



Domestic Violence 2019



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DAVID B. RAUSCH
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March 4, 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Each year the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation releases annual reports on crimes reported by law enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program in seven different reports. The TIBRS data contains a wide range of incident level information including victim and offender demographics.

The issue of domestic violence is by no means a novel problem in American society. The persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitate continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic violence for 2019 are included in the report.

I would like to thank all contributing agencies for their hard work and contributions to making this report a thorough and accurate picture of crime in Tennessee. It is only with their support the state continues to maintain such a successful program.

Sincerely,

Director
David B. Rausch



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Quick Facts

- ❖ A total of 71,263 offenses were flagged as domestic related in 2019.
- ❖ Of the 71,263 domestic related offenses reported in 2019, 48,006 of them were reported as *Simple Assault*.
- ❖ The overall number of domestic related offenses decreased by 3.7% from 2018 to 2019.
- ❖ *Females* were three times more likely to be victimized than males; accounting for 71.5% of all domestic violence victims.
- ❖ *Males* accounted for the other 28.4%.
- ❖ *Juveniles* made up 10.3% of the reported victim types in 2019, with *Simple Assault* being the most reported offense made against juveniles.
- ❖ Data on victim to offender relationship types revealed that *Boyfriend/Girlfriend* was the most frequently reported relationship type for domestic abuse.
- ❖ Domestic violence resulted in 90 Murder victims in 2019.
- ❖ The most common weapon reported with domestic violence offenses was *Personal Weapons* (hands, feet, teeth, etc.) at 44,683.
- ❖ Data on Injury Types revealed that *None* accounted for the most frequently reported at 49.7% followed by *Apparent Minor Injuries* at 46.2%.
- ❖ 62.8% of domestic violence incidents were *Cleared* in 2019.

Introduction

The issue of domestic violence is by no means a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitate continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, this study analyzes recent crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS). Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related in 2019 were examined.

Overall Findings

Upon initially examining the TIBRS data submitted for domestic violence offenses, several parameters for the study were established. The data included in this study had to meet the following criteria: Crimes Against Persons offense(s); offense(s) flagged by the law enforcement agency as being domestically related; and victim gender could not be reported as Unknown. The total number of domestic violence victims reported in the state for 2019 totaled 71,263. It should be noted that individuals who reported domestic abuse in more than one incident during the study period will be duplicated accordingly in this report's victim count. The majority of these victims were female (71.5%) outnumbering male victims by almost 3 to 1.

An analysis of race breakdown revealed that White victims, the race majority for all offenses, accounted for as much as 57.8% of victims reported in 2019. A total of 7,336 juveniles, or individuals under age eighteen, accounted for 10.3% of all victims. When examining relationship types, domestic violence occurred predominately in Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships at 38.6%, followed by Spouse at 14.6% in 2019. The most common weapon reported was Personal Weapons (hands, feet, teeth, etc.) at 44,683. A total of 62.8% of domestic violence cases were cleared in 2019.

Domestic Violence Offenses

Crimes identified as domestically related in TIBRS must always have the victim type of Individual. Crimes Against Society and Crimes Against Property cannot be flagged as domestic violence in TIBRS. There are 17 offenses considered to be Crimes Against Persons. Of these, 14 were included in the study with the three omitted offenses being Negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Vehicular Manslaughter, Justifiable Homicide. Findings found that from 2018 to 2019, domestic violence offenses decreased 3.7%.

Table 1: 2017-2019 Annual Comparison

Domestic Violence Offense Type	2017	2018	2019
Murder	88	100	90
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,060	1,115	1,287
Forcible Rape	712	718	679
Forcible Sodomy	197	146	167
Sexual Assault W/Object	78	99	63
Forcible Fondling	766	745	713
Incest	34	36	26
Statutory Rape	119	132	113
Aggravated Assault	11,527	10,947	10,647
Simple Assault	52,182	49,660	48,006
Intimidation	10,470	9,458	8,628
Stalking	943	873	844
Commercial Sex Acts	2	1	0
Involuntary Servitude	0	2	0
Total	78,178	74,032	71,263

Domestic Violence Victims

Domestic violence may often be perceived as violence against women. There are numerous agencies nationally and locally which advocate specifically for battered and abused women. The current analyses of domestic offenses in the state of Tennessee support this notion that domestic violence is most often reported as being committed towards female victim.

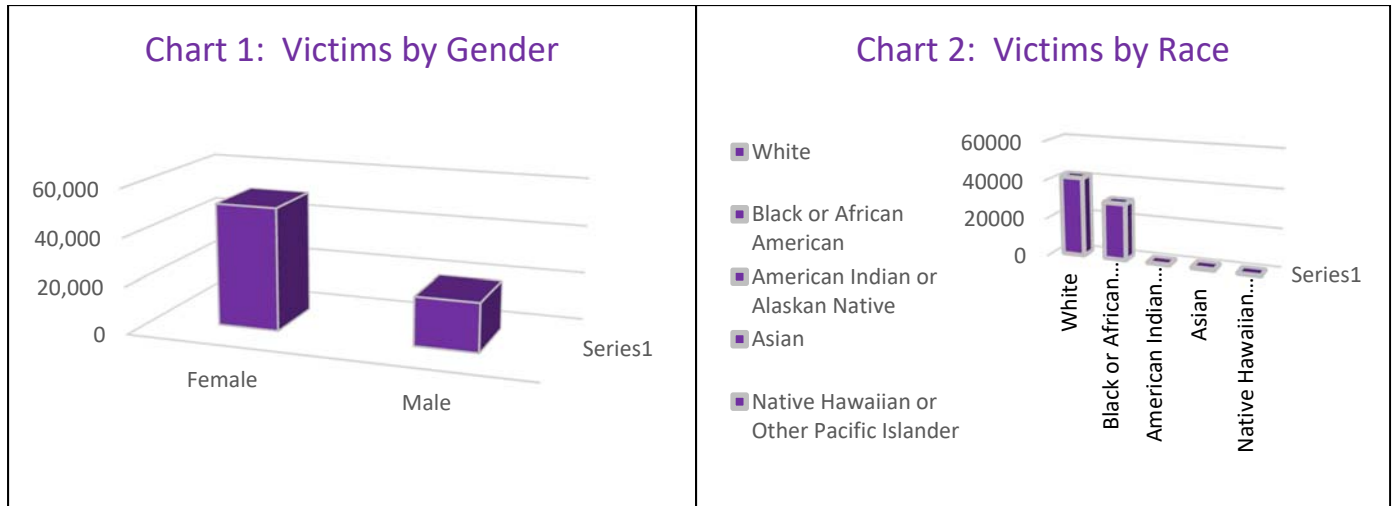
Table 2: 2019 Domestic Violence Offenses by Gender

Offense	Female Number	%	Male Number	%	Unknown Number	%	Total Number	%
Murder	47	0.09%	43	0.21%	0	0.00%	90	0.13%
Kidnapping/Abduction	913	1.79%	371	1.83%	3	4.55%	1,287	1.81%
Rape	671	1.32%	8	0.04%	0	0.00%	679	0.95%
Sodomy	90	0.18%	77	0.38%	0	0.00%	167	0.23%
Sexual Assault W/Object	60	0.12%	3	0.01%	0	0.00%	63	0.09%
Fondling	601	1.18%	109	0.54%	3	4.55%	713	1.00%
Incest	20	0.04%	6	0.03%	0	0.00%	26	0.04%
Statutory Rape	105	0.21%	8	0.04%	0	0.00%	113	0.16%
Aggravated Assault	6,942	13.62%	3,692	18.25%	13	19.70%	10,647	14.94%
Simple Assault	34,131	66.97%	13,829	68.36%	46	69.70%	48,006	67.36%
Intimidation	6,662	13.07%	1,965	9.71%	1	1.52%	8,628	12.11%
Stalking	725	1.42%	119	0.59%	0	0.00%	844	1.18%
Total	50,967	100.00%	20,230	100.00%	66	100.00%	71,263	100.00%

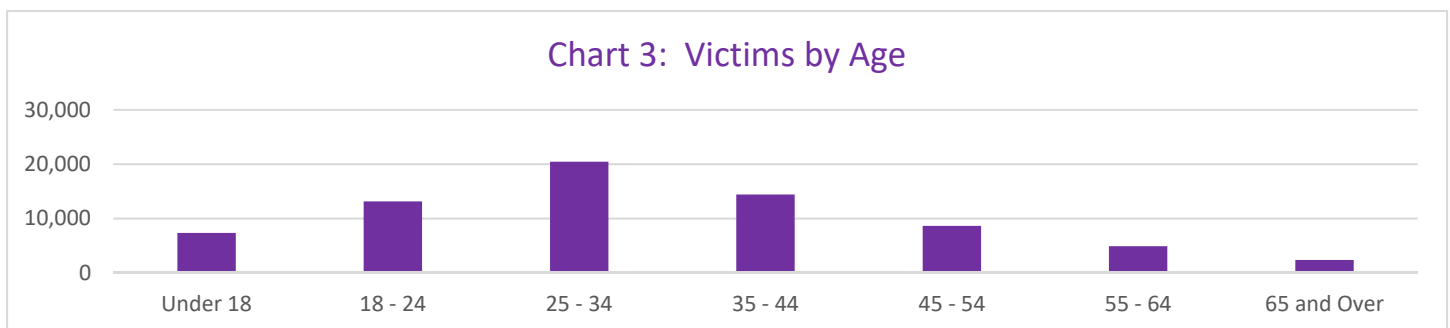
Note: Unknown is listed in Table 2 to accurately represent data reported in 2019. The category of unknown will not be listed in other tables or charts throughout this report.

In 2019, a total of 71,263 domestic violence victims were reported to the TIBRS program. Per TIBRS reporting guidelines, up to 10 offenses may be reported for each incident, such as those listed in Table 2.

Data collected from TIBRS revealed that women were consistently the primary victims of domestic violence offenses. In 2018, Females accounted for 71.5%, whereas their counterparts accounted for only 28.4% as shown in Chart 1. As such, females in Tennessee are almost three times more likely than males to become victims of domestic abuse.



Additional findings revealed victims classified as White (57.8%) and Black or African American (41.4%) were more likely to be victims of domestic violence than other races in Tennessee. White Females, in particular, were victimized at a higher rate than Black or African American Females in 2019. Males classified as Black or African American represented 40.0%, compared to White Males at 58.9%.



Individuals between the ages of 25-34 were at a higher risk of domestic abuse than other age groups displayed on Chart 3. Though individuals over 18 comprised the majority of domestic abuse victims, individuals Under 18 mostly comprised being a victim of Simple Assault.

Domestic Violence Victims continued

Though White victims (57.8%) were victimized at a higher rate overall than Black or African-American victims (41.4%), there were several incidents that showed even greater disparity between these two racial groups in terms of victimization.

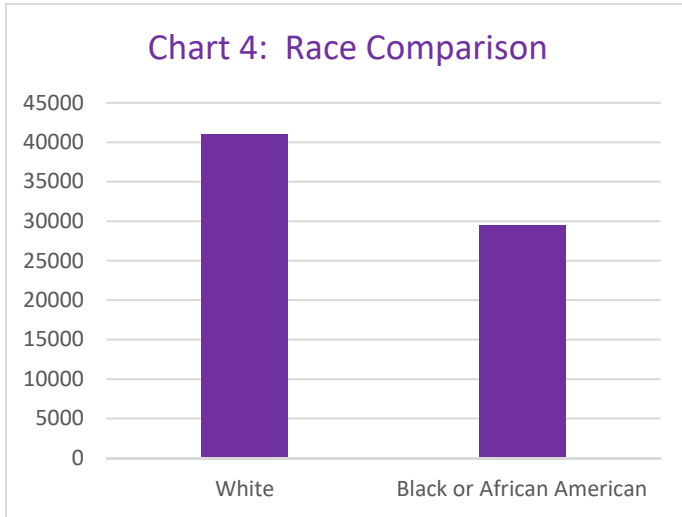


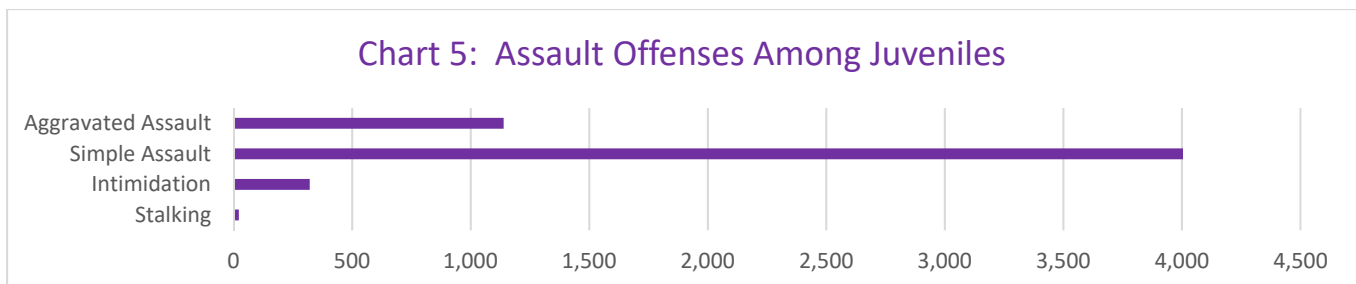
Table 3: Race Comparison by Offense

Offense Type	White	Black or African American
Murder	55	35
Kidnapping/Abduction	626	646
Rape	494	173
Sodomy	105	58
Sexual Assault W/Object	39	21
Fondling	519	178
Incest	21	4
Statutory Rape	75	37
Aggravated Assault	5,929	4,608
Simple Assault	28,352	19,130
Intimidation	4,360	4,174
Stalking	474	363

As a case in point, Chart 4 and Table 3 further examines race data and while Simple Assault accounted for the most frequently reported offense type between both racial groups, domestic related sexual incidents occurred more predominately among White victims than Black victims in 2019. Despite apparent differences, data revealed little variation between Kidnapping/Abduction incidents among Whites and Blacks in 2019.

Juvenile Victims

Additional findings on domestic violence data reveal juveniles accounted for 10.3% of all domestic abuse victims in 2019. Juveniles were more likely to be victims of Rape and Forcible Fondling than adults were in 2019. Similarly, the majority of Incest and Kidnapping/Abduction incidents were comprised of juveniles in 2019. When examining assault offenses, Simple Assault among Juveniles comprised 54.6%, followed by Aggravated Assault at 15.5% in 2019.

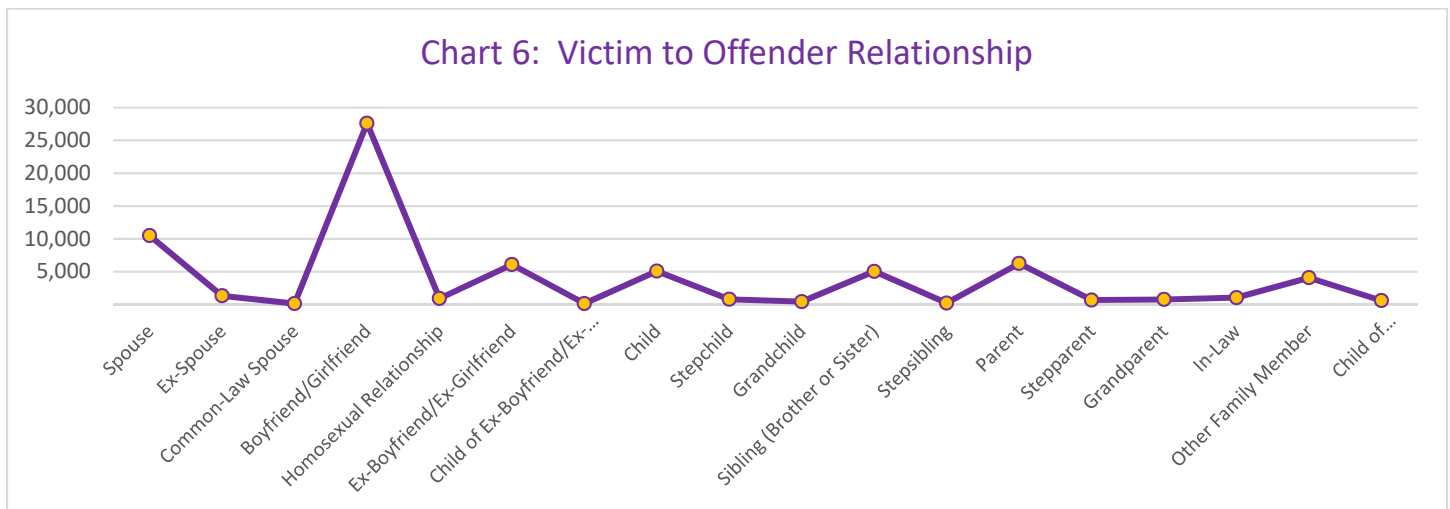


Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships

Table 4: TIBRS Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships	
Within Family	
Spouse	Grandchild
Common-Law Spouse	In-Law
Parent	Stepparent
Sibling	Stepchild
Child	Stepsibling
Grandparent	Other Family Member
Outside Family	
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	Ex-Spouse
Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend	Homosexual
Ex-Boyfriend/Ex-Girlfriend	Child of Ex-boyfriend/Ex-Girlfriend

Victim to Offender Relationship data allows one to understand the true nature of domestic abuse. Generally, domestic violence victims and offenders can have various interpersonal relationships. The intimate relationship is the most common when addressing domestic abuse. Intimate relationships may be presented as formal relationships such as a marriage or less formal relationships such as dating.

To examine such relationships, TIBRS collects information concerning the particular relationship between the victim and offender using the Victim to Offender relationship; and more specifically, the intimate Victim to Offender relationships of Spouse, Ex-Spouse, and Boyfriend/Girlfriend. Two additional categories (Ex-Boyfriend/girlfriend and Child of Ex-boyfriend/girlfriend) were added to the TIBRS program in 2018. Chart 6 reveals the number of Victim to Offender relationships reported in 2019.



Spouse/Ex-spouse

Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships were examined together for comparison purposes. Results revealed that Spouses are more likely to be domestically abused than those who fall in the relationship category of Ex-Spouse.

Spouse/ Ex-Spouse continued

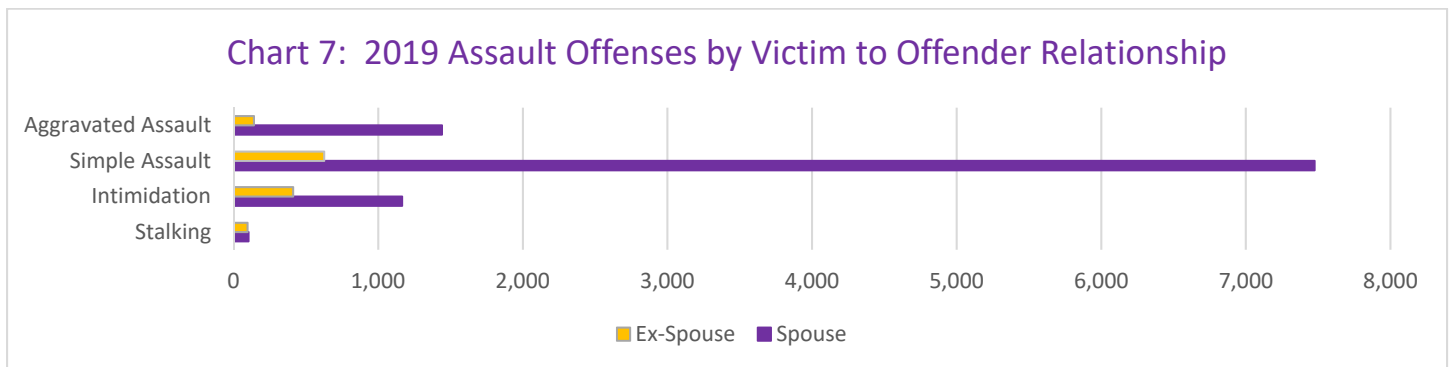
Over the three-year reporting period, as shown below, domestic violence with a relationship of Spouse/Ex-Spouse declined 13.6%. Female victims classified as Black or African Americans in an Ex-Spouse Relationship decreased 53.6% from 2017 to 2019. White Female victims decreased by 24.0% within that same timeframe.

Table 5: Spouse/Ex-Spouse Relationship by Gender and Race

Spouse	2017	%	2018	%	2019	%
Male	2,913		2,786		2,675	
White	2,102	72.2%	2,068	74.2%	1,956	73.1%
Black or African American	811	27.8%	718	25.8%	719	26.9%
Female	8,562		7,888		7,618	
White	6,440	75.2%	5,948	75.4%	5,714	75.0%
Black or African American	2,122	24.8%	1,940	24.6%	1,904	25.0%
Ex- Spouse						
Male	491		445		328	
White	322	65.6%	296	66.5%	240	73.2%
Black or African American	169	34.4%	149	33.5%	88	26.8%
Female	1,467		1,428		980	
White	1,012	69.0%	939	65.8%	769	78.5%
Black or African American	455	31.0%	489	34.2%	211	21.5%
Total		100%		100%		100%

Please note: This table only reflects the relationships of spouse and ex-spouse for Black or African American and White victims.

Additional findings revealed White males from 2017 to 2019 were victimized at a higher rate than Black or African American Males. Black or African Americans Males in Spouse relationships decreased 11.3% from 2017 to 2019.

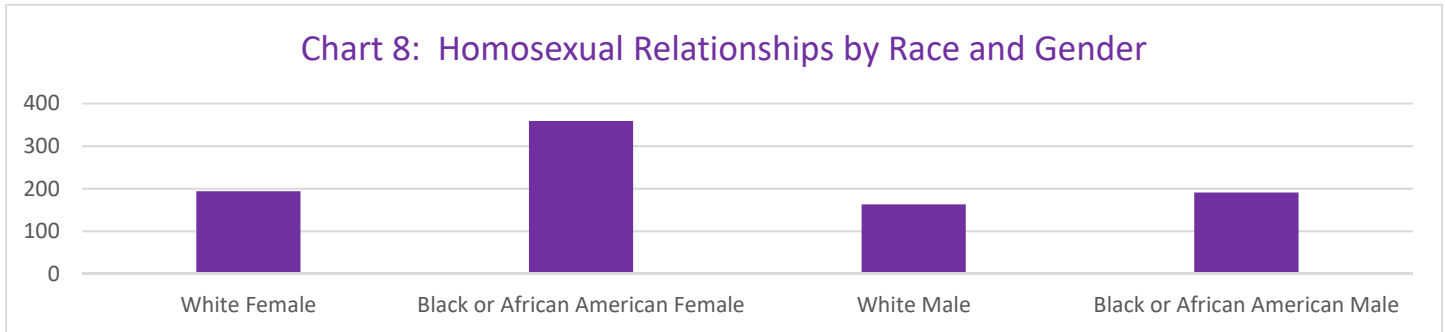


Note: This chart only reflects the relationships of Spouse and Ex-Spouse for Black or African American and White Victims.

The offense of Simple Assault accounted for the most frequently reported offense type among spousal relationships in 2019. A total of 198 domestic related Stalking offenses were reported in 2019. Of those 198 reported, 51.5% cases involved a Spouse.

Homosexual Relationship

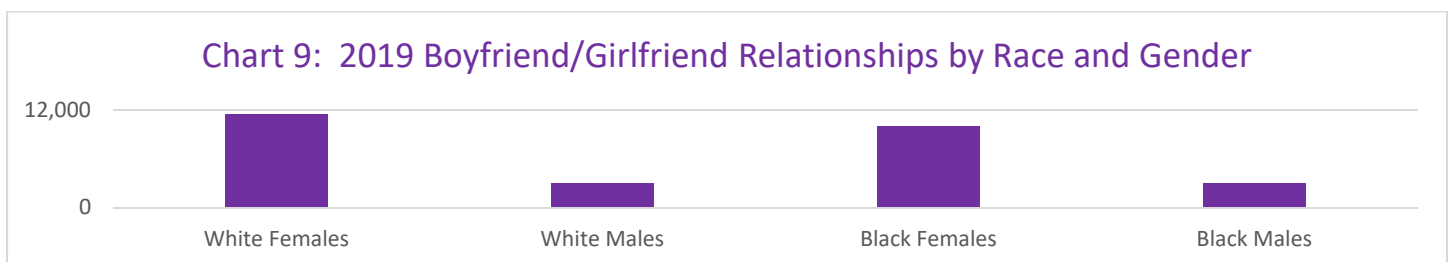
A total of 907 Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships were documented as domestic violence in 2019. This particular TIBRS code specifies the victim and offender as being individuals of the same sex that are involved in an intimate relationship. Given this definition, the gender data element being reported for victims will inherently be mirrored for the respective offenders. The largest number of domestic violence offenses reported in same sex intimate relationships was Simple Assault at 70.7%, followed by Intimidation at 13.8%



Additional findings on Victim to Offender relationships found that females in homosexual relationships were victimized at higher rate than males at 61.0% in 2019. When cross-examining race and gender, Black or African-American females accounted for the largest percentage of victims at 39.6%. Black or African American males were victimized more often than White Males in 2019.

Boyfriend/Girlfriend

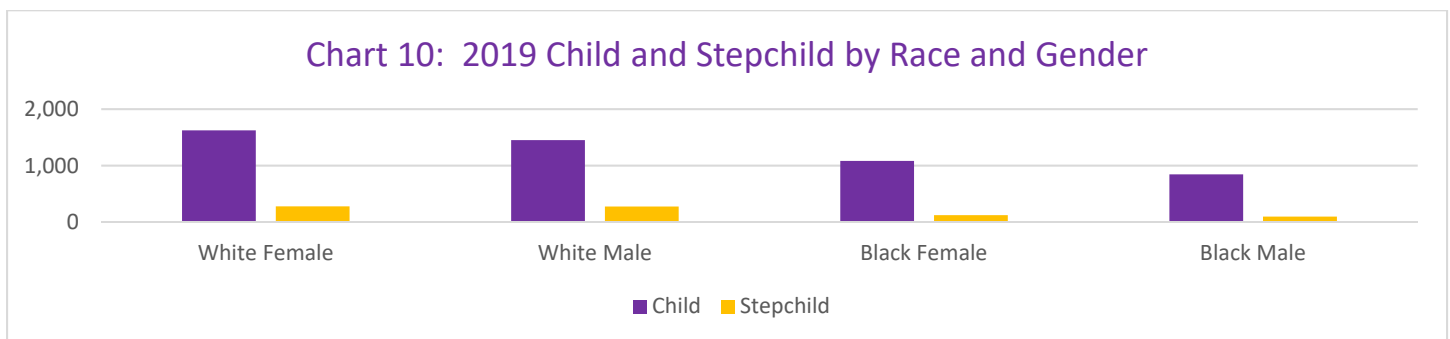
The research literature often documents the relationship between domestic victims and their abusers as Boyfriend/Girlfriend. In 2019, Tennessee law enforcement agencies reported 27,725 Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationships flagged as domestic violence incidents. Specific demographic information of both victims and offenders were examined to better understand domestic abuse within Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships. Black or African American victims comprised 47.2% while White victims comprised 52.8%. Victims reporting their offender as a Boyfriend/Girlfriend were mostly female victims at 78.1%.



Note: This chart only reflects the relationships of Boyfriend/Girlfriend for Black or African American and White Victims.

Child and Stepchild

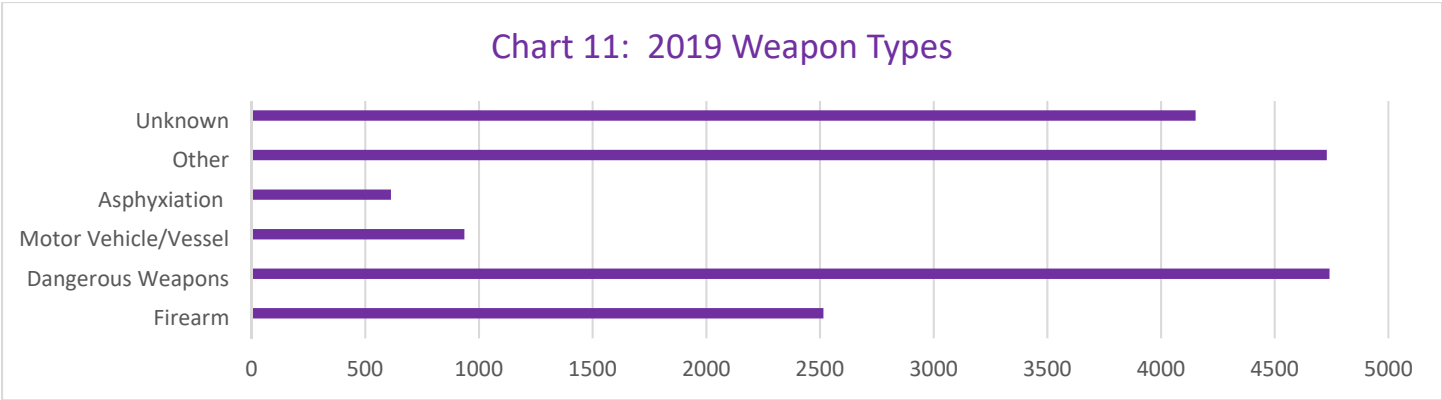
The Victim to Offender relationship Child or Stepchild denotes the offender as being the parent or stepparent (mother or father) of the victim. A total of 5,858 such relationships were reported in domestic violence offenses with the majority of victims reported as White and Black or African American. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander comprised 1.3% in 2019. This particular TIBRS data element, when specifically addressing juvenile victims, can be considered a direct indication of child abuse. The majority of domestic violence incidents indicating a Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship reported to TIBRS in 2019 had victims of Females. Several local and state agencies such as the Department of Children’s Services and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee advocate strongly on behalf of juveniles that are abused and/or neglected and try to prevent future abuse. Chart 10, as shown below, illustrates the difference of victimization rates by Race and Gender.



Child and Stepchild accounted for 8.2% of reported domestic violence victims in 2019. More specifically, White females under age 18 comprised the greater portion of all Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationships at 1,905. This demographic group was victimized at a higher rate than any other combination of race, sex, and age group when analyzing Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship. Victims identified as White were victimized by their parent(s) or stepparent(s) at a higher rate than Black or African-American victims.

Weapons Used in Domestic Violence

Per TIBRS, up to three weapons can be submitted per offense when reporting weapons used. A total of 62,490 weapon types were reported in 2019. The most common weapon reported with domestic violence offenses was Personal (hands, feet, teeth, etc.) at 44,683 usually occurring with Simple Assault offenses, the most commonly reported domestic violence offense.

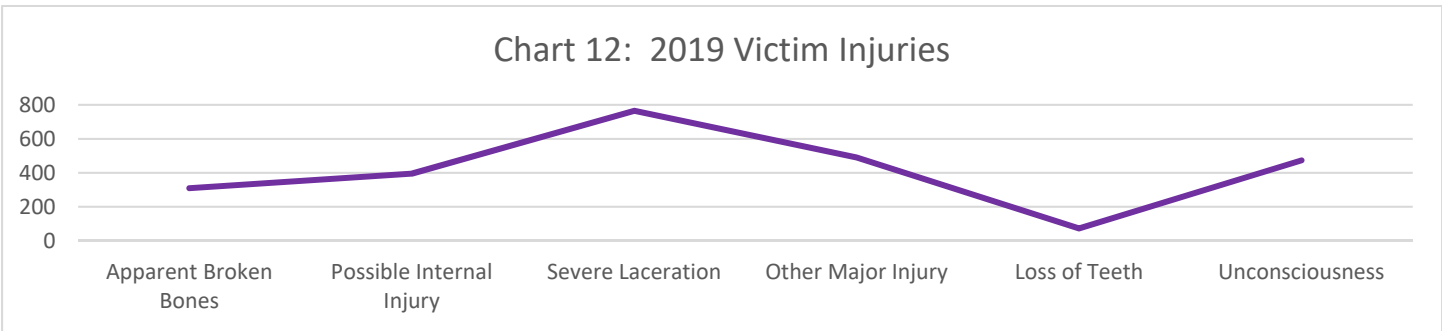


Note: The weapon types of Personal Weapons, Poison/Drugs, and Fire/Explosives are not included in the graph above.

The second most frequently reported weapon type in 2019 was Dangerous Weapon, followed by Firearm. More specifically, 47 domestic violence offenses involving a firearm resulted in Murder in 2019. The majority of aggravated assault cases also involved a Dangerous Weapon during the same reporting period. Additional findings revealed 936 domestic violence cases involved the use of a Motor Vehicle/ Vessel. Two such cases resulted in homicide.

Victim Injuries

When reporting domestic violence offenses to TIBRS, up to five injury types may be reported for applicable offenses. The two most predominate injuries types reported in 2019 were None (49.7%) and Apparent Minor Injuries (46.2%). A total of 24,321 domestic related Simple Assault cases were reported with an injury type of Apparent Minor Injury.



Note: The chart above excludes None (30,807) and Apparent Minor injuries (28,664).

Additionally, the injury type of Severe Laceration made up the third most frequently reported injury type in 2019, with Aggravated Assault being the most common offense. Notably, of the 473 Unconsciousness injury types shown in Chart 12, 448 instances were the result of an Aggravated Assault.

Domestic Violence Arrests

Table 6: 2019 Domestic Violence Arrests	
Offense Type	Number of Arrests
Simple Assault	25525
Aggravated Assault	7229
Intimidation	1654
Kidnapping/Abduction	645
Stalking	274
Rape	164
Fondling	112
Murder	70
Sodomy	32
Statutory Rape	26
Sexual Assault w/Object	19
Incest	6
Total	

Domestic Violence Exceptional Clearances

Clearing domestic violence incidents can be difficult when considering the compounding factors that contribute to the cooperation of victims and potential witnesses. Because of the very nature of domestic violence and the close interpersonal relationships that exist between the victim and offender, it can be challenging for law enforcement to complete an arrest. Cohabiting domestic violence victims and offenders can present an obvious challenge in clearing an incident due to victims not cooperating in order to prevent subsequent abuse and turmoil within the household.

In 2019, 62.8% of domestic violence cases were cleared. Table 4 displays the different exceptional clearance types. Data revealed that the vast majority of exceptional clearances, were documented as Victim Refused to Cooperate. As defined by TIBRS, Victim Refused to Cooperate can only clear an incident when the victim has actually stated or made it known to the agency that they refuse to cooperate or pursue prosecution of the offender.

Table 7: 2019 Domestic Violence Exceptional Clearances

Offense Type	Occurrence
Victim Refused to Cooperate	7,517
Prosecution Declined	1,344
Juvenile/No Custody	69
In Custody of Other Jurisdiction	13
Juvenile/No Custody	69
Total	9,000

Summary

Findings of the study revealed that the number of domestic incidents decreased 3.7% from 2018 to 2019. Overall, females were three times more likely to be reported as victims than males, and victim Race was most often documented as White (57.8%). Victim demographic information gives insight into what populations are most at-risk for domestic violence in the state. Although the injury type of None (30,807) accounted for the highest reported injury type in 2019, Apparent Minor Injury (28,664) was often reported in Simple Assault cases. TIBRS data supports the fact that women and children generally have the highest potential for domestic abuse victimization. Local, state, and national agencies across several disciplines, including law enforcement and social and child services avidly oppose domestic violence and advocate for its victims. These various institutions and coalitions battle domestic abuse by providing prevention training, intervention, shelter, and counseling for both victims and potential victims of domestic violence. Hopefully, the current assessment of domestic violence in Tennessee exposes the need for continued and increased efforts in the battle against domestic abuse within our communities.



Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, March 2021. Publication Authorization Number 348516, electronic copies only. This publication was promulgated at a cost of \$0.00 per copy.