

LETHALITY CHECKLIST

Some batterer's behaviors are life-endangering. The following information will help you determine whether the person who has or is battering you is likely to kill. The following is not a complete list, but is a partial list of indicators for you to consider.

THREATS OF HOMICIDE OR SUICIDE –

The batterer who has threatened to kill himself, his partner, the children or her relatives must be considered extremely dangerous.

FANTASIES OF HOMICIDE OR SUICIDE –

The more the batterer has developed a fantasy about who, how, when and/or where to kill, the more dangerous he may be. The batterer who has previously acted out part of a homicide or suicide fantasy may be invested in killing as a viable "solution" to his problem.

DEPRESSION –

When the batterer has been acutely depressed and sees little hope for moving beyond the depression, he may be a candidate for committing a homicide or suicide.

WEAPONS –

When a batterer possesses weapons and has used them or has threatened to use them in the past in his assaults on the battered woman, the children, or himself, his access to those weapons increases his potential for a lethal assault.

OBSESSIVENESS ABOUT PARTNER OR FAMILY –

A man who is obsessive about his female partner, who either idolizes her and feels that he cannot live without her or believes he is entitled to her no matter what because she is his wife, is more likely to be life-endangering.

CENTRALITY OF THE BATTERED WOMAN –

If the loss of the battered woman represents or precipitates a total loss of hope for a positive future, a batterer may choose to kill.

RAGE –

The most life endangering rage often erupts when a batterer believes the battered woman is leaving him.

DRUG OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION –

Consumption of drugs or alcohol when in a state of despair or fury can elevate the risk of lethality.

PET ABUSE –

Those batterers who assault and mutilate pets are more likely to kill or maim family members.

ACCESS TO THE BATTERED WOMAN AND/OR FAMILY MEMBERS –

If he cannot find her, he cannot kill her.

The presence of these indicators may mean that the batterer is contemplating homicide. **IMMEDIATE** action should be taken to protect yourself and your family! You may contact one of the battered women's shelters provided in this handbook to further assess lethality and make a safety plan for you. Act today for tomorrow may be too late.