



BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PRESS RELEASE

Broome County Sheriff, District Attorney, Emergency Services, BPD, Crime Victims Advocates, Healthcare Providers and Others Announce Coordinated Community Response to Strangulation

(DICKINSON, NY) Multiple Broome County government, law enforcement and emergency services agencies, community organizations and health care providers have partnered on a coordinated, county-wide response to dangerous strangulation-related offenses occurring in domestic violence cases.

Members of the Broome County Sheriff's Office, Crime Victims Assistance Center, Broome County Office of Emergency Services, Broome County District Attorney's Office, Binghamton Police Department, Guthrie-Lourdes Hospital, and UHS Hospital assembled data, expertise, and experience to develop a first-of-its-kind protocol in Broome County involving multiple agencies and organizations to quickly identify, communicate and implement evidence-based practices and standard of care for victims who report strangulation.

Through this new protocol, Broome County aims to lead the way in response, treatment, victims services and prosecution to help end the cycle of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and save lives.

Strangulation and obstruction of breathing come in different forms, from applying pressure to a person's throat/neck and blocking the nose/mouth, to wrapping hands or arms around a person's neck. A person could be rendered unconscious in as little as 5-10 seconds by obstructing blood flow and oxygen to the brain. Respiration could stop altogether at approximately 62 seconds. Any obstruction of blood flow is highly likely to cause brain damage.

Strangulation is also a serious indicator of future murder in domestic violence situations. A history of IPV-related strangulation increases the risk of homicide by 750%, according to the Journal of Emergency Medicine.¹

¹ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2573025/>

How the Multi-Agency Response Protocol Works

- The first step is a call/text received by the Broome County Office of Emergency Services Communication Center (dispatch), identifying an incident where someone may have been strangled. Dispatchers deploy Emergency Medical Services (EMS) while simultaneously dispatching law enforcement.
- Law enforcement has received advanced training in strangulation investigations to ensure not only the safety of the victim, but also medical treatment.
- EMS providers across the county have implemented detailed evaluations of potential strangulation victims, as not all injuries are visible or immediately present.
- Local hospital systems have enacted protocols and screening procedures to ensure victims received specific evaluation for potential injuries from strangulation.
- Victim advocates, who are notified on scene by law enforcement, are immediately connected with victims and, with advanced training and robust protocols, aid, guidance, and resources, including responding to hospitals.
- Prosecutors vigorously pursue prosecution on strangulation offenses, working with all the partners to build strong cases through awareness, advanced training and recognition, and evidence collection.

The Broome County Coordinated Community Response to Strangulations provides a consistent message and awareness from the moment a victim calls for help to arrive at the hospital and through prosecution and advocate support.

“This protocol is a testament to the commitment and cooperation of our local Public Safety and Healthcare system, as well as our victims’ advocates’, all focused on the safety of Broome County residents,” said Sheriff Fred Akshar. “If you or someone you know has been strangled, even if there are no visible injuries, seek follow-up care from a medical provider as soon as possible because symptoms and serious complications may appear later. Unreported crimes and abuse only help perpetuate the cycle, and it will take all of us working together to end it.”

"Responding to strangulation cases takes more than any one agency working alone, it takes law enforcement, medical providers, victim advocates, and prosecutors all working from the same playbook," said District Attorney F. Paul Battisti. "One of the most important things for our community to understand is that a strangulation victim can look completely fine and still be facing a serious, even life-threatening injury. That is exactly why this coordinated county response is so meaningful."

“At the Crime Victims Assistance Center, we are proud to partner with the Broome County Sheriff’s Office and our community partners to create a seamless response that prioritizes survivor safety, immediate medical evaluation, trauma-informed advocacy, and offender accountability,” said Christine Battisti, Executive Director of the Crime Victims Assistance Center. “By strengthening communication and implementing evidence-based practices across every point of contact, we are giving survivors the best opportunity to escape violence, begin healing, and reduce the risk of future harm. This collaboration represents what is possible when a community comes together to say that domestic violence—and particularly strangulation—will never be minimized or ignored.”

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