

Fact Sheet:

Domestic Violence in the Vietnamese Diaspora in the United States

Fall 2025



Community Snapshot

- Approximately 2.2 million people of Vietnamese ancestry resided in the United States in 2023, making the fourth largest Asian ethnic subgroup.¹
- 36% or 770,000 of the Vietnamese population live in California. Other states with large Vietnamese populations are Texas (310,000), Washington (105,000), Florida (100,000) and Georgia (70,000).¹
- Approximately 56% of Vietnamese speak English proficiently. This share includes 24% who speak only English at home and 32% who speak another language at home but say they speak English very well.¹
- As of 2023, 60% of the Vietnamese population is foreign-born, which may influence their experiences and reporting of domestic violence (DV).²

Recent Statistics on Domestic Violence

Prevalence and Forms of DV

- Among 173 Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean American young adult women in Boston who were 1.5* or second-generation immigrants, nearly 64% reported psychological aggression, 40% experienced sexual coercion, and 15% experienced physical assault from a partner in the last six months.²
- In a 2022 study of 20 Vietnamese women who had experienced DV in the past five years, all had faced psychological abuse, with most also experiencing coercive control (95%), physical abuse (90%), and sexual abuse (65%). Half of the participants experienced all four forms of abuse, and 75% remained living with their abuser.³
- In a 2007 study of 200 Vietnamese men recruited from Vietnamese churches, temples, and community organizations in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, 31% reported having engaged in at least one act of physical abuse toward their intimate partner within the previous year.⁴

* The 1.5 generation refers to individuals who were born outside of the United States and immigrated as children or adolescents before the age of 15 years.

Risk and Protective Factors

- Bicultural acculturation, or integrating aspects of both Vietnamese and American culture, can be a protective factor among young Vietnamese Americans. It can be helpful to assess the levels of acculturation of the whole family because differences in acculturation between youth and their parents may contribute to familial stress and violence in the home.⁵
- Supportive family dynamics have been cited as one of the most important protective factors against many youth problems including domestic violence and should be emphasized when working with Southeast Asian families.⁵
- According to a 2008 study, “picture brides” or women whom men marry based on little to know information and a picture, could be at high risk of physical, sexual, and verbal abuse because they came to the United States with little prior knowledge of their sponsor and husband.⁶
- In another 2008 study that included a convenience sample of 229 Koreans and 184 Vietnamese participants from Southern California, Vietnamese respondents (49.4%) were twice more often than the Korean sample to disagree with the statement that “a husband is never justified in hitting his wife.” This study found that men, less educated, and less acculturated individuals were more likely to endorse pro-violent attitudes.⁷
- A 2007 study of 200 Vietnamese men found that younger age, lower formal education, and attitudes supporting violence and gender inequality were key predictors of abusive behavior, while alcohol use was not a significant factor⁴

Mental and Physical Health Impacts

- In a 2018 study of Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, American women, about half (52.4%) of the participants reported at least one type of childhood physical and/or sexual abuse. Childhood abuse was significantly associated with experiencing suicidal ideation.²
- In that same study, those who reported experiencing physical or sexual DV were three times as likely to report having lifetime suicidal ideation/intent even after controlling for childhood experiences of abuse and other factors.²

Help-Seeking and Barriers to Support

- In a 2023 study of 60 Asian immigrant women in California (15 Vietnamese, 15 Chinese, 15 Korean, and 15 Thai), the most common barriers to disclosing DV among Vietnamese participants were worries about familial shame, concerns about individual shame, and victim-blaming. Less commonly cited were fears of undesirable consequences and beliefs in female inferiority and male dominance.⁸
- Victim blaming was rooted in the belief that it is wrong to air out household details and a lack of sympathy for survivors, who are in turn were blamed for not controlling their household affairs, not leaving abusive relationships, or not for getting help. In the same study, survivors shared proverbs or traditions that valued men’s and husbands’ rights and women’s submission.⁸

- According to a study from 2022, Vietnamese American survivors face language barriers and cultural barriers such as stigma and layers of individual and familial shame against reporting experiences of DV. To address some of the cultural barriers, survivors and service providers recommended comprehensive DV services and assigning one advocate to a survivor for continuous support throughout the entire process.³

Promising Practices and Recommendations

- A considerable portion of Southeast Asian youth reported having witnessed domestic violence. Screening tools and educational materials should be available in Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian languages, such as Khmer and Lao, for youth and their parents.⁵
- Service providers and survivors recommended locating services within community centers or alongside churches or healthcare providers. Providers should emphasize confidentiality and build rapport before working up to questions about DV services.³
- Survivors and services providers recommended that bilingual/bicultural staff, culturally responsive services, community education and outreach when providing DV services for Vietnamese survivors.³
- Interventions to disrupt domestic violence in Vietnamese American communities should include job and career preparation for men and women, as well as education about DV, power and control, and healthy relationships⁹
- Survivors from a 2022 study made recommendations that informative videos about DV should be culturally relevant, explain various types of DV in addition to physical violence, provide assurance of safety, and show clear processes and benefits to encourage immigrant Asian survivors to disclose experiences of DV.¹⁰

Selected Translated Materials

- Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence ([English](#); [Vietnamese](#)) | API-GBV
- Creating a Safety Plan ([English](#); [Vietnamese](#)) | Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse
- [English/Vietnamese Legal Glossary](#) | Superior Court of California
- Materials on domestic violence in over 115 languages | [Hot Peach Pages](#)

Resources

Crisis Services

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

Provides 24/7 free and confidential support, including crisis intervention, DV education, safety planning, and referrals to local service providers. Assistance is available in English, Spanish, and 200+ other languages through interpreter services.

Live Chat: www.thehotline.org | Call: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | Text: START to 88788.

- **Love is Respect**

Offers 24/7 free and confidential support for teens, young adults, and their loved ones seeking help or information about healthy relationships and dating abuse.

Live Chat: www.loveisrespect.org | Call: 1-866-331-9474 | Text: LOVEIS to 22522

- **National Sexual Assault Hotline**

Provides victims of sexual assault with 27/7 access to free, confidential services.

Live Chat: <http://online.rainn.org> | Call: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Directories

- [Directory of DV Programs Serving Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders](#) | API-GBV
- [International List of Sexual & Domestic Violence Agencies](#) | Hot Peach Pages

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

For questions, information, publications, training requests, and technical assistance related to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and/or stalking in Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) communities, visit www.api-gbv.org or email info@api-gbv.org

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