

Why Do Faith Communities Matter in Addressing Domestic Violence?

*"None of us as helpers should ever put a battered woman in the position of having to choose between her safety and the support of her religious community. She needs both...and it's up to us to provide that."
- Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune*

- Unique position to help as a safe place to disclose and ask for assistance
- Offer spiritual support: Religion can be a resource or a roadblock
- Foster the process of recovery as victims reach out, seeking answers to "why this happened"
- Provide advocacy and resource referral, and work toward systemic change

FOUR STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO ASSIST SURVIVORS:

Build upon the complex ways in which faith and community resources can support domestic violence survivors and their children.

1. Affirm:

Their courageous act of speaking about the abuse should be affirmed.

You can tell them:

- "I believe you."
- "I care about you."
- "You are not alone."
- "It's not your fault."

2. Assess:

Support a survivor's need to implement their safety plan

How can you and/or your faith community assist them?

- Financially?
- Emotionally?
- With practical steps?

3. Safety is the #1 Priority, Always:

Assure the victim that their safety is important to you and the community.

Review your safe church policy and procedures with them.
Ask for feedback, address concerns.

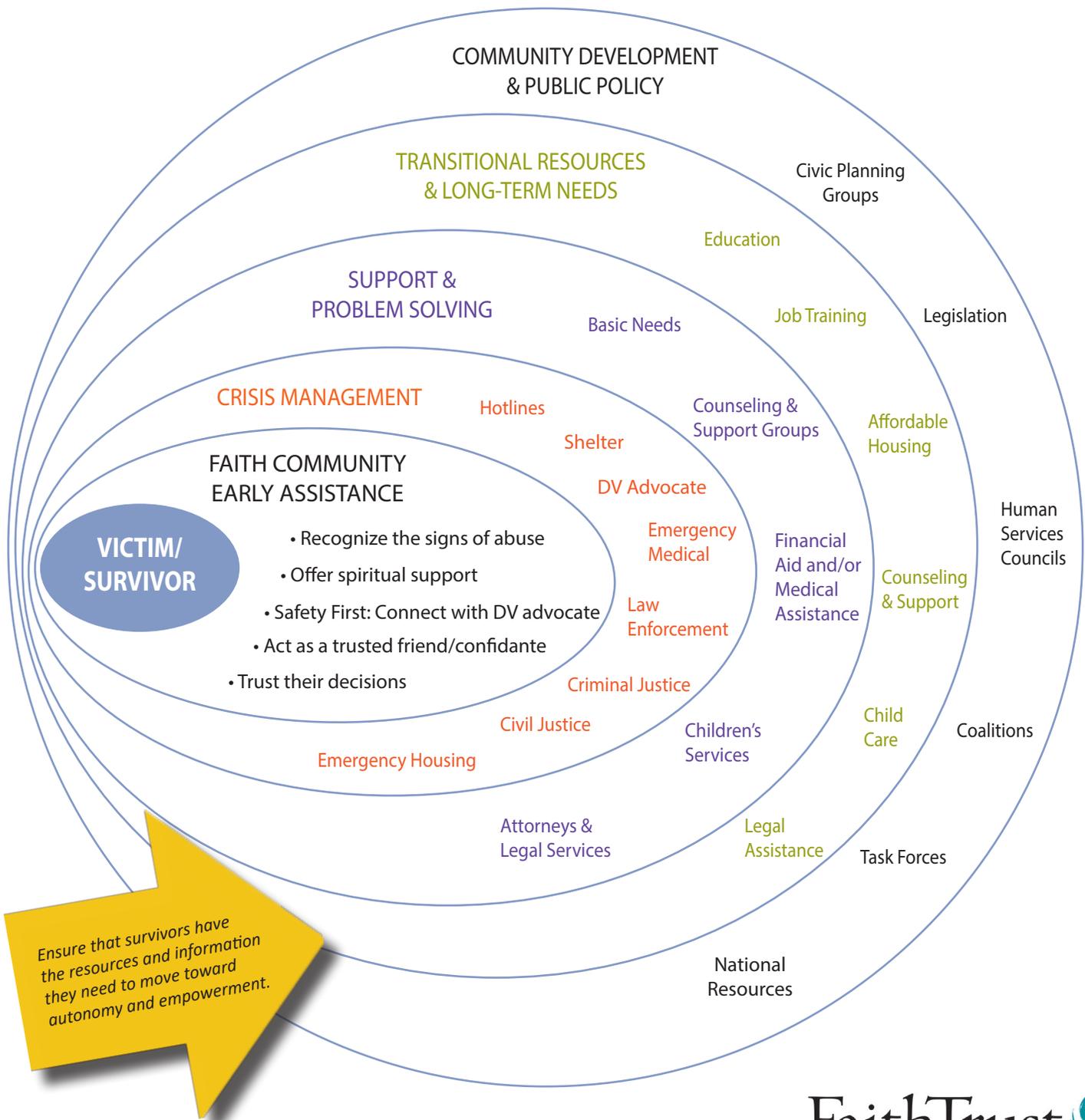
4. Refer:

Domestic violence advocates are experts at creating a detailed safety plan with the survivor.

Certain aspects of safety planning can be addressed by faith leaders, but **most aspects must be left to the experts.**

Tell them that an advocate can help them develop a plan for emotional, physical, and sexual safety for themselves and their family.

Map of Community-Based Resources for Victims of Abuse & Violence



INSTRUCTIONS:

Identify your local resources; begin to develop relationships with these key contacts

Services	Contact Name	Contact Number
CRISIS MANAGEMENT RESOURCES		
Domestic Violence Hotline: National and Local/State		
Domestic Violence Shelter/Agencies		
Suicide Prevention Agency/Hotline		
Sexual Assault Network/Hotline		
Elder Abuse Services/ Senior Help Line		
Teen Youth Care Center /Programs		
Child Abuse Hotline: National and Local/State		
Emergency Transitional Housing		
Emergency Feeding Program/ Food Bank		
Law Enforcement/Police/ DV Unit/ Victim Advocate Services		
Emergency Protection Order/Family Advocate		
Emergency/Urgent Medical Care		
SUPPORT AND PROBLEM-SOLVING RESOURCES		
Social Services Agencies		
Mental Health Counseling		
Substance Abuse Treatment/ Counseling		
Legal Assistance/ Family Law Assistance		
Child Protective Services		
Parenting Groups/Network		
Immigrant Outreach Services/Translation/Language		
Pet Care/Temporary or Fostering		
TRANSITIONAL RESOURCES & LONG-TERM NEEDS		
Superior Court/Criminal Justice Assistance		
Prosecuting Attorney		
Routine Healthcare/Clinic		
Transportation Services		
Education Assistance/ Job Training		
Employment Assistance		
Support Groups /Network		
Affordable Housing		
Batterers' Program		
COALITION RESOURCES		
State		
County/Local		

RESOURCES WITHIN YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY

Complete the list below by identifying the people, groups, & organizations in your faith community who have direct interest & ability in preventing domestic violence and aiding survivors.

People/Volunteer Time

Professional Expertise/Skill

Physical Space

Material Goods & Services

Financial Support

Collegiality/Relationships

Political/Advocacy/Leadership

FAITHFUL RESPONSE ESSENTIAL CHECKLIST

These are the questions a faith community should ask:

- Do you know the facts about domestic violence and abuse in your community?

- Has your faith community participated in training or awareness activities? Which ones?

- What challenges does your faith community face when addressing domestic violence?

- What safe church policies are in place in your faith community?

- What is your action plan to respond to domestic violence in your faith community and in the wider community?

- What are the community, social service or government organizations in your community that provide domestic violence services?
