Domestic violence
In 2011 there were 26,808 reported incidents of domestic violence related assault in NSW. Domestic violence is a complicated issue. Understanding the impact it has on victims and the context in which it occurs may help you develop your story.

Domestic violence
At a glance
- In 2011, 86% of domestic violence related assaults occurred in homes.
- Between 2007 and 2008 over half of all homicide victims were killed by a person they shared a current or former domestic/family relationship with (NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team Annual Report 2011-2012).
- The Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 allows for any offence that is committed in the context of a domestic relationship to be recorded as a "domestic violence offence" on the offender's record.
- The majority of victims of domestic violence are women, while the vast majority of offenders are men.

This factsheet explores common reactions to domestic violence, and information about the dynamics of violent relationships. As with any type of trauma it is important to be mindful that people's reactions will differ.

Tips for talking to a victim of domestic violence
Domestic violence doesn’t just affect the victim. It also has serious impacts on the children of violent relationships. Don’t assume that every victim will have the same reactions or attitudes to the offence or the offender.

The safety of the victim and their children should always be paramount. Remember that the offender may still have access to the victim, so consider whether your coverage of the story may put the victim at further risk of harm.

Be clear with the victim about your intentions in interviewing them, and explain how their answers will be used and reported. Ensure that the victim has support during and after the interview and that they can call the Victims Access Line on 1800 633 063 for support.

Common reactions to domestic violence
It is important to understand that domestic violence is very different to other violent offences, as it occurs in the context of an existing relationship.

 Victims of domestic violence may respond in various ways, and their reaction to the offence and the offender can change over time.

Immediately following the event they may be scared, confused, and concerned for their safety and the safety of their children.

Over time, some victims of domestic violence may feel differently about the offence, either due to fear of reprisal from the offender, or a desire to restore the relationship.

The offender may have a history of threatening and controlling behaviour, which can lead the victim to feel trapped and unable to leave the relationship.

In some cases, offenders will ensure that the victim is cut off from family and friends and remove access to finances. This can leave the victim with nowhere to go and no way to support themselves if they leave the relationship.

In other cases, the violence may not be the defining feature of the relationship for the victim. They may feel love for the offender, and the offender may express remorse for their actions. This can lead to confusion and ambivalence about the offending behaviour and lead the victim to want to restore the relationship.

For statistics:
NSW crime statistics are available from NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
Website www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au

For expert comment:
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