The theories on the causes of family violence still do not tell us much about the individual batterer. What type of person commits violence in an intimate partner relationship? What behaviors indicate an abusive partner? Studies show a strong relationship between alcohol and/or drugs and intimate partner violence committed by men against women (Thompson & Kingree, [**2006**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib63)). Aggression has also been linked with psychoactive drugs such as barbiturates, amphetamines, opiates, phencyclidine, cocaine, and alcohol–cocaine combinations (Fagan, [**1990**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib23)).

From a review of the literature, Hanson ([**2002**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib26)) characterizes individual batterers as clinically assessed problematic individuals displaying poor impulse control, aggression, fear of intimacy, emotional dependence, fear of abandonment, and impaired ego functioning. Mental health diagnoses for batterers range from obsessive–compulsive, paranoid, borderline personality, passive–aggressive, narcissistic, to antisocial (Hanson, [**2002**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib26)).

Significant controversy exists as to whether it is possible to predict future violent behavior as a means of protecting family violence survivors. The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA) is one tool that has been developed to help determine whether an offender is at risk for future offending by classifying individuals into high- and low-risk categories (Dutton & Kropp, [**2000**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib18)). Used extensively by criminal justice professionals, it has been tested and found to illustrate good predictive validity of offender recidivism (Wong, [**2008**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib69)). The 20-question interview is not a controlled psychological test; therefore, it can be used by practitioners with some training (Dutton & Kropp, [**2000**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib18)). Community responses and multidisciplinary teams are becoming involved in the protection of survivors to a greater degree through high-risk offender assessment.

Legislation passed in recent years has included strong measures allowing police officers to arrest offenders and the courts to issue protective orders. We have learned that not all abusers are men, that not all men are abusers, and that there are degrees of seriousness in domestic violence cases. In other words, not all family violence is the same. We are moving into the phase in which different approaches may be considered to respond to different offenders, based on their risk of offending, motivations, and the population that they target. The profile of a domestic abuser as a serial recidivist is emerging. New measures will address this concept of family violence. New York is one of the first states that are raising the bar in holding serial domestic perpetrators more accountable. As of 2013, enhanced penalties are in place through an Aggravated Family Offense law, which allows law enforcement to prosecute family abusers as felons in certain situations (New York S 240.75).

According to **National Crime Victimization Survey** (NCVS) reports, family violence is intraracial; that is, most offenders are the same race as their victims. The most frequent form of family violence is simple assault, and approximately three-quarters of the incidents occur in or near the victim’s residence (Durose et al., [**2005**](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781323087206/content/id/ch10bib17)). Violence committed against a boyfriend or girlfriend is most likely to result in a conviction, with sentencing to a state or federal prison or in a local jail.