

**Relational Violence Definitions**

**Background**

This document is intended to define key relational violence terms used by the Safe Futures Collaborative to help ensure shared language and understanding. Relational violence is any physical, sexual, or psychological harm by someone known to the victim including a current or former partner or spouse. Within the Safe Futures Collaborative, relational violence includes domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking. Although each form of violence is unique, there is significant overlap between the root causes of each and the challenges/barriers victims and survivors face.

**Domestic Violence**

Maryland law defines domestic violence “abuse” as the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between “family or household members”:

* Assault
* An act that places a person in fear of imminent serious bodily harm
* An act that causes serious bodily harm
* Rape or sexual offense
* Attempt rape or sexual offense
* Stalking
* False imprisonment, such as interference with freedom, physically keeping you from leaving your home or kidnapping you.

**Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault is any unwanted or forced sexual act and includes:

* Rape and attempted rape
* Unwanted touching or groping
* Sexual harassment
* Unwanted showing of private parts
* Sexual exploitation
* Child sexual abuse
* Incest
* Sexually obscene communications (in person, by phone, texting, email or social networking)

**Sex Trafficking**

Sex trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which individuals perform commercial sex through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. (National Human Trafficking Hotline)