



## **Early-Stage Risk Insight Brief Domestic Violence Pattern (Germany)** **Developed by Uncensored Voices**

### 1. Context

This brief draws on a youth-reported personal experience of domestic abuse, highlighting how severe violence often emerges as the outcome of earlier, normalized behaviors within the household. The purpose is to identify early-stage risk signals that precede escalation and are frequently overlooked in practice.

### 2. Key Pattern Observed

The incident of attempted lethal violence did not occur in isolation. It was preceded by a consistent pattern of:

- Repeated verbal threats (e.g., threats of physical harm)
- Alcohol-influenced instability in caregiving environments
- Cycles of intimidation followed by normalization or forgiveness
- Lack of early intervention despite visible warning signs

These behaviors created an environment where fear and control became normalized, reducing the perceived urgency of risk until escalation occurred.

### 3. Early Risk Signals Identified

- Normalization of Threats: Verbal threats were present but not treated as immediate risk indicators
- Unstable Caregiving Environment: Exposure to substance abuse and unpredictability
- Dismissal/Absorption of Harm: Victims adapting to ongoing fear without external intervention
- Delayed System Activation: Formal systems (police, legal) engaged only at the point of crisis.

### 4. Escalation Point

The situation escalated to an attempted act of lethal violence (attempted physical harm towards the mother), which triggered emergency intervention. This reflects a pattern where systems respond only when harm becomes visible and severe.

## 5. System Response Gap

Post-incident, the response was limited to a restraining measure (prohibiting proximity), without addressing underlying behavioral patterns or long-term risk factors.

This indicates:

- A reactive rather than preventive system design
- Limited mechanisms for early-stage identification and intervention
- Lack of integration between early warning signals and accountability pathways

## 6. Key Insight

This case reinforces a broader pattern observed across youth-reported experiences: Severe forms of violence are often the outcome of normalized early behaviors that are not recognized or acted upon as risk.

## 7. Implication for Practice

There is a need to:

- Recognize verbal threats, fear, and control as actionable early risk signals
- Integrate early-stage pattern recognition into safeguarding and community awareness efforts
- Strengthen pathways between early identification and preventive intervention

## 8. Conclusion

The risk in this case was visible long before escalation occurred. However, without mechanisms to identify and act on early signals, the system engaged only at the point of crisis. Prevention requires shifting focus from visible harm to the patterns that precede it.