



# STRANGULATION

## IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

### FACT SHEET

## STRANGULATION:

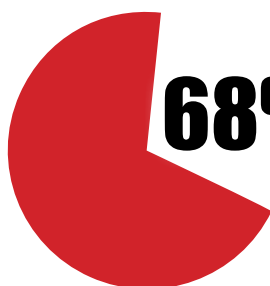
the obstruction of blood vessels and/or airflow in the neck resulting in asphyxia.



**1 in 4**

women will experience intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

Of women at high risk, up to...

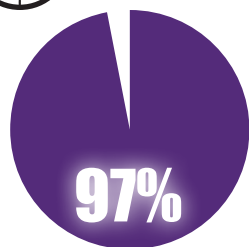


**68%**

will experience near-fatal strangulation by their partner.<sup>2</sup>

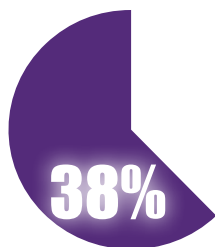


Loss of consciousness can occur within 5 - 10 seconds. Death within minutes.<sup>2</sup>



**97%**

are strangled manually (with hands).<sup>3</sup>



**38%**

report losing consciousness.<sup>4</sup>



**35%**

are strangled along with sexual assault/abuse.<sup>5</sup>  
**9%** are also pregnant.<sup>4</sup>



**70%**

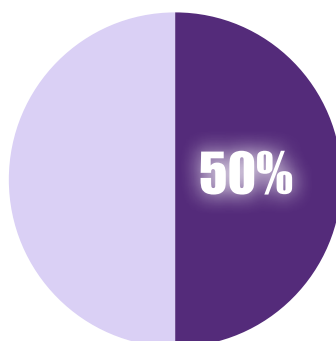
of strangled women believed they were going to die.<sup>6</sup>

And odds for homicide increase **750%**

for victims who have been previously strangled, compared to victims who have never been strangled.<sup>7</sup>

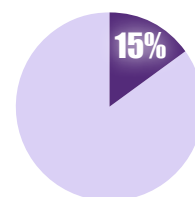
## HOWEVER...

Oftentimes, even in fatal cases, there are **NO EXTERNAL SIGNS** of injury.<sup>3</sup>



**50%**

Only half of victims have visible injuries



**15%**

Of these, only 15% could be photographed

# STRANGULATION

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS <sup>2</sup>

### NEUROLOGICAL

- Loss of memory
- Loss of consciousness
- Behavioral changes
- Loss of sensation
- Extremity weakness
- Difficulty speaking
- Fainting
- Urination
- Defecation
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Headaches

### EYES & EYELIDS

- Petechiae to eyeball
- Petechiae to eyelid
- Bloody red eyeball(s)
- Vision changes
- Droopy eyelid

### FACE

- Petechiae (tiny red spots—slightly red or flared)
- Scratch marks
- Facial drooping
- Swelling

### CHEST

- Chest pain
- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Bruising
- Abrasions

### VOICE & THROAT CHANGES

- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing
- Painful to swallow
- Clearing the throat
- Coughing
- Nausea
- Drooling
- Sore throat
- Stridor

### SCALP

- Petechiae
- Bald spots (from hair being pulled)
- Bump to the head (from blunt force trauma or falling to the ground)

### EARS

- Ringing in ears
- Petechiae on earlobe(s)
- Bruising behind the ear
- Bleeding in the ear

### MOUTH

- Bruising
- Swollen tongue
- Swollen lips
- Cuts/abrasions
- Internal Petechiae

### NECK

- Redness
- Scratch marks
- Finger nail impressions
- Bruising (thumb or fingers)
- Swelling
- Ligature Marks

### BREATHING CHANGES

- Difficulty breathing
- Respiratory distress
- Unable to breathe

## CONSEQUENCES <sup>9</sup>

### PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY

PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, memory problems, nightmares, anxiety, severe stress reaction, amnesia, and psychosis.

### DELAYED FATALITY

Death can occur days or weeks after the attack due to carotid artery dissection and respiratory complications such as pneumonia, ARDS and the risk of blood clots traveling to the brain (embolization).

Today,  
**45 States**  
have legislation  
**AGAINST**  
**STRANGULATION** <sup>8</sup>

**VAWA 2013**  
added strangulation  
and suffocation to  
**FEDERAL LAW**



TRAINING INSTITUTE  
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a program of Alliance for HOPE International

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<sup>1</sup> Breiding MJ, Smith SG, Basile KC, Walters ML, Chen J, Merrick MT. Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization—National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. *MMWR* 2014; 63(SS-8): 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> Taliaferro, E., Hawley, D., McClane, G.E. & Strack, G. (2009). Strangulation in Intimate Partner Violence. *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*. Oxford University Press, Inc., 217-235.

<sup>3</sup> Strack, G.B., McClane, G.E., & Hawley, D. (2001). A review of 300 attempted strangulation cases: Part I: Criminal Legal Issues. *Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 21(3), 303-309.

<sup>4</sup> Shields et al. (2010). Living victims of strangulation: A 10-year review of cases in a metropolitan community. *American Journal of Forensic Medical Pathology*, 31, 320-325.

<sup>5</sup> Plattner, T. et al. (2005). Forensic assessment of survived strangulation. *153 Forensic Science International* 202

<sup>6</sup> Wilbur, L. et al. (2001). Survey results of women who have been strangulated while in an abusive relationship. *21J. Emergency Medicine* 297.

<sup>7</sup> Glass et al. (2008). Non-fatal strangulation is an important risk factor for homicide of women. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 35(3), 329-335.

<sup>8</sup> Mack, M. (2013) States with strangulation legislation. A product of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention. [www.strangulationpreventioninstitute.com](http://www.strangulationpreventioninstitute.com)

<sup>9</sup> Funk, M. & Schuppel, J. (2003) Strangulation injuries. *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 102(3), 41-45.