

## Screening for Domestic Violence

### Predominant Aggressor Assessment

When both parties have used violence, investigators must determine which person acted in self-defense.

#### Always report the following items:

- All evidence collected or statements** made during interviews
- History of violence** including prior arrests, criminal records and TPO filings
- Comparisons of height and weight** between victim and suspect
- Absence or presence of any physical disabilities, medical conditions or impairments**
- Claims of self-defense**
- Specific injury patterns** found on the victim or suspect which commonly include:
  - Fingernail or other scratches to suspect's neck, face and arms caused by victim in self-defense
  - Bite marks on suspect's arms, hands, or chest caused by victim in self-defense
  - Groin or genital injuries to suspect by victim in self defense
  - Bruises, lacerations and abrasions on the forearms and hands of victims from attempting to block punches, kicks, or other strikes with a weapon

**Remember bruising will not always appear immediately!**

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### **Information for the Victim**

**Encourage the victim to contact Georgia's 24-Hour, Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-33-HAVEN (1800-334-2836).** Explain that they can talk to an advocate about shelter and additional services.

Explain their rights and inform them that they might qualify for a Family Violence Protective Order and/or Victim's Compensation.

### **Making A Good Domestic Violence Case**

- Document parties location upon arrival and interview them separately (including children)
- Have victim and witnesses write (or tape) a statement
- Take pictures of crime scene, injuries, etc.
- Describe in detail victim's and suspect's injuries (or lack of), crime scene, etc.
- Document any spontaneous utterances (in quotes)
- Note any history of abuse including court orders/TPO filings
- Describe victim's and suspects emotional and physical condition, including height and weight
- Identify and interview person calling 911, if not victim
- Record names/ages of any children present
- Impound weapons
- Follow Miranda. Ask if suspect wants to make a statement (write/record)
- Record permanent and alternative phone number and address for victim and witnesses
- Obtain signed medical release form from victim
- Record name and badge number of all officers present
- Note emergency personnel information