

From Violence Free Minnesota: The Coalition to End Relationship Abuse



PREVENTIVE PRESS:

A GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS ON RESPONSIBLE REPORTING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



VIOLENCE FREE
MINNESOTA

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1989, Violence Free Minnesota has tracked and documented intimate partner homicides in Minnesota, and remains the only agency in the state to capture the full scope of this form of abuse. Each year, we release our annual *Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota* and publicly memorialize that year's victims. The goal of these efforts is to increase public awareness of relationship abuse, identify patterns in relationship abuse over time, advocate for policy and prevention recommendations that we believe if implemented would reduce intimate partner homicides in our state, and remember and honor every known victim.

Over the past 30 years of these efforts, we have collectively witnessed the immense positive impact of journalism and reporting on relationship abuse in our state, but also the many pitfalls and systemic failures. While by and large reporting on this issue has become more nuanced, sensitive, and educational, and a great many reporters thoughtfully and thought-provokingly report on relationship abuse with tact and empathy, we continue to see news articles that victim-blame, demean, and dehumanize victim/survivors and sensationalize abuse. Through the use of stereotypes, myths, and problematic framing, irresponsible journalism in our state contributes to minimization of violence in a way that predominantly negatively impacts women, 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, immigrant victim/survivors, victim/survivors with disabilities, and victim/survivors of color.

This problem is not unique to our state. **We recognize many of these issues are not intentional, and we are grateful for the many wonderful partners and allies we have worked with over the years from various news outlets both regionally and statewide. However, we believe all victims and survivors of relationship abuse and intimate partner homicide are owed basic respect in reporting about their lives and deaths.**

Our hope is that this media guide will serve as a helpful tool for journalists interested in better understanding the dynamics, prevalence, and impact of domestic violence in our state and ways to report on this issue in a manner that is sensitive, empathetic, and survivor-centered.

WHY RESPONSIBLE REPORTING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MATTERS

01

Respectful content may dispel readers' implicit biases and negative stereotypes about victim/survivors.

02

People using harm in their relationships may be challenged to think more critically about their abusive behavior.

03

Victim/survivors may be presented with helplines and advocacy resources they may not have known about.

04

Communities, systems, and various stakeholders may learn how to better support victim/survivors.

05

The general public may begin to view domestic violence as a public health and social issue, not a private matter.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 101

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior used by a current or former intimate partner to maintain power and control over another current or former intimate partner. “Intimate partner” may include any current or former dating partner, sexual partner, spouse, or any romantic relationship. Domestic violence can also occur in roommate and familial relationships; however, Violence Free Minnesota focuses specifically on intimate partner abuse in our work and this guide.

TERMINOLOGY

Violence Free Minnesota often uses the term “relationship abuse” interchangeably with “domestic violence” to represent the range of contexts in which domestic violence can occur, which are not limited to a household setting, and to signify forms of abuse beyond physical violence.

BEHAVIOR

Domestic violence may include physical violence; sexual violence and coercion; reproductive coercion over a victim/survivor’s reproductive choices; emotional abuse such as intimidation, stalking, and threats; economic abuse involving control of a victim/survivor’s finances; and digital abuse such as monitoring and online harassment.

REPRESENTATION

Domestic violence is a prevalent public health and social issue that affects people of all genders and sexual identities, racial and ethnic identities, abilities, and backgrounds. However, domestic violence disproportionately impacts 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, women, people with disabilities, people of color, and immigrant survivors.

Victim/survivors who hold multiply minoritized identities, such as women of color and queer people of color, also disproportionately experience criminalization as survivors.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 101

PREVENTION

Domestic violence is preventable. Violence Free Minnesota believes that to prevent and end domestic violence, victim/survivors deserve access to a range of options that both include and expand beyond the criminal legal system. We believe that the criminal legal system alone does not effectively prevent domestic violence, and instead often punishes and retraumatizes survivors, especially survivors of color, while further reinforcing health and socioeconomic disparities that increase vulnerability to abuse.

CONTEXT

Reporting on domestic violence requires a nuanced understanding that any action a victim/survivor takes within an abusive relationship is occurring within a context of ongoing control and/or violence.

Victim/survivors frequently make choices based around their survival and the survival of their children, which cannot truly be called choices at all. Abusive partners often rely on societal victim-blaming tendencies and negative stereotypes to falsely portray victim/survivors as abusive. Victim/survivors may be portrayed to the criminal legal system, family courts, doctors, mental health practitioners, and other professionals as “crazy,” “violent,” or “hysterical.”

Ableist, sexist, homophobic, racist, and transphobic stereotypes often result in survivors experiencing blame and shame within their communities and within and across systems.

As much as possible, journalists should use language and framing that dispels these stereotypes and challenges victim-blaming.

PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MINNESOTA



Domestic violence tends to be under-reported, for reasons including:

- **Victim/survivor fear of reporting** (fear of retaliation from partner for reporting, fear of what will happen after reporting, etc.)
- **Systemic barriers**, such as justified distrust of police and healthcare providers as a result of police brutality, systemic racism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.
- **Lack of reporting measures** that capture gender expansive victim/survivors and disaggregated racial and ethnic data
- **Victim/survivors may not identify their experiences** using terms like “domestic violence” or “intimate partner violence”

Some measures used to collect the following race and gender data are limited in their ability to capture the full scope of domestic violence across diverse communities. The race and gender terminology used by these measures may not fully and accurately reflect the diversity of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and survivors of color in Minnesota.

STATISTICS

- During a **24-hour period on September 9, 2021, 49 of 68 (72%) identified domestic violence programs in Minnesota** participated in a national count of domestic violence services conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence ([NNEDV, 2021](#))
 - **2,421 victims** were served in one day
 - Hotline staff received **859 contacts** (nearly 36 contacts per hour)
- From 1989–2023 in Minnesota, **827 people, most of whom were adult women**, were killed due to domestic violence, including intimate partners, and bystanders and intervenors ([VFMN, 2023](#))

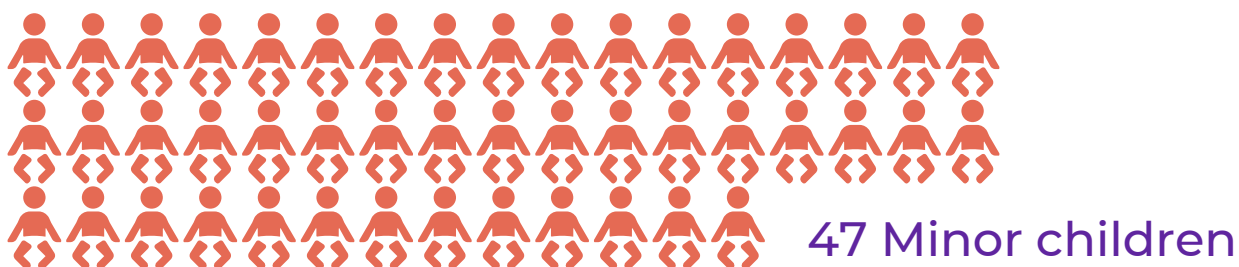


PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MINNESOTA

STATISTICS

- **Of the 827 people killed from 1989–2023** in Minnesota due to domestic violence, **Native victims (45 confirmed homicides) represent 5.44%** of that total number despite making up less than 1% of Minnesota's total population ([VFMN, 2024](#))
- **Between 2012–2022, at least 9 women in Minnesota were killed while pregnant** due to domestic violence. Four were Black women, and one woman was Native ([VFMN, 2023](#))
- **Women accounted for 83% (n = 1,606)** of all intimate partner violence-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations between 2016 and the first quarter of 2018 in Minnesota ([MDH, 2019](#))
 - **Men accounted for the remaining 17% (n = 319)**
 - Women between the ages of 20 and 39 accounted for **63%** of all intimate partner violence-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations among women during this time period

At least **80 children** lost a parent due to intimate partner violence in Minnesota in 2023 ([VFMN, 2024](#)).



LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

Violence Free Minnesota uses the following language in our analysis of relationship abuse in Minnesota. We suggest survivor-centered language.

VICTIM/SURVIVOR OR SURVIVOR

A person who has experienced or is experiencing relationship abuse. The standalone word “victim” is reserved for the context of homicide or if a person who has experienced relationship abuse self-describes as such.

RELATIONSHIP ABUSE/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Violence and/or other tactics used by a current or former intimate partner to exert power and control over a victim/survivor

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Violence Free Minnesota does not use the term “domestic abuse” except when directly referencing the legal definition. Minnesota statute defines domestic abuse in a “household” context, and thus includes domestic relationships beyond those between intimate partners, such as family members.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Violence that is specifically rooted in harmful gender norms and power inequality and includes physical, sexual, emotional, and economic harm

INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE

A homicide perpetrated by a victim’s current or former intimate partner that did not occur as a result of self-defense

DOMESTIC ABUSE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMMING (DATP)

Programming that aims to transform abusive partners’ behavior by addressing the attitudes and beliefs driving their use of harm. In Minnesota, this programming is also commonly known as “Battering Intervention Programming.”



BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The following are best practice guidelines for reporting on domestic violence, with a particular focus on language, framing, and visual content. These guidelines stem from Violence Free Minnesota's 30+ years of experience in documenting intimate partner homicides in Minnesota using media as a primary data source.

STARTING AN ARTICLE: HEADLINES

A headline is the first thing a reader sees when engaging with a media piece on domestic violence. A headline can either demonstrate nuance, sensitivity, and understanding of the issue, or it can immediately reinforce problematic biases and myths.

Refrain from using sensationalizing headlines.

- Rather than attempting to provoke public interest by representing domestic violence in a “thrilling” or “shocking” manner, prioritize **accuracy, nuance, and sensitivity**.

Focus headlines on the perpetrator’s behavior.

- In cases of intimate partner homicide, headlines that **memorialize and honor** the victim are also acceptable.

Do not include perpetrators’ “reasons” for harming or killing a current or former intimate partner in headlines.

- This is particularly important for reporting on homicides in which the perpetrator claims they were motivated by the victim’s alleged infidelity.
- Always keep in mind: **is the story you are telling one that the victim or victim/survivor would share if their voice could be included?**

Write headlines with the understanding that there is no excuse put forth by abusive individuals who kill their partners that is EVER acceptable.

Nurse of 15 years killed in ‘senseless act of domestic violence,’ Minnesota cops say



This appropriate headline focuses on the victim, honors her life by sharing her career, and contextualizes her death by specifically framing it as domestic violence.

IMAGERY

Imagery in domestic violence articles should center and, when applicable, memorialize victims rather than reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

When reporting on domestic violence, intimate partner homicide, or murder-suicide, **do not include photos of the victim/survivor and perpetrator together.** This minimizes the abuse and portrays it as love.

- If possible and appropriate, include the victim's photo.
- The focus should be on the victim and who they were as a person.

Similar to when reporting on mass shootings, **do not include photos of the perpetrator except when the story is about sentencing.**

If using stock images, **avoid including the stereotypical image of a woman cowering in the corner** with a man towering over her with a raised fist, or **images of women with visible facial injuries or bruising.**

- Such images reinforce heteronormative assumptions of domestic violence and misconceptions that it only involves physical abuse. Include photos that reflect the diversity of domestic violence.

Avoid using images that depict alcohol or drugs, as this can reinforce the misconception that abuse is caused by substance use.



The image in this article about domestic violence is a photo of Violence Free Minnesota's [Clothesline Project](#), which honors the lives of individuals lost to abuse. Images of public memorial displays are a good alternative option when living photos of a deceased victim are not available.

LANGUAGE

The terminology that is used in pieces about domestic violence is critical. It is important to use language that **accurately reflects the direction and severity of abuse and violence**, and that avoids victim-blaming, implying mutuality, or excusing abusive behavior. Furthermore, journalists should pay careful attention to the language used to refer to abusive partners: they, too, may be reading articles wondering where to find help.

Avoid outdated, pejorative language like “wifebeater,” “batterer,” or “battered woman/person.”



Be clear about who was gaining and maintaining power and control in the relationship.

Don’t sensationalize content (What NOT to use: “Love triangle,” “spurned lover(s),” “romantic rival”).

Avoid language that implies both parties are to blame for the abuse (do NOT use “violence between the couple,” “toxic/volatile relationship,” “mutual abuse,” etc).

To focus on the victim/survivor, refer to them throughout by first name and the perpetrator by last name.





LANGUAGE

Don't reinforce the myth that abusive partners "snap" rather than intentionally escalating their control. DON'T use "[they] just snapped," "spat/tiff," "in a rage," "killed because of jealousy," "crime of passion," etc.

Avoid language that dehumanizes people using harm in their relationships ("monster," etc). This "others" them and makes them less likely to seek help. It also makes society less likely to feel inclined to help.

If including details about sexual violence in the relationship, use appropriate terminology like "sexual coercion," "rape," and "sexual assault" rather than "sex," "unwanted sex," "nonconsensual sex," or "forced sex."

Refer to women as "women" instead of "females" or "a/the female." "Female" should only be used as an adjective (e.g., "the female neighbor") instead of a noun. Using these terms as nouns is dehumanizing. Also, always respect the self-identification of gender expansive victim/survivors in reporting.

Abusive jealousy

Charge: ~~Workplace love triangle~~ was behind man's shooting death outside Howard Lake business

"Love triangle" is sensationalistic, implies all parties are to blame, and obscures the violence and control involved.

FRAMING



Position domestic violence as a preventable public health issue and social issue instead of a criminal-legal systems issue.



Don't depict older women's homicides as "mercy killings" by using that language OR by focusing on victims' perceived health issues as an implicit motive.



Rely on law enforcement quotes only for the facts (time of death, age, name, relationship) of cases, and interview advocates/experts for the rest.



Focus on the impact of the domestic violence and/or homicide and the traumatic ripple effects, not the "heroic" actions of the police.



Place behaviors within a larger context of a pattern of abuse. Include details about a past history of violence and control if available and applicable.

FRAMING: SHOULD YOU TALK TO THE NEIGHBORS?

It depends. **Avoid including statements from neighbors, coworkers, etc. who only speak to the perceived positive quality of the perpetrator's character.** Not all abusive partners “seem” abusive all of the time. Human beings are complex and oftentimes what the survivor is experiencing is vastly different from the persona others may see. Readers need to know about the dynamics and intricacies of abuse, not that the perpetrator took their kids on fishing trips.

If the neighbors, coworkers, or others can provide statements that offer a window into a history or pattern of violence and control in the relationship, and/or can advocate for the victim or victim/survivor, then their voices are appropriate to include. If not, reconsider. The below quotes, about 4 different men, all of whom either killed their spouses and/or children, illustrate the harm that can be caused.

— “ —

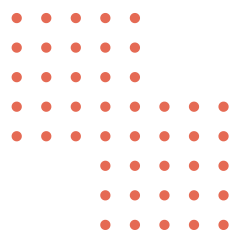
"You have to understand, Ray was one of the most dedicated and loving fathers we had ever seen," said [REDACTED], who lived next door for about six years. "This just doesn't seem possible."

“He was a very good guy. He was one of the finest trial lawyers in the state of Nevada. It’s tragic, and it’s senseless,” he said.

LEXINGTON, S.C. -- A South Carolina man described as a smart, loving father confessed to killing his five children and then dumping their bodies in a secluded clearing along a rural road in Alabama, authorities said Wednesday.

Neighbors say Smith was a great neighbor and nice guy so they were surprised to hear he's accused of killing his wife. Neighbors say Smith's wife left behind two kids.

— ” —



ADDRESSING CRIMINALIZED SURVIVORS

Many survivors are arrested, charged, and/or convicted of crimes in connection with their own abuse. This may be for fighting back, for keeping children from an abusive parent, or for being coerced into criminal activity.

DON'TS

Don't use past or current booking photos of criminalized victim/survivors. This is disrespectful and dehumanizing, and reinforces negative stereotypes about criminality.

Don't include the victim's past criminal history in the article unless the article is specifically addressing how they have been failed by the legal system. For example, if the article is about the victim's homicide, unrelated criminal history has no relevance to their murder.

Don't include photos of survivors entering or leaving courthouses for civil or criminal trials; this is a violation of their privacy and may also threaten their safety.

DO'S

If it is necessary to discuss a survivor's own use of violence, or pending or past criminal charges, frame these in the necessary context.

If the connection between someone's experience of abuse and their commission of a crime is unclear, reach out to local experts in the domestic and sexual violence field for insight and background into the experiences and behaviors of victim/survivors.



The image above—without the blurring—was included in an article about a criminalized survivor. The photo depicts her leaving the courthouse after being indicted for the actions of her abusive partner. **This is what NOT to do.** Journalists must always think about the privacy and safety of criminalized survivors and their families when choosing photos—and must consider how images like this implicitly blame survivors.



REPORTING ON MURDER-SUICIDES

Murder-suicides are a unique form of intimate partner homicide that warrant extra consideration and care, as they are too often inappropriately framed as a mental health issue with two victims.

DON'TS

- Don't frame murder-suicides as a mutual "pact" or an outcome that both partners agreed to.
- Don't include suicide hotlines.
- Don't include photos of the perpetrator and victim together nor share details about the perpetrator's life, career, achievements etc.
- Don't include information about fundraisers for the perpetrator's funeral.

DO'S

- Remind readers that the person killed by their current or former partner is the victim.
- Emphasize that murder-suicides are not a mental health issue, but a domestic violence issue.
- Share fundraisers for the victim's loved ones.
- Share details of the victim's life, career, etc.

Who Was Irwin Jacobs? Former Minnesota Vikings Part-Owner Found Dead Alongside Disabled Wife in Alleged Murder-Suicide

The above article headline describes a high-profile murder-suicide that occurred in Minnesota in 2019. This headline exemplifies much of the problematic media response that followed: many outlets spent paragraphs detailing Jacobs's life and career and little to no time discussing who his wife Alexandra, the victim, was as a person. Here, she is unnamed, relegated to the role of "disabled wife" while the man who killed her is granted the privilege of a name, a career, and no mention of the fact that he murdered her.

ENDING AN ARTICLE

The very last lines in a domestic violence media piece may stick with the reader. These lines can either reinforce stereotypes and victim-blaming, or challenge the reader to think differently.

Include a domestic violence hotline for survivors at the end of every article on domestic violence.

- **The Minnesota-specific Day One hotline should be included** (call [1.866.223.1111](tel:18662231111) or text [612.399.9995](tel:6123999995)) over the National Hotline.
- If possible, include contact information for local domestic violence agencies **based on the location of the incident or homicide**.
 - For example, articles about homicides that occur in Mankato should include the Day One hotline and the hotline for CADA (Committee Against Domestic Abuse) in Mankato.

Do not end articles with a quote from the perpetrator. Instead, end with a quote from the victim/survivor's loved ones, a note about where victim/survivors can seek help, more legal information about the case; or, in cases of intimate partner homicide or murder-suicide, a note about the victim's life, career, hobbies etc. Include any GoFundMe or other available fundraisers for victim/survivors in cases of financial need, medical costs, and/or funeral costs for the victim or the victim's family.

In two days, the GoFundMe has garnered over \$6,700 against a \$10,000 fundraising goal. You can [donate right here](#).

Include a link and how much is left to raise

This is a great example of a media outlet including a hotline!

Domestic violence help

Help is available 24/7 through the [Day One hotline](#) by calling 866-223-1111 or texting 612-399-9995.



MEDIA TOOLBOX

This media toolbox includes practical tools journalists can use to ensure that the framing, imagery, and language of their articles is as survivor-centered as possible, and that appropriate resources are included for readers.

Headline Checker

The following are examples of problematic headlines collected from articles on domestic violence, most from Minnesota. The headlines are followed by an example of a rewritten, more respectful headline with an explanation of why the original was problematic. This section can be used as a tool to provoke consideration of more thoughtful messaging.

Charges: Dassel man killed his wife with kids in the house over alleged affair

- **Updated: “Charges: Dassel man killed his wife with kids in the house”** ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline privileges the perpetrator's excuse for his violence and implies the victim was to blame.

Charges: Love triangle at center of Minneapolis homicide

- **Updated: “Abusive jealousy and control at center of Minneapolis homicide”** ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline sensationalizes the homicide and obscures the power and control; and, through the use of “love triangle,” suggests all parties contributed to the death.

Southern Minnesota man agrees to 6½-year term for strangling his girlfriend as part of suicide pact

- **Updated: “Southern Minnesota man agrees to 6½-year term for strangling his girlfriend to death”** ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline privileges the perpetrator's narrative and excuses for his actions, and inappropriately frames a domestic violence homicide as a mental health issue.

Minneapolis man held back, then shot rival, police say



- **Updated:** “Minneapolis man shot other man due to abusive jealousy, police say” ✓
- **Why the change:** The term “rival” referred to another man who slept with the perpetrator’s ex-girlfriend. This term is disrespectful to the victim, places the victim and perpetrator on a level playing field, and frames women as objects of conquest.

Crow Wing County man admits killing wife in June hit-and-run after her ‘hissy fit’



- **Updated:** “Crow Wing County man admits killing wife in June hit-and-run and leaving her to die” ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline centers the perpetrator’s inexcusable motives and implicitly uplifts and reinforces misogynistic language (“hissy fit”), which is utterly disrespectful to the victim.

Carlton County man says he murdered wife at her request



- **Updated:** “Carlton County man murdered wife” ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline frames this intimate partner homicide as consensual. Homicides are never consensual.

Charge: Minneapolis man injected sex partner with meth, left him tied up as he died



- **Updated:** “Charge: Minneapolis man killed partner with a fatal dose of drugs and left him for dead overnight” ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline sensationalizes the homicide and dehumanizes the victim by referring to him as a “sex partner” rather than a person.

Man confesses to killing wife to end her chronic pain, police say



- **Updated:** “Man confesses to killing wife, police say” ✓
- **Why the change:** The original headline excuses the perpetrator’s murder of his wife. It also reinforces the ableist narrative that the lives of people with disabilities and chronic pain are not worth living.

Cop Accused Of Killing Ex-Wife, Underage Girlfriend; Abducting Child

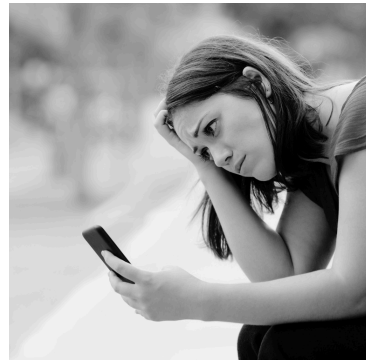


- **Updated:** “Cop Accused of Killing Ex-Wife, Minor He Was Grooming; Abducting Child” ✓
- **Why the change:** There is no such thing as an “underage girlfriend” for a 39-year-old. “Girlfriend” implies a consensual nature, not sexual predation.

PHOTO EXAMPLES

The following are examples of images that could be used in articles about domestic violence. These images are chosen with the intent to depict the complexities and nuances of domestic violence and to also illustrate non-physical abuse. Pay attention to what stereotypes certain images might convey; for example, an image of a bouquet of flowers and an apology note is not relevant to many victim/survivors and may come off as cliché.

- Digital abuse
- Financial abuse
- Reproductive coercion
- Property damage
- Fear and intimidation
- Effects on children
- Purple ribbon (domestic violence awareness symbol)

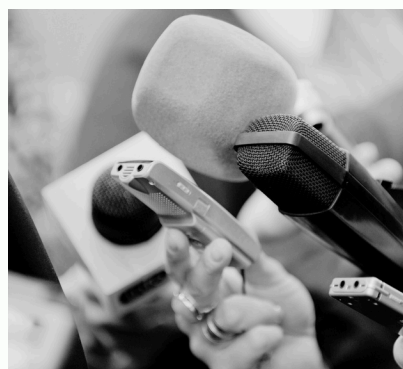


SUGGESTED TAGLINES

Always include a domestic violence hotline at the end of articles on domestic violence. You never know when your article might cause someone to realize they are being abused, or are harming someone else.

For survivors: “If you or someone you know needs help in a relationship, please call the **24/7 Minnesota Day One Hotline at 1.866.223.1111 or text the hotline at 612.399.9995.** The hotline offers confidential help and resources for individuals experiencing domestic and sexual violence, general crime, and trafficking, and can also help people concerned about a loved one.”

For people using harm: “If you or someone you know is using violence or control in a relationship and wants help to change, find a list of Domestic Abuse Transformation Programs on Violence Free Minnesota’s website at <https://www.vfmn.org/find-a-datp-program> or contact the free, confidential *A Call for Change* helpline at 877-898-3411.”



STATE AND LOCAL CONTENT EXPERTS

Consulting domestic violence experts in lieu of police quotes can bring a nuanced, critical lens to your reporting. Experts can speak to dynamics of power and control, risk factors, and available resources in a way police often cannot.

- **Violence Free Minnesota** (for discussion of specific IPV homicide cases included in our homicide reports, and statewide perspectives on domestic violence policy, prevention, and funding)
 - <https://www.vfmn.org/>
- **Mending the Sacred Hoop** (for discussion of domestic violence against Native communities; <https://mshoop.org/>)
- **Minnesota domestic violence agencies** (for discussion of specific incidents or homicides, and information about what community resources are available to victim/survivors)
 - <https://www.vfmn.org/find-a-program>
 - Prioritize outreach to an agency located in the area the incident or homicide occurred
- **Minnesota DATP agencies** (for articles that discuss resources and interventions for abusive partners)
 - <https://www.vfmn.org/find-a-datp-program>
 - Prioritize outreach to an agency located in the area the incident or homicide occurred, if applicable
- **Culturally specific domestic violence agencies** (for perspectives on the unique needs and barriers faced by culturally specific victim/survivor communities, including older adults, 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors, Asian survivors, Latine survivors, Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors, East African survivors, and more).
 - <https://dayoneservices.org/domestic-violence/safety-plan/culturally-specific/>

Glenda Gannett, 45, Elementary School Teacher Killed By Fiancée, Remembered for “Beautiful Spirit”



Glenda and Bonnie Gannett, 2023

On Thursday at Hutchinson Community Center, loved ones gathered to celebrate Glenda Gannett, who was killed by her fiancée Ashley Simonson on January 19th after experiencing years of coercive control.

Glenda, born and raised in Hutchinson, was “a popular and devoted teacher who was loved by her students” and spent “almost every weekend” landscaping for the Hutchinson Arboretum.

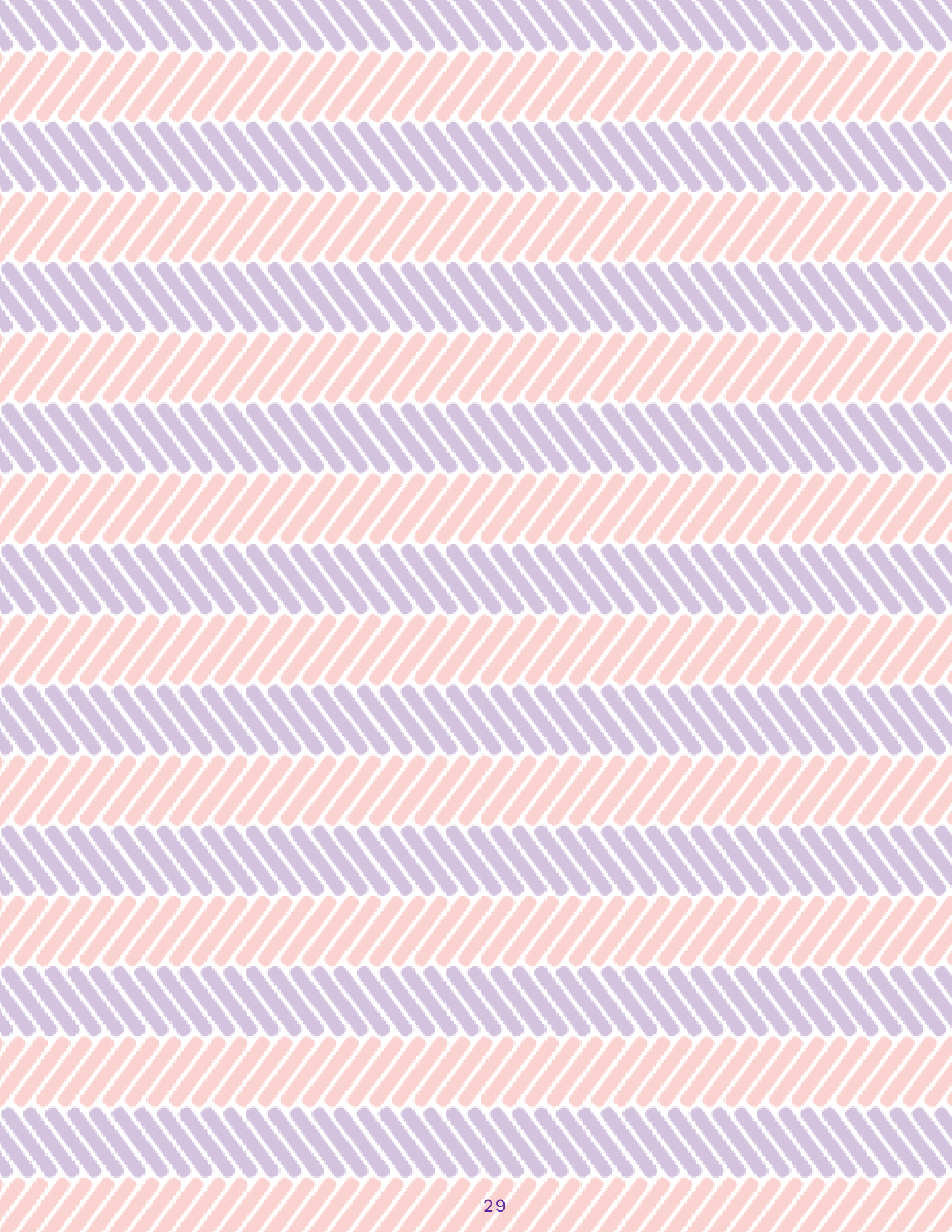
Friends say Simonson had long exhibited jealousy over Glenda’s social life, controlled her finances, and at times threatened to hurt Glenda. Glenda had been preparing to leave the relationship in January when Simonson shot and killed her on the 19th. Simonson is charged with second-degree murder and unlawful possession of a firearm and is currently awaiting trial.

Dane Clemens, Community Advocacy Coordinator for Hutchinson House, a local agency that serves 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors of relationship violence, spoke with reporters at Glenda’s memorial about challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ victims. “This isn’t ‘mutual abuse,’” Dane said. “It’s a pattern of power and control. Many 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors may be afraid to seek help from police because of stereotypes and discrimination.” As attendees gathered to share stories of Glenda, Dane concluded: “Be on the lookout for signs of control in relationships. Don’t pressure someone you’re concerned about into leaving; let them know about resources.”

Glenda leaves behind a daughter, 10-year-old Bonnie, whom she often called “the enduring joy of my life.”

If you or someone you know needs help, please call the 24/7 Hutchinson DV Hotline at 387-482-9999 for free and confidential support. Hutchinson House can be reached at 387-112-3465 or www.hutchinsonhouse.org.

The article begins with a headline, photo, and content centering Glenda/her life and achievements, continues with details of a history/context of abuse, and brings in a local expert to speak to abuse dynamics. The article comes to a close with suggestions for seeking help, and returns one final time to who Glenda was as a person, before concluding with domestic violence hotlines.





VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

ABOUT

Founded in 1978, Violence Free Minnesota is a statewide coalition of over 90 member programs working to end relationship abuse. Violence Free Minnesota strives to end relationship abuse by taking strategic action in partnership with the power of survivors and member programs across the state. As Minnesota's state domestic violence coalition, we shape public policy, raise public awareness, and build the capacity of community-based programs to address the needs of survivors of relationship violence and advocate on their behalf.

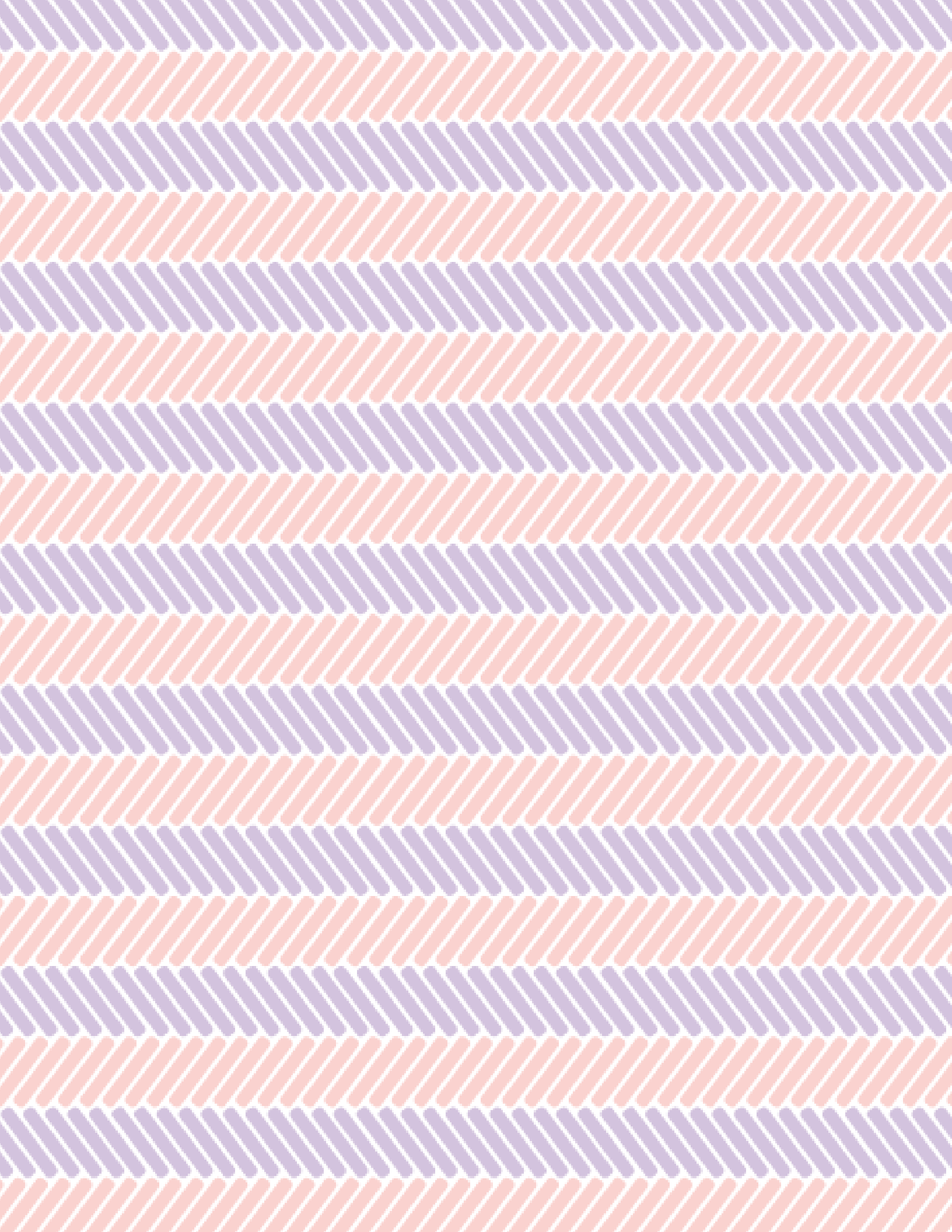
We ask that Violence Free Minnesota be credited when information from this report is used. Questions, comments, and concerns may be directed to Meggie Royer, Communications Senior Manager, at mroyer@vfmn.org.

OUR MISSION

- Represent relationship abuse victim/survivors and member programs;
- Challenge systems and institutions;
- Promote social change;
- And support, educate, and connect member programs.

OUR VISION

To end relationship abuse, create safety, and achieve social justice for all.





VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

**If you are experiencing abuse,
contact Day One at **866.223.1111** to connect with services.**

Violence Free Minnesota
60 East Plato Boulevard, Suite 230
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