

**LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL  
ASSAULT**

**Survey for Victims  
and Survivors in  
Miami-Dade County**

[law.miami.edu/courage](http://law.miami.edu/courage)

# The **COURAGE** in Policing Project

## **CONSENT**

This survey assesses law enforcement response to domestic violence and sexual assault in South Florida. We want to hear from victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in South Florida. Participants will be asked to share their personal observations of law enforcement's reaction and response to domestic violence as it relates to their personal experiences. We hope that the information collected from the survey will be useful for efforts to enhance police responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, and all forms of gender violence, and that this information will help to enhance access to safety and justice for all survivors. We are primarily focusing on your experiences with law enforcement in the United States.

The study should take you approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Please do your best to respond to every question. You should answer the questions to the best of your knowledge, based on your experiences. There is no prompt to call your attention to skipped questions, so please review your answers.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any repercussion. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Professor Caroline Bettinger-Lopez at [courage@law.miami.edu](mailto:courage@law.miami.edu).

While you will not experience any direct benefits from participation in this study, information collected in this study may benefit others in the future by helping to identify additional services, policies, and training needed to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

**Confidentiality: Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential and anonymous.** Your name will not be used. We will refer generically to responses from survivors represented, and will use aggregated data and regional examples. The survey will ask for stories and specific examples which are particularly powerful at illuminating circumstances. **We encourage you whenever possible to include specific examples.**

The survey may cover difficult topics, and we encourage you to take breaks or stop the survey as necessary. If you are experiencing an emergency situation or are in need of immediate assistance for a domestic violence or sexual assault situation, please contact the **Florida Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-500-1119, RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673), or Switchboard 211 (Dial 211 from any phone in Miami-Dade or Monroe County)**. The Florida Domestic Violence Hotline is operational 365 days a year and provides trilingual services by connecting survivors to local shelters, support groups, and ongoing advocacy. The RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline connects victims to local resources to assist in the healing process. Switchboard 2-1-1 provides a 24/7 source for

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information and resources for all health and human services in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact the University of Miami, Human Subject Research Office at (305)-243-3195.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, that you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

- I consent, begin the study
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

## KEY TERMS

The terminology presented below is intended to provide a common vocabulary and context for our survey.

**Sexual Assault:** The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or sexual behavior that occurs without consent of the victim. Sexual assault includes: fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, attempted rape, and unwanted sexual penetration (rape).

**Domestic Violence:** The term domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.

**Victim/Survivor:** In the eyes of the law, sexual assault and domestic violence are crimes, which would make someone who experiences it a “victim.” However, many individuals who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault prefer to use the term “survivor” as a term indicating empowerment in the context of dealing with a traumatic, life-changing experience. Both terms will be used without distinction in this survey.

**Police Bias:** For the purpose of this survey, the term police bias includes both explicit and implicit biases which affect law enforcement’s perception of sexual assault or domestic violence crimes. These biases can prevent law enforcement agencies from effectively handling allegations presented, and thereby undermine the effectiveness of their response (e.g finding a sexual assault to be less severe because the victim was intoxicated at the time of the assault, or failing to investigate a domestic violence crime because the victim is a homosexual male).

**Q1. Please indicate your gender identity:**

- Male
- Female
- Transgender Man
- Transgender Woman
- Gender Non-Conforming
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply):**

- Black/African American
- White/Caucasian
- Hispanic/ Latino/a
- Native American/ Hawaiian/ Alaska Native/ other Pacific Islander
- Multiracial
- Caribbean (please specify nationality) \_\_\_\_\_
- East Asian
- South Asian
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Eastern European (please specify nationality) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3. Which of the following best describes the area you live in (If homeless, please describe the location where you most recently resided):**

- Urban
- Rural
- Suburban

**Q4. What is your current zip code?**

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**Q5. Do you consider yourself to be:**

- Heterosexual/straight
- Lesbian/gay
- Bisexual
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q6. Which category below includes your age?**

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years or older

**Q7. Would you describe yourself as low income (poverty or working poor)?**

- Yes
- No

**Q8. Which category below best describes your educational level?**

- No schooling
- 1st-8th grade
- Some high school
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- Two-year technical degree
- Four-year college graduate
- Graduate degree

**Q9. Do you have a disability?**

- Yes
- No

**Q10. Have you ever had an interaction with law enforcement in the past that has affected your confidence or trust in law enforcement?**

- Yes (Please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- No



**Q11. Did anyone (including you) report your domestic violence/sexual assault experience to a police officer?**

- Yes (Continue to page 10)
  - No (Skip to page 18)
  - I am not a victim of partner abuse or sexual assault (Stop here, thank you for participating.)
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**Q12. In general, how do you think your interactions with law enforcement have impacted your safety?**

- I felt safer
- I felt less safe
- I felt there was no difference in my safety

**Q13. When you interacted with the police regarding your domestic violence/sexual assault incident, did you feel the police treated you with respect?**

- Yes
- No

**Q14. What were the most helpful things the police have said or done for you when responding to a domestic violence or sexual assault incident? (check all that apply)**

- Told me they believed me
- Told me what happened to me was a crime
- Arrested the abuser
- Referred my case to a prosecutor, in order for charges to be filed against the abuser
- Helped me get a protection/restraining order
- Transported me to a shelter or a safe place
- Connected me with a victim advocate
- Communicated respectfully with me
- Made safety suggestions
- Gave me referrals to other resources
- Provided help and services in a language I was comfortable in (please specify the language) \_\_\_\_\_
- Told me about my options (including those listed above)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q15. Do you think that the police were biased against you when responding to your domestic violence or sexual assault incident? Please refer to key terms on page 4 for definition of police bias.**

- Yes (Continue to question 15a on page 13)
- No (Skip to Question 16 on page 14)

**Q15a. If yes, do you think that the police were biased against you due to your:  
(Check all that apply)**

- Immigration Status
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender Identity (LGBTQI)
- Nationality
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Neighborhood where you live
- Neighborhood where the domestic violence/sexual assault incident took place
- Profession/Professional identity (ex. sex worker)
- Age
- Disability/Mental Health
- Drug use
- Poverty/limited income
- The police were biased against me because the offender has connections with the police or powerful people
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q16. When you contacted the police about your domestic violence or sexual assault incident, was anyone arrested? (check all that apply)**

- The perpetrator was arrested.
- I was arrested.
- No one was arrested.
- Someone else was arrested. (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q17. How likely would you be to call the police in the future if you were assaulted or concerned for your safety due to domestic violence or sexual assault?**

- Extremely likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Unsure

**Q18. Please tell us about any reasons you might not call the police or cooperate with the criminal justice system for your experiences of domestic violence or sexual assault victimization in the future (Check up to 5 reasons):**

- Lack of Knowledge** – I am not informed of the resources available to me or how to access the police.
- Confidentiality** – I was concerned the police would not keep my situation confidential or that others would find out.
- Previous Negative Experiences (unrelated matter)** – I had previous negative experiences with the police due to an unrelated matter.
- Previous Negative Experiences (same matter)** – I had previous negative experiences with the police due to a matter related to domestic violence/sexual assault.
- Poor Treatment** – I am concerned I would be treated poorly.
- Lack of Action** – I am concerned no action would be taken.
- Not Serious Enough** – I do not think the incident was serious enough to report.
- Did Not Desire Action** – I do not want any action taken.
- Avoiding Arrest of Abuser** – I do not want the abuser to be arrested or prosecuted.
- Economic Harm** – I am worried that an arrest of the abuser would result in economic harm to him/her, or to myself, or to our children.
- Did Not Need Assistance** – I do not need assistance.
- Embarrassment/Fear of Blame** – I am embarrassed and/or feared that other people might blame me. (12)
- Fear of Getting in Trouble** – I feel that I might get in trouble for some reason.

- Fear of Revenge or Increased Violence** – I am worried that the abuser or others might seek revenge, or might become more violent.
- Loss of Housing/Employment/Public Benefits** – I am worried that contact with the police would result in loss of housing, employment, and/or public benefits.
- Fear of Child Protective Services** – I am worried that contact with the police would result in involvement with child protective services.
- Fear of ICE** – I am worried that contact with the police would result in a report to ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) about the immigration status of a household member.
- Fear of Arrest (Self)** – I am worried the police would arrest me.
- Fear of Police** – I distrust or fear the police in general.
- Lack of Language Assistance** - Help and services are not provided in my primary language.
- Perpetrator Connected to Police** – The abuser was a police officer or connected to the police in other ways that would make it difficult to report.
- Other Reasons (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q19. Have you, or someone you know, been a victim of officer-perpetrated violence?**

- Yes
- No



**Q20. Please feel free to write about any other thoughts you have concerning law enforcement response to domestic violence and sexual assault.**

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(Stop here. Thank you for your participating.)

**Q12. Please tell us about the reasons you did not call the police or cooperate with the criminal justice system for your experiences of domestic violence or sexual assault victimization (Check up to 5 reasons):**

- Lack of Knowledge** – I was not informed of the resources available to me or how to access the police.
- Confidentiality** – I was concerned the police would not keep my situation confidential or that others would find out.
- Previous Negative Experiences (unrelated matter)** – I had previous negative experiences with the police due to an unrelated matter.
- Previous Negative Experiences (same matter)** – I had previous negative experiences with the police due to a matter related to domestic violence/sexual assault.
- Poor Treatment** – I was concerned I would be treated poorly.
- Lack of Action** – I was concerned no action would be taken.
- Not Serious Enough** – I did not think the incident was serious enough to report.
- Did Not Desire Action** – I did not want any action taken.
- Avoiding Arrest of Abuser** – I did not want the abuser to be arrested or prosecuted.
- Economic Harm** – I was worried that an arrest of the abuser would result in economic harm to him/her, or to myself, or to our children.
- Did Not Need Assistance** – I did not need assistance.
- Embarrassment/Fear of Blame** – I was embarrassed and/or feared that other people might blame me.
- Fear of Getting in Trouble** – I felt that I might get in trouble for some reason.

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- Fear of Arrest (Self)** – I was worried the police would arrest me.
- Fear of Police** – I distrust or fear the police in general.
- Lack of Language Assistance** - Help and services are not provided in my primary language.
- Perpetrator Connected to Police** – The abuser was a police officer or connected to the police in other ways that would make it difficult to report.
- Other Reasons (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q13. Were you worried that the police would be biased against you?**

- Yes (Continue to question 13a on page 20)
- No (Skip to question 14 on page 21)

**Q13a. If yes, do you think that the police were biased against you due to your: (Check all that apply)**

- Immigration Status
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender Identity (LGBTQI)
- Nationality
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Neighborhood where you live
- Neighborhood where the domestic violence/sexual assault incident took place
- Profession/Professional identity (ex. sex worker)
- Age
- Disability/Mental Health
- Drug use
- Poverty/limited income
- The police were biased against me because the offender has connections with the police or powerful people
- Other (please specify)

**Q14. How likely would you be to call the police in the future if you were assaulted and/or afraid or concerned for your safety due to domestic violence or sexual assault?**

- Extremely likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Unsure

**Q15. Have you, or someone you know, been a victim of officer-perpetrated violence?**

- Yes
- No

**Q16. Please feel free to write about any other thoughts you have concerning law enforcement response to domestic violence and sexual assault.**

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(Stop here. Thank you for your participating.)