

Vermont Crime Analysis Using
National Incident Based Reporting System
(NIBRS) Data on Domestic Violence, 2015-2019



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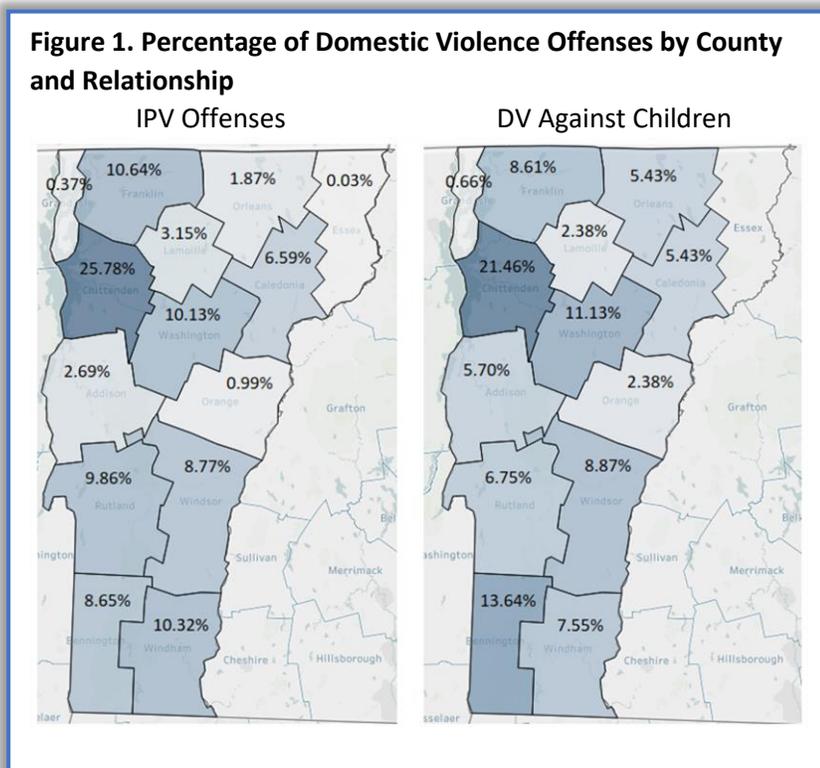
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Introduction

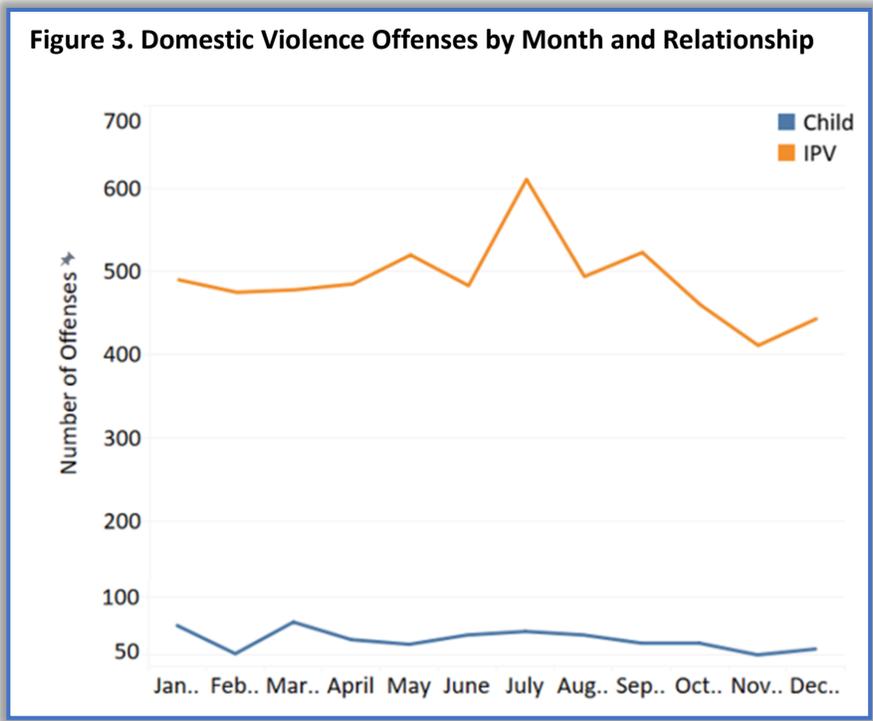
Domestic violence (DV) refers to a particular subset of offenses committed by household members, spouses (including ex- and common law spouses), children/stepchildren, or family members. While some domestic incidents involve non-violent offenses (e.g., identity theft, forgery, motor vehicle theft), this report focuses on violent offenses (e.g., murder, rape, assault) that occur during domestic incidents. Rather than report crimes as DV, NIBRS requires law enforcement to record the relationship of the victim to the offender. Incidents included in this report can be categorized as intimate partner violence (IPV) (i.e., violent offenses committed against a boyfriend/girlfriend, homosexual partner, spouse, ex-spouse, or common law spouse) and DV against children aged 18 and younger (i.e., violent offenses against a biological child, child of a boyfriend/girlfriend, or a stepchild). Annual reports will monitor trends related to the number of incidents each year, types and number of offenses committed, victim and offender demographics, victim-offender relationships, and arrestee information.



DV Offenses

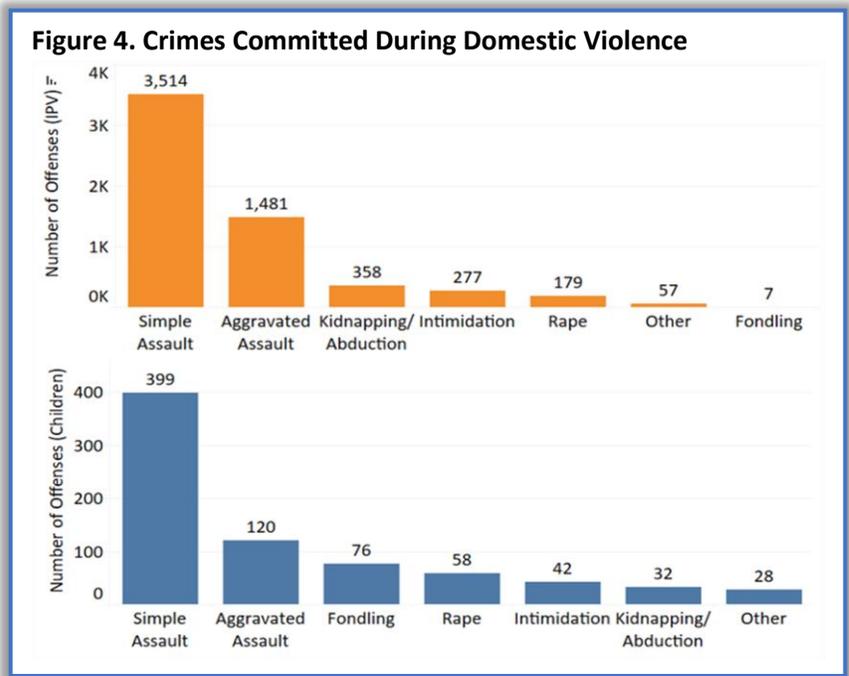
Between 2015 and 2019, there were 6,628 total DV offenses- 5,873 IPV offenses and 755 DV offenses against children. Most IPV offenses occurred in Chittenden County (1,514 / 25.78%) followed by Franklin (625 / 10.64%), Windham (606 / 10.32%), and Washington (595 / 10.13%) counties. Like IPV offenses, most DV offenses against children occurred in Chittenden County (162 / 21.46%). Though notably, while Bennington County ranks 7th for IPV

offenses with 8.65% (508), it ranks 2nd in the total number of offenses involving DV against children with 13.64% (103). Next, Washington County recorded 11.13% (84) of DV offenses against children followed by Windsor (67 / 8.87%) and Franklin (65 / 8.61%) counties. Essex County reported the lowest percentage of IPV offenses between 2015-2019 with 0.03% (2) and no DV offenses against children under the age of 18.



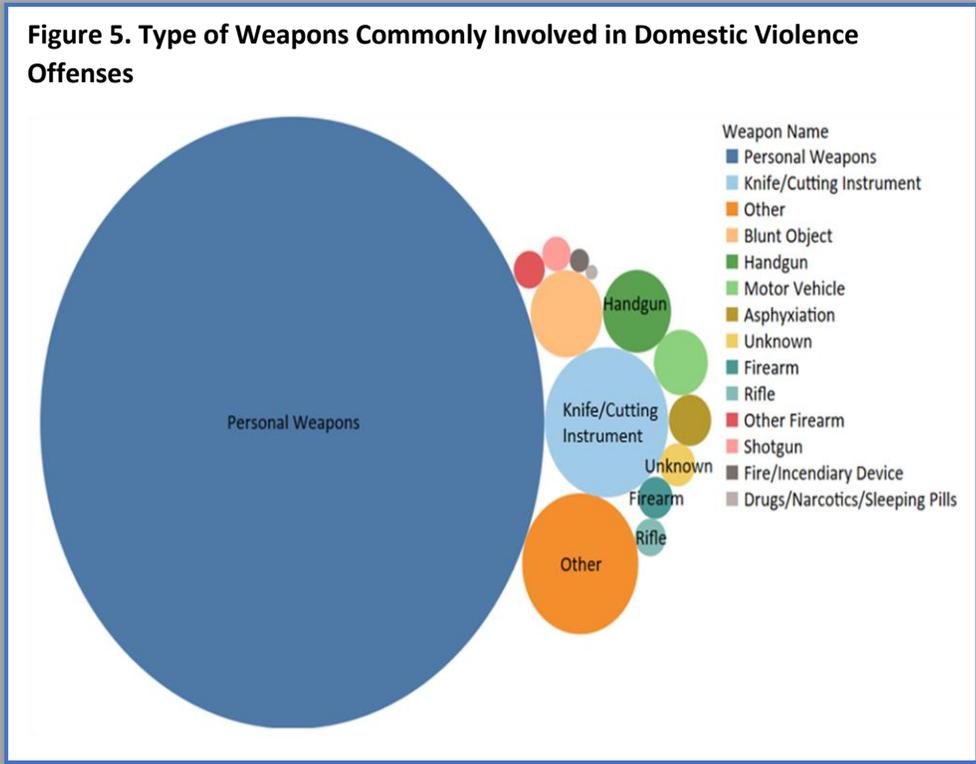
Between 2015 and 2019, most IPV offenses occurred during July (611), with the least number of offenses reported in November (411) (see Figure 3). For DV against children, most offenses were reported in March (78) and the fewest in November (50) with a similar low in February (51).

Figure 4 shows that for both IPV and DV against children the most common offense committed was simple assault (3,514 / 59.83% and 399 / 52.85% respectively) followed by aggravated assault (1,481 / 25.22% and 120 / 15.89%). Then for IPV, the next most common offenses were kidnapping/abduction (358 / 6.10%), intimidation (277 / 4.72%), rape (179 / 3.05%), and other (57 / 0.97%).¹ For DV against children 18 and under, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th most common offenses are comprised of fondling (76 / 10.07%), rape (58 / 7.68%), and intimidation (42 / 5.56%). Figure 4 illustrates this information and more.



¹ Seven offenses –murder/non-negligent manslaughter, statutory rape, sodomy, incest, negligent manslaughter, sex trafficking, and sexual assault with an object – are represented in the “other” category.

Figure 5. Type of Weapons Commonly Involved in Domestic Violence Offenses

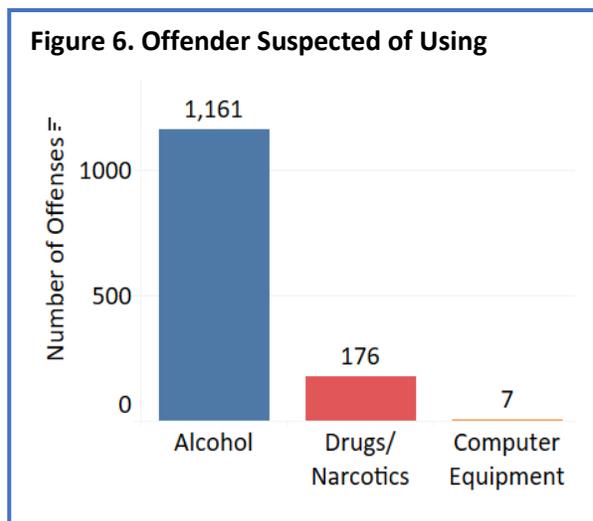


Weapons were involved in 4,420 (66.69%) of all DV offenses. The most common weapons involved were personal weapons which were used in 3,720 (84.16%) offenses involving weapons, followed by knife /cutting instrument (209 / 4.73%), other (203 / 4.59%), and guns (120 / 2.71%) (see Figure 5).

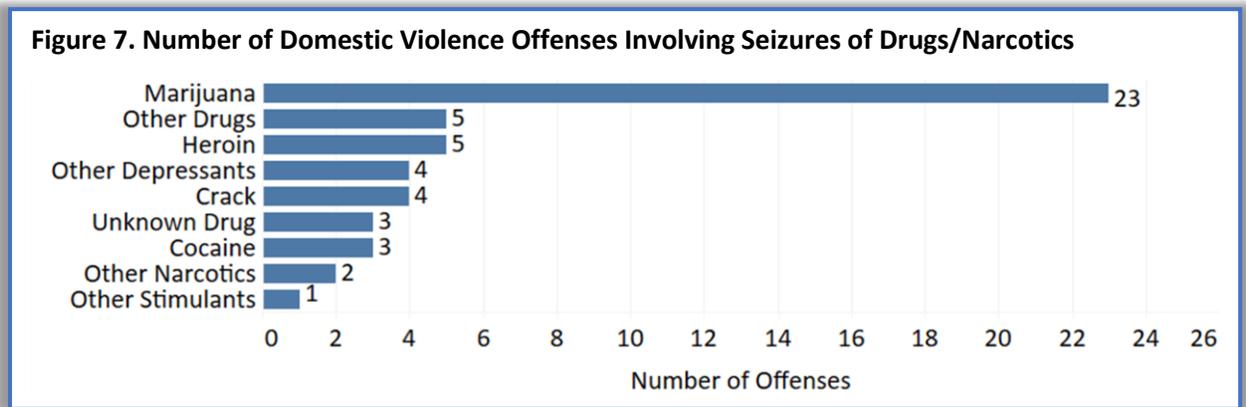
NIBRS data also capture whether drugs were involved in offenses. This information is recorded in two ways. First, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) report to NIBRS when an offender is suspected of using drugs shortly before or during the incident, as well as whether offenders were suspected of using computer equipment (e.g., laptop, handheld mobile device) to perpetrate the crime. Second, LEAs record whether and which types of drugs were seized by officers.

Figure 6 illustrates that offenders were suspected of using substances in a total of 1,344 (20.28%) offenses of which 1,161 (17.69%) offenses involved offenders suspected of using alcohol, 176 (2.66%) offenses in which an offender was suspected of using drugs/narcotics, and seven (0.11%) offenses in which an offender was suspected of using computer equipment to commit the offense. These seven offenses involved three different offense types- fondling, intimidation, and simple assault.

Figure 6. Offender Suspected of Using



Below, Figure 7 illustrates that between 2015 and 2019 (excluding 2017), drugs were seized in only 0.73% (50) of all DV offenses.² Notably, just 5 of these offenses involved DV against children. Of the 50 offenses involving drug seizure, marijuana was seized in 46% (23) of offenses. Seizures of this substance have decreased since its legalization in 2018. Next, other drugs (e.g., codeine, methadone, hydrocodone) and heroin each constituted 10% (5) of offenses involving drug/narcotics seizure.

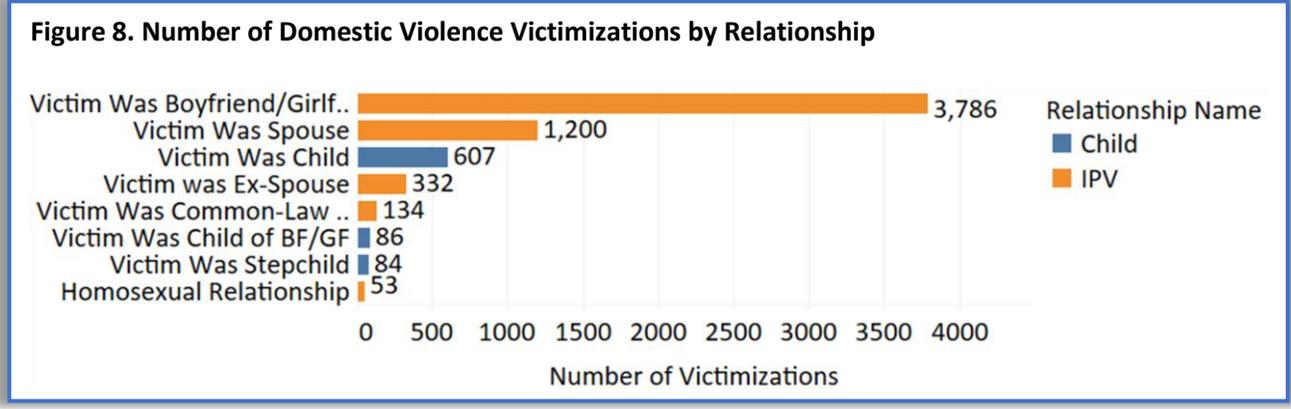


Victimization

Between 2015 and 2019 there were a total of 5,463 victims of DV who experienced 6,282 victimizations. For a better understanding of how victims are harmed by offenses, NIBRS records the number of times victims were victimized during an incident.³ In other words, each type of harm experienced by a victim during the course of an incident is recorded as separate victimizations. A victim may experience several different types of harm (e.g., simple assault and aggravated assault) during one DV incident. Additionally, they might experience the same type of harm multiple times during the course of one incident (e.g., being intimidated more than once during a DV incident). Below, Figure 8 illustrates that most DV victimizations happened to the boyfriend/girlfriend of the offender (3,786 / 60.27%), then the spouse (1,200 / 19.10%) and/or the child (607 / 9.66%) of the offender. This pattern is consistent each year.

² Data for the year 2017 were excluded from this analysis due to irregularities that could not be reconciled.

³ The NIBRS User Manual defines incident as “one or more offenses committed by the same offender, or group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place” (p. 5). This means that each incident can involve multiple offenses. Law enforcement agencies capture each offense on a separate line in the NIBRS database.



The average age of intimate partners experiencing victimization was 35.81 and 10.16 for children 18 and under. Victims most commonly experienced simple assault which accounted for 63.93% (4,016) of all 6,282 DV victimizations (see Figure 9 below). Next, aggravated assault comprised 25.25% (1,586) of victimizations. The remaining 10.82% of victimizations consisted of eleven offenses. There were very few victimizations resulting from sex trafficking, negligent manslaughter, and sexual assault with an object. Notably, there were zero nonnegligent manslaughter or sex trafficking victimizations involving DV against children recorded in NIBRS between 2015 and 2019.

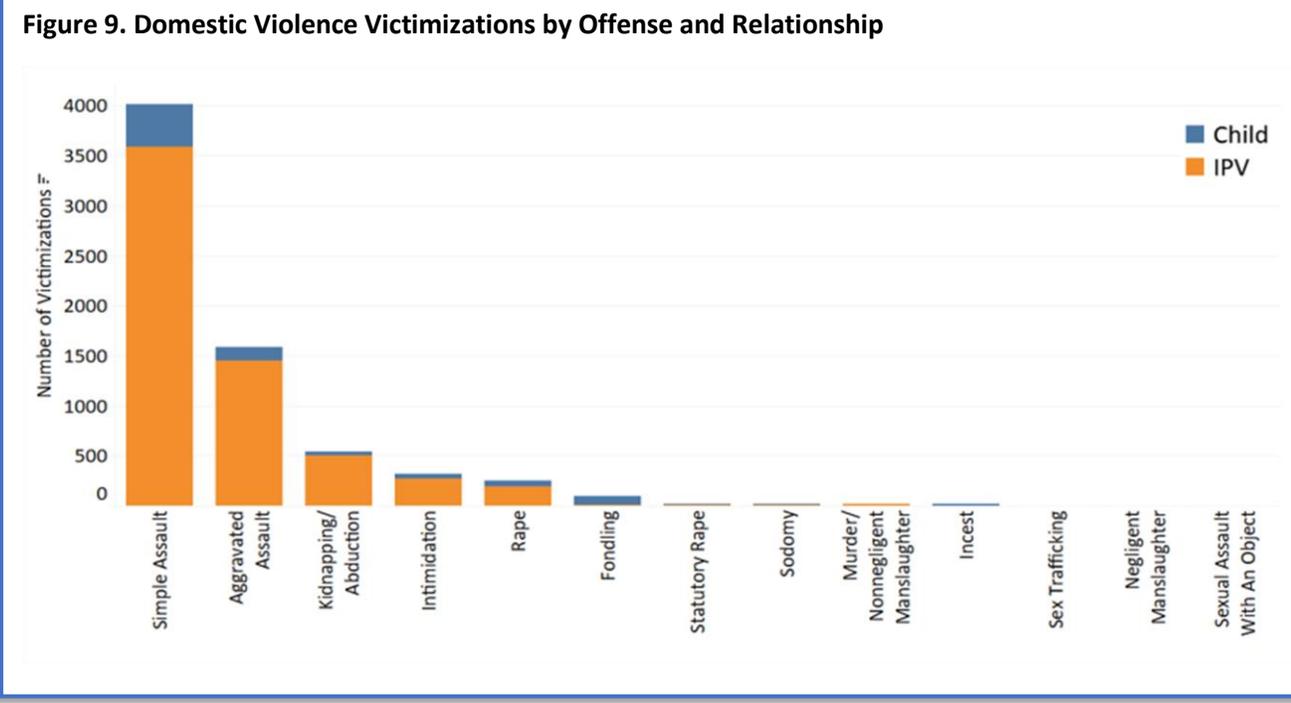
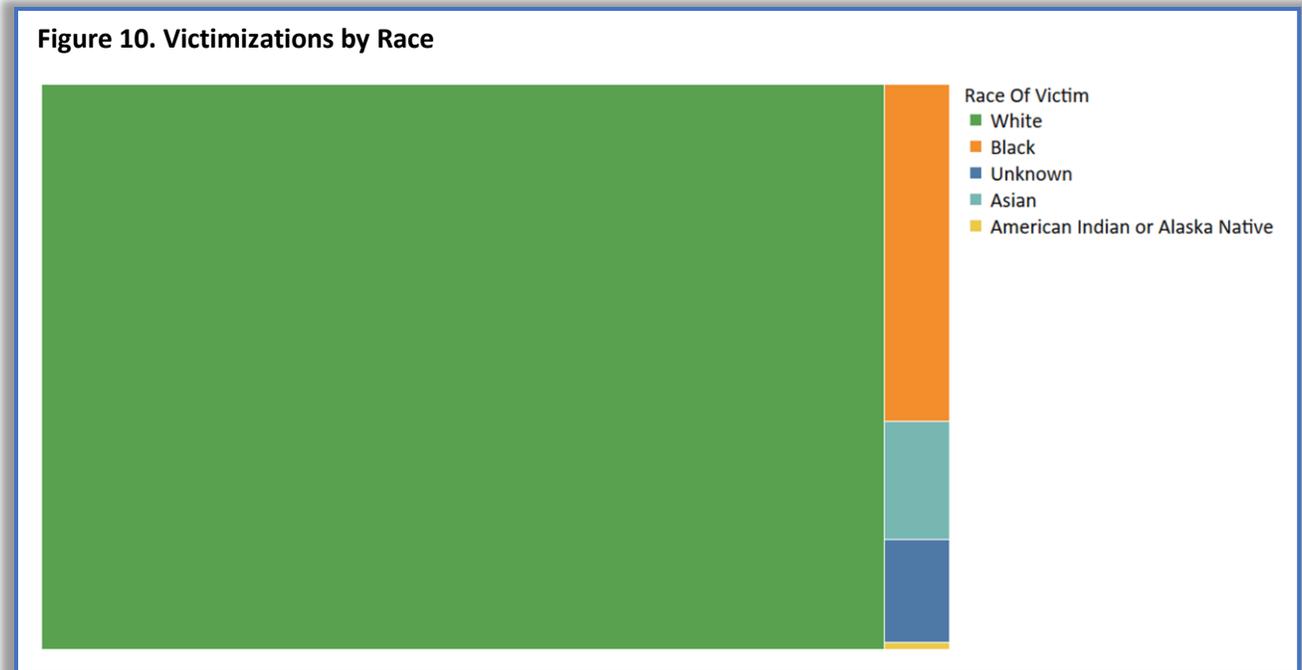
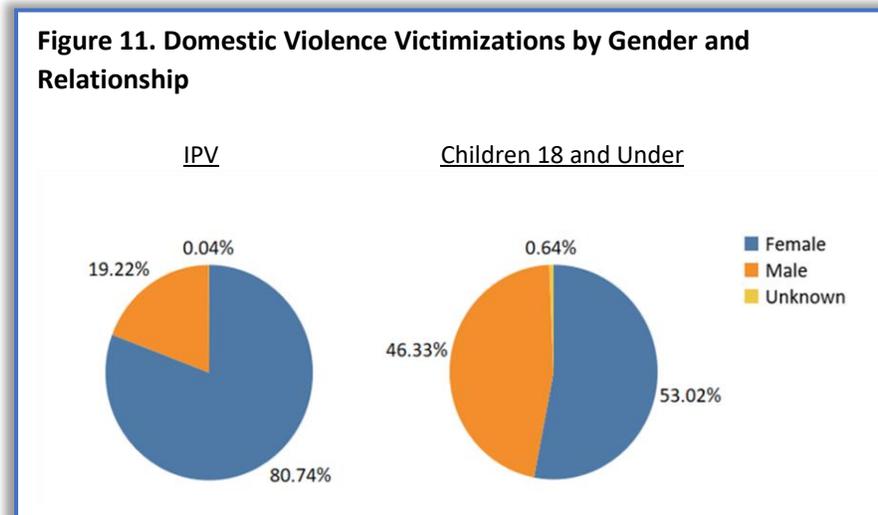


Figure 10 shows that of the 6,282 total DV victimizations, 92.85% (5,833) happened to victims who were White. The racial composition of those who were victimized remains similar when isolating both IPV and DV against children.



The majority of all DV victimizations were experienced by females⁴ (77.32%). However, Figure 11 illustrates that when isolating IPV offenses and DV against children 18 and under, the percentage of victimizations

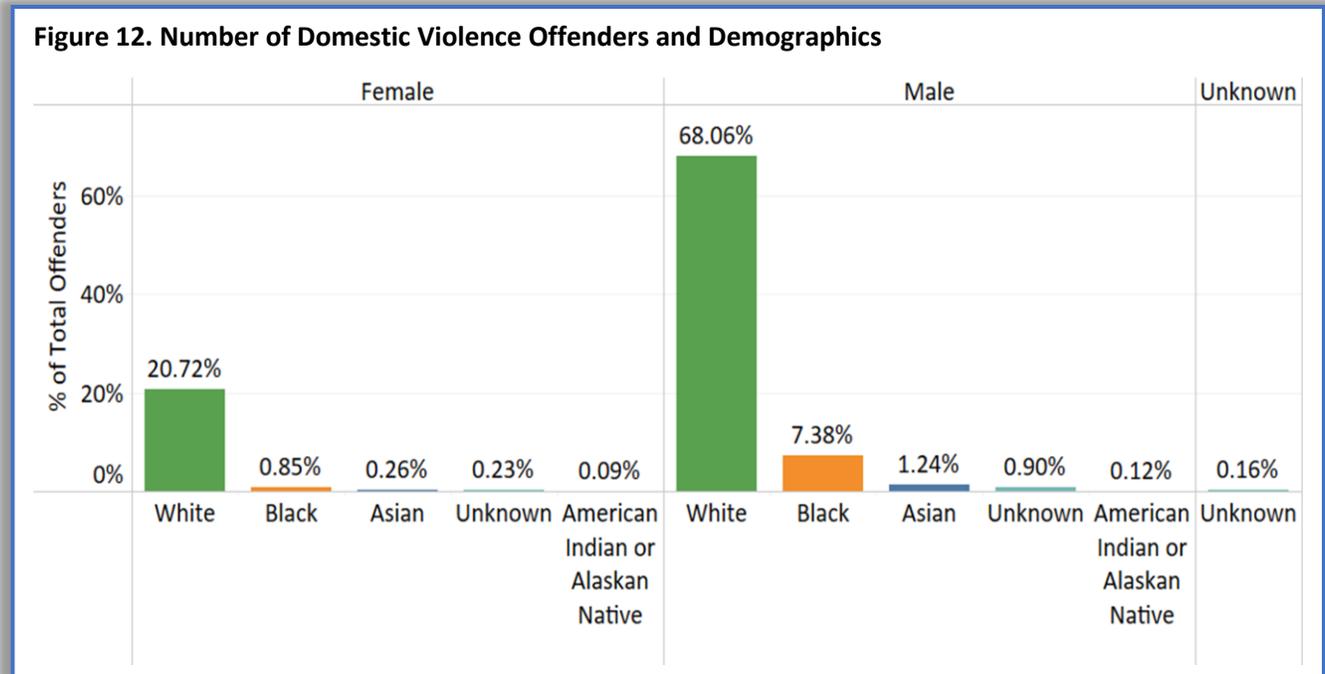


experienced by females differs. While an overwhelming majority of IPV victimizations are experienced by females (80.74%), females account for just over half (53.02%) of those 18 and under experiencing DV victimization with males comprising 46.33%.

⁴ NIBRS records information about the sex of the victim and gives law enforcement 3 categories to choose from- Male, Female, or Unknown.

Offender Demographics

There was a total of 5,748 DV offenders recorded between 2015 and 2019. Gender and race information were Unknown for 9 (0.16%) offenders. Most known offenders were White males (3,912 / 68.06%) followed by White females (20.72%, 1,191). Next, Black males comprised 7.38% (424) of offenders and 1.24% (71) of offenders were Asian males. Below, Figure 12 shows the demographic breakdown of all offenders.

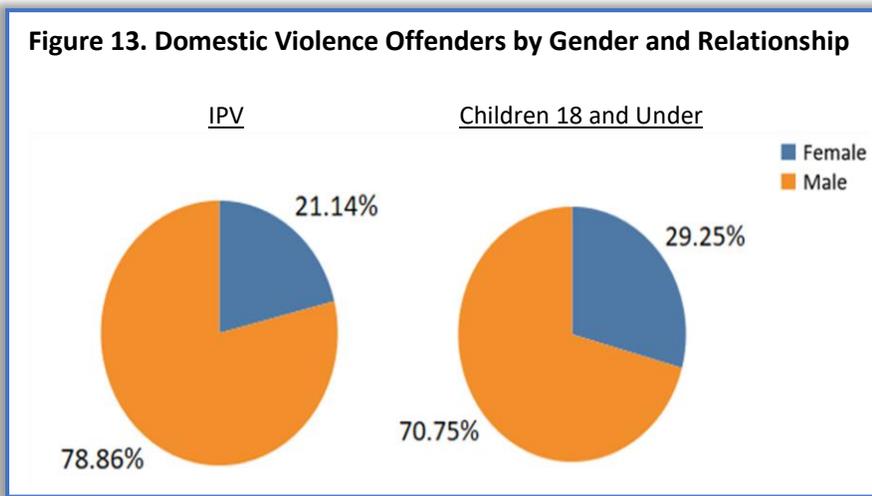


For all DV offenses, the average age for male offenders was 36.17 and 33.90 for female offenders. However, when the offenders' average age is parsed by type of crime committed, ages range from 25.39 to 47.89 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Average Offender Age by Offense Type and Gender

Offense Category Name	Female	Male
Assault Offenses	33.99	36.36
Homicide Offenses	38.00	47.89
Human Trafficking	33.00	35.67
Kidnapping/Abduction	36.14	33.35
Sex Offenses	25.39	33.12

Most DV offenders are male (77.82% / 4,466) with female offenders accounting for 22.18% (1,273) of all offenders. This is similar for offenders of intimate partner violence (see Figure 13 below). However, females



comprise a larger percentage (29.25% / 208) of offenders who commit acts of DV against children 18 and under with males comprising the remaining 70.75% (503).

Conclusion

NIRBS data offer a rich source of information about DV in Vermont. Between 2015 and 2019, there were 6,628 DV offenses recorded in NIBRS by law enforcement in Vermont. Most IPV and DV offenses against children 18 and under occurred in Chittenden County (1,514 / 25.78% and 162 / 21.46% respectively). The majority of DV offenses were simple assaults (59.22%) followed by aggravated assaults (23.98%). These offenses were committed by 5,748 offenders against 5,463 victims. Annual reports on DV trends will help law enforcement and other stakeholders focus efforts and utilize resources more efficiently.