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CONTEMPORARY POLICE PRACTICES IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

Domestic violence unquestionably looms as one of the more serious and complex problems facing the law enforcement community today. Domestic-related violence has long been the leading cause of homicide for most communities. As a core social phenomenon, it challenges the scope, the breadth and the role of modern law enforcement policy and practice. The police have not always responded to this challenge in the most appropriate fashion. Historically, domestic violence has been viewed as an essentially private, family matter not suitable for aggressive governmental intervention. In fact, American law once recognized husbands as titular heads of their households with a right to dispense corporal punishment to disobedient wives. Although most laws of that sort disappeared during the early nineteenth century, their residual effects continued to manifest themselves in the social norms and assumptions of modern society. Society has expanded the role of government as a protector not only outside the home, but within it as well. Institutional transitions to new policies and procedures frequently lag behind changes in social attitude, however, and this has traditionally been true of police departments where domestic violence is concerned. Moreover, not every officer has personally accepted this change, and insensitivity to the victims of domestic violence has sometimes been the result. The dynamics of victimization have also contributed to the hesitancy of police agencies to serve domestic abuse victims properly. Many officers have mistakenly concluded that intervention is pointless or even harmful. Once the appropriateness of police intervention became apparent, police agencies sought to curb domestic violence through conflict resolution techniques and emotional support rather than by relying upon traditional criminal enforcement. Unfortunately, these techniques alone have not proven to be as effective as had been hoped and, as the criminality of domestic abuse has become more widely recognized, pressure has built for a tougher, arrest-oriented response. Unfortunately, there is a growing body of evidence that such arrests do not necessarily prevent recurrences of abuse. In fact, there is now a feeling that these arrests may even worsen the situation within some families. As a result, many knowledgeable people are questioning arrest as an exclusive, preferred method for preventing further violence. This should not be surprising. The world is all too full of aggressive, impulsive individuals who are willing to take risks in order to vent their temper or get

their way. They are often poorly educated and lack solid judgments and planning skills. Many are convicted criminals who have outgrown their fear of jail and have no interest in protecting their reputations. These types of individuals are not impressed by the risk of short-term arrest because it has relatively little effect at preventing their participation in drug offenses, robberies, burglaries, and other crimes.

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STALKING IN THE USA

Stalking is defined as any unwanted contact between two people that directly or indirectly communicates a threat or places the victim in fear. In the USA stalking is a crime under the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the federal government. Any person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her immediate family may be charged with stalking regardless of any pre-existing relationship with the victim. There fore if Ronald, for instance, spends a number of hours each week harassing Victoria, his former girlfriend, by following her home from work, sending her threatening emails, and calling her in the middle of the night, he could likely be charged with stalking because it isn't just a one-time occurrence, but a pattern of harassment and threats.

Stalking can touch anyone, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or geographic location. According to the results from the survey which was conducted in the USA in 2018 one in twelve women and one in forty-three men have experienced stalking during their lifetime. Most people know their stalkers. About 87% of stalkers are male. Less than 2% of stalking cases result in homicide.

Stalking cases raise serious questions about how to prevent stalking and its consequences which are associated with violence and significant psychological distress. As there is a wide range of stalking behaviors, it is virtually impossible to devise a single effective coping strategy that can be applied to any situation. However, stalking victims should document violations of the law committed against them and their property by stalkers. Doing so requires taking photos of damaged or vandalized property and injuries inflicted by the stalker, as well as saving notes, letters, e-mails, or messages left on phone