

Nev. ranks among worst states for domestic violence

By Jackie Valley, Las Vegas Sun

When most people think of domestic abuse, they picture the victim as a young woman.

But here's the reality: The abused person very well could be a wealthy neighbor who keeps the beatings a secret for fear of social repercussions. Or the quiet husband who's ashamed to admit his wife throws punches behind closed doors. Or the celebrity whose megawatt smile belies the shoving she endures. Or the woman who confides in police that her female partner loses her temper too often. Or the grandmother who gets pushed around by her impatient son.

On Oct. 20, a 52-year-old man stabbed his ex-wife to death in their home with their children nearby, according to Metro Police. Jodi Joyce suffered a fatal wound to her chest. James Joyce then stabbed himself in the stomach, inflicting critical injuries, police said.

Domestic abuse, which includes emotional and verbal abuse, is all around us, and the number of occasions it rises to physical violence is stunning. Metro Police fielded nearly 60,000 calls last year from people saying they were being assailed by someone in their household.

The actual number of victims is likely much higher still, because many are too scared or ashamed to admit they've been abused. For nine of the past 10 years, Nevada has ranked among the top 10 states for the rate of women killed by men, according to the Violence Policy Center. The center's most recent report, based on 2012 data, ranked Nevada sixth.

Because domestic violence is a shadow crime without a national

database tracking numbers, estimating its scope in Las Vegas as it compares with other cities is difficult. But we certainly don't lack catalysts – booze, drugs, clashing work schedules, gambling, sex and a tough economy.

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