

Assessing spousal homicide risk

Homicide risk elements

Protection elements

Risk present

Aggravated risk

Imminent risk

Triggering events

- Imminent or recent separation
- Continued cohabitation after the announcement of the separation
- Conflicts after the separation (children custody)
- Custody decision perceived as negative
- Presence of a new partner
- Loss of employment, sick leave
- Financial problems
- Signs of depression
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- Is able to foresee his mourning the break-up
- Maintains a feeling of hope regarding life
- Recognizes his ability to act for his well-being
- Recognizes the other's autonomy as a reality; cases to see the other as a simple object (of satisfaction or frustration); shows empathy
- Recognizes his violent behaviours (and their negative impacts) and shows a desire to change
- Is aware of a change in his tolerance for his own violence
- Recognizes his triggering elements and acts to protect himself (can foresee and apply protection scenarios)
- Recognizes the value of his ex-partner in her role as mother
- Is able to ask for help; presence and support of his social network
- Respects his conditions and the law out of concern for the consequences
- Gets involved in the helping process and shows trust towards the worker and the organization
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Assessing spousal homicide risk The risk elements

Risk present

- Suicidal ideas
- Changes in behaviour
- Overcontrolled emotions
- Pattern of violence in response to conflict situations
- Resentment
- History of violence against previous partners
- History of violence against women
- History of violence outside the family
- Impulsive or unpredictable behaviours; continuous rage
- Lacks empathy and compassion

Aggravated risk

- Does not accept the separation
- Does not accept the presence of a new partner
- Fantasies of committing spousal homicide and/or filicide
- Obsessive jealousy
- Abandonment anxiety (difficulty coping)
- Feeling of loss and failure
- Thinks about getting revenge
- Imagines his partner being destroyed/ perception of her as an object
- Notable change in his sense of responsibility for his behaviours (abandons this responsibility)
- Perception that the partner has destroyed the family
- Controls his partner's behaviours and where she can go
- Uses violence against the children
- Contemptuous and cruel behaviours or words toward the partner, and absence of remorse
- Increased frequency and severity of conjugal violence during the past month
- Cruelty towards household pets
- Verbalizes his suicidal intentions (has attempted suicide in the past)
- Stalking
- No-compliance with his release conditions (as set out in a court order)
- Breaks into his ex-partner's residence
- Unlawful confinement
- Has developed a homicide scenario (planning)
- Has made death threats during the past month
- Threatens to kidnap the children
- Armed threats
- Presence of a weapon (or other planned-for means)
- Stops trying to find help

Imminent risk

- Loses hope in resuming the relationship
- Has the clear intent to cause severe injuries
- Makes an attempt by strangulation or use of a firearm
- Verbalizes his homicidal intentions
- Has worked out a full homicide scenario