



# Strangulation and Domestic Violence:

Saving Lives by Enhancing our Response

October 16, 2013  
October 18, 2013  
October 24, 2013

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This webinar is co-sponsored by the  
**Georgia Commission on Family Violence**

as part of an effort to raise awareness and improve the response of advocates, first responders, law enforcement, prosecutors, and the medical community.



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

## Housekeeping Notes

- Can you hear me now? If yes, please raise your hand. 
- Technical problems (viewing, listening, etc.)?
  - Contact Global Customer Support at 1-800-263-6317 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>
- Questions or comments during the webinar:
  - Raise your hand – click the hand icon to raise your hand
  - Use the question box to type a question/comment for the presenter
- We will email slides at end of the webinar.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6317 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Learning objectives

- Understand what strangulation is - and what it is not
- Identify lethality risks of strangulation
- Identify the short- and long-term physical and mental health risks of strangulation
- Know how to improve our response to survivors who have been strangled through screening and survivor education

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Slides and materials adapted from the

## Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention

a project of the Family Justice Center Alliance sponsored by the Office on Violence Against Women

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Strangulation is Highly Prevalent

- **Between 47% and 68% of female survivors have encountered strangulation**

*Wilbur, Higley, Hatfield, Surprenant, Taliaferro, Smith, & Paolo, (2001)*

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

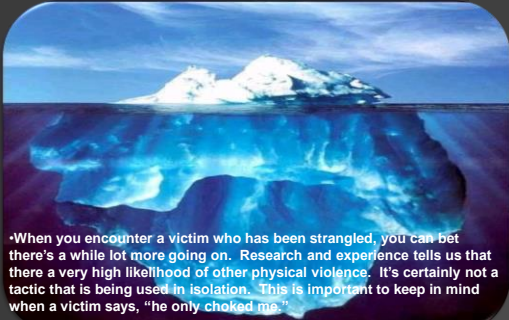
---

---

---

---

## The "tip of the iceberg"



•When you encounter a victim who has been strangled, you can bet there's a while lot more going on. Research and experience tells us that there's a very high likelihood of other physical violence. It's certainly not a tactic that is being used in isolation. This is important to keep in mind when a victim says, "he only choked me."

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Strangulation is Traumatic

- Is intimate and terrifying
- Is a near-death experience
- Reinforces his control

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Strangulation is a Lethality Indicator

- 24% to 62% of female intimate partner homicide victims had a history of prior strangulation.

Glass, Laughon, Campbell, Block, Hanson, Sharps & Taliaferro (2008)

- 19% of cases reviewed in Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Annual Report, 2004-2012, had prior strangulation incidents

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Strangulation is a Lethality Indicator

**Victims of prior attempted strangulation are 8 times more likely of becoming a homicide victim.**

*Glass, et al, 2008*

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Changes to our response to non-fatal strangulation can save lives!

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Continuum of Violence



Part of the solution starts with how we view strangulation in the continuum of physical violence. Historically, we have tended to put strangulation, or "choking", somewhere between "punch" and "kick". Why? Because so often it doesn't leave any marks. But the more we learn about strangulation, the more we can see that it really needs to be placed here, somewhere between use of a "weapon" and "homicide" due to its lethal potential.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Strangulation vs. Choking

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

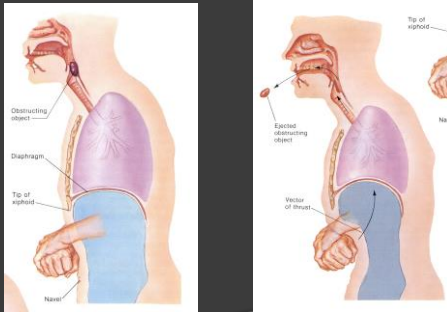
---

---

---

---

## Strangulation is not "CHOKING"



If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## STRANGULATION



If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

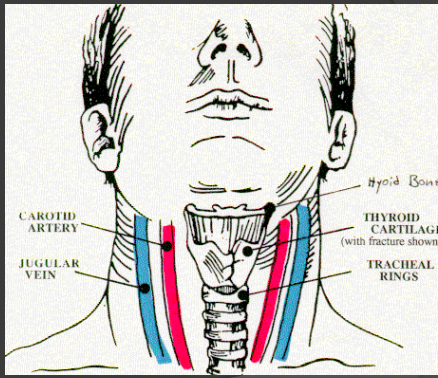
---

---

---

---

---



If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## STRANGULATION

- Pressure placed upon the neck
- Resulting in reduction of blood flow through the brain
- If this persists, then oxygen delivery to the brain is impaired, and the brain cells become hypoxic (not enough oxygen), then anoxic (no oxygen), then dead
- This type of serious bodily injury is called ASPHYXIA, and it occurs first at the cellular level, then throughout the body

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How long until permanent damage occurs?

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

It takes only **4 lbs of pressure** to cut off both jugular veins

10 seconds → brain damage

10-20 seconds → loss of consciousness

2 minutes → full unconsciousness

A firm handshake is about 8 lbs of pressure.

4 minutes → death

Using **11 lbs of pressure**, both jugular veins AND both carotid arteries are cut off, which speeds up the timeframe for damage

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Is there visible evidence of injury?

- Visible injuries on victims in only **50%** of cases
- **Death can occur without any external marks at all**
- Visible injuries on perps (from victim self-defense) is more common.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Most common symptoms

- **Changes in speech**
  - Sore throat, raspy, scratchy voice
- **Changes in swallowing**
  - Pain on swallowing, usually intense
- **Changes in breathing**
  - Rare, severe, immediately life threatening

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Other possible signs and symptoms among victims

- Redness of the neck
- Swelling of the neck (due to internal bleeding or injury of underlying neck structures)
- Scratch marks (victim or perp)
- Miscarriage
- Droopy eye
- Tiny red spots (petechiae, or ruptured capillaries) *\*clear indication of permanent brain damage*
- Blood red eyes (due to capillary rupture)
- Bruises (may not appear for some time)
- Finger tip bruises (circular/oval and often faint)

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### PETECHIAE



If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Other possible signs and symptoms among victims

- Pain or tenderness on touch or movement
- Spasm
- Coughing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of consciousness
- Involuntary urination and/or defecation
- Ears ringing
- Head rush
- Mental status changes
- Vision and hearing changes

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Stages of death

### Disbelief

Victim cannot believe their air or blood supply is being stopped.

### Realization

Victim realizes she they are losing air and/or blood supply. Often their thoughts are of survival, their family or children.

### Primal

Victim fights with whichever means they have available to get blood and/or air flow back.

### Resignation

Victim gives up, feeling they can do nothing, and go limp.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Serious health risks and need for monitoring

- Only about **3%** of victims seek medical attention
  - Victims may not understand the danger and may be reluctant to seek medical attention.
  
- **Victims may die up to several days after the assault** – even with medical care – due to progression of internal injuries

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Common causes for delayed death

- Lung inflammation due to breathing in contents of stomach after vomiting
- Fracture of trachea or larynx with air leak
- Airway obstruction due to swelling of the glottis or larynx
- Stroke from blood clot caused by carotid artery dissection (separation of layers of the artery)

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Long term health consequences

- Seizures
- Cryptogenic strokes
- Permanent damage to vocal cords
- Recurrent headache and persistent neck pain
- Lifelong cognitive deficit (from brain damage and brain hemorrhaging)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Emotional and cognitive health consequences

- Depression, chronic pain, self blame, nightmares, insomnia, hyper vigilance, and anxiety
- Flashbacks and nightmares
- Memory loss, learning deficits, and inability to concentrate

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Common feelings and experiences

- **Betrayal**
  - “How could someone I loved and considered a partner do something like that to me?”
  - “I was looking at his eyes and he looked crazy. It was like he was possessed.”
- **Disbelief**
  - “I can’t believe this could happen to me.”
- **Vulnerability**
  - “I thought I was going to die, I felt hopeless.”

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Stages of death

**Disbelief**  
Victim cannot believe their air or blood supply is being stopped.

**Realization**  
Victim realizes she they are losing air and/or blood supply. Often their thoughts are of survival, their family or children.

**Primal**  
Victim fights with whichever means they have available to get blood and/or air flow back.

**Resignation**  
Victim gives up, feeling they can do nothing, and go limp.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Improving our response to strangulation

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Our response to victims

- ⦿ Enhanced screening and evidence collection by first responders and law enforcement
  - Only 39% report to law enforcement
- ⦿ Enhanced education to victims by first responders, law enforcement, and domestic violence programs
- ⦿ Heightened prosecution of the crime

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Poll

Does your domestic violence shelter or community-based program ask survivors if they have been strangled/choked?

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Screening

- *Has anyone you've been involved with ever strangled, choked, or aggressively put their hands around your throat or neck?*
- *Did this happen recently?*

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Important steps to take with victims of strangulation



Next 24 hrs could be critical



Encourage victim to seek medical



Advise to keep a log of symptoms

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Education and Advocacy

- Educate the survivor about strangulation, signs and symptoms
  - Help survivors understand their immediate danger and long-term consequences
- Encourage survivor to seek medical attention
- Advise survivor to keep log of symptoms

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12/22/99: I looked in my mirror and noticed facial petechia. Police photographed my condition. I had pain in my neck and my back was stiff and very painful. I could only speak with a little more than a whisper.

12/23/99: Muscular neck sprain & facial petechia diagnosis by Dr. Kahn at the Immediate Care Center, Nora. My throat was sore & I could hardly talk. (You have this Dr.'s encounter sheet in your file).

I had pain and stiffness in my back for three (3) days. It seemed better on 12/25/99 (Christmas). My throat was sore & talking was difficult.

The petechia were present for four (4) days following. I noticed it clearing up approximately on 12/26/99. My pain around my neck subsided on this date, too. However, talking was still a struggle.

2-2-00: Laryngeal trauma & hoarseness diagnosed by Dr. Jones, an ENT specialist. (You have this Dr.'s encounter sheet in your file). My hoarseness continued two weeks longer until approximately 2-16-00. But tightness and strain in and around my throat continued.

Noticeable tightness and strain in my throat continued for four (4) months. It tapered off (got better) towards the end of April 2000.

Presently I do not have full use of my voice, i.e. my vocal range is less. I do not have the ability to project my voice with the same volume or fullness as before the strangulation. The tone of my voice has been and still is altered to that of what it was before the strangulation on 12-22-99.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Help survivors understand what they are experiencing

- ❖ *How has this impacted your life?*
- ❖ *It's normal to have a wide range of feelings and emotions after a traumatic event.*
- ❖ *You might experience fear and anxiety, a lack of focus, sadness, changes in how well you sleep or how much you eat, or crying spells that catch you off guard.*
- ❖ *You may have nightmares or be unable to stop thinking about the event.*

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Systems advocacy

- Educate your community
  - Emergency dispatch operators
  - First responders (EMS and EMTs)
  - Local law enforcement
  - Medical professionals
  - Prosecutors
  - Judges
  - Lawmakers

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Strangulationtraininginstitute.com

- *Facts Victims of Choking (Strangulation) Need to Know!*
  - Click "Resources," then click "Library," then click "Brochures and Flyers" → FJC Legal Network Strangulation Victim Log
- *Strangulation: A Quick Reference Guide (for law enforcement)*
  - Click "Resources," then click "Library," then click "Brochures and Flyers" → Strangulation Guide for California Law Enforcement
- *Very short online training for law enforcement*
  - Click "Training", then click "Online Strangulation Training"

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Improving laws to match the seriousness of strangulation

- *Codifying strangulation as **felony** offense*
  - *37 other states and U.S. Virgin Islands have felony strangulation statutes*
    - Alabama, North Carolina, Florida, Tennessee included

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## States that have passed felony strangulation laws have seen

- Increasing victim safety
- Increasing offender accountability
- Drawing attention to the potential lethality
- Causing more resources to be marshaled
- Educating the public on domestic violence

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Time-limited strangulation screening and assessment

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Context of the screening and assessment project

- To bring survivor voices to inform our training and policy advocacy on strangulation
- To understand the prevalence of strangulation among survivors in Georgia
- To understand the impact of strangulation on survivors in Georgia

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The process

- GCADV will distribute a short strangulation assessment to participating, along with instructions.
- Can be completed on paper or via Survey Monkey
- Individual responses will be kept confidential. Only aggregate quantitative information will be shared with legislators.
- GCADV will also send materials for debriefing with survivors.

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Questions?

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## THANK YOU!

Allison Smith  
 Director of Public Policy  
 Georgia Coalition Against Domestic  
 Violence  
 404-209-0280, ext. 15  
 asmith@gcadv.org

If you are having technical difficulties, please contact Global Customer Support Center at 1-800-263-6337 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---