



Overview **The Domestic Violence Intervention (DVI) employs the National Network’s approach to identify and deter the most serious domestic violence offenders, reduce domestic violence, and reduce harm to victims. A pilot implementation of DVI appears to have had powerful impact on domestic violence and victim injuries.**

An approach to serious domestic violence

Domestic violence is often thought of as fundamentally different from other types of violence, but a considerable body of evidence shows that, as with other serious violence, the gravest domestic violence with respect to the most vulnerable victims tends to be driven by “chronic” offenders who commit a wide variety of crimes at relatively high rates.¹ Research shows that domestic violence offenders who do not fit this profile can be deterred by relatively low-level sanctions; DVI seeks to create meaningful deterrence for “chronic” offenders as well. Importantly, DVI focuses on removing the burden of behavior change from victims and placing it on offenders, and shifts the responsibility for dealing with offenders from victims to law enforcement and the larger community. One of the strategy’s critical features is the ability to focus on offenders at early stages of offending before violence escalates, and to create strong norms against domestic violence, and clear expectations for consequences, from the beginning.

A coherent structure and strategic communication

Through a partnership between law enforcement, community members, social service providers, and domestic violence victims’ advocates, the DVI strategy intervenes early with low-level domestic violence offenders, puts them on notice of community intolerance for domestic violence and that further and more serious offending will be met with a meaningful legal response, and takes special steps to remove the most dangerous domestic violence offenders from the community. The strategy includes close partnership with domestic violence victims’ advocates to ensure that victims have access to safety and support structures and are not exposed to unintended harm.

DVI recognizes that domestic violence offending occurs at different levels of severity and engages each level of offender with a tailored approach. Any continued offending results in “promotion” to the appropriate higher level.



DVI levels of offending and responses

Level D: Identified as suspected offender but not arrested

- **Offender response:** Notified with a letter that gives information about DVI and conveys community moral message against domestic violence and prior notice of legal consequences for further offending
- **Victim response:** Notified with letter of available services

Level C: First time arrest since DVI implementation

- **Offender response:** In-person notification after arrest from an officer who conveys community intolerance for domestic violence and prior notice of legal consequences for further offending
- **Victim response:** In-person outreach to notify victims of available services

Level B: Multiple domestic violence charges

- **Offender response:** Notification at a “call-in” meeting, where offender receives a moral message from the community against domestic violence and a message about legal consequences for further offending
- **Victim response:** Follow up by social services and victims’ advocates after call-in to ensure victim safety

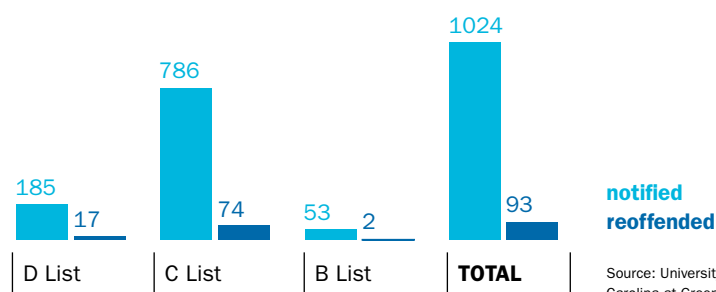
Level A: History of severe domestic violence

- **Offender response:** Addressed with a “pulling levers” approach that imposes meaningful sanctions using any available legal tools—e.g., a federal felon in possession gun prosecution—and held up to other offenders as a deterrent example
- **Victim response:** Direct outreach by victims’ advocates to offer all available safety and support structures

Impact An evaluation of a pilot implementation of DVI in High Point, NC, found dramatic reductions in reoffending among notified domestic violence offenders and reductions in domestic homicide, calls for service, and victim injuries.²

After the first two years of implementation in High Point, only 9 percent of the more than 1,000 offenders notified through DVI had reoffended with an act of domestic violence. This compares to typical domestic violence recidivism rates that range in the literature from 20 to 34 percent. High Point has also seen a decline in domestic homicide: there were 17 in the five years prior to implementation, and only one in the five years since the strategy began.³

The National Network believes this framework represents a way forward to reduce the most serious domestic violence and is currently working on replication in several jurisdictions nationally.



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The National Network for Safe Communities supports cities advancing proven strategies to reduce violence, minimize arrest and incarceration, and strengthen relationships between law enforcement and distressed communities.

¹ Engel, R. S., Tillyer, M. S., & Corsaro, N. (2011, November). Reducing Gang Violence Using Focused Deterrence: Evaluating the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). *Justice Quarterly*.

² Smith, P. (2015, June). A Harsh Reality. *National Network for Safe Communities Chronicle*.

³ Sumner, M. A. (2014, September). A Different Response to Intimate Partner Violence. *Community Policing Dispatch 7(9)*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Retrieved from http://eops.usdoj.gov/html/dlspatch/09-2014/a_different_response_to_ipv.asp