

# Lessons Learned from Domestic Violence Tragedies: The Emerging Role of the Workplace

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PROACTIVE  
RESOLUTIONS 

# Intimate Partner Femicide

- The homicide of a woman by her current or former intimate partner
- The single most common form of homicide perpetrated against women
  - 30-60% of all homicides of women annually
- Additional individuals are often harmed or killed in the context of IPF
  - 10-25% of cases involve additional victims
  - 30-40% of cases involve perpetrator suicides

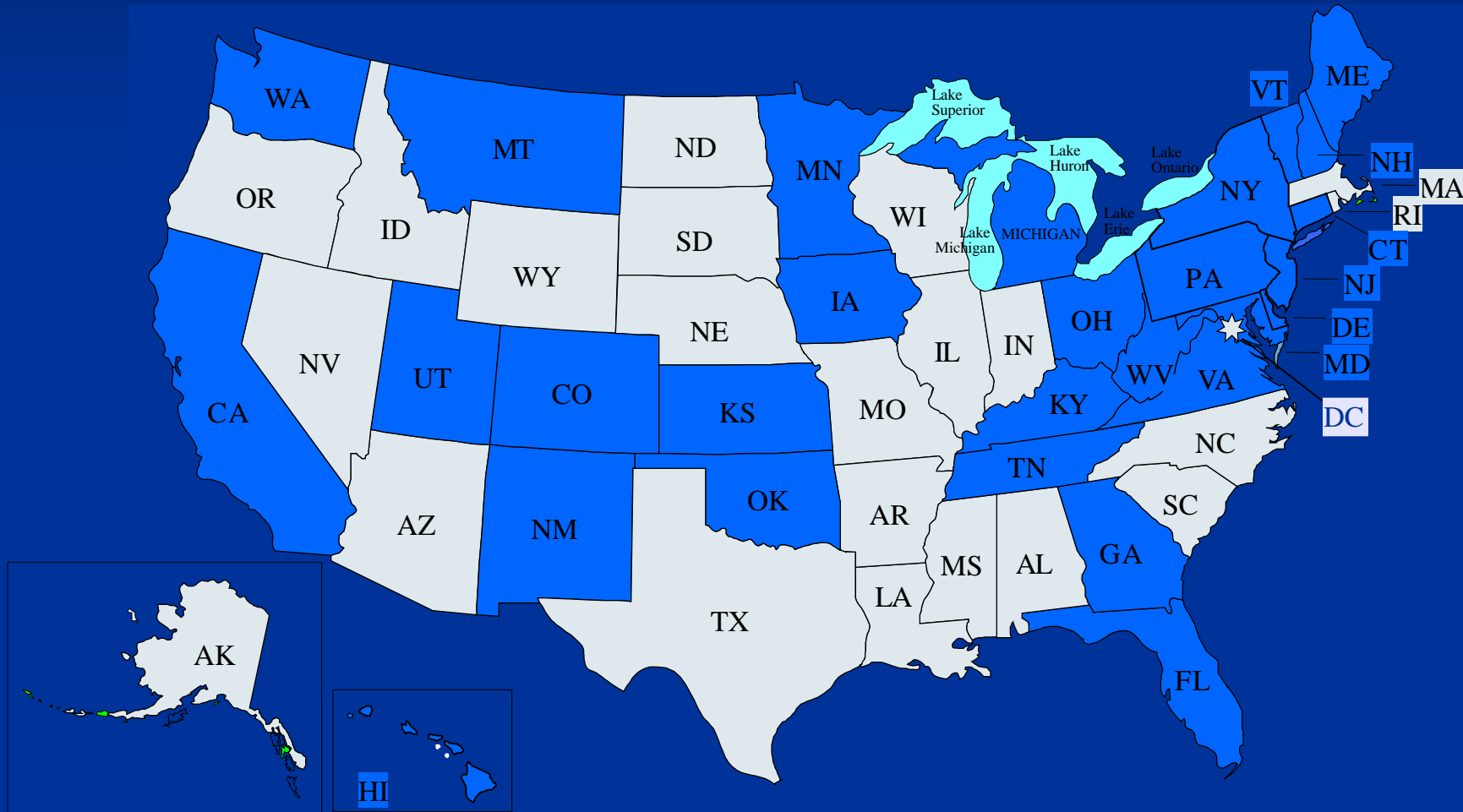
# Preventable Tragedies

- Research on risk factors suggests that it may be possible to identify risk of IPF
- Reviews of system gaps suggests that IPF are often preventable tragedies
- Family, friends, co-workers, neighbours, and professionals are often aware of problems

# DV Fatality Review Teams

- Established in the United States and Canada over last fifteen years to *understand* and *prevent* cases of IPF
- Involve a collaboration of stakeholders who review cases of IPF to identify risk factors and gaps in the system response
- Publish report describing their work, findings, and recommendations for systems change

# Active US DV Fatality Review Teams



# Diverse Nature

- Goals
  - Improve knowledge, systems, and collaboration
- Structures
  - Authority, jurisdiction, membership, and meetings
- Processes
  - Case selection, data collection, and data analysis
- Outcomes
  - Developing and implementing recommendations

# Increased Knowledge

- Increased public and professional knowledge
  - Includes conducting research, educating the public, and training professionals about domestic violence
  - One team reported increased public knowledge and awareness regarding domestic violence homicides by disseminating their reports widely to community stakeholders and generating media attention through press releases

# Better Coordination

- Better coordination and communication across services
  - Includes developing trusting relationships, increasing coordination between services, and improving communication among services providers
  - One team witnessed better coordination between courts and crisis centers following the implementation of one of their recommendations

# Systems Improvement

- Improved practices, policies, and procedure
  - Includes making recommendations for changes to legislation and policy and improving the existing system response to domestic violence
  - One team observed improvements to practice when one of their recommendations resulted in changes to law enforcement policies related to weapons removal in cases of domestic violence

# Resource Development

- Development of additional resources
  - Includes developing new resources and services to address unmet needs
  - One team noted increased funding for domestic violence when the provincial government announced a sixty-six million dollar action plan to address a range of needs outlined in their report

# Ontario Chief Coroner's Office and DVDRC

*“We Speak for the Dead to Protect the Living”*



# *DVDRC* Purpose

- To assist the Office of the Chief Coroner in the investigation and review of deaths of persons that occur as a direct result of domestic violence, and to make recommendations to help prevent such deaths in similar circumstances.
- Homicides, homicide/suicide primarily, (spouse, significant other, children)

# *DVDRC* Objectives

- Confidential review of DV deaths
- Offer expert opinion to CC, RSC
- Create and maintain a comprehensive database
- Identify trends, risks and patterns
- Identify systemic gaps and shortcomings
- Make recommendations

# Predictable and Preventable?

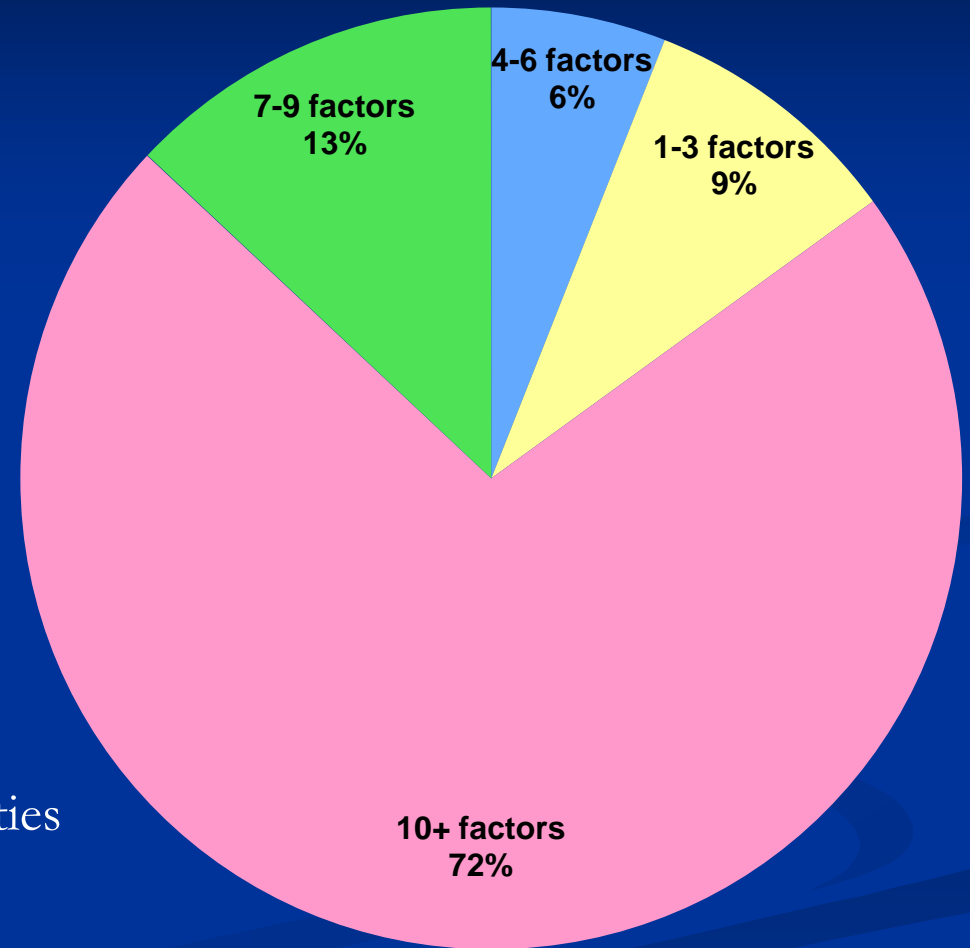
- 84% of the cases had at least 7 risk markers
- Critical information held by family, work colleagues, front-line professionals
- Children are the victims in a number of ways
- Critical need to collaborate between child protection and violence against women services as well as the justice system (criminal and family court)

# Common Risk Markers

- 79% Actual or pending separation
- 63% Depression (or other mental health problems)
- 75% Prior history of domestic violence
- 44% Prior threats to commit suicide or attempt
- 55% Access to or possession of firearms
- 60% Obsessive behavior (including stalking)
- 43% Controls most or all of victim's daily activities

# Risk Factors

1. Actual or pending separation
2. History of domestic violence
3. Perpetrator depressed in opinions of non-professionals
4. Escalation of violence
5. Obsessive behaviour displayed by perpetrator
6. Prior threats to kill victim
7. Prior attempts to isolate victim
8. Prior threats/attempts to commit suicide
9. Access to or possession of firearms
10. Control of most or all of victim's daily activities
11. Excessive alcohol and/or drug use
12. History of violence outside the family



# Who Knows What?

■ Family	75%
■ Friends	53%
■ Police	41%
■ Medical	28%
■ CAS	19%
■ Co-workers	19%
■ DV agency	15%
■ Clergy	4%

# Workplace Domestic Violence

- Victims and perpetrators are both in the workplace
- Victim in the workplace and perpetrator outside workplace

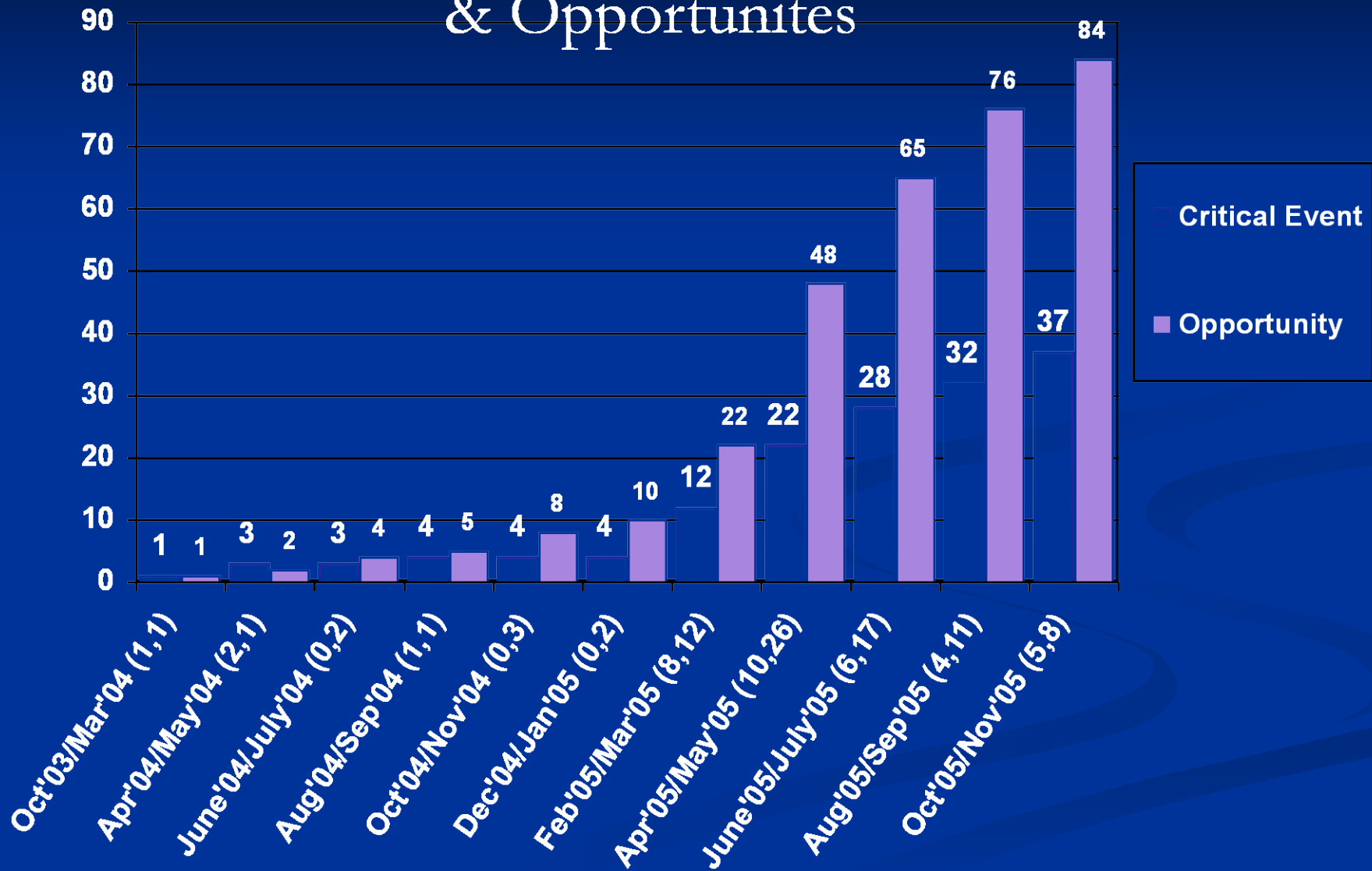
# Case Example #1

- Victim – Lori Dupont, a nurse at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital
- Perpetrator – Marc Daniel, the estranged intimate partner of the victim and a doctor at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital
- Event - Lori was murdered by Marc on November 12, 2005 at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital

# Critical Events and Opportunities

- Critical events include warning signs and risk factors that, either by themselves or as part of a pattern of behaviour, should raise possibility of danger
- Opportunities include a chance to intervene and offer protection for victim or accountability for perpetrator, some of which overlooked because of uncertainty or missing information

# Accumulation of Critical Events & Opportunitites



# Recommendations

- Public & professional awareness
- Risk assessment & management with perpetrators
- Safety planning with victims
- Prevention programs in schools, colleges & universities
- Recognition of needs of exposed
- Changes to workplace legislation, policies, procedures and practices

# Case Example #2

- Victim - Aysegul Candir, a Mississauga high school teacher
- Perpetrator - Erhun Candir, the estranged husband of the victim
- Event - Aysegul was murdered by Erhun

# Context

- Aysegul Candir had left her husband of 18 years just a few weeks before her death, while he was in Turkey . She moved from their Bolton home into a high-security condominium in Woodbridge. Brian McGuire, who prosecuted the case along with Michael Morris, argued Erhun Candir deliberately planned the murder. "She was afraid of him," McGuire told jurors. "She took elaborate steps to make sure he couldn't find her... she essentially went into hiding... she wanted to disappear, to fall off the radar screen." Aysegul Candir was shot in the head and hip as she stepped from her car on the cold, rainy morning. Before coming to Canada, she taught in her native Turkey, from 1980 to 1986.

# Outcome

- A man who gunned down his wife — a former Mississauga high school teacher — five years ago outside a Brampton school has lost his bid to have his conviction and sentence overturned. On Wednesday, the Ontario Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal filed by Erhun Candir, 65, meaning he must serve a life sentence with no parole for at least 25 years. Candir was found guilty in 2007 of first-degree murder in the Dec. 10, 2004 shooting death of Aysegul Candir, 47, outside Bramalea Secondary School, where she had taught since 2002. Candir's lawyers appealed on several grounds, including that the trial judge failed to properly instruct the jury on the use of hearsay, eyewitness identification and expert evidence. They also contended the trial judge didn't remedy an allegation by Candir's lawyers that the Crown disclosed information too late.

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