



Florida's Public Health & Medical System **PREPARES & RESPONDS**

VULNERABLE POPULATION: Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence incorporates those offenses against family members or intimate partners described in section 741.28, Florida Statutes. An often quoted non-legal definition of domestic violence is, “*a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners, the intent of which is to establish power and control over the victim.*”¹

Key Issues:

- Victims of domestic violence may or may not have resorted to the legal system. There may or may not have been arrest reports or court ordered restraining orders.
- Victims of domestic violence require extraordinary security measures to ensure their safety, physical and psychological, during evacuation, at a safe and secure location, and protection from predators, known to them or unknown.
- Victims of domestic violence have already experienced significant trauma, and may feel isolated, may react strongly to additional stressors, and may fear disclosure of the domestic violence to strangers.
- Most victims of domestic violence may not be eligible for special needs shelters, as they are typically not medically fragile, oxygen dependent, etc.

Planning Considerations:

- Transportation of domestic violence victims (and their families) should be coordinated with law enforcement.
- Optimal destination shelters are domestic violence shelters in the destination city.
- There is an informal network of domestic violence shelters, but their capacity to provide shelter varies widely.
- Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence should be brought into planning sessions early, with grassroots planning at county level emergency management.

Supporting Agency:

Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Domestic Violence Program
www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/domestic-violence

Additional Information: The following resources provide more information on planning considerations for Victims of Domestic Violence during disasters and other emergencies:

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) www.fcadv.org

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Certified Domestic Violence Centers
www.fcadv.org/centers/local-centers

¹ Ganley, A. L., & Schechter, S. (1996). *Domestic violence: A national curriculum for children's protective services*. San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund.