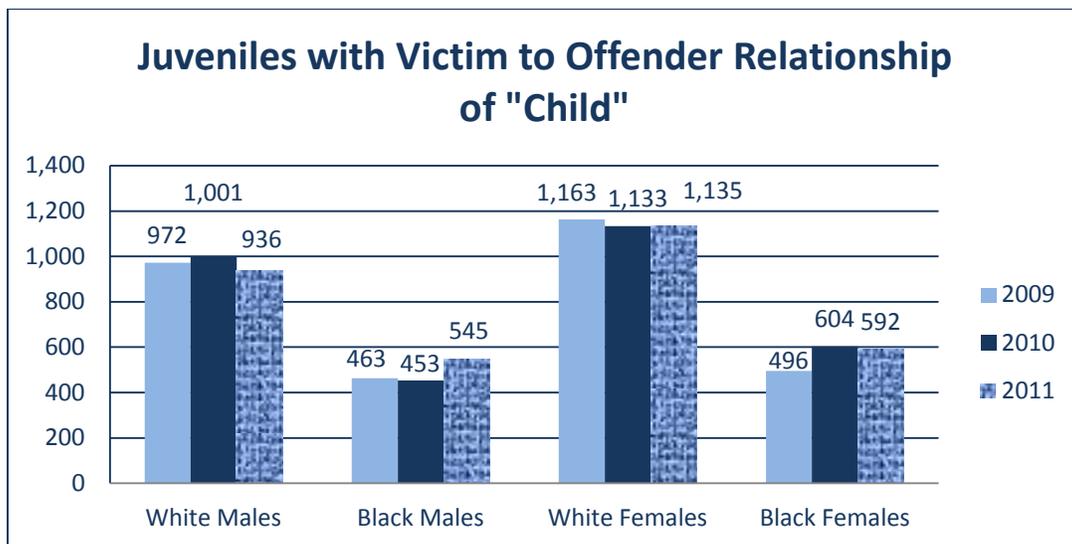
Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships in the state of Tennessee. During the three year time frame examined in the study, the number of V-O relationships reported by juvenile victims decreased each year (1,279 in 2009; 1,180 in 2010; 1,017 in 2011) resulting in a 20.5% drop. Juveniles accounted for 3.1% of domestic abuse victims with a Boyfriend/Girlfriend offender, and were most likely to be females with the greatest percentage identified as White Females.

**Family Relationships**

***Child***

The Victim to Offender (V-O) relationship *Child* denotes the offender as being the parent (mother or father) of the victim. In the state of Tennessee, a total of 16,142 such relationships were reported in domestic violence offenses. This particular TIBRS data element, when specifically addressing juvenile victims, can be considered a direct indication of child abuse. The majority of domestic violence incidents indicating a Child V-O relationship reported to TIBRS between 2009 and 2011 had victims under age 18. For TIBRS purposes these individuals are considered to be juveniles and any physical assaults perpetrated against them are inherently child abuse. Several local and state agencies such as the Department of Children’s Services and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee advocate strongly on behalf of juveniles that are abused and/or neglected and try to prevent future abuse.

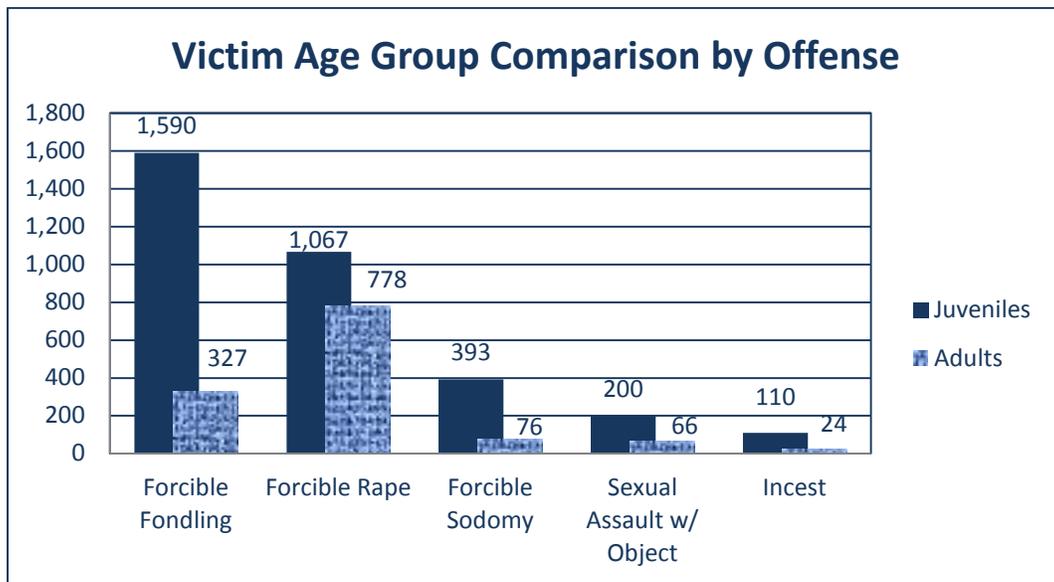
Three year totals for the Child V-O relationship for domestic violence offenses show several trends in the data. Each year juveniles, on average, accounted for 59.7% of victims abused by one or more parent(s). More specifically, females under age 18 were most frequently reported as being victimized by their parents accounting for 32.2% of all Child V-O relationships at 5,198. Representing 21.3% of victims were White Females under age 18. This demographic group was victimized at a higher rate than any other combination of race, sex, and age group within this study.



Whites were victimized by their parents at approximately two times the rate of Blacks. Analysis of Race showed a 36.0% disparity between Black and White victims of domestic abuse having a Child V-O relationship. Examination of the data revealed a positive relationship between the age of white victims and the proportion of white victims reported as having a Child V-O relationship. As the age groups increase, so does the representative percentage of victims with a documented Race of White within each age group. This is found to be true for both males and females. Of the 5,045 victims identified as having a Race of Black, 3,003 were female and 2,042 were male. Within the Black Race, 33.5% were juvenile females and 28.9% were Juvenile males accounting for 62.4% of all reported Black abuse victims with a Child V-O relationship.

**Juvenile Victims**

Of the domestic violence victims, juveniles accounted for approximately 10.0% of victims each year of the study with 8,486 (10.0%) in 2009, 8,605 (10.3%) in 2010 and 8,374 (9.9%) in 2011. Female juveniles were reported as victims around 60.0% each year while Male juveniles were reported as victims around 40.0% each year. The most frequently reported offense for female victims was Forcible Rape for each year. This mirrors the trend found in the adult female domestic violence victims. The most frequently reported offense for male victims was Forcible Sodomy in 2009 and 2010. In 2011, the most frequently reported offense for male victims was Murder, Non-negligent Manslaughter.



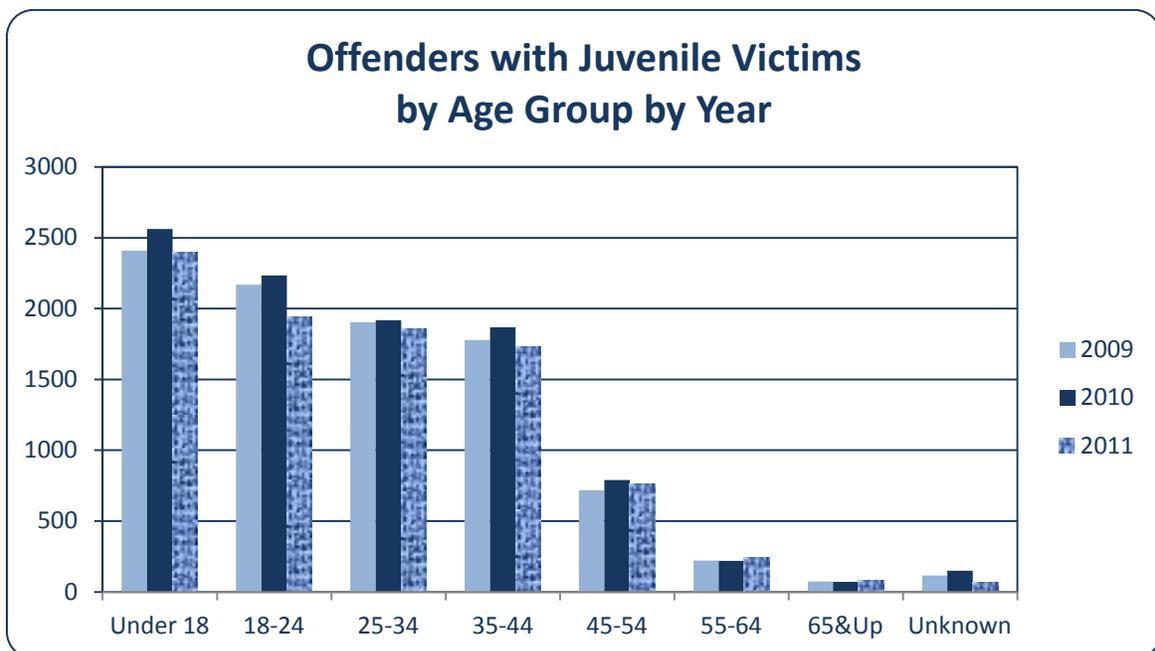
The chart above depicts five offenses in which juveniles are victimized at a higher rate than adults. Juveniles were more than four times more likely to be victims of Forcible Fondling in a domestic assault than adults. Juveniles accounted for 57.8% of all reported Forcible Rapes during the study period and 83.8% of all Forcible Sodomy offenses.

## Offenders with Juvenile Victims

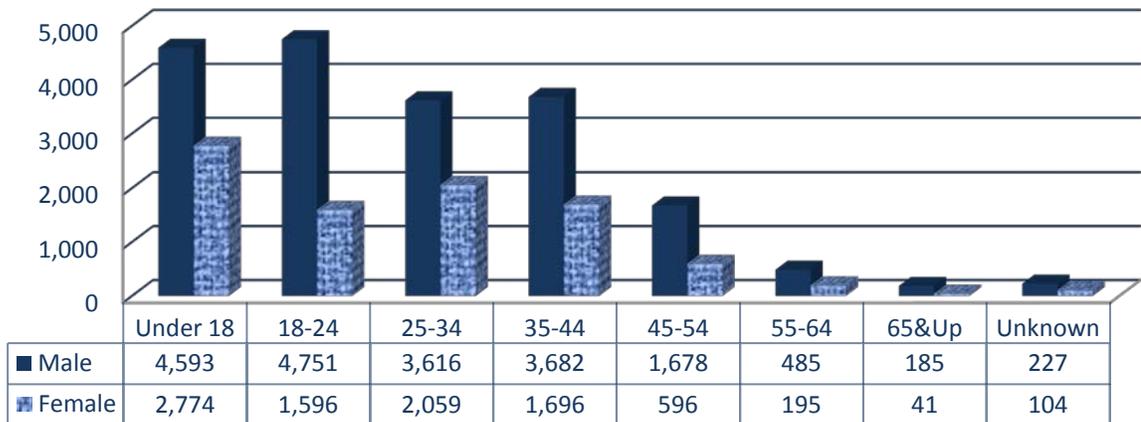
During the timeframe of the study, there were a total of 28,278 offenders with juvenile victims: 9,390 (33.2%) in 2009, 9,815 (34.7%) in 2010 and 9,073 (32.1%) in 2011. The number of Male offenders reported outnumbered the number of Female offenders by 2 to 1, with a total of 19,217 Males compared to 9,061 Females.

The most frequently reported age group of offenders with juvenile victims was Under 18 for all three years. This gives insight into the juvenile on juvenile domestic violence. Because these incidents have been flagged as domestically related, there is great confidence that the data is capturing more than the typical after-school fights or spats between friends. Domestic abuse, by definition, denotes a closer interpersonal relationship shared by the victim and offender. Given these facts, there may be some support for the existence of teenage dating violence and domestic abuse within the state of Tennessee. Earlier examination of the Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship revealed that domestic abuse does exist, though in low numbers (juveniles accounted for 3% of all Boyfriend/Girlfriend Relationships reported) within this population.

The second most frequently reported offender age group was 18 to 24. The least frequently reported age group with juvenile victims was 65 & up. The most frequently reported age group for Female offenders was Under 18. However, the most frequently reported age group for Male offenders was 18 to 24.



## Offenders with Juvenile Victims by Age and Sex 2009-2011



Secondary analysis of the TIBRS data element Race found that of the 28,278 offenders with juvenile victims reported during the study period, those identified as having a Race other than Black or White accounted for a small percentage. As a result, Black and White offenders were specifically reported in this study. Although other offender races were not omitted from the total offender count, due to the very low representation, other offender races will not be detailed in the current study. Analysis of the offender race indicates that the most frequently reported offender race for the age ranges of Under 18 and 18 to 24 was Black while White offenders were the most frequently reported as being age 25 and older. This trend was reflected in all three years of the study.

### **Clearance of Domestic Violence Offenses**

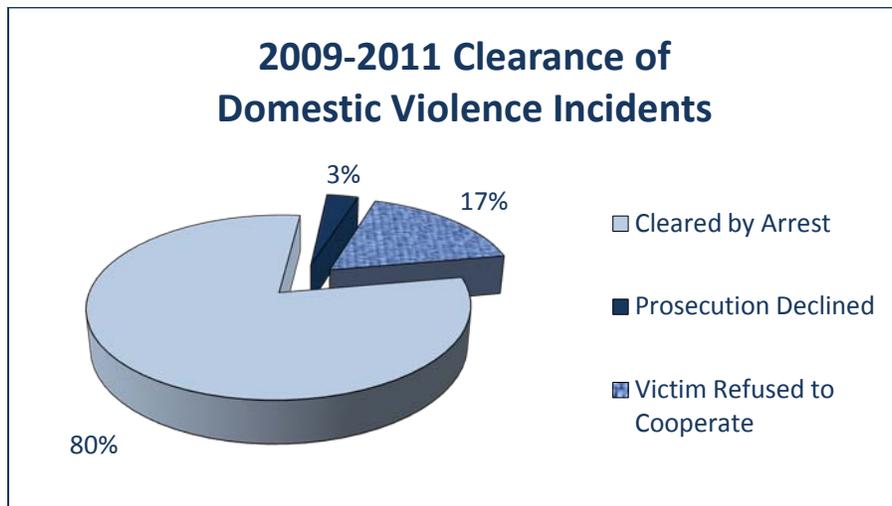
TIBRS offenses can be cleared two ways, arrest or exceptional means, by law enforcement agencies. Per TIBRS, incidents are exceptionally cleared “when an element beyond law enforcement control prevents a physical arrest.” (TIBRS Data Collection Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012, p. 9)

Clearing domestic violence incidents can be difficult when considering the compounding factors that contribute to the cooperation of victims and potential witnesses. Because of the very nature of domestic violence and the close interpersonal relationships that exist between the victim and offender, it can be challenging for law enforcement to complete an arrest. Fear of retaliation is a very strong deterrent for domestic violence victims. Cohabiting domestic violence victims and offenders can present an obvious challenge in clearing an incident due to victims not cooperating in order to prevent subsequent abuse and turmoil within the household. One of the most common variables contributing to the lack of victim cooperation is the fear of retaliation. Additional future physical and/or mental abuse and loss of residence are just a few potential negative consequences when pressing charges against the offender or cooperating in the investigation by the victim.

Over half of the domestic violence incidents reported during the study period were cleared (55.4%). Of the 141,340 domestic violence incidents cleared in TIBRS from 2009 through 2011, 79.3% were cleared by arrest. The remaining 20.7% of cleared incidents were cleared exceptionally. In order for Tennessee law enforcement agencies to clear an incident exceptionally, the following conditions must be met: the investigation established identity of at least one offender; sufficient probable cause must have been developed to support the arrest, charging, and prosecution of the offender; the exact location of the offender must be known; there must be a reason outside of law enforcement control preventing arrest. (TIBRS Data Collection Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012)

Domestic Violence Exceptional Clearances 2009-2011	
Offense Type	Totals
Death of the Offender	116
Prosecution Declined	4534
Extradition Denied	27
Victim Refused to Cooperate	24,369
Juvenile/No Custody	170
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,216</b>

The vast majority of exceptional clearances, 83.4%, were documented as Victim Refused to Cooperate. As defined by TIBRS, Victim Refused to Cooperate can only clear an incident when the victim has actually stated or made it known to the agency that they refuse to cooperate or pursue prosecution of the offender. Death of the Offender, Extradition Denied, and Juvenile/No Custody each accounted for less than one percent of all clearances during the study period.



**Summary**

The problem of domestic violence has consistently plagued our society. Given the prevalence of domestic violence and its consequences to individuals as well as the local and state community, the current study assessed domestic abuse within the state of Tennessee. Findings of the study revealed that though the number of incidents reduced each year during the study period from 2009 to 2011, the

total percentage decrease was minute (-1.1%). Overall, females were three times more likely to be reported as victims than males, and victim Race was most often documented as White (58.6%). This victim demographic information gives insight into what populations are most at-risk for domestic violence in the state.

The overwhelming majority of domestically related offenses reported during the study period were assaults. The four assault offenses combined to account for 96.9% of all domestic violence incidents in the state of Tennessee. Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense at 69.6%.

Examination of Victim to Offender relationships revealed that Spouses are abused at a rate almost four times that of Ex-Spouses. The data from the Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship element showed very little percentage difference between Black and White female victims: 39.1% and 40.0% respectively. Perpetrators of domestic abuse against a boyfriend or girlfriend were most often Black males accounting for 46.0% of all perpetrators. A significant finding from this data element revealed the existence of domestic violence in juvenile boyfriend/girlfriend relationships with 3,476 incidents during the study period.

Another significant finding revealed that over half of the victims reporting "Child" Victim to Offender relationships were juveniles. A 36.0% racial disparity was found with Whites under age 18 being victimized at greater rate than Blacks within the same age group. It is vital to assess the prevalence of juveniles being abused at the hands of parents as this implicates child abuse within the community.

TIBRS data supports the fact that women and children generally have the highest potential for domestic abuse victimization. Local, state, and national agencies across several disciplines including law enforcement and social and child services avidly oppose domestic violence and advocate for its victims. These various institutions and coalitions battle domestic abuse by providing prevention training, intervention, shelter, and counseling for both victims and potential victims of domestic violence. Hopefully, the current assessment of domestic violence in Tennessee exposes the need for continued and increased efforts in the battle against domestic abuse within our community.

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