

Religion and Domestic Violence

Information and Resources

STATISTICS



prepared by

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STATISTICS OVERVIEW

Statistics, when presented accurately, can be useful tools for domestic violence advocacy and activism: they can be used to mount convincing campaigns for systems and community-wide change; they can offer evidence that informs and supports efforts to educate the public about the extent of domestic violence impacted by policy, funding and other systemic decisions; they can illustrate and underscore the need for services when writing proposals and reports to funders; and they can strengthen and support information conveyed in newsletters, brochures, and presentations.

Currently, very few studies exist which measure the extent and nature of domestic violence within specific religious and spiritual groups. In addition, reports that attempt to describe the diversity of the religious landscape of the United States are often controversial; some suggest that religious organizations that track their own adherents have a vested interest in maximizing these numbers. These numbers also vary depending on each group's definition of "membership" or "affiliation," not to mention the variance in individual definitions of "religion" and "membership" and whether or not they are willing to disclose this information.

For the purposes of this packet, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence has chosen to include general statistics relevant to the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence, derived from government-sponsored research on domestic violence in the United States; statistics relevant to the religious identification and affiliation of individual people throughout the United States; and statements that begin to describe the extent and nature of domestic violence within the Jewish and Islamic faiths.

PREVALENCE OF INTIMATE PARTNER NON-LETHAL VIOLENCE

- Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that intimate partner violence is pervasive in U.S. society. Nearly 25 percent of surveyed women and 7.5 percent of surveyed men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime; 1.5 percent of surveyed women and 0.9 percent of surveyed men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a partner in the previous 12 months. According to these estimates, approximately 1.5 million women and 834,732 men are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States. Because many victims are victimized more than once, the number of intimate partner victimizations exceeds the number of intimate partner victims annually. Thus, approximately 4.9 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against U.S. women annually, and approximately 2.9 million intimate partner physical assaults are committed against U.S. men annually. [Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.]
- Results from the National Violence Against Women Survey indicate that violence against women is primarily intimate partner violence: 64.0 percent of the women who reported being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked since age 18 were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or date. In comparison, only 16.2 percent of the men who reported being raped and/or physically assaulted since age 18 were victimized by such a perpetrator. [Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.]
- Research from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that intimate violence is primarily a crime against women. In 1998 females were 75 percent of the victims of intimate murders and about 85 percent of the victims of nonlethal intimate violence. [Henneburg, M. (2000). *Bureau of Justice Statistics 2000: At a Glance*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.]

RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION/AFFILIATION

- Two out of every three Americans are affiliated with a religious, spiritual, or faith-based group or organization, and approximately one out of every four Americans is an active member of such a community. [US Census Bureau (1998). *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 118th Edition*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.]
- 81% of the adult population in the U.S. identify with one religious group or another. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- 54% of the adult population in the U.S. reside in a household where either they themselves or someone else is a member of, or affiliated with, a place of worship. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- The proportion of adults who do not subscribe to any religious identification has [...] grown from 8% of the total in 1990 to 14% of the total in 2001. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- The American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) sought to determine whether and to what extent adults in the U.S. consider their outlook on life to be essentially religious or secular. In all, 75% described their outlook as religious or somewhat religious, while 16% described their outlook as secular or somewhat secular. 1% said they were a little of both, 2% were unsure and 5% refused to answer the question. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- In 2001, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York conducted an American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS). A random sample of 50,281 American adults were questioned about their religious affiliations. Poll subjects were asked what religion they considered themselves to be, rather than with what religion they were actually affiliated. Results included:
 - 76.5% of American adults are Christian (52% Protestant; 24.5% Catholic).
 - 14.1% do not follow any organized religion; they are Agnostics, Atheists, Humanists, Secularists, or have no religious affiliation.
 - 1.3% are Jewish.
 - 0.5% are Muslim, followers of Islam.
 - 0.5% are Buddhist.
 - 0.4% are Hindu.
 - 0.3% are Unitarian Universalist.
 - 0.1% are Neopagan (Druids, Pagans, Wiccans, etc.)
 - There are many more small religions, each of whom are followed by fewer than 0.1% of American adults.

[Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]

- 63% of Americans (163 million) state that they are actively affiliated with a faith group. Roman Catholicism is the largest single religious group (60 million). Members of American Protestant churches total 94 million members, spread across 220 denominations. There are 3.8 million religiously active Jews (1.5%); an additional 2 million regard themselves as cultural or ethnic Jews. Estimates of Muslims vary greatly. Some surveys show that there are about 3.5 to 3.8 million Muslims (1.4 to 1.5%) in the U.S. Most Muslim sources estimate six million. [Peters, W. (Ed.) (1997). *The religious landscape of the United States. US Society and Values: Electronic Journal of the US Information Agency*, 2(1).]
- In the United States, the number of adults who identify themselves as Christians has declined from 86% in 1990 to almost 77% in 2001. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- According to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), the number of respondents who identify as Wiccan have increased significantly. These numbers have increased from 8,000 in 1990 to 134,000 in 2001. This is an increase of almost 17 times. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- Between 1990 and 2001, the number of respondents who identify themselves as Muslim and Buddhist has more than doubled, while the number of respondents who identified as Hindu has more than tripled. [Kosmin, B.A., Mayer, E. & Keysar, A. (2001). *American Religious Identification Survey*. New York, NY: The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.]
- The number of mosques has grown over the past 30 years from 150 to 1250. [Peters, W. (Ed.) (1997). *The religious landscape of the United States. US Society and Values: Electronic Journal of the US Information Agency*, 2(1).]

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE WITHIN SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Currently, very few studies exist which measure the extent and nature of intimate partner violence (IPV) within specific religious and spiritual groups. In searching for statistics for the development of this packet, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV) found statements relevant to IPV within the Jewish and Muslim faiths. As credible research reports on the extent and nature of IPV within these and other faiths become available, their findings will be added to the contents of this packet.

Jewish Community

- An estimate by the organization Jewish Women International indicates that 15 to 25% of all Jewish households experience domestic violence. This rate is the same among Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews. [Giller, B. & Goldsmith, E. (1980). *All in the Family: A Study of Intra-familial Violence in the Los Angeles Jewish Community* [unpublished masters thesis]. Los Angeles, CA: Hebrew Union College and University of Southern California.]
- One out of five Jewish women are abused by their partners – a rate that is consistent with that of the general population. However, the statistics show that Jewish women remain in abusive relationships five to seven years longer than non-Jewish women. [Hadassah (n.d.). *Domestic Abuse Does Not Discriminate*. Retrieved July 2003 from: <http://www.hadassah.org/>]

Muslim Community

- According to estimates by Muslim activists in the United States, approximately ten percent of Muslim women are abused emotionally, psychologically, and/or physically by their husbands. [Faizi, N. (2001). Domestic violence in Muslim communities. *Texas Journal of Women and the Law*, 10, 209-230.]

