Violence is defined as:

- behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something
- the unlawful exercise of physical force or intimidation

It is nearly impossible to be unaware of the issue of violence. Violent images are constantly being seen on television programs, news outlets, video games, and in real life. The constant exposure to violence dulls or makes a person uncaring to it. The large rate of crime is shocking, however, it is often not surprising to most because it has become a way of life for many.
Violence has become a growing public health crisis in America. Acts of violence affect each member of society across the age range. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), violence is a leading cause of death and disability which also affects youth, low-income populations, and people of color at a higher rate. Violence takes on many forms, which includes child abuse, suicide, domestic/intimate partner violence, human trafficking, gang violence and elder abuse.

The total cost of injuries and violence in the United States was $671 billion in 2013.¹

- $214 billion fatal injuries
- $457 billion nonfatal injuries

Each year 27 million people are treated in emergency departments and released, and more than 192,000 die as a result of violence related injuries.

Beyond the medical cost, individuals who are exposed to violence are more likely to experience some health effects from being exposed. Negative health behaviors such as risk-taking behavior, drug abuse and mental health problems are often linked to violence and trauma as a result of exposure to violence.

**Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of abuse committed by a spouse, partner or significant other, with the goal of creating or maintaining power and control. Domestic violence can happen often or continuously and typically gets worse over time. Domestic violence is seen in all income levels, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations. In the U.S. more than 10 million women and men are affected by domestic violence each year.²

Forms of domestic violence include:

**Physical Abuse**: Use of physical force to cause bodily harm or damage to property
- Hitting, beating, choking, pushing, slapping, kicking, holding partner down
- Throwing and/or threatening with objects

**Emotional Abuse**: Use of words to hurt, demean and control
- Verbal threats, name calling and use of abusive language
- Constant blaming and criticism

**Sexual Abuse**: Forced or coerced sexual act or behavior motivated to acquire power and control over the partner
- Unwanted touching or forced sexual acts on a partner
- Criticizing a person’s sexual history, performance and desirability

**Financial Abuse**: Use of financial resources to gain control
- Controls partners' financial resources and limits access to them
- Limits partner's ability to care for themselves by affecting employment or refusing to work

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2. Ibid.
Domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone, often the problem is overlooked, excused, denied and unreported. Domestic abuse often escalates from threats and verbal abuse to physical violence. While physical injury may be the most immediate danger, the emotional and mental costs of domestic abuse are also severe. All forms of domestic violence can destroy feelings of self-worth, instill feelings of helplessness and lead to anxiety and depression. Identifying the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to ending it.

**Resources**

Call 911 if you or someone you know is in immediate danger

**Domestic Violence**

- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- GA Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-39-HAVEN (1-800-334-2836)
- Partnership Against Domestic Violence 404-873-1766 (24 hr. crisis line)
- International Women’s House 770-413-5557 (24 hr. crisis line)
- Women’s Resource Center to End Domestic Violence 404-688-9436 (24 hr. crisis line)
- Center for Pan Asian Community Services 770-936-0969
- Men Stopping Violence 404-270-9894
- GA Coalition Against Domestic Violence 404-209-9894

**Common Warning Signs**

- Controlling behavior
- Jealous/Possessive
- Isolation of partner
- Blames others for problems and behavior
- Threats of violence
- Often puts partner down

**Why do people stay in abusive relationships**

- Conflict of emotions
- Cultural or religious pressure
- Fear
- Custody worries
- Lack of resources
- Shame

**How to help someone in an abusive relationship**

1. Express concern
2. Provide Support
3. Provide domestic violence resources
4. Call 911 if there is immediate danger

Raksha
www.raksha.org

Ser Familia
678-363-3079
www.serfamilia.org

Tapestri
www.tapestri.org

Ahimsa House
www.ahimsahouse.org

1-866-725-7423
404-299-2185
404-452-6248
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Crime Victims’ Assistance</strong></th>
<th><strong>Elder Abuse</strong></th>
<th><strong>Human Trafficking</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulton County Solicitor General’s Office</td>
<td>GA Adult Protective Services</td>
<td>National Human Trafficking Resource Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.fultonda.org">www.fultonda.org</a></td>
<td>1-866-55AGING (552-4464)</td>
<td>1-888-373-7888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeKalb County District Attorney</td>
<td>Atlanta Regional Commission</td>
<td>Covenant House</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.dekalbda.org">www.dekalbda.org</a></td>
<td>404-463-3310</td>
<td><a href="http://www.covenanthousega.org">www.covenanthousega.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>GA Criminal Justice Coordinating Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Out of Darkness</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cjcc.ga.gov">www.cjcc.ga.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.outofdarkness.org">www.outofdarkness.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlanta Victim Assistance, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wellspring Living</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.atlantava.org">www.atlantava.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.wellspring.org">www.wellspring.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Resources</td>
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<td>Youth Spark</td>
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<td>Families First Counseling</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.youth-spark.org">www.youth-spark.org</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.familiesfirst.org">www.familiesfirst.org</a></td>
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<td>Tapestri</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Odyssey Family Counseling Center</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.tapestri.org">www.tapestri.org</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.odysseycounseling.org">www.odysseycounseling.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>DeKalb County Service Board</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.dekcsb.org">www.dekcsb.org</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Sexual Assault</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>This list does not include all services, for more referral information please call:</td>
<td>National Sexual Assault Hotline</td>
<td>1-800-656-HOPE (4673)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GA Network to End Sexual Assault</td>
<td>404-815-5261</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.gnesa.org">www.gnesa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grady Hospital Rape Crisis Center</td>
<td>404-616-4861</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.gradyhealth.org">www.gradyhealth.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>Legal Help</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Atlanta Legal Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>404-524-5811 (Fulton)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.atlantalegalaid.org">www.atlantalegalaid.org</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>404-377-0701 (DeKalb)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation</td>
<td>404-521-0790</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.avlf.org">www.avlf.org</a></td>
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<td>GA Law Center for the Homeless</td>
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<td></td>
<td>404-681-0680</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.galawcenter.org">www.galawcenter.org</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Transitional Housing/Shelters

Gateway Center  
404-215-6600
www.gatewayctr.org

Atlanta Missions  
404-566-6439
www.atlantamission.org

Shepherd’s Rest Ministries  
770-443-5213
www.shepherdsrestministries.org

Our House  
404-522-6056
www.ourhousega.org

City of Refuge  
404-952-1201
www.cityofrefugeatl.org

Salvation Army  
404-486-2900
www.salvationarmyatlanta.org

Hope Atlanta  
404-817-7070
Www.hopeatlanta.org

Nicholas House  
404-622-0793
www.nicholashouse.org

Child Abuse

DFCS Child Protective Center  
1-855-GACHILD (422-4453)

Stop It Now  
1-888-PREVENT (773-8368)

Prevent Child Abuse GA  
1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373)

GA Center for Child Advocacy  
678-904-2880

Child Abuse

Child abuse is more common than most people think. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, there are over 3 million reported cases of child abuse in the U.S. annually. In 2017, there were 67,943 child welfare referral/report calls received by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services.3

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the harm of a child which includes:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

Who Does it Affect?

- In the U.S., approximately 5 children die daily because of child abuse. 5
- 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys will be sexually abused before age 18. 7
- 90% of sexual abuse victims know the offenders (68% are abused by family members). 7
- 80% of adults who were abused as children meet the criteria for at least one psychological disorder. 7

Over $124 billion is spent annually to address the effects of child abuse. 4 Services include:

- Healthcare (physical and mental health)
- Child welfare & protection
- Special education


The solution to violence is prevention. There are a number of programs that help deter crime and work with community members to provide resources to encourage positive behaviors and responses to conflict. It is important to know how to stay safe and prevent crimes before they happen.

Effective crime prevention strategies address the factors we know contribute directly to crime. Through targeted programming, we aim to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors by engaging community groups, grassroots groups, police officers, and other stakeholders to create safe and thriving communities.

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk Factors are negative conditions and influences that increase the likelihood of a person committing crime.

They can include:
- unemployment and low income
- educational levels including high school drop-out rates
- changes in families and parenting
- household size
- availability and use of alcohol and drugs
- shifts in social values
- moving to larger cities
- a shift to communities where people don’t know each other

Protective Factors are positive features or conditions that reduce risks and promote positive development. They decrease the likelihood of engaging in crime. Examples include:
- positive attitudes and coping skills
- supportive family
- positive and healthy peers
- living in low-crime neighborhoods with access to support services
**Elder Abuse**

Elder abuse is any form of mistreatment or neglect that results in harm or loss to an older person. As the population of older adults grows so does the problem of elder abuse. The decline in physical and mental ability that often occurs with aging makes this population vulnerable to abuse. There is often a refusal to report abuse because many feel they will not be believed, to protect abusive family members from the legal costs of their crimes, or too embarrassed to admit that they have become a victim.

**Elder Abuse Can Include:**
- **Physical abuse** - Use of physical force that may result in bodily injury or physical pain
- **Sexual abuse** - Any non-consensual sexual contact with an elderly person
- **Emotional abuse** - Mental anguish or distress caused by verbal or non-verbal acts
- **Financial/material exploitation** - Illegal or improper use of an elder’s funds, property, or assets
- **Neglect** - Refusal or failure to fulfill any part of an elder’s care obligations
- **Abandonment** - Person who has physical custody and in charge of primary care for an elder leaves them

**Warning signs of an abused elder**
- Unkept, smells, malnourished, bed sores, unmet medical needs
- Withdrawn, confused or extremely forgetful, depressed, helpless or angry, hesitant to talk freely, frightened, secretive
- Changes in money patterns

**Human Trafficking**

Human trafficking is a growing problem around the world. After drug trafficking, human trafficking is the second largest criminal industry in the world today and is considered the fastest growing by generating $32 billion a year.

Although many people do not think this happens in the U.S., this is a growing problem that affects the lives of many every day. It is a form of slavery in which people are trapped, often beaten, starved, and forced to work as prostitutes or hard jobs with poor work conditions for little to no pay. Due to Georgia’s large immigrant and refugee populations as well as large farming industries, it is considered a major destination for US human trafficking. In fact, Atlanta has been named one of the top sex trafficking destinations in the United States since the FBI statistics ranked Atlanta among the top 14 cities in the United States for domestic minor sex trafficking. Minors are often recruited from a city and are transferred to another county or state to prevent them from leaving. Atlanta’s international airport and high tourism rates make it an attractive location for traffickers.

**Signs of a trafficked person**
- Unable to leave or come and go as they wish
- Under 18 and providing commercial sex acts
- Is unpaid or paid very little
- Works excessively for long hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual work conditions
- Owe a large debt and which they unable to pay off
- Was recruited through false promises about the nature, pay, conditions and terms of the work

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http://www.polarisproject.org/resources/resources-by-topic/human-trafficking
Violence takes many forms; however, these forms are often connected and share the same root causes. They can also all take place under one roof, in a given community or neighborhood and can happen at the same time or at different stages of life. Understanding the causes of violence and the things that can protect people and communities is important. This information can help better address violence in all of its forms. The communities people live in can protect them from violence or can increase their risk of violence. There are experiences, mostly early in childhood, that make it extremely likely that individuals are at higher risk for involvement with violence.

In addition to the physical toll, the economic cost for violence is staggering. Death, disability, medical treatment, mental trauma and criminal justice system cost billions of dollars each year. The residents of communities with high crime rates are often limited due to the lack of resources and opportunities because businesses are discouraged from investing and locating in these neighborhoods. As a result, there is a lack access to healthy food options, safe places to exercise which has health costs such as diabetes, obesity, malnutrition and heart disease. There are also high levels of stress, anger, frustration and hopelessness present that is more likely to be converted to violence when conflict occurs, which creates a cycle of violence in communities.
**Sexual Assault**

Sexual and assault is any unwanted sexual activity, with the offenders using force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent. Sexual assault includes:
- Inappropriate & unwanted touching
- Rape (and attempted rape)
- Child molestation

Most victims of sexual assault know the person who committed the crime. The CDC reports that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives. Although the numbers are very high, the incidence is far greater than what is reported because only 12% of child sexual abuse and 37% of sexual assaults are reported.

![Child Sexual Abuse by the Numbers](image)

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY THE NUMBERS**

- 17 million children will be sexually abused over the next 18 years
- 47% of child molesters are female
- 1 in 3 girls are sexually abused
- 1 in 5 boys are sexually abused
- 400,000 Number of convicted pedophiles living in the U.S.
- Only 1 in 10 children will tell someone they were molested
- 42 million Number of sexual abuse survivors in the U.S. today
- 77% of child molesters are married
- 80% of sexual abuse survivors have drug/alcohol problems
- 20% of male sexual abuse survivors will attempt suicide
- $20 billion Estimated annual mental health care cost of child sexual abuse in the U.S.

Source: Sexual Abuse Resource Network

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**Gang Violence**

The Department of Justice defines a gang as a collective group of 3 or more individuals that have a name, identity, saying, symbol, tattoo or style of clothing to distinguish members. The group engages in criminal activity and violence to further the groups objectives. They are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime in most jurisdictions.

- 100% of cities with a population of more than 250,000 report gang activity
- Over 50% of suburban counties report gang activity.
- More than 33,000 gangs are active in the U.S.

The FBI reports that there are more than 33,000 violent street, motorcycle and prison gangs with about 1.4 million members that are criminally active in the U.S. today. Many are well organized and use violence to control neighborhoods and to boost their illegal money making activities, which includes robbery, drug and gun trafficking, fraud, extortion, and prostitution rings. According to the 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment report, gangs are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime.

Due to the large amount of gang violence the FBI started the Safe Streets Violent Crime Initiative in 1992, to address violent street gangs and drug-related violence. The Violent Gang Safe Streets Task Force became the vehicle through which all of the federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies joined together to address the violent crime troubling their communities.

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A violent crime is a crime in which an offender uses or threatens force on a victim. This entails both crimes in which the violent act is the objective, such as murder, as well as crimes where violence was not the aim. Violent crimes are often committed with weapons.

Violent crime is composed of four offenses:

1. Murder and manslaughter
2. Rape
3. Robbery
4. Aggravated assault

### Number of Violent Crimes in GA in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Murder</th>
<th>Rape</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>2,684</td>
<td>9,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeKalb County</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton County</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>2,354</td>
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