

Survey finds violence widespread across Texas, often missing from official crime data

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Stacey Plaisance splaisance@tulane.edu

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Violence touches the lives of millions of Texans far more often than official crime statistics show, with many experiences beginning in childhood and closely linked to economic hardship, housing instability and mental health strain, according to a new statewide, population-based survey by Tulane University's [Newcomb Institute](#).

More than half of Texas adults have experienced physical violence at some point in their lives, and an estimated 1.5 million experienced physical violence in the past year, says the [Texas Violence Experiences Survey](#) (TexVEX).

The report also found sexual violence to be widespread across the state. An estimated 12.3 million Texas adults have experienced some form of sexual violence over their lifetimes, including sexual harassment, coercion or forced sex. About 2.1 million Texans experienced sexual violence in the past year, most often sexual harassment.

Nearly half of Texas adults reported experiencing intimate partner violence over their lifetimes, as well. The report finds that roughly one in five women, or about 2.6 million women, have experienced potentially lethal abuse from a

partner, such as choking or the use of a weapon.

“These findings tell us that violence in Texas is not an exceptional circumstance – it is a harmful norm,” said lead study author Anita Raj, executive director of the Newcomb Institute and professor in the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health at Tulane University. “For women, that violence too often comes from a partner, and it can be deadly.”

Researchers said the findings matter because they capture violence that often never appears in police reports or hospital data, particularly sexual harassment, coercive control by partners and experiences survivors do not report to authorities.

“Reliance on crime statistics alone obscures the true prevalence, timing and cumulative impact of violence across Texans’ lives,” the report notes.

TexVEX was conducted in May and June 2025 using a statewide, representative sample of 1,052 Texas adults. Responses were weighted to reflect the state’s adult population, allowing researchers to generate population-level estimates of violence exposure across Texas.

The survey shows violence often begins early in life. About 15% of adults reported experiencing physical violence in childhood and 24% in adolescence. One in seven adults reported sexual violence in childhood, with sharp increases during adolescence and young adulthood, particularly among women.

The report also highlights differences in how violence occurs for women and men. When physical violence occurred in the past year, women most often reported it happened at home and involved a partner, while men more often reported violence in public spaces and from strangers.

Economic hardship was strongly associated with recent violence. Financial instability, food insecurity and housing insecurity were all linked to a higher likelihood of experiencing physical, sexual and intimate partner violence.

“Our strongest findings related to recent homelessness, which was reported by about one in 33 Texans,” Raj said. “Homelessness was associated with three to six times higher risk of recent physical, sexual and intimate partner violence.”

The report also links recent violence to mental health challenges and substance use. Texans who experienced violence in the past year were two to three times more likely to report moderate or severe anxiety and depression and two to seven times more likely to report binge drinking and illicit drug use than those who did not report recent violence.

Many respondents also described major life disruptions, such as missed work, job loss or housing changes, while relatively few reported seeking formal services or legal remedies.

Researchers said the findings underscore the need for early prevention efforts, stronger support systems outside law enforcement and sustained population-based tracking of violence in Texas, one of four states where Newcomb Institute has conducted the violence experiences survey in recent years.

Full results are available at vexdata.org.