

Domestic Violence Task Force

May 4th, 2026

Attendees:

- Bernie Wolf, Member of the City of Alameda's Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) and co-chair of the SSHRB's Domestic Violence Workgroup
- Chantel Carter, Member of the City of Alameda's SSHRB and co-chair of the SSHRB's Domestic Violence Workgroup
- Cindy Pile, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT)
- Rhea Olmedo, DV Outreach Coordinator for Building Futures for Women and Children (BFWC)
- Robby Stofle, Sergeant for the Alameda Police Department
- Katherine Schwartz, CEO of Alameda Family Services
- Julia Gonzales, City of Alameda's Chief Assistant Prosecutor
- Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
- Amy Wooldridge, Assistant City Manager
- Jennifer Co, DV Director at BFWC
- Undrea, Family Violence Law Center Crisis Services Manager
- Grecia Mannah-Ayon, City of Alameda's Housing & Human Services Program Manager
- Shelby Neil, Housing & Human Services Admin Specialist

Mayoral Update:

After a terrible family annihilation tragedy in Alameda, the Mayor became determined to make productive change on domestic violence. In partnership with Alameda Family Services, she has led the project to create a domestic violence education video for young people, many of whom are starting to get into relationships. The video preview is tentatively set for the first City Council meeting in June.

Quarterly Domestic Violence Update:

Sergeant Robby Stofle gave an update on the number of domestic violence incidents report to the APD from January to March, 2026. He also announced that they have updated the language of the preamble for police reports regarding domestic violence (see image below).

DV Preamble examples

Case 1

Per 293 PC and 7923.615(b)(1) of the Government Code, (VIC) has a right to confidentiality, and elected to keep her name confidential throughout this report. I advised VIC of her right to have an advocate/support person present moving forward, prior to the start of any law enforcement interview per 679.04 PC. I provided VIC with an APD Marsy's Card and Resource Pamphlet. VIC was not suffocated/strangled during this incident. VIC and (SA) BLANK did not share any children, but did live together. Alcohol, weapons, and drugs were not factors in this incident. A Domestic Violence Lethality Risk Assessment For First Responders Form and APD Confidentiality Request Form were completed and attached to this report. A records check of BLANK revealed that she was not on the APPS/FDAS list.

Case 2

Per 293 PC and 6254(f)(2) of the Government Code, (SA/VIC) and (SV) BLANK had a right to confidentiality. BLANK denied keeping his name confidential, but SA/VIC desired to be confidential. BLANK and SA/VIC were provided an APD Marsy's Card and Domestic Violence Resource Pamphlet. BLANK and SA/VIC had been dating for about three-four years and had no children in common. No weapons were involved in this incident. BLANK, nor SA/VIC were strangled during this incident. Alcohol was not a factor. BLANK and SA/VIC would like to pursue a criminal complaint. BLANK and SA/VIC were offered an Emergency Protective Order (EPO), but SA/VIC declined. I authored an EPO, which was granted by Judicial Officer, (OTH) Sanford-Smith. Ofc Fernandez served SA/VIC with her copy of the EPO and she advised she understood. APD Dispatch entered the EPO into CLETS. Jackson, nor SA/VIC did not have any firearms registered to them and they were not on the prohibited weapons list.

Sergeant Stofle opened the floor up for questions.

Q1: What kind of training does APD receive in responding to DV incidents?

A1: The APD receives targeted training on domestic violence every two years. It is also incorporated into their new-hire training. They send every officer to a week-long critical intervention techniques course, which also addresses a variety of ways to handle domestic violence situations. For officers in the field training program, which lasts about 4 months, there's another week-long, in-house training where they address domestic violence (with a focus on de-escalation) and other related topics.

Keynote Speaker: Cindy Pile, LMFT

Cindy Pile shared lessons she had learn from her experience counseling victims of domestic violence. She urged the men in the group to consider calling out other men's behavior more often.

She mentioned non-physical abuse tactics and how difficult it can be for a victim to identify that they are being abused when overt violence is absent. She spoke to the role religious beliefs can play in domestic violence situations, and asked how we can get faith communities to take a firm no-tolerance position on abuse. Pile described observing a lot of shame and self-blame among victims, who often ask themselves why they didn't fight back or leave sooner. She described her

professional ethos in helping survivors love themselves, forgive themselves, trust themselves, and discover who they are as an individual. She teaches a lot of distress tolerance tools and incorporates Eye Movement and Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR).

Pile described all the ways the law shows up in the therapy room with clients who have children, because courts are often involved, even passively, with arrangements between co-parents. She expressed support for Senate Bill 1364, which would allow survivors of sexual violence to terminate their perpetrators' parental rights.

Q1: You've spoken a lot about the faith communities. That's a place where children and adults should be able to come and feel safe and learn. When I try to meet with them, universally none of them had any programs on DV or health relationships. What can we do to encourage them to do more outreach?

A1: Invite some of these organizations to offer a sermon or lead a support group. Religion is a great opportunity for education and a source of strength for some victims.

Jennifer Co, DV Director at BFWC, told the group that many religious groups have community liaisons that we could tap into, whether we invite them to this task force or offer them something.

Mayor Ashcraft suggested that the conversation start with organizations that we know to be receptive and progressive in their outlook, such as Buena Vista Methodist Church, Reverend Laura Rose with First Congregational, Stephen McHale at Christ Episcopal Church.

Q2: How do you build the mental resiliency in children from falling into these relationships that can be insidious and happen gradually?

A2: A child is less likely to enter or stay in an abusive relationship if the child has love in their household and ways of feeling good about themselves. Parents/guardians must teach acceptance of emotions, and a focus on choosing what you do with them. Grounding or sensory tools (e.g. Can you feel your feet on the ground? Look around and how many things do you see that are red?) taught early. Parents can overtly teach the concept of saying no, having control over their own body, naming parts of the body, and talking about sex at an age-appropriate level.

Katherine Schwartz of AFS added that they do a lot of work in the schools about healthy relationships. They teach some of the early signs that a relationship is moving in an unhealthy direction.

Q3: How can we focus prevention efforts on would-be perpetrators?

A3: Men lash out if they're feeling smaller, so we need to redefine the conversation about what it means to be a man and have men actively support each other. Teaching children to name, identify, and express their emotions. Recidivism rates with DV are so high.

Katherine Schwartz added the importance of teaching empathy by encouraging perpetrators to see things from the victim's perspective and seeing potential victims as human beings. Many perpetrators of violence and abuse have been raised in families where there was violence, where the father figure lacked empathy and didn't display respect for women. It can be almost a learned behavior to some degree. Mitigation efforts need to recognize the importance of healing childhood trauma.