



# Reproductive Coercion

## *Preventable, Pervasive, Readily Prioritized*

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*Fellow in Complex Family Planning*  
*she/her/hers*





# Disclosures

- None



# Objectives

- **To affirm violence as a health phenomenon**
- **To review current terminology and theory of intimate partner violence**
- **To define reproductive coercion and recognition in the clinical setting**
- **To highlight interventions for reproductive coercion that are routine in reproductive and sexual health care**



# Violence as health

Rate of All Violent Crimes Offenses by Population



Figure 2. National Homicide Rate, 1960-2016

Rate per 100,000 people

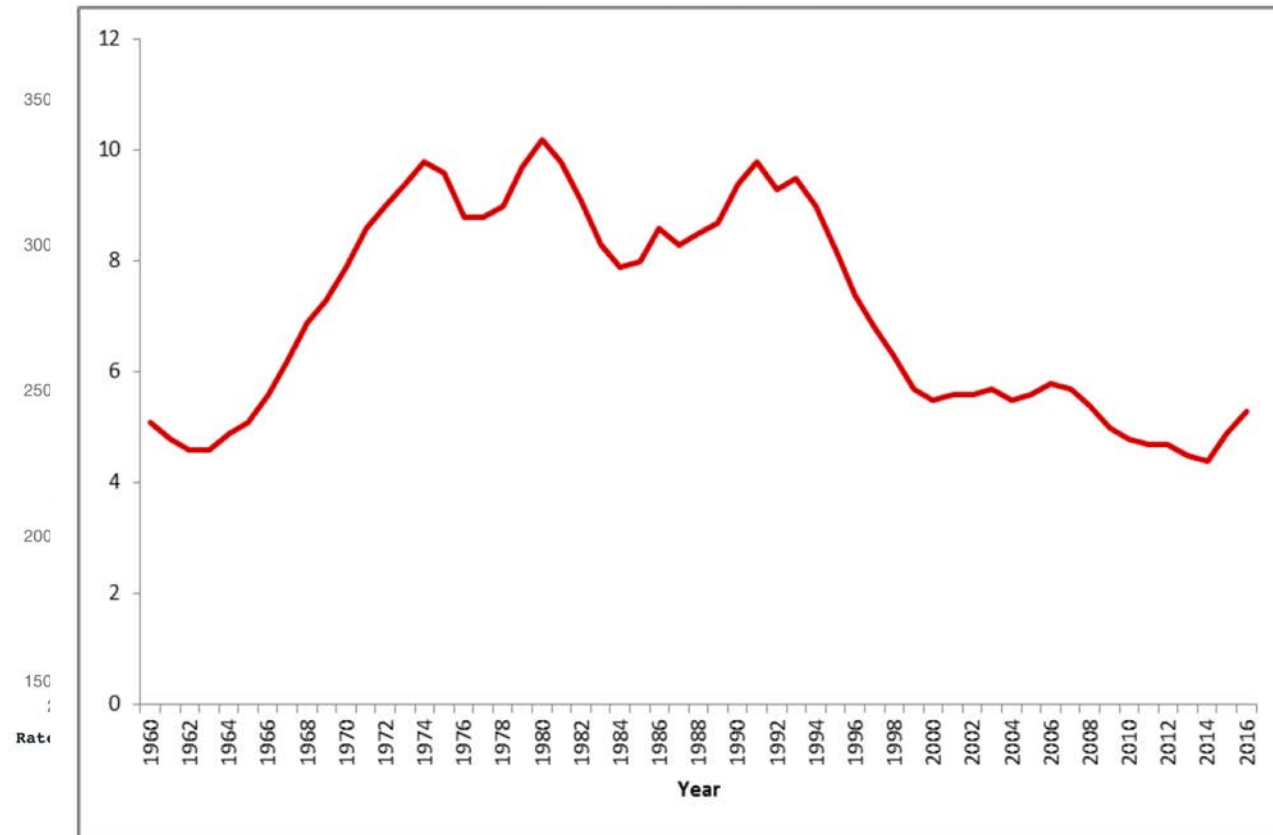
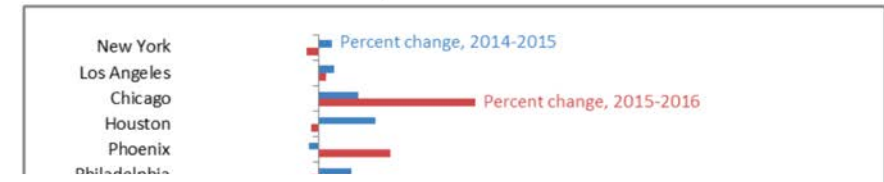
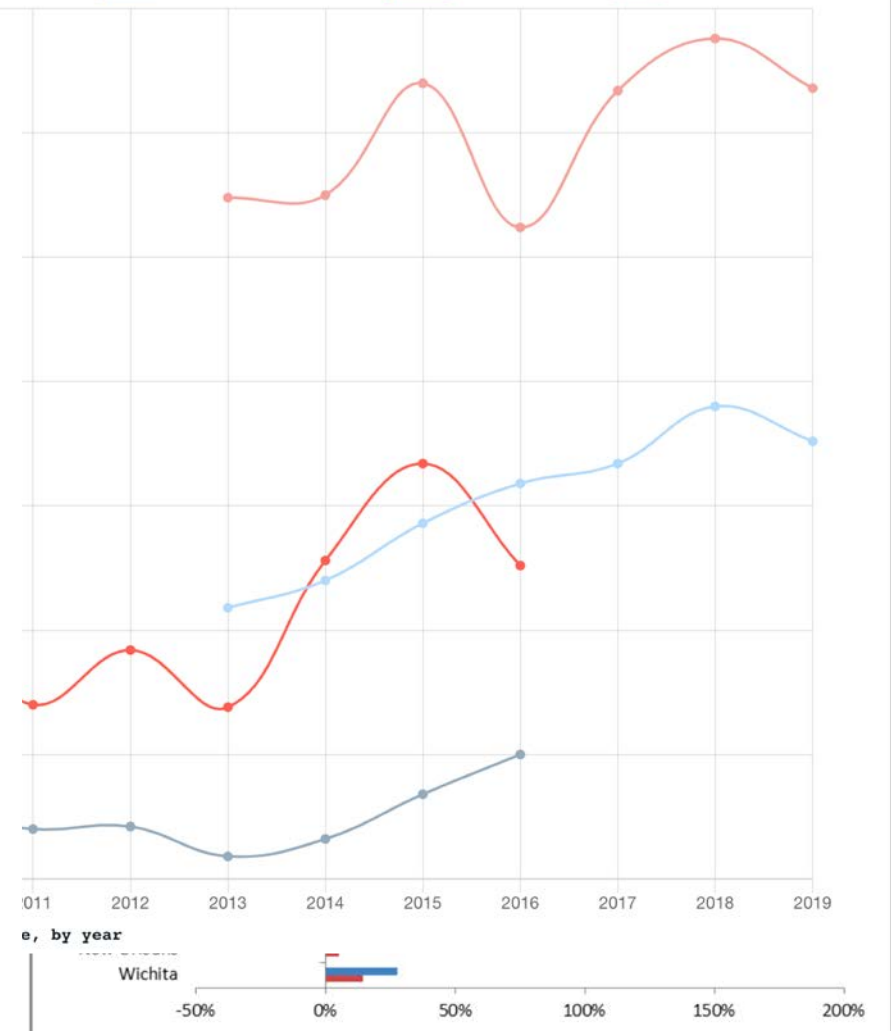


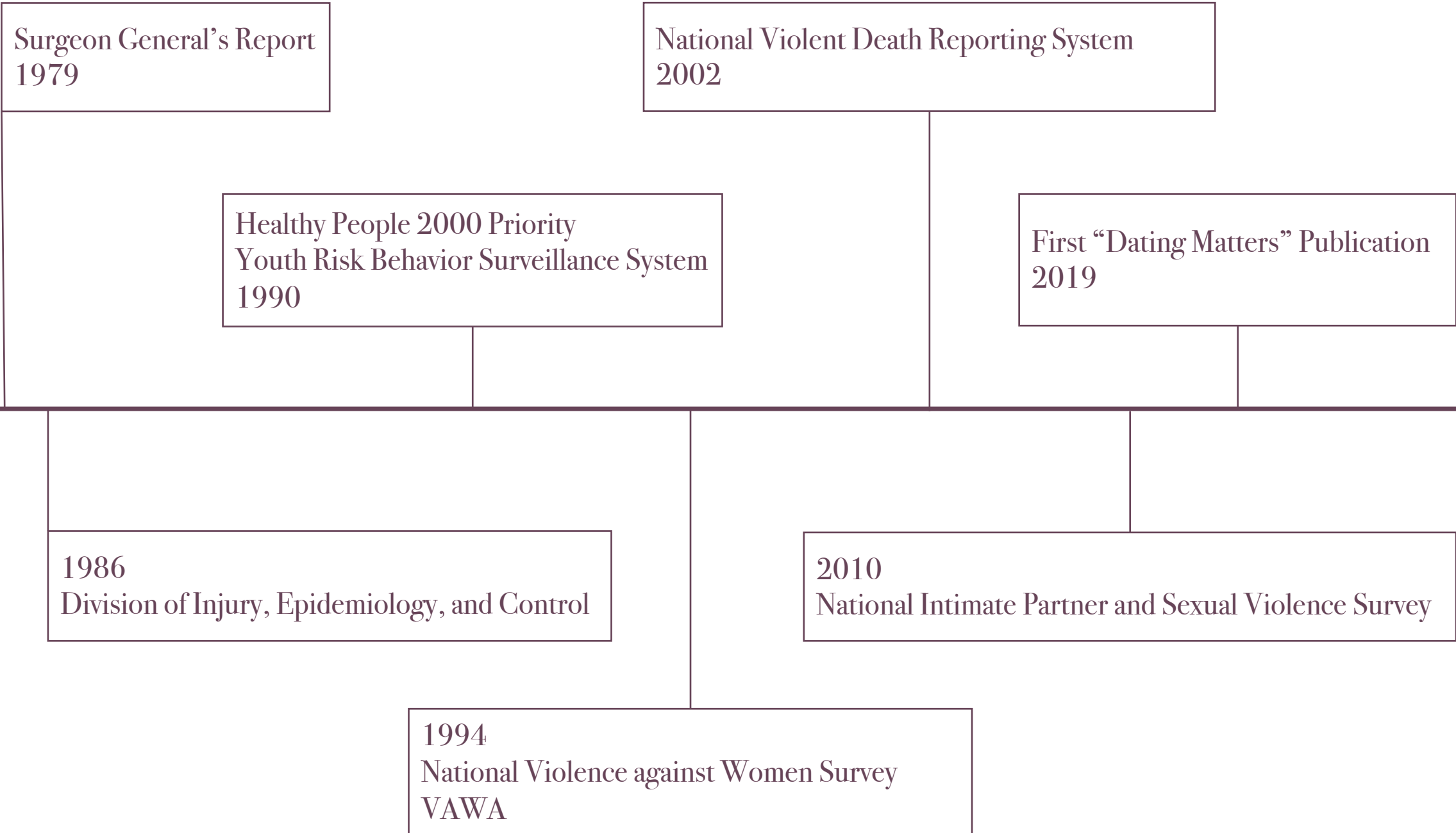
Figure 9. Percentage Change in Homicide Rates in the 48 Largest Cities in the United States, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016



Rate of Rape Offenses by Population

United States Rape Legacy United States Rape Revised Utah Rape Legacy Utah Rape Revised







# Intimate Partner Violence Definition

Physical injury

Sexual assault

Stalking

Psychological abuse

BY

Current partner

Former partner

Aspiring partner

FOR

Power

Control

# Violence as a Quality Indicator for Health

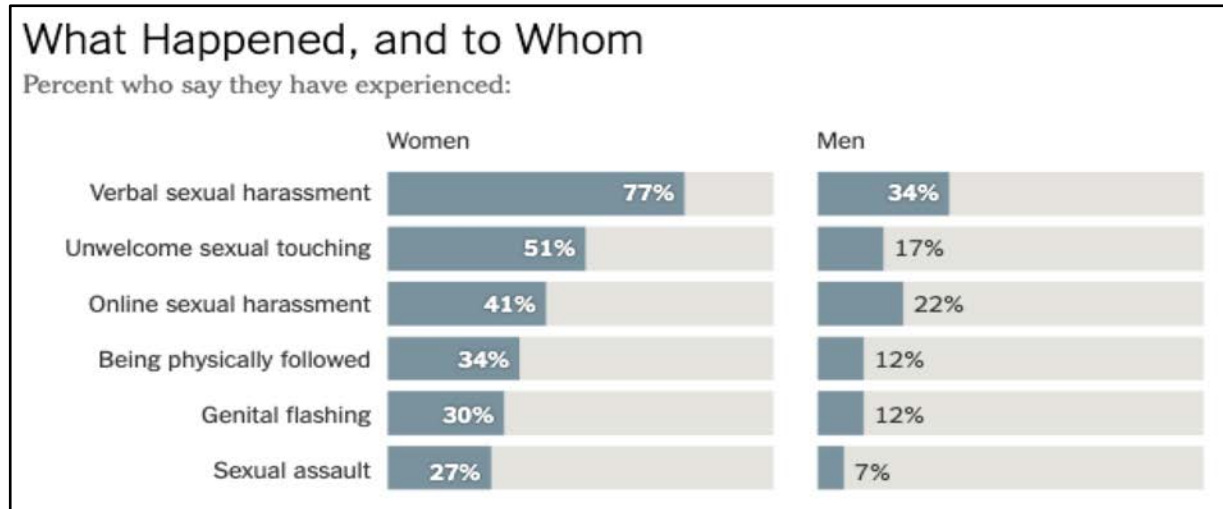
**DeseretNews**

LATEST NEWS FEATURED UTAH SPORTS INDEPTH OPINION CORONAVIRUS MORE

UTAH POLICE/COURTS HOME

## 'Shocked and crushed': Friends and community mourn slain University of Utah doctor

By Lauren Bennett | Feb 4, 2019, 10:13pm MST



**Alyssa Milano** @Alyssa\_Milano

If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet.

Me too.

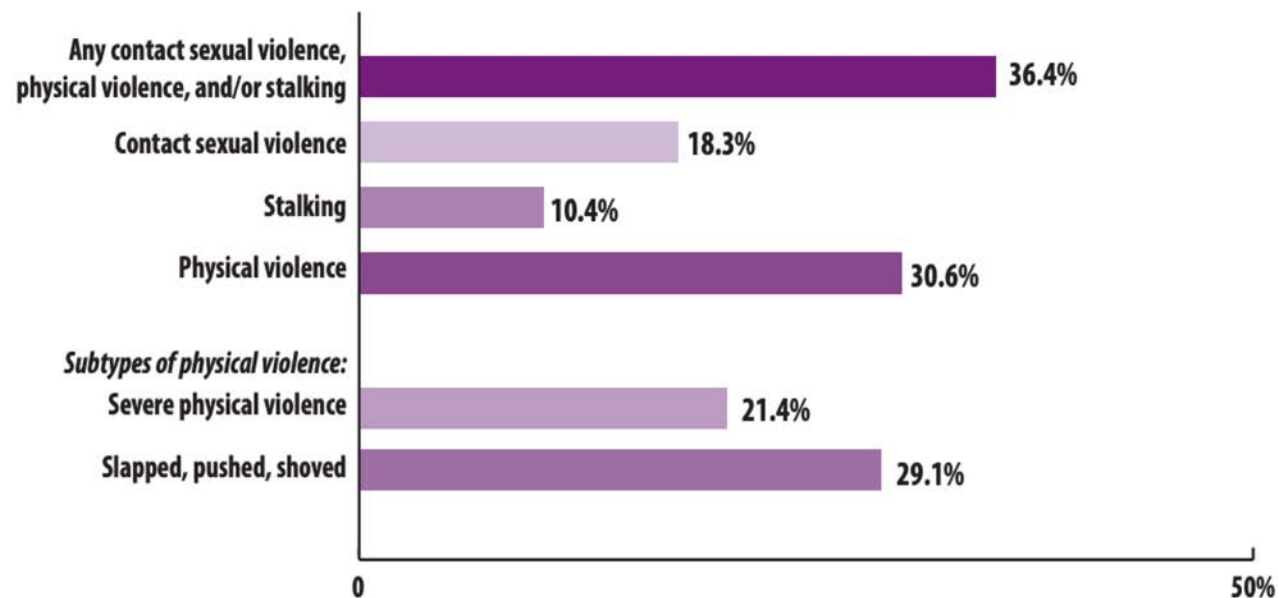
Suggested by a friend: "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too.' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem."

2:21 PM · Oct 15, 2017

49.7K 84K people are Tweeting about this

# Intimate Partner Violence Epidemiology

**Lifetime Prevalence of Contact Sexual Violence,<sup>1</sup> Physical Violence, and/or Stalking Victimization by an Intimate Partner—U.S. Women, NISVS 2015<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Contact sexual violence includes rape, being made to penetrate someone else, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact.

<sup>2</sup> All percentages are weighted to the U.S. population.

**1 in 4 women**  
report IPV-related impact





# Intimate Partner Violence Costs

Injury	Chronic Conditions	Mental Health Conditions and Substance Misuse	Urologic and Gynecologic Conditions	Pregnancy and Peripartum-Related Conditions	Other Conditions
Strains, contusions, lacerations Fractures Head, neck, and facial injuries Strangulation Traumatic brain injury Thoracic and abdominal injuries Sexual assault Homicide	Asthma Diabetes Cardiovascular conditions (HTN, lipid disorders) Stroke Joint disease Chronic pain	Depression Anxiety disorders, including PTSD Eating disorders Suicidal behavior Tobacco addiction Misuse of alcohol and other drugs Prescription and opioid misuse	HIV infection STD UTI Unplanned pregnancy Menstrual disorders Pelvic pain Dyspareunia Menopausal symptoms Incontinence	Obstetrical complications (miscarriage, injury, HTN) Perinatal depression, anxiety Smoking, alcohol, or substance misuse Death due to homicide or suicide Preterm birth, low-birth-weight infant	Frequent headaches Difficulty sleeping Gastrointestinal disorders Palpitations Fibromyalgia Musculoskeletal conditions Activity limitations Multiple physical symptoms

**Figure 1. Common Medical and Psychiatric Sequelae of Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence.**  
 HIV denotes human immunodeficiency virus, HTN hypertension, PTSD post-traumatic stress disorder, STD sexually transmitted disease, and UTI urinary tract infection.

# Intimate Partner Violence Theory

- Psychopathology theory
- Social learning
- Duluth model







# Reproductive Coercion

- Behavior that undermines autonomous decision making in areas of reproductive health to maintain power and control
- Behavior interferes with contraceptive use and pregnancy

# Birth Control Sabotage



Removing or damaging a condom



Pulling out IUDs



Destroying a partner's pills



Not withdrawing when agreed upon



Taking off patches



Removing vaginal rings



# Pregnancy Pressure

- Threatening to hurt or leave a partner if she does not become pregnant
- Forcing a partner to continue or end a pregnancy through threats
- Committing acts of violence in an attempt to cause a pregnancy loss

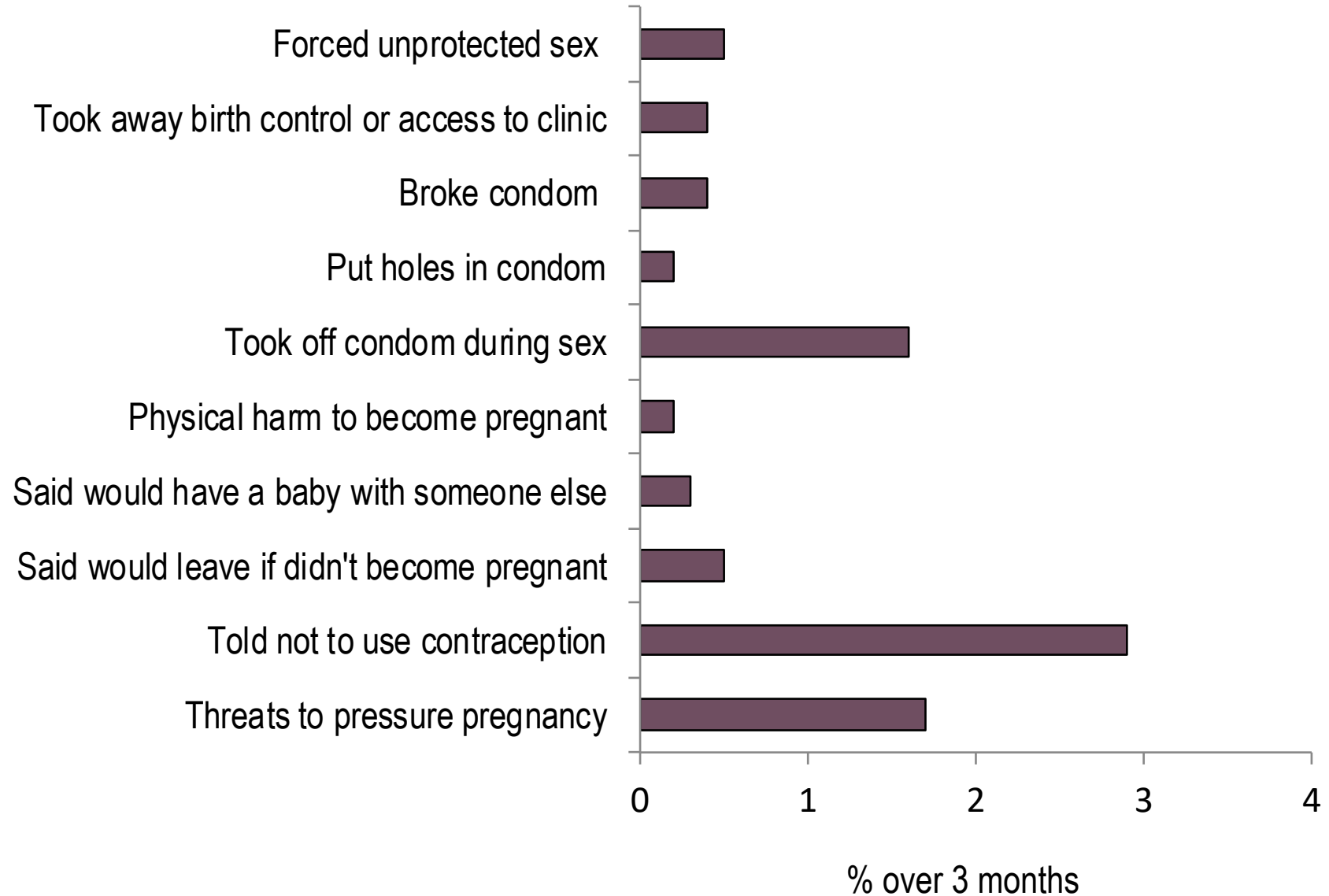


# Reproductive Coercion Scale

In the past 3 months, has someone you were dating or going out with:

1. Tried to force or pressure you to become pregnant?
2. Told you not to use any birth control (like the pill, shot, ring, etc.)?
3. Said he would leave you if you didn't get pregnant?
4. Told you he would have a baby with someone else if you didn't get pregnant?
5. Taken off the condom while you were having sex, so you would get pregnant?
6. Put holes in the condom so you would get pregnant?
7. Broken the condom on purpose while you were having sex so you would get pregnant?
8. Taken your birth control (like pills) away from you or kept you from going to the clinic to get birth control?
9. Made you have sex without a condom so you would get pregnant?
10. Hurt you physically because you did not agree to get pregnant?

# Tactic frequency





# Stealthing

- “Nonconsensual condom removal”
- Term originated in MSM community
- Increased publicity following legal analysis by Brodsky



# Voices from those affected

“If I guy doesn’t want to use it [a condom], girls are unlikely to use them if they really like the guy . . . Guys might say to girls: ‘You’re the only person that I’m sleeping with’ . . . [or] . . . ‘I love you’ . . . [or] . . . ‘We’ve been together for a long time’ . . . [or] . . . ‘You my girlfriend and we shouldn’t have to use them’”

“Some men be like . . . no, you mine, you gonna have my babies”

*Before my fiancé got locked up he wanted a baby and I had birth control pills . . . he threw them away, yeah, he bought ovulation kits and a four-pack of pregnancy tests . . . he was serious . . . I didn’t want no baby . . . I didn’t want one but I was confused. But now he’s not around and I don’t want no baby . . . I had condoms, he threw them away. I had contraceptive stuff, the foam stuff, he threw it away . . . And I had a whole bag of stuff, the day after pills, he just threw the whole bag away . . . [Regarding birth control pills] I had ‘em hidden for a minute . . . I told him they were vitamins and . . .*

*I guess he researched on ‘em and [he said], “these are not*

*he’s gonna really re! They like, ‘oh what you like*

*here if her dad didn’t wanted to keep going to er [the child]. Her dad I’m going to kill you.” ng all these other girls Left her pregnant and 10)*

*He kept stopping it [the abortion] [. . .]. He kept track [of when the appointments were], taking the car, [saying the car] wouldn’t work, saying, “I can’t come because of this and this but I have to be there [for the abortion], but I have to work this day,” so he kept dragging it out, ‘cause he wanted me to not be able to have it.*

–Respondent 6, 26 years old at the time of the interview. This partner impregnated her against her will by forcing her to have sex and refusing to withdraw. She ended up aborting at 4 months gestation. She had four other abortions with this partner.

# Prevalence

**16%** at obstetrics and gynecology outpatient offices





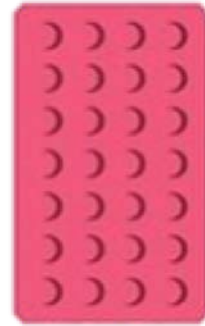
# Demographics

- Mixed demographic associations
- Robust association with other IPV tactics

# Health Implications



Pregnancy testing



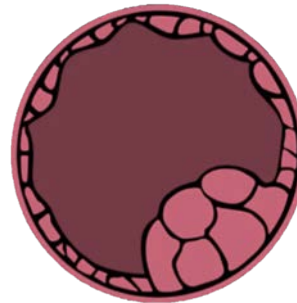
Emergency  
contraception



STI testing



Sexually transmitted  
infections



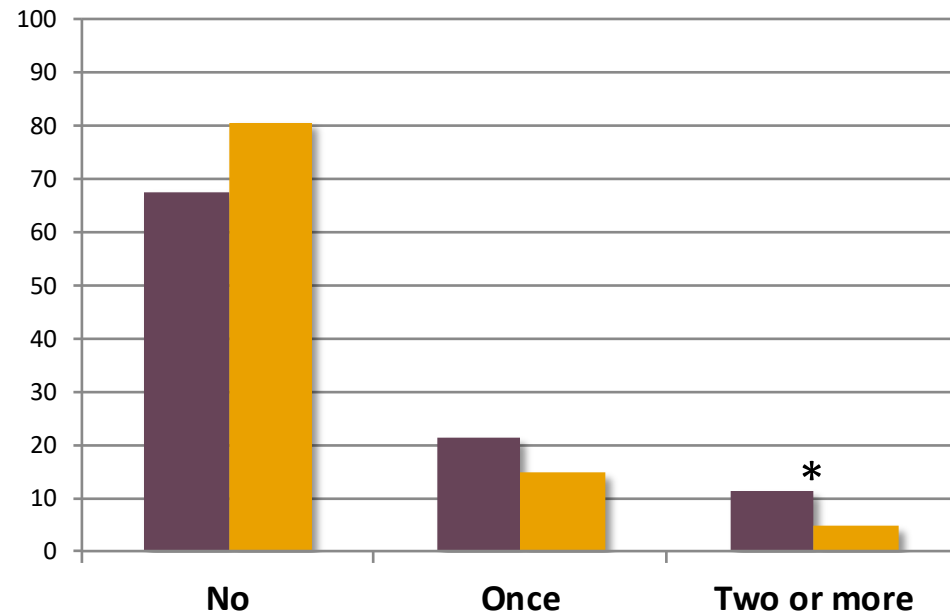
Unintended  
pregnancies



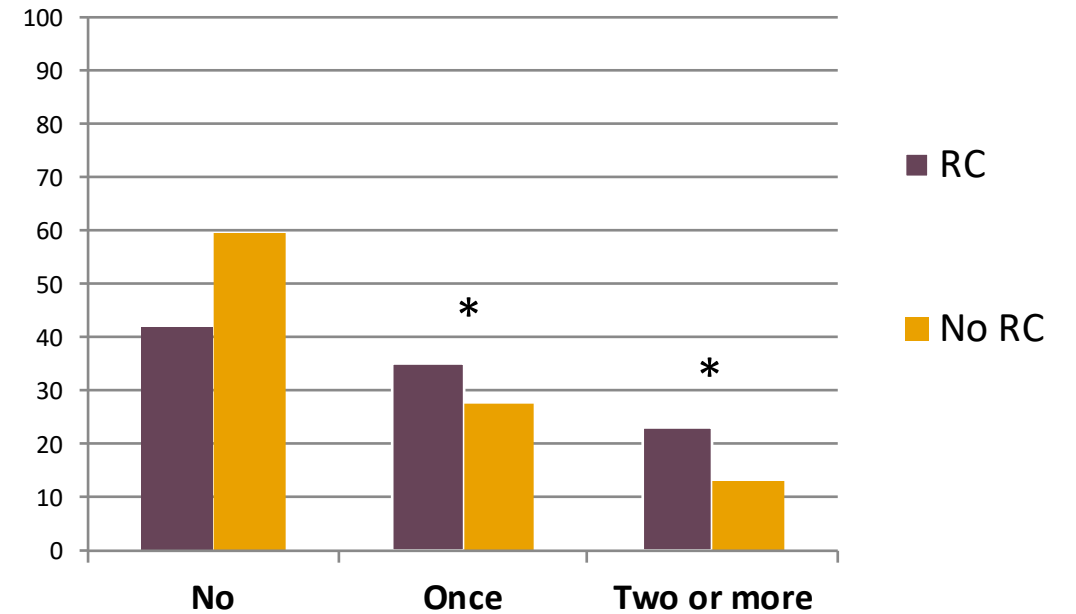
Decreased  
contraception

# Encounters for Testing

## STI testing



## Pregnancy testing



# Contraceptive Use



Contraceptive use



Sexual self-efficacy



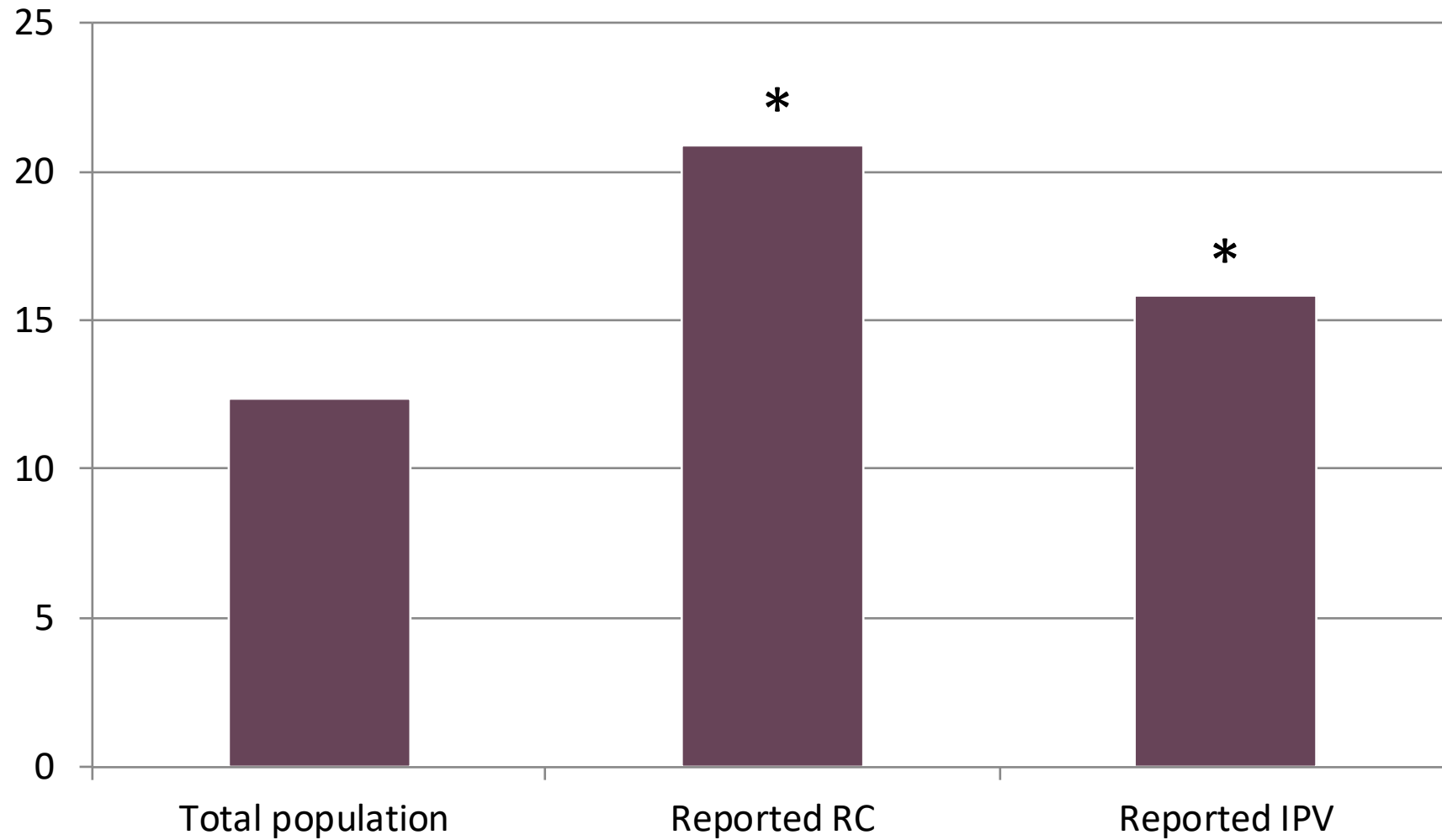
Use of emergency contraception



Risk of chlamydia



# Unintended Pregnancy





# Perinatal Context

Undesired pregnancy\*

Abortion

Limited prenatal care

Poor weight gain

Substance use

Depression

Violent death

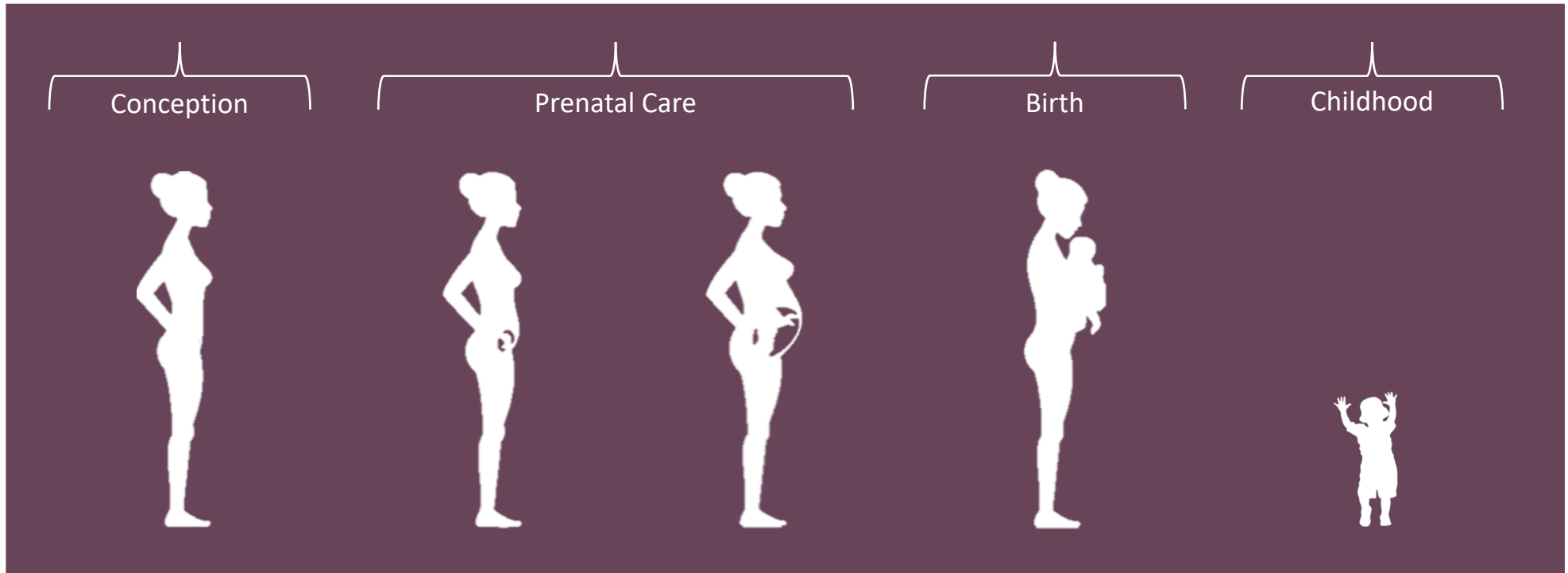
Preterm birth

Low birth weight\*

Decreased breastfeeding

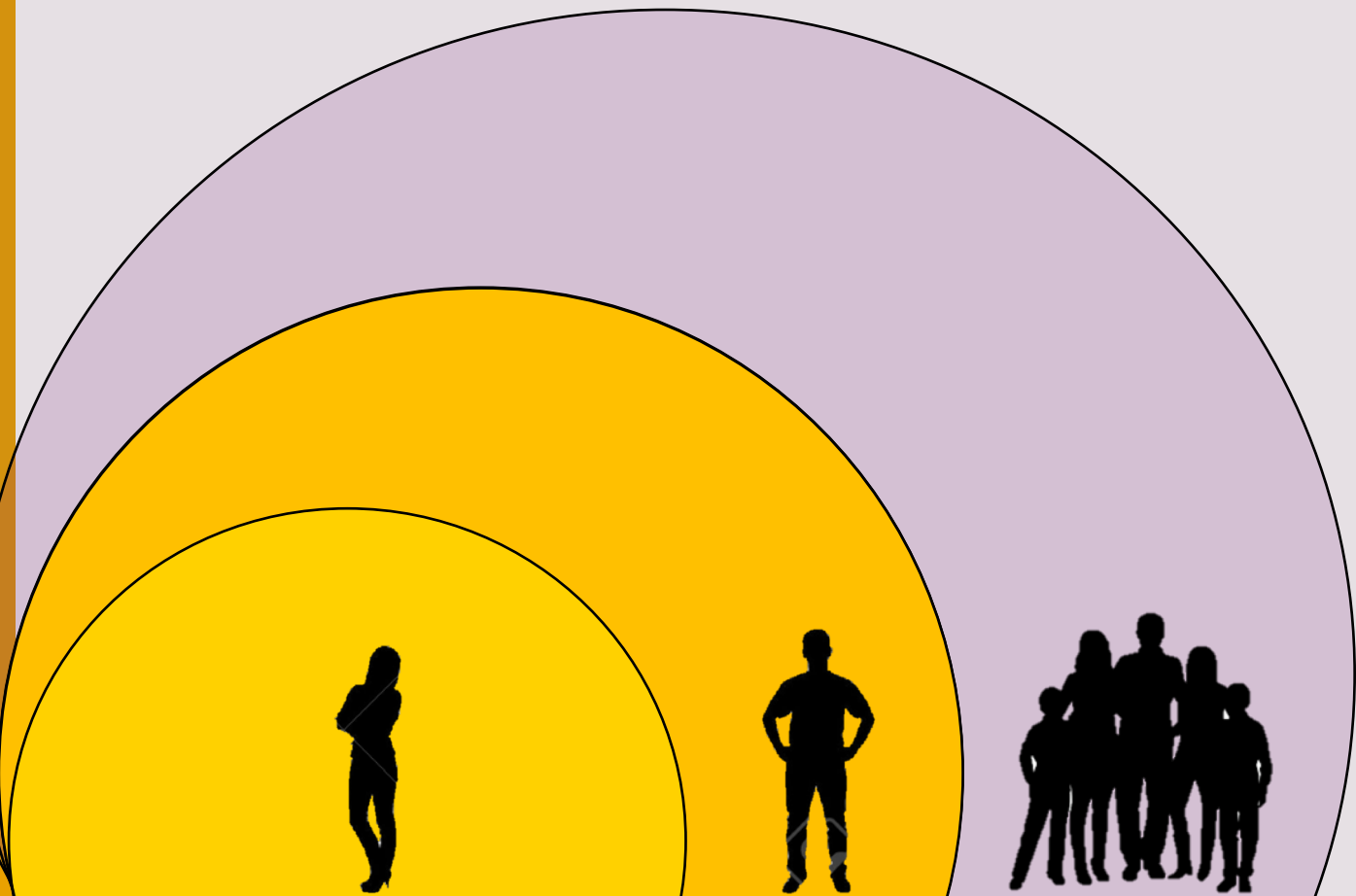
Mood disorders

School problems



\*substantiated for IPV and RC

# Family Planning in Context





# Rationale for Medical Intervention

- Grave sequelae
- Significant number affected
- Routine reproductive/sexual care optimized with identification

# Screening

Universal screening for IPV is already a standard of care.



- Remember mandated reporter status
- Disclose limits to confidentiality first



# Screening

- Has your partner ever forced you to do something sexually that you did not want to do or refused your request to use a condom?
- Has your partner ever tried to get you pregnant when you did not want to be pregnant?
- Are you worried your partner will hurt you if you do not do what he wants with the pregnancy?
- Does your partner support your decision about when or if you want to become pregnant?

# Screening Specifics



Contraceptive counseling



Barrier method use



Emergency contraception visit



Sexually transmitted infection testing



Pregnancy testing or establishing prenatal care



# Resistance Strategies

- Hiding contraception
- Disguising contraception (different container, different language)
- Making up clinic fees for cancelling desired procedures
- Setting expectations for condom use before any sexual activity
- Using rings, IUDs, injections for contraception
- Continuing a pregnancy a partner does not want by promising no request for child support
- Stopping sexual activity to make sure the condom is still in place
- Pretending to go to appointments for an abortion but not following through



# Harm Reduction

## **Contraceptive counseling**

- (Ab)user dependence
- Menstrual cycle monitoring
- EC packaging

## **Pregnancy management**

- Give UPTs, EC
- Abortion care vs. prenatal care? Medical or surgical intervention?
- Postpartum contraception opportunities

## **STI risk assessment**

- STI testing frequency
- Partner notification
- PrEP

## **Risks of other forms of sexual/physical violence**

- Warm referrals
- Trauma informed care

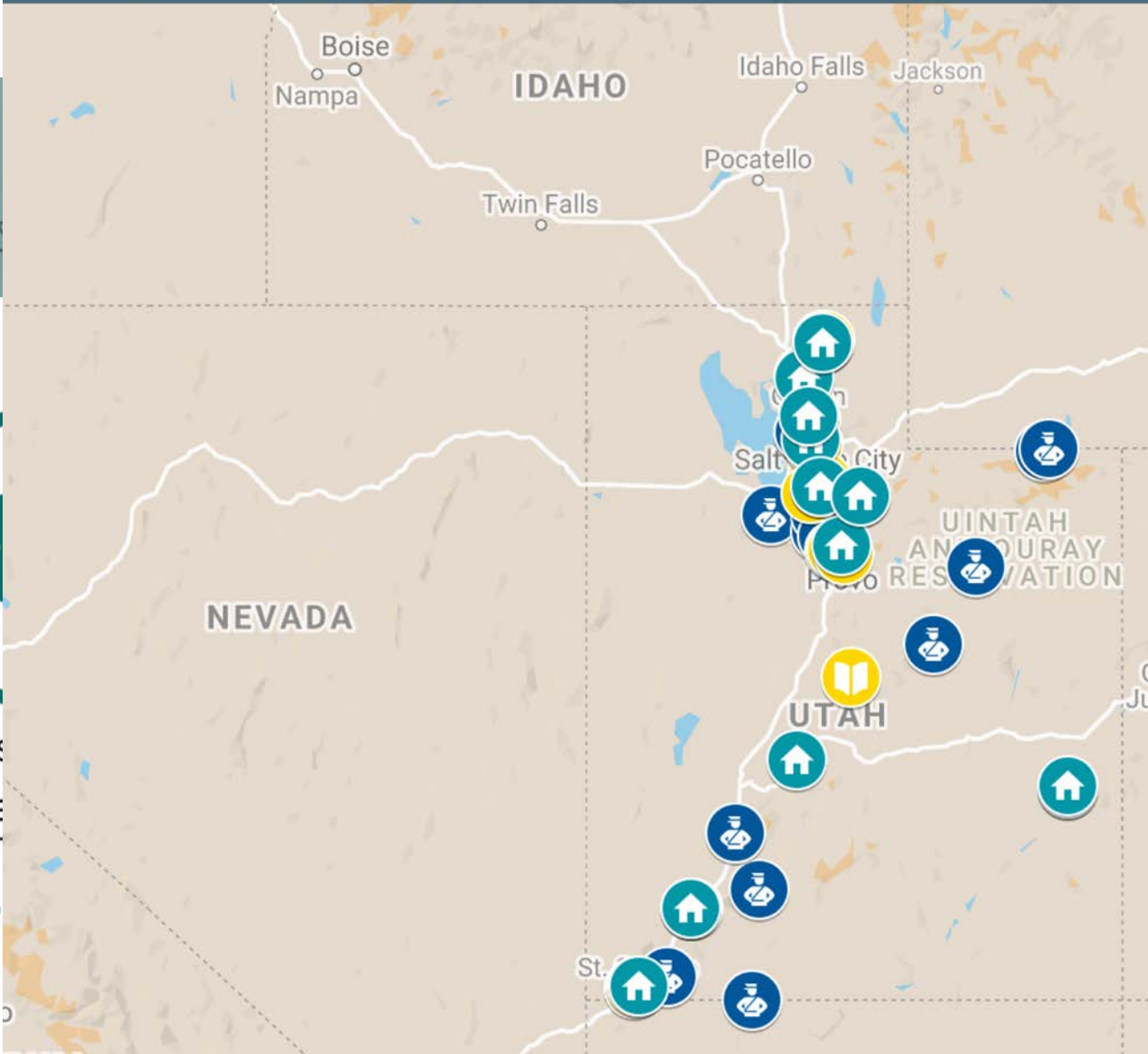




# Local Resources

## Utah Sexual Violence Services ★

This map was created by a user. [Learn how to create your own.](#)



# UCA

Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault



Utah's  
Sexual Violence Helpline

1-888-487-3437

# Violence Coalition

Prevent • Educate

Support for victims and partner violence is available

# Rapport Building

## *By all means...*

- ✓ Paraphrase
- ✓ Talk before touch
- ✓ Use open-ended questions
- ✓ Reflect her language

## *But try not to...*

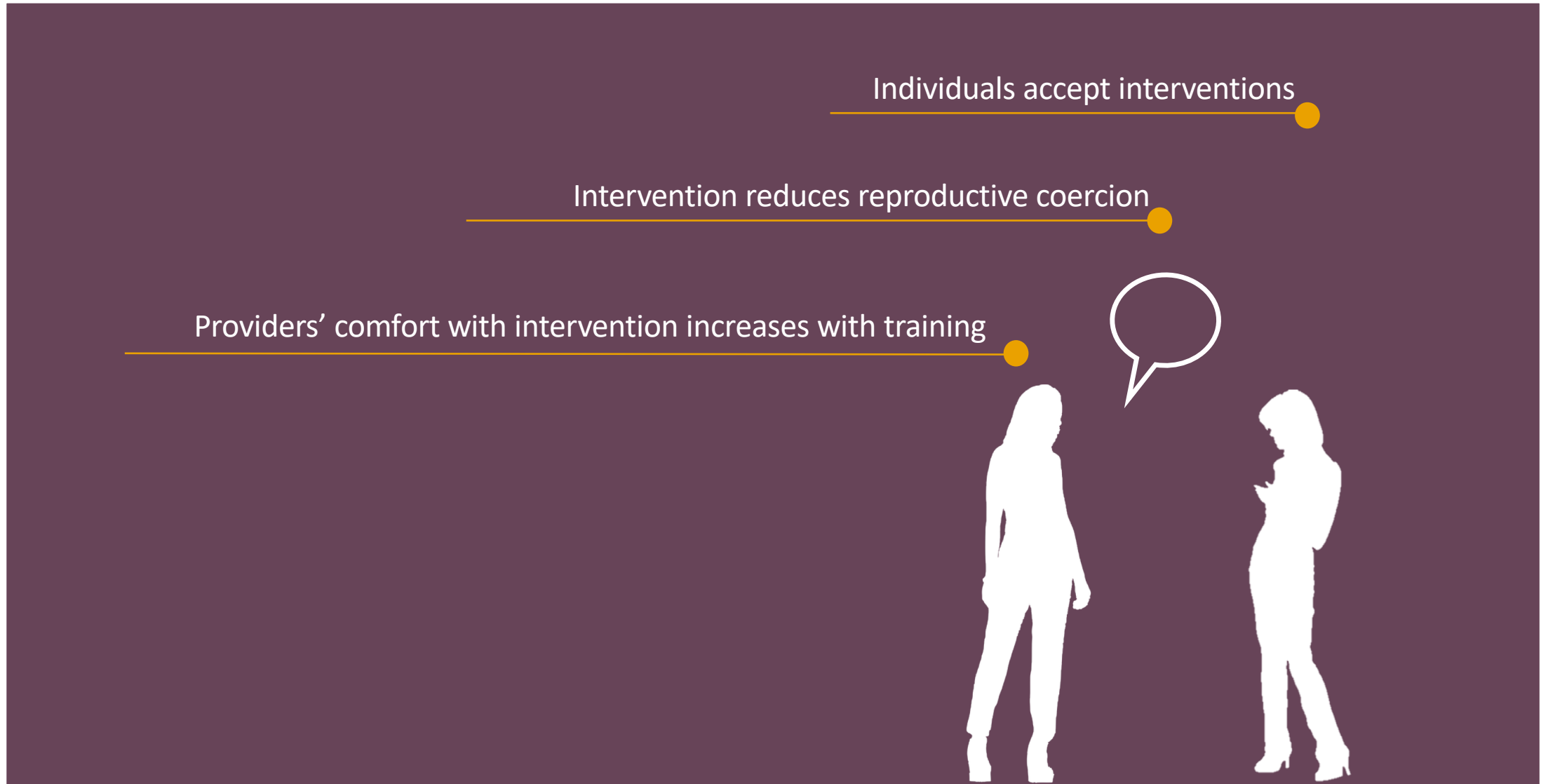
- x Say “I know exactly how you feel” or “It’s going to be okay”
- x Talk about your experience with abuse
- x Ask “Why did you do that?”



# Why Does She Stay?

- She is isolated
- Shelters are full
- Her religious beliefs forbid it
- She can't support herself without him
- No one believes she is being abused
- She knows he will respond by escalating
- He has threatened to take the children
- She blames herself
- Her relatives blame her
- She is afraid of the unknown
- She has tried before unsuccessfully
- She loves her partner, not the abuse
- She is disabled and her partner is her personal care attendant
- She feels she has to “go along” with it, try to put it behind her
- She is afraid he will get custody of the children
- She can't support her children without him
- Her partner says “I love you,” “I'll never do it again,” “I'll take the children,” “I'll kill you if you leave,” “I'll kill myself if you leave.”

# Evidence for Intervention





# Future Research

- Enhancement of screening instruments
- Increased clarity of health outcomes
- Effective primary and secondary prevention measures



# Conclusions

- Addressing violence is a fundamental part of providing quality care to patients
- Reproductive coercion is prevalent and has a profound impact on reproductive health and autonomy
- The ob/gyn office is a critical locus for identifying and addressing reproductive coercion with easily integrated interventions





## Questions?

FAMILY PLANNING ELEVATED | [FPEUTAH.ORG](http://FPEUTAH.ORG)  
[FACEBOOK.COM/FPEUT](https://FACEBOOK.COM/FPEUT) | [TWITTER.COM/FPEUTAH](https://TWITTER.COM/FPEUTAH)



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