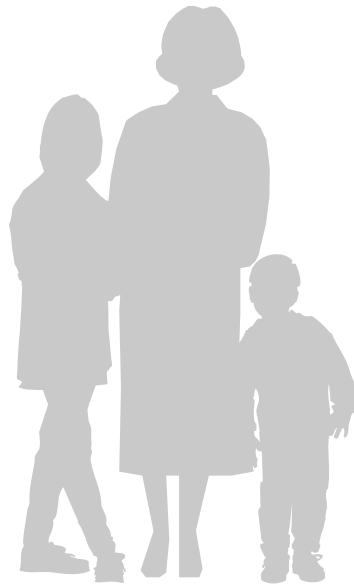


# **Helping Rural Battered Women and Their Children:**

**A Guide for Faith Leaders  
and Religious Communities**



*Developed by*  
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

*Funding provided by a grant from*  
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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## **NOTE ABOUT GENDER LANGUAGE**

Throughout this resource, domestic violence victims are assumed to be female and abusers male – as reflected in the body of domestic violence research. This is not meant to take away from instances where the victim and abuser may be the same sex or the victim may be male and the abuser female.

## **PERMISSION TO REPRINT**

The contents of this publication may be reprinted with the following acknowledgement:

This material was reprinted from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence publication entitled *Helping Battered Women and Their Children in Rural Communities: A Guide for Faith Leaders and Religious Communities*.

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*Helping Rural Battered Women and Their Children:  
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**WHEN IN DANGER, CALL 9-1-1  
OR THE LOCAL POLICE.**

**YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
PROGRAM CAN HELP.**

Emergency assistance, information and referral, crisis counseling and other services are available 24-hours a day, every day of the year, from the local domestic violence program. Please call if you, or someone you know, is in need of help.

Your local domestic violence program contact information is on the cover of this booklet.

Additional resources and training on domestic violence are available from your local program. Please contact them for more information.

**ALL SERVICES ARE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL.**

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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**“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\*

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\*Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune, a minister in the United Church of Christ, founded the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, WA, in 1977. A graduate of Yale Divinity School, she is a pastor, educator and author as well as a practicing ethicist and theologian.

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## Introduction

**“When you’re out on a farm at night, there’s no one to hear you scream. And there’s nowhere to go except out on a dark road...”**

These are the words of a battered woman from one of Pennsylvania’s rural communities. They capture the woman’s feelings of desperation, isolation and hopelessness that often come with being a victim of domestic violence living in remote corners of the commonwealth.

What can someone do when she lives in a home where fear and violence are a way of life? When there’s no one around to hear her cries for help because she lives miles away from the closest neighbor, police station or highway?

No matter where a battered woman lives in this state, **FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL** help from a local domestic violence program is just a phone call away.

**▶ As a faith leader, you may be in a position to link members of your religious community who are being battered to this program.**



## Use This Resource To Guide You

Inside this booklet you'll find the following information on how to talk and offer support to someone who is being abused:

- ✓ An explanation about domestic violence – who is abused and who does the abusing
- ✓ Information about the services available to battered women and their children from local domestic violence programs, such as:
  - shelter or safe home to hide in
  - trained counselors to talk to
  - someone to go to court with them
  - help with filing for welfare assistance
  - programs for children
  - advice on how to make a safety plan for living in an abusive relationship or for when trying to leave the relationship
- ✓ Tips to help keep battered mothers and their children safe
- ✓ A promise that battered women and their children don't have to struggle on their own, behind closed doors, with the violence in their lives

**Please read this booklet and call your local domestic violence program. It could mean the difference between life and death for a member of your religious community.**



## **Principles For Addressing Domestic Violence**

The materials in this guide are based on the following six principles:

- 1) Despite conflict within the family, violence and abuse cannot be justified and are violations of an individual's rights.
- 2) Domestic violence is a social problem, not an isolated or private family matter.
- 3) A strong public stance against domestic violence is necessary.
- 4) Ultimately, domestic violence is about power and control.
- 5) A batterer must be responsible and accountable for his violence; the violence is not the fault of the person who is being harmed.
- 6) Education is a primary way to create awareness about domestic violence and to change destructive violent patterns.

Thank you for reading these materials and for working against domestic violence. It is our hope that someday everyone will be safe in their homes. Until that day, your participation could literally be a lifeline for any member of your religious community who is a victim of domestic violence.





## Battered Women Often Confide In Faith Leaders

Dealing with violence within rural communities is a complex issue with many ramifications. Victims of domestic violence who live in rural areas face special challenges. While batterers tend to isolate their victims in any geographical setting, for women in rural areas, this isolation is often even more severe. They may live miles from their nearest neighbor, friend or family member. Lack of available child care, few job opportunities, inadequate public transportation, distance from shelters and services, poverty and economic dependence are just some of the barriers that can make escaping a violent relationship even harder for rural women.

*A lack of anonymity and confidentiality also makes it more difficult for victims of abuse to come forward and seek help. In small towns, it can seem as if everyone knows everyone else. Judges and police officers who know both a batterer and his victim socially may be less likely to recognize the severity of an assault. Underserved rural populations, including immigrants, African Americans, Native Americans, and gays and lesbians, face additional barriers as well. (Excerpted from *Danger in a Small Town: The Impact of Domestic Violence in Rural Communities*. by Esta Soler, Family Violence Prevention Fund, San Francisco, CA, 2001.)*

Many battered women and their families turn to the faith community for guidance and comfort.

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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Knowledge of the issues, the impact of domestic violence and the resources available for intervention can allow faith leaders to serve individuals in need of assistance more effectively. Faith leaders have a unique opportunity to educate and sensitize their congregations to the impact that domestic violence has on their community and society as a whole.

Dealing with issues of violence in relationships can sometimes cause conflict within congregations and communities, especially when the violent relationship involves prominent families or families with many relatives in the area. Be prepared for responses such as denial, cover-up, and blaming of the faith leader. ("If you hadn't brought this up, everything would still be fine.")

This handbook is intended to give you some basic information about domestic violence and will offer guidance on how you as a leader and member of a religious community can help.

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**If the physical, mental,  
emotional and spiritual  
well-being of the woman  
is intact, so too is that of  
the family, community  
and society.**

– Indigenous Proverb

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## **A Framework For Working Against Domestic Violence**

Throughout this guide , you will find guidelines for intervention, tips and specific strategies for members of religious communities and faith leaders to assist victims of domestic violence. The following three recommendations for religious communities can be used to frame your work:

- 1) Provide education on the issues around battering and domestic violence. It helps to know what the issues are, what problems are encountered by both the victim and the batterer and what causes the violence.

Remember:

- ✓ Most people are not aware of the obstacles a battered woman faces when she seeks help – the legal, financial, emotional traps that bind her in the violent relationship.
- ✓ There are even fewer resources for the man who seeks counseling to change his abusive behavior.
- ✓ We only recently have become more aware of the extent of emotional and perhaps physical violence that impacts children in these relationships.

- 2) Encourage serious reflection on why and how domestic violence is a religious problem. Consider the following spiritual dimensions inherent in crises of domestic violence:

- ✓ the fundamental experience that domestic violence can be life threatening

- ✓ the sense of shame and humiliation
- ✓ issues of trust and betrayal, particularly as they relate to our capacity for a relationship to a Higher Power
- ✓ the need for others to provide and for victims to accept help in healing the wounds, for abusers to accept responsibility and be accountable for the violence and, if necessary, to mourn the end of a relationship  
(Adapted from *A Theological Perspective on Sexual Assault* by Mary D. Pellauer.)

3) Pursue collaborative leadership. People need vision and guidance and it can be provided best by those who have knowledge and experience in this field. Refer to the resources listed at the end of this booklet. In addition, the domestic violence program in your county offers a variety of **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** services to victims as well as support, education and materials for community members.

However you are able to help a victim of domestic violence, know that your support is vital to her safety and overall well being. Sometimes, people feel as though they are not doing enough, but they fail to realize that a kind word or gesture is often the key to making another person feel valued and cared for. **Linking her to the domestic violence program may really be offering a lifeline.**



## **Your Local Domestic Violence Program Is A Link To Safety**

Domestic violence programs work to enhance safety for battered women and children. They do not encourage divorce or try to break families apart. The services offered vary from program to program, but advocates may be able to offer the following:

- 24-hour crisis hotline
- one-on-one support and counseling
- shelter or safe housing
- assistance with obtaining a protection order and other types of legal advocacy
- battered women's support groups
- child advocacy services
- medical advocacy at local hospitals
- assistance with emergency and basic living needs
- emergency transportation
- assistance with finding permanent housing or obtaining welfare
- referrals to other resources
- support for family members and friends of a victim of domestic violence
- information, training and resources on domestic violence

The contact information for your local domestic violence program is located on the cover of this guide. In rural areas, programs often serve more than one county, but advocates can provide transportation to shelter or counseling appointments or arrange for someone to meet with the battered woman in your community.



## **What You Should Know About Domestic Violence**

### ***UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS***

The first step you can take to help members of your religious community who are being battered is to learn more about domestic violence. Society's lack of understanding about domestic violence often is the greatest obstacle a battered woman faces in her efforts to end the violence in her life. With this in mind, here is some information to help you more fully understand the dynamics of this crime:

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISN'T JUST A FAMILY MATTER**

Domestic violence is never just a family problem. It is a crime that could be deadly for the battered woman. Domestic violence affects her, her children and the entire community. It is probably difficult for her to talk about and may be dangerous for her to even reach out for help. You should get involved. Start by reading this guide and then help her safely place a call to the local domestic violence program for free and confidential assistance.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL**

Domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviors in a relationship that is used to gain and/or maintain power and control over another. These behaviors are often described as emotional, psychological, sexual or physical abuse.

Domestic violence is also called battering, family violence, wife beating, intimate partner violence, spouse abuse and woman abuse.

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**“ It is not unusual for a batterer to become angry with anyone who is helping the victim. Clergy are not immune to this anger. It is emotionally more difficult in smaller communities because clergy and abused/abusers are more likely to come into daily contact with each other (store, post office, cafe, on the streets, etc.) ”**

– A Rural Pastor

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- Batterers who are violent also use nonviolent tactics of control. Even those batterers who do not use violence regularly remind their battered partners that failure to meet their demands and rules may lead to violent assaults.
- Incidents of violence may be frequent or infrequent, prolonged or brief, severe or mild.
- Many victims suffer all forms of abuse. Emotional and psychological abuse may be more subtle than physical harm, but this does not mean that it is less destructive. Many battered women report that this abuse is more difficult to experience. Physical injuries may heal; however, the emotional scars of domestic violence can last a lifetime.
- Unless there is intervention where the batterer is held accountable for his actions, domestic violence usually increases in frequency and severity over time. As the batterer’s violence progresses, he may begin to abuse the children and he may direct violence or threats of violence against friends, helpers or extended family.

## **THE FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

### **MOST VICTIMS ARE WOMEN**

The only factor that most victims have in common is gender, because most victims of domestic violence are women. The following is a list of behaviors that might indicate that a woman is being abused:

- fear of intimate partner's temper or jealousy
- lack of access to money, car, friends or family
- repeated mental health and stress-related issues, such as depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse, headaches and ulcers
- repeated injuries that do not seem accidental

### **A VICTIM CAN BE ANY WOMAN**

Domestic violence occurs among all ages, races and religions. It occurs regardless of sexual orientation, mental or physical ability or geographical region. It happens to people of all educational and income levels. It happens in dating relationships, new marriages and in long term intimate partnerships. Women can be beaten in any town, near any mile marker. It happens in rural communities as often as in cities or suburbs. Battered women are factory workers, nurses, homemakers, lawyers, police officers, college students and farmers. They are grandmothers and they are teenagers. She may be your neighbor, your sister, your daughter-in-law or your niece.

### **A BATTERER CAN BE ANY MAN**

Batterers are our neighbors, service providers and respected members of the community. They are computer experts, farmers, unemployed workers, pastors, car salesmen, university professors, truck drivers, psychiatrists and house painters. Behind

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closed doors, they may also terrorize their family members. Many abusers are not violent in other relationships. They can be charming and lovable in a social situation, yet display extreme violence in the privacy of the home.

### **BATTERING IS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR, NOT A MENTAL ILLNESS**

The abuser's experience as a child, or the messages he gets from society in general, may tell him that violence is an effective way to achieve power and control over his partner's behavior. Men who batter must be held accountable for their own actions. Viewing him as "sick" wrongly excuses him from taking responsibility for his behavior.

### **ALCOHOL OR DRUG USE DOES NOT CAUSE VIOLENCE**

Abusers use violence whether drunk or sober. Many abusers don't drink or use drugs at all. Using drugs and alcohol as an excuse relieves the abuser of responsibility for his actions. An alcoholic or drug addicted abuser must be treated for two separate problems – violence, as well as drug and alcohol abuse. An abuser may not stop abusing if he becomes sober.

### **STRESS DOES NOT CAUSE VIOLENCE**

Battering is not caused by the loss of a job, the death of a parent or any other stressful event.

### **BATTERING DOES NOT REPRESENT A LOSS OF CONTROL, BUT RATHER A WAY OF ACHIEVING IT**

Men who batter typically make excuses for their violence, claiming a loss of control due to alcohol/drug use or extreme stress. A batterer is selective about who he hurts; he is not usually

choosing to assault his boss, a neighbor or the mail carrier. Batterers target their intimate partners and children. In fact, some batterers, even those who drink alcohol until they are intoxicated, are in control enough to be selective about where they hit their partners so that the injuries will not show.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS NOT “MUTUAL BATTERING”**

Many times in homes where there is domestic violence, women will fight back against their abusers in an attempt to defend themselves. This does not mean that the violence is “mutual.” We must consider the dynamic of power and control in the relationship. Does one partner live in constant fear of another? Is one partner afraid to speak, to go to work or tell anyone about the violence?

### **A VICTIM MAY LOVE HER ABUSER, BUT SHE DOES NOT LOVE BEING ABUSED**

Despite the faults a victim may have, she never deserves abuse. Having personality flaws does not ever justify abusive behaviors.

Attitudes such as those listed below are all excuses that allow the violence to continue:

- “She should just keep her mouth shut – she knows what provokes his anger, so she should just stop.”
- “She’s not a very good wife. If she would take care of her responsibilities in the family, he wouldn’t have to discipline her.”
- “She exaggerates what he does to her. He’s a nice guy and she’s just trying to hurt him.”

Whatever problems exist in a relationship, the use of violence to resolve them is never justified

or acceptable. If a member of your religious community is the victim of battering; she is not to blame nor does she ever deserve such treatment.

### **ANY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT IS SERIOUS**

Domestic violence can involve threats, pushing, punching, slapping, strangling, choking, sexual assault, assault with weapons and murder. It is rarely a one-time occurrence and usually increases in frequency and severity over time. Any act of domestic violence is something to take seriously.

### **ABUSE ALSO OCCURS IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS**

Many young women in high school report abuse in their relationships. Teenagers who are abusive use various tactics of control against their partners. Physical abuse in relationships rarely starts out as severe violence. Some behaviors which show the possibility that a dating partner may eventually become physically violent include extreme jealousy, blaming others for all problems, never being able to admit to wrongdoing, cruelty to animals, and holding rigid beliefs about sex-roles for men and women.

Make sure the young women in your religious community know that:

- No one has the right to hurt them as a way to control them.
- It's against the law for someone to hit them.
- If they get assaulted, they can call the police.
- If they are being abused, they can call their local domestic violence program. All services are free and confidential.

Ask them to consider these questions:

- Does your boyfriend strike out at you or make you feel afraid or uncomfortable?
- Do you change your behavior to try to keep him happy?
- Are you afraid you will get hurt if you try to end the relationship?

*Approximately 1 in 5 female students (grades 9 through 12) reported being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner. Adolescent girls who report a history of, or are currently experiencing, dating violence are more likely to exhibit other serious health risk behaviors. (Silverman, Jay, G. et al. (2001). Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality. Journal of the American Medical Association, 286 (5).)*

*In a study of gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents, youths involved in same-sex dating were just as likely to experience dating violence as youths involved in opposite sex dating. (Elze, D. (2000) Dating Violence Among Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Adolescents. George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University, St. Louis, MO.)*

*Adolescent relationships may be particularly prone to violence because of the dependency that partners have on each other for social acceptance and self-esteem. Normal adolescence is marked by a move toward peer groups, conformity to peer norms, and pressure to be involved in intimate relationships. (Levesque, R. (1997). Dating Violence, Adolescents, and the Law. Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law, 4(2).)*

## **SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF ABUSE**

- EMOTIONAL ABUSE** includes hurting another person's feelings by saying cruel, unfair comments or by name calling, and may include:
- ✓ cursing, swearing and/or screaming at her
  - ✓ repeated harassment, interrogation or degradation
  - ✓ attacks on self-esteem and/or insults to her person (name-calling, put-downs, ridicule)
  - ✓ attacks on and/or insults about people she cares for, her family and friends
  - ✓ threatening to "come out for her" (to reveal a lesbian identity) at work or to her family or anywhere that the information had been kept private
  - ✓ threatening to report her to "welfare to work" programs, Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Internal Revenue Service or to discredit her in the local community or with her employer
  - ✓ disclosing personal or damaging information (e.g., current or former psychiatric care, HIV/AIDS status or a criminal record)
  - ✓ controlling and/or limiting her behavior (e.g., keeping her from using the phone or seeing friends, not letting her leave the room or the house, following her and monitoring/limiting her phone conversations, checking mileage on her car, or keeping her from reading material, activities and places that he does not approve of)
  - ✓ interrupting her while she is eating, forcing her to stay awake or waking her up
  - ✓ blaming her for everything that goes wrong

- ✓ forcing her to do degrading things (e.g., making her kneel, beg for money)
- ✓ using the difference in physical size to intimidate her
- ✓ criticizing her thoughts, feelings, opinions, beliefs and actions
- ✓ treating her like a servant in matters of household chores and decisions
- ✓ being extremely jealous, constantly accusing her of flirting or cheating
- ✓ forcing her to commit illegal activity
- ✓ using money to control her (e.g., taking money from her, giving her an allowance, controlling how extra money is spent, forcing her to ask for and account for any money she gets, and acting like the work she does at home is of no economic value to the family)
- ✓ telling her that she is “sick” and in need of therapy
- ✓ using her physical disabilities against her or putting her down for her disability
- ✓ forcing the children to “report” on her activities: “Who did Mommy see today?” “Who did she talk to on the phone?” “Where did she go?”

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE** is any threat to do bodily harm to a partner, a child, a family member, friends, pets or one's self (suicide). Psychological abuse involves not only hurt and anger, but also intimidation, fear and degradation. The purpose of psychological abuse is to make her emotionally insecure about her own self-worth and cause her to feel helpless and/or not able to escape further physical, sexual or psychological abuse.

Examples include the abuser...

- ✓ threatening to punch, hit, slap or kick her
- ✓ threatening to use a weapon
- ✓ threatening to harm himself or to commit suicide if she leaves
- ✓ threatening to punish children to "get back" at her
- ✓ threatening to kidnap the children or gain custody
- ✓ threatening to harm or kill beloved pets
- ✓ throwing objects in her direction
- ✓ making vague threats such as: "You're going to get it," or "I'm really going to let you have it."
- ✓ minimizing the abuse, saying it didn't happen or that she caused it
- ✓ harming or killing a pet to "get back" at her
- ✓ smashing and breaking things
- ✓ throwing objects around the room
- ✓ punching walls, slamming doors
- ✓ hiding, stealing or destroying her possessions
- ✓ damaging her car
- ✓ spitting on or near her

**SEXUAL ABUSE** is any non-consenting sexual act or behavior.

Examples include the abuser forcing sexual activity when...

- ✓ she says "no" and her limits are not respected
- ✓ she is sleeping
- ✓ she is afraid to say "no"
- ✓ she is drunk or high and is unable to say "no"

***Other examples include when the abuser...***

- ✓ insists that she dress in a more sexual way than she wishes to dress
- ✓ makes insulting comments about her body and/or body parts
- ✓ minimizes her feelings about sex
- ✓ berates her about her sexual history; blames her if she was sexually abused in the past
- ✓ criticizes her (calling her "frigid")
- ✓ insists on touching her sexually when she does not want to be touched, alone or in the presence of others
- ✓ accuses her of sexual activity with others
- ✓ calls her a "whore" or a "slut"
- ✓ has affairs with other women (often flaunting them) after agreeing not to have sex with anyone but her
- ✓ physically attacks sexual parts of her body, (e.g., grabbing her breasts, pinching her buttocks, burning, biting or cutting genitalia)
- ✓ forces her to perform any sexual act that she does not wish to do (e.g., oral sex, watching or acting out pornography or prostitution)



**PHYSICAL ABUSE** is any forceful or violent physical behavior.

Examples include:

- ✓ Slapping
- ✓ Choking
- ✓ Punching
- ✓ Kicking
- ✓ Pinching
- ✓ Pushing
- ✓ Strangling
- ✓ Shoving
- ✓ Biting
- ✓ Pulling hair
- ✓ Twisting limbs
- ✓ Tripping
- ✓ Spanking
- ✓ Scratching
- ✓ Grabbing
- ✓ Burning
- ✓ Restraining by force
- ✓ Throwing objects at the partner
- ✓ Using or threatening to use a weapon of any kind (stick, ruler, belt, whip, knife, spoon, gun, etc.)

***Of the estimated 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults perpetrated against women annually, approximately 2 million will result in an injury to the victim, and 552,192 will result in some type of medical treatment to the victim.***

- P. Tjaden and N. Thoennes, (2000)  
National Violence Against Women Survey,  
U.S. Department of Justice, Extent, Nature,  
and Consequence of Intimate Partner  
Violence.

## **CHILDREN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Your religious community member is probably doing her best to protect her children from the violence. She may feel that the abuse is only directed at her and does not yet realize its effects on the children. Perhaps she believes that her children need a father, or she lacks the resources to support them on her own. The children may beg her to stay, not wanting to leave their home or their friends. She fears that if she leaves she will lose custody of her children due to threats made by the abuser.

Reactions of child witnesses to violence are as varied as the personalities and experiences of the children. Many factors come into play: age of the child, cultural context, intensity and frequency of abuse, coping skills of the child, degree of isolation, availability of external support persons, etc. However, certain patterns of behavior and beliefs frequently emerge.

### **POTENTIAL IMPACT**

**Isolation**, vital to the abuser's successful use of power and control over the adult victim, creates a situation wherein children, particularly preschoolers, are limited to family feedback regarding their self-worth and their ability to interact with others. Verbal abuse (shaming, blaming, intimidation and threats) is a common technique the abuser employs to control the children's behavior. From these verbal assaults, the child may acquire a **sense of worthlessness**, getting the message that he or she is unlovable and incapable of success.

Children may experience **decreased parent availability** in violent families. The abused

parent may be unable to provide adequate care for the children because of injuries, emotional exhaustion or depression.

Another factor faced by children in these situations is the **chronic, elevated level of tension and stress** in the family. Children in violent families may live in **constant fear of injury or death** for themselves and every member of the family. In response to that fear, children may become hyper-vigilant, hoping to monitor adult behavior and provide protection for their mother, siblings and self.

Finally, child witnesses live in homes where **violence is seen as the norm**. They have no understanding of the dynamics and may view power and control, aggression and violence as the only means to get needs met. While some children may model violent behavior, others may withdraw and become passive, adopting the victim role in interactions with others.

**Experts agree the best way to protect children is to protect their mothers. There is strong evidence that intervention, support and safety can often reverse the negative impact of domestic violence on children.**

### **A RESOURCE FOR CHILDREN**

Your local domestic violence program also works with children and many programs have children's advocates on site. These advocates run groups and one-on-one sessions for children. If you are concerned that a child is the target of abuse, you can call the program for information and assistance. You can also encourage the child to talk with a safe person, such as a teacher or guidance counselor.

## **BARRIERS TO LEAVING AND OBTAINING HELP**

People often believe that a battered woman will be safe if she just leaves the batterer. But a battered woman is not free to separate from an abuser at any time and there are many barriers to her leaving. **The biggest reason that a battered woman stays in an abusive relationship is fear – a very real fear for her safety and the safety of her children. She knows, and the evidence has shown, that leaving is potentially the most deadly time.**

A batterer is likely to increase the violence to persuade the woman to get back together or to punish her for “rejecting and leaving” him and their relationship. Men who believe they “own” their female partners view a separation as an ultimate betrayal that justifies his violent response. Leaving can be extremely dangerous. The domestic violence program can help a battered women conduct a risk assessment and assist her in developing a plan to enhance her safety, whether she chooses to stay or is able to leave.

### **BARRIERS ALSO MAY INCLUDE:**

- **Fear that her children will be taken from her** – Batters threaten that they will take the children from the battered woman (either legally or illegally), if she dares to leave the relationship.
- **Children** – Children may miss their father and the battered woman may feel guilty for splitting up the family. She may have trouble finding reliable childcare since rural areas face a severe shortage of this resource.

- **No transportation** – A rural battered woman often cannot leave her home because she doesn't have access to a car or a driver's license. If she does have a car, her abuser may check her mileage; he may also disable the vehicle so it appears that she has a car but, in actuality, it isn't driveable. Usually there is no public transportation available.
- **Economics** – In rural areas, poverty is harsher than people may realize and there is a lack of available services and safety nets. Seasonal jobs mean unemployment during the off-season. Rural areas have few, if any, job training programs. Access to assistance programs may be limited because of distance and transportation issues. She may be financially dependent on the batterer and lack the necessary resources to leave or the work skills needed to provide for herself and her children.
- **Isolation** – The batterer may have cut off access to her support systems, not allowing her to see friends, make phone calls, attend meetings, etc., so she is not able to talk about what is happening or reach out for help. She may live miles from a closest neighbor. In bad weather or during seasonal unemployment, she may be alone with the abuser for extended periods of time.
- **Lack of telephone service** – She may not have a phone and a lack of 9-1-1 services is often a reality. It may be too far to go to use a neighbor's telephone and cell service may not be available in her area.
- **Nowhere to go** – For some rural battered women, the nearest shelter may be more than an hour away. In addition, leaving a

batterer often means leaving the community because of a lack of permanent housing.

- **Concern for pets and farm animals** – Many abusers harm or kill family pets and farm animals to threaten and hurt their partners. She may feel like she can't leave because the animals would be unprotected.
- **Religious reasons** – Many rural women are deeply religious, committed to their marriage vows and are deeply opposed to breaking up the family. Some faith leaders advocate for a continuation of the marriage even though the abuser has broken the vows by becoming violent to his spouse. Some religious communities in rural areas prohibit divorce and may "excommunicate" or "shame" a person who leaves a marriage or the community.
- **Extended family** – Family often plays a huge role in the lives of rural people. Family relationships are important and widespread. A battered woman may have relatives throughout the community; those ties to extended family may pose an increased risk for her or may be a resource for enhancing safety. Homes, businesses and farms are often shared among extended family members. Leaving can affect business relationships, as well as personal ones.
- **Hope for change** – Some battered women stay with their partners because they love them and have made a serious commitment to the relationship. They may believe that there is hope for change, especially when the abuser promises he will never harm her again.

- **Loss of Security** – She may not have the support of family, friends, her religious group or other community members. Leaving the relationship may mean leaving her entire community. Many rural women have never lived anywhere else, and leaving the security of a family is a giant step into the unknown.
- **Lack of awareness that domestic violence is wrong and is a crime** – Communities may give a message that domestic violence is permitted, if there are no actions taken to interrupt and condemn violent behavior. Also, some rural women and children do not leave their communities very often, and they may be unaware that violence against them is a crime.

### **LEAVING IS A PROCESS**

Most battered women leave and return several times before permanently separating from the batterer. Leaving is a process. The first time a battered woman leaves may be a test to see whether he will actually get some help to stop his terrorism. When he is violent again, she may leave to gain more information about resources available to her. She may then reconcile to get some economic and educational resources together in case she decides that she must leave later. She may next leave to try to break out of the isolation in which the batterer has virtually imprisoned her. Most battered women do eventually leave.

The most likely predictor of whether a battered woman will permanently separate from her batterer is whether she has the

economic resources to survive without him.  
(*Okun, L. Woman Abuse: Facts Replacing Myths. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1986.*)

It is very important that a battered woman receive the support and assistance she needs to enhance her safety and reduce her risk of being harmed by the batterer. The next section of this booklet offers information to help you assist battered women safely as well as actions you can take to respond to her effectively. In addition, you should work collaboratively with the domestic violence program. It can offer immediate emergency aid, information and assistance with safety planning and facts about economic supports including job training and employment opportunities. Domestic violence programs are interested in helping battered women be safe, not in breaking up families or encouraging divorce as the best solution to violence within the home. Call your local program for help in enhancing the safety of battered women and children in your religious community.





## What You Can Do

### **GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

The response of faith leaders and religious communities to the spiritual crisis caused by domestic violence can be critical for victims. The following guidelines may prove helpful; however, if a battered woman's life is in immediate danger, call the police and refer to the section on *Guidelines for Crisis Intervention* for additional actions.

#### **BECOME INFORMED**

Provide accurate information about domestic violence. Many victims of domestic violence have limited information about the issue and other women's experiences. They may not know domestic violence is wrong and is a crime. It is important that you become even more informed about this issue – attend a local training on domestic violence, use the resources in this guide to gather more information, work with other religious groups in your community to explore these issues.

#### **BE AWARE OF PRIVACY CONCERNS**

It is critical to remember that the battered woman may be in great danger. Do not underestimate this fact. Be careful to approach her in private and keep any information she gives you confidential.

**TIP:** Offer the use of a private telephone for her to call the domestic violence program or to make other calls to get support and information. She may not have access to a

telephone at home or may not have any way to make a private call. Often the abuser will monitor phone calls, use Caller ID and other services to track her contacts. If you are not able to support the cost of long distance calls, ask that she have her party return the call to your office or provide a calling card. (Collect donations for the telephone cards and call it the safe calling fund.) Caution her not to use her telephone company calling card since the bill will be sent to the home and offers another way for the abuser to track her actions and possibly her location.

**TIP:** Written materials such as brochures or cards are available from your local domestic violence program. Offer them to her, but be cautious. Check to see that she has a safe place to keep them where the abuser will not find them. Often abusers monitor everything. She may not have any privacy for keeping personal items.

### **PROTECT HER CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is especially important to maintain when a member of your religious community discloses domestic violence. A slip to another member of the congregation can result in increased danger to the battered woman. It is especially important not to confront the abuser using information shared by the battered woman. If the abuser finds out that she reached out for help, he may double his efforts to control her and make sure that she doesn't ask for help again.

- Be sure everyone else is out of earshot before asking a question or raising the topic.
- Place brochures on domestic violence in the women's bathroom.

- Inform staff and members of your congregation how important it is to be careful when reaching out to a victim of domestic violence. If anyone says anything that might indicate they know what is going on in the home, she may be in greater danger.

### **PROVIDE A FORUM FOR HER TO TALK**

There are many things a battered woman fears and not being believed is a strong one. This fear will be compounded in religious settings when her husband chairs a board, sings in the choir or is a "pillar of the community." It is important for her to break the silence by describing what is happening to her. Telling you the story may be extremely embarrassing for her. She is not likely to exaggerate; in fact, she is more likely to limit the information she shares and minimize the danger.

- Let her know she is not alone. Believe her story.
- Offer her information to read and other resources on domestic violence.
- Work with the local domestic violence program to assist her.

**TIP:** Provide a meeting place for a worker from the domestic violence program or for other helpers. The batterer may track mileage on her vehicle, provide all her transportation or time her errands. All of these actions limit her ability to meet with anyone who might provide support or information and assistance. Religious meetings may be one of the few places she is "allowed" to go, but even her time there may be limited.

## HELP HER TAKE THE LEAD

In an abusive relationship the batterer maintains a position of power and control. When helping, it is important to offer a different experience to the battered woman – a chance to be empowered to make and trust her own decisions. If she is in immediate physical danger, call the police and refer to the *Guidelines for Crisis Intervention* section.

- Be a listener.
- Listen without assigning blame.

Does it try your patience to listen to people without telling them what to do? It can at first, but when you see listening as a process of untangling a web of confused feelings and behavior – like untangling a ball of yarn – you will sense the importance of patience. The answers are inside the battered woman and your role is to begin to untangle her confusion and make a referral to individuals trained to handle domestic violence.

Stay involved long enough to see the process completed and have her take the lead in solving her own problems. Telling her what to do about her problem or relating a similar story for her to use isn't always the best listening. Listeners give HOPE: Helping Other People Emotionally.

A good way to listen is with questions.

- ✓ "What have you done already?"
- ✓ "What have you thought about doing that you haven't done?"
- ✓ "What do you think is best for you?"

If you are concerned for her safety, speak up. If you notice an injury, inquire about it. Be sure you make a private connection with her.

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- Ask a question like: "I have seen other women who have this type of injury and they have been hurt by their partners. I wonder if this is happening to you?"
- Use the following *7 Things to Say to a Battered Woman* as a guide:

### **7 Things to Say to a Battered Woman**

(Adapted from a speech by Sarah Buel, 1995)\*

1. I am really sorry to hear this is happening to you.
2. I am afraid for your safety or I'm scared for you.
3. I am afraid for the safety of your children.
4. I am afraid it will only get worse.  
(Said in a non-blaming way.)
5. I will help you find someone who can help.
6. You don't deserve to be abused.
7. I won't tell anyone what we discussed.

### **ASK QUESTIONS TO DRAW HER OUT**

Women rarely come in and announce they have been battered. They may come for counseling and speak in terms that are general or vague.

- Develop ways of asking specific and direct questions such as:
  - ✓ Are you in danger?
  - ✓ Has he hit you?
  - ✓ What does he do when he gets angry?

\*Sarah Buel, a formerly battered woman, is a national expert and trainer on domestic violence.

*Helping Rural Battered Women and Their Children:  
A Guide for Faith Leaders and Religious Communities*

## **LISTEN AND AFFIRM HER FEELINGS**

It is crucial that faith leaders respond with affirmation and without judgment to a battered woman. Listen to the woman and understand her situation; uncover abuse; recognize panic and fear. Believe her assessment of a life threatening situation and the potential danger to her from her husband's or partner's violence. Do not discount her fears that he may try to kill her if she leaves, or that if she stays she may end up dead.

Listening carefully and attentively can help you discern what is important to the woman in crisis and what she feels will be helpful for her safety and well-being. Active and respectful listening may be more critical than theological answers. You can discuss theological issues when the battered woman is not in crisis and able to think critically.

- Let her know that you want to hear about her experience and support her.
- Let her be your teacher and educator.
- Offer her the domestic violence hotline number for support and connection with other women in her situation.
- Learn about some of the feelings that are common for battered women.

### ***Feelings Often Experienced by Battered Women***

- ✓ **Fear** – Fear for her and her children's safety is often overwhelming. She may also fear losing her children, livelihood, resources and becoming homeless.
- ✓ **Confusion** – The battered woman may believe her partner when he promises to change or to stop abusing her. She may feel confusion over the change in the partner's behavior from day to day.

- ✓ **Hopelessness** – She may have been trying everything possible to try to stop the violence, without success. There may be no access to resources, friends or family. Each abusive incident often decreases her hope, her belief in herself and her ability to leave the situation.
- ✓ **Shame and Guilt** – She is told that she deserves the abuse and she may try to change her behavior to stop the abuse. She may be told that it is up to her to solve the “problem.” This makes her feel worse about herself, because nothing stops the abuse. She may be ashamed about staying in the relationship.
- ✓ **Denial of the Abuse** – The abuser constantly tells the battered woman that the abuse is deserved, or even that it did not occur at all. Victims begin to think they may be exaggerating or view the abuse as “normal.”
- ✓ **Powerless and Tired** – When all power is taken away, it requires all of a victim’s energy to survive. She may be exhausted from protecting herself and her children.
- ✓ **Hope and Love** – Many battered women will say that they want the violence to stop but the relationship to continue. She may still love the abuser and remember the good times. He may be the father of her children; she may hope for a change in his behavior so they can continue the relationship.
- ✓ **Loss** – If she leaves, she may feel sad about losing the relationship or giving up hope for change.

## TALK ABOUT HER SAFETY

If you know a battered woman is in danger, discuss ways she can be safe and keep her children safe. Many battered women have a plan already in place; offer to help her review her strategy or work on developing resources or new ideas for difficult issues.

Talk with her about her safety plan.\* Her plan might address:

- identifying signs and events that often precede an escalation of the violence
- identifying an emergency safe location if she needs to flee
- collecting emergency items and finding a safe place to store them
- naming who to call in an emergency: 9-1-1, local police etc.
- obtaining a free emergency 9-1-1 cell phone (available from the local domestic violence program) and other actions
- identifying what other issues she might want to include in her plan

\*Remember that advocates at domestic violence programs are experts and available to help a battered woman review her safety plan and address other issues.

**TIP:** For more review questions and additional information about safety planning, see the section *Guidelines for Crisis Intervention, If She Stays in a Violent Relationship*.

**TIP:** Offer a safe and confidential mailing address and limited storage location. A private mailing address may allow her to apply for a credit card or obtain information about an assistance program. Help her find a safe place



to store a small emergency bag, a file of important written documents, and/or even something sentimental that the abuser is likely to destroy (e.g., photographs).

### **BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT OFFERING ADVICE**

Do not advise her to leave or stay, without knowing how dangerous those choices might be for her.

- Listen with an open heart.
- If you are afraid for her safety, say so.
- Let her know that leaving is an option, and that there are people available who can help her leave safely. The workers at the domestic violence program can help her sort this out.

If she decides to stay, review the safety information in the *Guidelines Crisis Intervention, If She Stays in a Violent Relationship*.

- Don't blame the battered woman if her choices are not the ones you would make.

See the sections on *Strategies for Involvement For Faith Leaders* and *Strategies for Involvement For Religious Communities*.

***Our creator made each of us unique. If we can sense that another person's core is damaged or hurt, that they have fragmented and have lost perspective about their life, then we can sense how to help them become whole again.***

– Except from *Become a Tough and Tender Listener*, Shirley Brackett.

## **REACH OUT TO BATTERED WOMEN FROM UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES**

At the present time there is little racial and religious diversity in rural Pennsylvania; the majority population is white and Christian. However, this is slowly changing. Racial minorities are moving to rural communities. Some immigrants work on farms. Gays and lesbians are moving out of cities and into the suburbs. People are seeking alternative ways to express spirituality. A battered woman from a small cultural or social community will encounter few, if any, helping professionals of her group in a rural area, and will face an additional set of barriers when seeking safety from a violent partner. For example:

- Battered women who don't speak English must put their safety in the hands of people whose culture and language they may be unfamiliar with in order to receive help.
- Lesbians and gay men in need of assistance may experience a variety of obstacles when seeking help. They may fear harassment, vandalism and physical violence from their community if they are discovered. For this reason, they may choose to keep their orientation private and not identify their abuser's gender when they seek assistance.
- Battered women with a disability, may not have physical access to transportation and face other obstacles in seeking help.
- Muslim women who are being battered, may fear discrimination given the current political climate in America.

Unraveling the complexities of the problem of racism and oppression against small social and cultural groups continues to be a great challenge everywhere in the United States. This is especially true in rural areas where populations tend to be less diverse. As every rural community becomes more diverse, so will the need for specific assistance and outreach efforts. It is important that faith leaders and religious communities address these issues to meet the needs of ALL victims of domestic violence in your community. Advocates from domestic violence programs have worked hard to make programs and services more accessible to battered women from a wide variety of social and cultural communities. They work with translators, provide translated materials and offer information and resources that are specific to various social and cultural groups. Advocates are resource for you in your region, please call them for information and/or assistance.

### **EXPLORE THEOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Discuss theological issues when the battered woman is not in crisis and able to think critically. She will be looking to you for help to integrate her experience with her religious beliefs. Know that reconciliation with an abusive partner is **DANGEROUS**, unless there is intervention to hold him accountable for his violence and ensure that it won't happen again.

- Attend a training on domestic violence for faith leaders, review materials listed in *Resources On Domestic Violence*.
- Review the *Questions Battered Women Often Ask Faith Leaders*.
- Talk with your colleagues about these issues.

- Discuss the following questions with your leadership and community:
  - ✓ Are the marriage vows broken, or rent, when the husband uses violence?
  - ✓ How can we as a community hold abusers accountable for using violence in a relationship?
  - ✓ How can we enhance the safety of one of our members in this situation?
  - ✓ Where do we find guidance regarding these issues?
  - ✓ How does she find hope and reconciliation without risking her safety?
- Use the *Resources On Domestic Violence* section to identify relevant materials and for contact information to reach experts on these issues, especially the Center for the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence.

### **KNOW THE RISKS OF COUPLES COUNSELING**

When a woman comes to you for help or you suspect there may be violence in the home, there are several things to keep in mind.

- Problems associated with domestic violence are difficult to work through. Usually patterns of abuse have existed for a long time and unless you are a professionally trained counselor, entering into a long-term counseling or therapy situation may interfere with your ability to relate and minister to all parties. These unique relationships need to be preserved.
- Couples counseling should never be offered if there is violence or the threat of violence present in the relationship. The success rate

for treating violent offenders in couples counseling is extremely low. Most abusers are looking for easy, quick solutions and for immediate ways of getting back together with their partner. Most victims do not want to separate or leave their batterer and believe that if they confront their abuser before a third party (the faith leader), the abuser will be forced or embarrassed into changing his behavior. (Unfortunately, this rarely happens.)

- If a couple comes to you for counseling because of violent episodes in their relationship or if you discover in the course of counseling a couple that violence occurs in their relationship, we strongly recommend that you consult with a local domestic violence program or a counselor trained in treating domestic violence. In most cases, each partner will be referred to separate counselors or to a support group for battered women or a treatment group for batterers. She must be assisted in taking responsibility for her safety needs. He must take responsibility for his violent behavior in order to change it.
- Couples counseling remains inappropriate even when both parties request it and/or want to maintain the relationship. When there is violence or the threat of violence present in the relationship, couples counseling is very dangerous for the victim of abuse. If the abuser confides in you about his abusive actions, contact the local domestic violence program which may be able to make a referral to a mental health professional or batterers' treatment program.

***Couples counseling is beneficial to work on marital problems. Wife battering, however, is a violence criminal act, not a marital problem. It is illegal. It is a behavior that is solely the responsibility of the violence person, is chosen by him, and he alone is capable of changing it. This is true regardless of the alleged provocation, since the behavior of one family member cannot compel another family member to be violent. Violent behavior must be addressed and stopped before couples counseling takes place.***

– Excerpt from *A Policy Statement on Domestic Violence Couples Counseling, Confronting the Batterer.*

***Clergy should be involved in domestic violence situations as a support for the victim and children, if any. It would be very helpful for clergy, as well as law enforcement people, to be educated by being involved in domestic violence training so the two groups can work together to assist. Offenders should be required to attend long term therapy and could be assisted by clergy who are trained and hold degrees in the psychotherapy field.***

– A Rural Pastor

## **DON'T WAIT TO TAKE ACTION**

Don't wait for someone to be in crisis. Address this issue in the community. Make it clear that anyone can talk with you about violence in the family.

- Help the entire religious community be more aware of the issue.
- Make a library of books (use the resource list) available to your congregation.
- Invite a speaker to offer a program on domestic violence at your church, temple or mosque.
- Incorporate this issue into sermons, Sunday School and other classes.
- Post information about domestic violence in the building.
- Provide resources, pamphlets, and information from your local domestic violence program.

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**“ Many people, especially the abused, see pastors as individuals who are either aloof or removed from the realities of their life. It's almost as if people are afraid to talk to us because we represent the good of society. ”**

– A Rural Pastor

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## Guidelines For Crisis Intervention

It cannot be overemphasized that domestic violence is a crime that can result in serious physical injury and even death. If you receive a call for help from a victim of domestic violence in immediate crisis, here are some suggestions:

- 1) Determine the immediacy of the danger and make the appropriate suggestions. Is she in a safe place right now? Do you need to call the police? Is she physically injured? Does she need medical attention?
- 2) Be strategic about intervention. Do not go to the home. The violence may still be occurring and could be dangerous for you. Offer to call the local police or sheriff, or ask to meet her somewhere safe.
- 3) Ensure safety. If you do agree to meet with a battered woman, for your protection and hers, take law enforcement or another person with you.
- 4) Investigate the circumstances: Does she fear her abuser will be back? Where are the children?
- 5) Locate safe emergency housing: Does she have a safe place she can go? If a shelter is her only option, provide her with the phone number, encourage her to call and offer to driver her there.

Encourage her to make contact with the local domestic violence program, regardless of whatever her decision may be. In an effort to empower a woman to take responsibility for her own safety and her needs, most domestic violence programs prefer



the battered woman call for help, not someone else calling on her behalf.

You can call the domestic violence program if you need support and additional information.

### **IF SHE STAYS IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP**

Do not be surprised if the battered woman chooses to stay in the abusive relationship or leaves and later returns. If she chooses to leave, her leaving will likely be a process that will take place over time. Some battered women never choose to leave. Many women would like the violence to stop and the relationship to continue.

The biggest reason that a battered woman stays in an abusive relationship is fear. Fear for her safety and the safety of her children. Leaving can potentially be the most deadly time.

Other barriers to leaving include:

- fear that her children will be taken from her
- no transportation
- nowhere to go
- concern for pets and farm animals
- religious reasons
- hope for change
- shortage of resources
- lack of awareness that domestic violence is wrong and is a crime.

Sometimes identifying her barriers to leaving can help her find information and assistance to overcome those barriers. She can talk about her concerns and fears about leaving with you and with the staff at the local domestic violence program.

**If she chooses to stay in or return to a violent relationship...**

- she is probably still in danger
- she needs your support more than ever
- she is not a failure
- she may know that staying in the relationship provides her with the best outcomes at that time
- she may be very intentional about her choice
- she may not be sure of her decision
- she can work to enhance her safety while in the relationship
- she is still eligible for free and confidential assistance from the domestic violence program
- she will be most successful in leaving an abusive relationship and staying safe if she has the support of her religious community and the economic means to provide for herself and her children

**SAFETY PLANNING**

When you have the opportunity to talk with her privately, discuss ways she can be safe and keep her children safe. You could talk with her about her protection plan, often called a safety plan. Many battered women have a plan already in place; offer to help her review her strategy or work on developing resources and new ideas for difficult issues.

**A comprehensive safety plan is important and will change as her circumstances change.**

Advocates at domestic violence programs are the experts and are available to help battered women review their safety plan and address

other issues. You can help most effectively by informing her that those free and confidential services are available.

### **Assessing Her Risk**

Review the following questions with her to assess her risk and take action(s) to enhance her safety:

- In an emergency, what works best to keep her safe?
- Who can she call in a crisis? Can she arrange signals with emergency resources in the rural areas such as the mail carrier, meter reader, road grader operator, neighbors?
- Would she call law enforcement if the violence starts again? Is there a phone in the house or can she work out a signal with someone she trusts to call law enforcement or get help?
- If she needs to flee temporarily, where can she go? Help her think through several places where she can go in a crisis. Encourage her to write down the addresses and phone numbers and keep them in a safe place.
- If she needs to flee, where are the escape routes from the house? Although it is important not to instill either guilt or a feeling that she can totally control personal safety, there are certain locations in the home that are seen as particularly dangerous (e.g., kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms). Escape plans should take this into consideration.
- If there are weapons in the house, explore ways to have them removed.

- Advise her to make an extra set of car keys and to hide some money in case of an emergency.
- Remind her that in the middle of a violent assault, it is always best for her to trust her own judgment – sometimes it is best to flee, sometimes to placate the assailant – anything that works to protect herself is a good choice.
- Advise the battered woman to have the following available in case she must flee:
  - ✓ birth certificates
  - ✓ social security cards
  - ✓ marriage and driver's license and car title
  - ✓ bank account number, credit and ATM cards and savings passbooks
  - ✓ lease/rental agreements, deed for the house, mortgage papers
  - ✓ insurance information
  - ✓ school and health records
  - ✓ welfare and immigration documents
  - ✓ medications and prescriptions
  - ✓ immunization records
  - ✓ divorce papers or other court documents
  - ✓ phone numbers and addresses for family, friends and community agencies
  - ✓ clothing and comfort items for her and the children
  - ✓ keys

Most of these items can be copied and stored in a safe place or with a person she trusts.

**TIP:** One of the practical ways the religious community can help a victim of domestic violence is by creating a secure, safe location for her to store emergency items.

**TIP:** Allowing her to use a community member's address or the office address to receive mail or telephone messages may also be extremely helpful.

### **KNOW THE LEGAL OPTIONS**

In Pennsylvania, victims of domestic violence may have several civil legal options available to them, including: filing petitions for a Protection From Abuse order (PFA), divorce and/or custody of children. Criminal charges for the abuse, including assault, stalking, criminal trespass, rape and/or other crimes may be an option, depending on the batterer's actions. Criminal charges may result in the abuser being ordered to attend a batterers' treatment program, pay fines and/or serve jail time.

Criminal charges can be filed by the state or local police or through a private criminal complaint made by the person who was the target of the abuse. Free, confidential assistance is available from the local domestic violence program to help explain the criminal justice process, accompany victims to court and provide support and information.

Many battered women benefit from obtaining a PFA – a civil court order that, at minimum, directs the batterer to refrain from further abusing his victim(s). Additional relief is sometimes available in the court order. Violation of the order may result in the abuser being required to attend a batterers' treatment program, pay fines and/or serve jail time. A PFA is obtained through a legal process that has specific requirements; it is not guaranteed to

everyone. Advocates from the domestic violence program also are available to provide free information and assistance regarding a PFA.

**TIP:** The domestic violence center hotline is available to provide information about and assistance with legal interventions – even over holidays and weekends. The hotline operates twenty-four hours a day, every day, all year.

**TIP:** Free materials may be available from your local domestic violence program about legal options. Consider keeping this information available in public areas.

***Intimate violence is primarily a crime against women. In 1998, females accounted for 75 percent of the victims of intimate murders and about 85 percent of the victims of non-lethal intimate violence.***

- Henneberg, M. (August, 2000). Bureau of Justice Statistics 2000: At a Glance. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

***Every day, at least three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country.***

- Rennison, C. & Welchans, S. (2000). Intimate Partner Violence. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report, OJP.



## Strategies For Involvement Of Faith Leaders

Enroll in courses in seminary or continuing education programs that deal with spiritual preparation in both counseling and community advocacy work related to domestic violence and violence against women.

- Urge your religious community to support the local domestic violence program with financial contributions and “practical” assistance. See *Supporting Your Local Domestic Violence Program* in the *Strategies for Involvement of Religious Communities* section for more information.
- Volunteer as a “spiritual advisor” for shelter residents upon request.
- Read books relating to religion and domestic violence.
- Be approachable. Let your community know you are willing to discuss this issue. Place posters and literature in public spaces.
- Address domestic violence issues, use stories of non-local abuse situations while preaching or in Bible Study sessions. Pray for victims of domestic violence.
- Offer premarital counseling with an emphasis on equality, conflict resolution, violence and control.
- Recognize that working with victims of abuse can sometimes be very frustrating. What may seem to you to be the obvious solution may not be a workable solution to the battered woman.
- Foster the interest of both lay and denominational leadership. Within the local

community, develop models of ministering to families in crisis.

- Organize seminars on spiritual counseling that focus on domestic violence.
  - Build a relationship with the local domestic violence program, train to be a volunteer advocate for battered women.
- 

**“ I found that a close relationship between clergy, law enforcement and domestic violence programs is not only possible, but necessary. I have found that these relationships are extremely effective in bringing domestic violence to a close. ”**

– A Rural Pastor

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- After the batterer has received treatment to hold him accountable for the violence and the abuse has stopped, encourage counseling for families that will be non-sexist and non-condemning in approach. Remember that couple’s counseling is very dangerous. See *Know The Risks Of Couples Counseling* in the *What You Can Do* section.
- Discuss ways of dealing with power abuse in families; examine what your religion teaches about family structures, male and female roles, marriage and divorce, and how to deal with anger, guilt and negative feelings.
- During premarital counseling, separate couples to discuss conflict and concerns.
- Work on local economic development initiatives that focus on helping battered women achieve financial independence.





## Strategies For Involvement Of Religious Communities

- Learn more about domestic violence – review resources, talk with community leaders, start a study group.
- Develop or renew and support a relationship between yourself, the church, temple, synagogue or mosque, and the local domestic violence program.
- Provide education on domestic violence during Sunday School, Bible Study and other religious meetings, gatherings or services. Pray for victims of domestic violence.
- Initiate concern through informal discussion among lay and faith leaders. Call together an interested group of people. Know the issue well yourself and invite a representative of a local domestic violence program who can speak on the problems and resources in your rural community.
- Become familiar with your community and state's resources for victims of violence. Know the location of, and distance to, the closest domestic violence program and shelter for battered women from your rural community.
- Distribute domestic violence information such as posters, brochures, business cards and other types of resource materials to members of community. Contact your local domestic violence program for available materials and other resource information. Be sure to ask for guidance on how to safely distribute materials to enhance confidentiality and to minimize any additional risks for battered women.

## ***DIRECT ACTION INITIATIVES***

Offer battered women at the local shelter alternatives to long evenings alone, such as social events and spiritual/religious related activities and gatherings.

- Offer to help a family with financial assistance, childcare, foster pet or farm animal care and/or other actions to provide support and continuity through this transition in their lives.
- Offer free or low cost baby-sitting at the church, temple, synagogue, mosque or in private homes.
- Work with the domestic violence program to create a comprehensive resource directory for your community.
- In conjunction with your local domestic violence program, hold a workshop on domestic violence for the spiritual and/or religious community.
- Develop a "safe home or network" where women in crisis can go temporarily, until they can make contact with the local domestic violence program. This can be particularly important in remote areas. Information on the need for confidentiality and safety issues can be obtained from your local domestic violence program.

## **SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM**

It is critical that all victims of domestic violence have access to the help they need; please help us ensure that services continue to be available in this community.

- Volunteer! Enroll in the volunteer training program to work on the hotline, as court advocate or perform other tasks at the local domestic violence center.
- Take up a special collection during October, National Domestic Violence Awareness Month or at other times during the year.
- Organize a fundraiser to benefit your local domestic violence program.
- Collect donations to support battered women and their children. (New sweat suits and other emergency clothing, phone cards, furniture, holiday or new home welcome baskets – contact your local program to identify what items are most helpful.)
- Organize members of the faith community to offer emergency boarding of pets or farm animals while families are in residence at the emergency shelter.
- Make a monthly financial contribution to the domestic violence program. Regular financial donations – even if they are small – are really helpful to meet on-going costs.
- Invite your friends and family members to get involved in this community issue.
- Invite the local domestic violence program to present a “Mission Moment” during a worship service or other gathering.
- Say NO to domestic violence, all the time.

## **Q** **A** **Questions Battered Women Often Ask Faith Leaders**

***“My husband has told me that he has accepted Jesus into his heart and that I should forgive him and take him back. He says he is changed. Should I believe him?”***

This is a very difficult issue to address with a battered woman. It is important for her to understand that if it is a true conversion, the road to healing and true lasting change is still long. It is best, for her safety, to emphasize that her abusive husband needs guidance and support from a faith leader or counselor who understands battering and will hold him accountable for his violent behavior. Successful treatment for battering is a long and involved process. Religious conversion does not necessarily mean he will stop battering. As always, the woman’s safety and well being is the primary concern.\*

***“If I could just learn to be a better wife, would the problems in my marriage stop?”***

In abusive relationships, the choice to use violence is entirely in the hands of the abuser. It is important to reiterate this point to women who are blaming themselves. Abuse is not “problems with a relationship” or “communication problems”; it is the problem caused when one person chooses to be violent to another. Because it is the abuser’s choice to use violence, there is nothing that she can do to change herself in order to stop the abuse. It is the obligation of the abuser to take responsibility for his actions.\*

***“If I leave, am I going against God’s will by breaking up my home?”***

Any man who brings violence and abuse into his family life is destroying the marriage covenant. This violence and abuse is what breaks up a marriage, and the person responsible for that abuse is the one responsible for breaking up the home. Leaving the relationship is only a public acknowledgment of the private abuse that has actually destroyed the relationship. No one should have to choose between personal safety and faith/religious beliefs.\*

\*Excerpt from *The Faith Community: A Response To Family Violence*.

Copies may be available from:

The Centre County Women’s Resource Center  
140 West Nittany Avenue  
State College, PA 16801  
814-234-5222

***“How does religious doctrine address domestic violence?”***

Religious teachings can serve as either a roadblock or a resource in addressing domestic violence. There is nothing in Jewish or Christian teaching which can rightly be used to justify abuse. However, there are teachings which can be misused and distorted to suggest that domestic violence may be acceptable or even God’s will. When these teachings or interpretations of scripture are misused, they become roadblocks to ending the abuse.

For example, Shalom Bayit, the Jewish teaching about peace in the home, which places sole responsibility for the woman to “keep the

peace” and obey her husband, would be a serious roadblock to addressing domestic violence for a battered woman. Help her understand that Shalom Bayit is everyone’s responsibility.

Likewise, the Christian teaching that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the Church is a challenge to husbands to treat their wives with respect and love, not with violence or control. This teaching can serve as a valuable resource to respond to and prevent domestic violence.

As religious communities, our mandate is to minimize any roadblocks facing abused members of our congregations and to maximize the resources that exist within our religious traditions.

Excerpt from *What Every Congregation Needs to Know About Domestic Violence*. 1994.

Brochures are available from:  
The Center for the Prevention of  
Domestic and Sexual Violence  
2400 N. 45th Street, Suite 10  
Seattle WA 98103  
206-634-1903  
www.cpsdv.org

#### **NOTE**

*No information was available for other faith communities concerning religious doctrine.*

***“Go to religious services every week ... How will advice like this affect a me?”***

These words may help a woman of faith focus on positive spiritual action within her powerless situation; however, they offer little to support her practically in her struggle to survive and can place her at additional risk. Telling her to be a good spiritual person does not resolve anything for her. Such comments ignore the terrorizing actions of her abuser and the real danger of her situation. This advice to focus on the practice of her religion and her spiritual life may keep her from addressing the real problem and her own safety.

Adapted from *Domestic Violence and the Clergy: A Guide to Effective Response to Battered Woman with Information Specific to Older Battered Women*.

This publication is available for a nominal fee from:  
The Women’s Center, Inc.  
11 North Market Street  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
570-784-6632.



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## **Resources On Domestic Violence**

### ***PA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS***

A broad range of materials about domestic violence is available from your local domestic violence program.

#### **Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV)**

6400 Flank Drive, Suite 1300  
Harrisburg, PA 17112  
Phone: 800-932-4632  
Fax: 717-671-8149  
TTY: 800-553-2508  
[www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org)

PCADV is a private, non-profit, membership organization comprised of 62 domestic violence programs serving all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. PCADV and its member organizations provide integral services to battered women and their children including shelter, counseling, legal advocacy and representation, medical advocacy, children's advocacy, transitional housing, and many other emergency and support services.

#### **Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)**

125 N. Enola Drive  
Enola, PA 17025  
Phone: 800-692-7445  
Fax: 717-728-9781  
TTY: 877-585-1091  
[www.pcar.org](http://www.pcar.org)

PCAR is a state non-profit working to prevent sexual violence at statewide and national levels. Its statewide network of 52 crisis centers work to administer quality services to survivors and their significant others who are victims of sexual violence.



## **NATIONAL RESOURCES**

### **The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence (CPSDV)**

2400 N. 45th Street, Suite 10  
Seattle WA 98103  
Phone: 206-634-1903  
[www.cpsdv.org](http://www.cpsdv.org)

CPSDV is the leading educational program and resource center on abuse and religion. A few of their resources are listed in this booklet; however, they have many books, videos and other resources for loan or sale. They also provide training and technical assistance to faith leaders and members of religious organizations working against domestic violence and sexual abuse. Contact them for a free Resource Catalog.

### **The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF)**

383 Rhode Island St. Suite #304  
San Francisco, CA 94103-5133  
Phone: 415-252-890  
Fax: 415-252-8991  
TTY: 800-595-4889  
[www.fvpf.org](http://www.fvpf.org)  
[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)

FVPF is a national non-profit institution dedicated to preventing and reducing domestic violence. The organization has piloted institutional change efforts, created public awareness campaigns, and developed public policy initiatives in the arenas of public health, child welfare, the law, public education, immigration, international settings, and the workplace.

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**Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse (MINCAVA)**

School of Social Work  
University of Minnesota  
105 Peters Hall  
1404 Gortner Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55108-6142  
Phone: 612-624-072  
Fax: 612-625-4288  
[www.mincava.umn.edu](http://www.mincava.umn.edu)

The mission of MINCAVA is to support research, education, and access to violence related resources. MINCAVA strives to provide a quick and easy access point to the extensive electronic resources on the topic of violence and abuse available on-line. MINCAVA has on-line information available on the faith responses to domestic violence: historical and contemporary perspectives; within the Christian community; within the Islamic community; within the Jewish community and additional web links.

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)**

P.O. Box 18749  
1201 E. Colfax, Suite 385  
Denver, CO 80218  
Phone: 303-839-1852  
Fax: 303-831-9251  
[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)

NCADV is a grassroots non-profit membership organization working since 1978 to end violence in the lives of women and children. They provide general information and referrals, publications on the issue of domestic violence, sponsor a national conference every two years for battered women and their advocates, promote public policy at the national level, offer technical assistance and develop community awareness campaigns. General information, membership information and product catalog are available from the Denver office.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**

P.O. Box 161810  
Austin, TX 78716  
Phone: 800-799-SAFE (7233)  
TTY: 800-787-3224  
[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides a 24-hour, toll-free national crisis intervention line, referrals to domestic violence agencies, and other resources. Calls can be placed from anywhere in the U.S. and a referral will be made to the domestic violence programs closest to the location where the call was placed. Each month, nearly 10,000 callers – victims of domestic violence, their families and friends across the U.S. – receive crisis intervention, referrals, information and support in many languages.

**National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDV)**

6400 Flank Dr. Suite 1300  
Harrisburg, PA 17112  
Phone: 800-537-2238  
Fax: 717-545-9456  
TTY: 800-553-2508  
[vawnet.org](http://vawnet.org)

As a source of comprehensive information, training and technical assistance on community response to and prevention of domestic violence, the NRCDV supports the capacity of organizations and individuals working to end violence in the lives of women and their children. The NRCDV's first priority is to proactively support the work of national, state and local domestic violence programs. It also places an emphasis on increasing organizational responsiveness to the needs identified by communities of color and other traditionally underserved populations. The NRCDV is a project of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

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**National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)**

123 North Enola Drive  
Enola, PA 17025  
Phone: 877-739-3895  
717-909-0710  
Fax: 717-909-0714  
TTY: 717-909-0715  
[www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)

NSVRC serves as a central clearinghouse for the voluminous resources and research, the NSVRC provides a place to turn to for information, help and support. The NSVRC influences policy, practice and research by providing greater interaction, investigation and review, and by promoting awareness within the anti-sexual violence movement. The NSVRC is a project of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.

**Violence Against Women Office**

810 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
Phone: 202-307-6026  
Fax: 202-307-3911  
TTY: 202-307-2277  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/)

The U.S. Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Office web site provides information about the National Domestic Violence Hotline, information about the Violence Against Women Act of 1994; and a wealth of information and links to other organizations working to end domestic violence.



## **SUGGESTED READING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

### **RELIGIOUS ISSUES**

Adams, Carol J. *Woman - Battering*, Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1994.

Adams, Carol J. and Marie M. Fortune. (eds.) *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*. New York, NY: Continuum Press, 1995.

Brown, Joanne Carlson and Carole R. Bohn, (ed.) *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, New York: Pilgrim Press, 1990.

Burns, M. C. (ed.). *The Speaking Profits Us: Violence in the Lives of Women of Color*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1986.

Cooper-White, Pamela. *Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995.

Foote, Catherine T. *Survivor Prayers - Talking with God about Childhood Sexual Abuse*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

Fortune, Rev. Marie M. *Keeping the Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1995.

Fortune, Marie M. *Violence in the Family: A Workshop Curriculum for Clergy and Other Helpers*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991.

Gnanadason, Aruna. *No Longer a Secret: The Church and Violence Against Women*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993.

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Pearson, Helen Bruch. *Do What You Have the Power to Do; Studies of Six New Testament Women*. Nashville: Upper Room, 1992.

Miller, Melissa A. Miller. *Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds*. Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1994.

Millhaven, Annie Lally, (Ed.), *Sermons Seldom Heard, Women Proclaim Their Lives*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.

Pellauer, Mary D., Barbara Chester, Jane A. Boyajian, ed *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1987.

Russ, Ian, Sally Weber , Ellen Ledley. *Shalom Bayit: A Jewish Resource to Child Abuse and Domestic Violence*. The Shalom Bayit Committee, 6851 Lennox Ave. Panorama City, CA 91404, 1993.

Selvidge, Marla J. *Women, Violence and the Bible*. Lewiston, E. Muellen Press, 1996.

### **GENERAL ISSUES**

Browne, A. *When Battered Women Kill*. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1987.

Evans, Patricia. *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize it and How to Respond*. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 1996.

- Almost everyone has heard of or knows someone who is part of a verbally abusive relationship – if they're not involved in one themselves. In *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, you'll find validation and understanding – it's "not all in your head"-and encouragement for your efforts to change the situation. Author Patricia Evans explores the damaging effects of verbal abuse on children

and the family, and offers valuable insight and recommendations to therapists, as well as those who seek therapeutic support.

Jones, Ann. *Next Time, She'll Be Dead: Battering and How to Stop It*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994, 2000.

- If you ever thought that women who stayed in abusive relationships must somehow like it, or deserve it, or if you're a woman who ever thought "It could never happen to me", then you should read this book. A revealing look at battered women and abusive men and society's response. If you want to know what you can do to help stop domestic violence, this book is for you.

Jones, Ann and Susan Schechter. *When Love Goes Wrong: What to Do When You Can't Do Anything Right*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.

- Full of moving first-person stories and drawing on the authors' 15 years of experience working with women in controlling and abusive relationships, *When Love Goes Wrong* provides guidance and practical options for the millions of women whose partners have crossed the line between love and control.

Klein, Ethel and Esta Soler, Jacquelyn Campbell and Marissa Ghez. *Ending Domestic Violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

NiCarthy, Ginny. *Getting Free: You Can End Abuse and Take Back Your Life*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1982, 1997.

- Although *Getting Free* was written in 1982, it is still called the bible of all domestic violence texts. It's not just the content of the book – 24 chapters covering a gamut of issues – but

the tone. The problems of and solutions to domestic violence are clearly defined through the voices of women as they share their experiences and carve out their steps toward freedom. At the time that *Getting Free* was first published, the more common feeling about domestic abuse was that women brought it on themselves. This landmark book changed that perception, not only bringing a social problem to light, but also offering a lifeline to thousands of women. It continues to do so.

NiCarthy, Ginny and Sue Davidson. *You Can Be Free: An Easy to Read Handbook for Abused Women*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1989.

Miller, Mary Susan. *No Visible Wounds: Identifying Nonphysical Abuse of Women by Their Men*. Chicago, IL: Contemporary Books, 1995.

- Domestic violence against women is not limited to physical assaults. In *No Visible Wounds*, Mary Susan Miller breaks the silence that surrounds this devastating form of abuse, identifies the many types of nonphysical battering, and explores why this outrageous treatment of women continues unabated in our society.

Roues, Linda P. *You are Not Alone: A Guide for Battered Women*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications Inc., 1986.

Stenack, Richard J. *Stop Controlling Me! What to Do When Someone You Love Has Too Much Power Over You*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2001.

- Control issues are a major factor in the nearly 50 percent of American marriages that end in divorce. Women with low self-esteem are



most likely to attract (or seek) a dominating partner. Hungry for acceptance, they allow themselves to be manipulated. This book offers exercises to uncover mistaken beliefs, identify unacceptable compromises, and regain self-worth, as well as step-by-step tools to end relationships that can't be saved.

Websdale, Neil. *Rural Woman Battering and the Justice System*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

### **CHILDREN'S ISSUES**

Bernstein, Sharon. *A Family That Fights*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.

- An 8 year old boy and his two younger siblings live in a home where the father abuses the mother. Picture book with illustrations in pencil, 4–12 years.

Boyd, Candy Dawson and Floyd Cooper. *Daddy, Daddy, Be There*. New York, NY: Putnam & Grosset.

- Children's moving pleas for a father's love and support. This easy-to-read story touches on all that children want from their father – emotionally – as they go through the life span together. This book only touches on domestic violence, but its use as a tool for assessment and for exploration of wish-fulfillment cannot be denied. Picture book with multicultural illustrations in pastels, ages 3–10.

Davis, Diane. *Something Is Wrong At My House/Algo Anda Mal En Mi Casa*, Seattle. WA: Parenting Press.

- A boy tells about the violence in his home and how it affects him. For younger children, you can read just a text below the illustrations. Includes advice for children on

coping. Small book with pencil sketch illustrations, 3 -10 years. Available in Spanish.

Lee, Ilene and Kathy Sylvester. *When Mommy Got Hurt – A Story for Young Children About Domestic Violence*. Charlotte, NC: KIDSRIGHTS.

- A young (androgynous) child tells this story about the parents' fight, how the mother and child leave to live somewhere safe, and the conversations the mother has with this child afterward. The story focuses on four points: Violence is wrong, it is not the child's fault, it happens in many families and it's OK to talk about it. Large softcover book with simple black and white drawings suitable for coloring, 3–9 years.

Timm, Steven. *The Dragon & the Mouse*. Available exclusively from: Touchstone Enterprise, 2108 South University Drive, Fargo, ND 58103, 701-237-4742.

- A mouse lives with a dragon who is abusive to him emotionally, physically, mentally and socially. In the end, the mouse leaves the living arrangement, but continues to be friends with the dragon. Picture book with vivid illustrations, 4–11 years.

Winn, Christine and David Walsh, PhD. *Clover's Secret*. Minneapolis, MN: Fairview Press.

- In an imaginary land where people can fly, two girls form a friendship that helps one of them deal with the problems she faces at home. Picture book with colored pencil illustrations, 4–10 years.

## **DATING VIOLENCE**

Levy, Barrie. *In Love and in Danger: A Teen's Guide to Breaking Free of Abusive Relationships*. Seattle, WA, The Seal Press, 1998.

- According to author Barrie Levy, as many as one out of three high school and college-age youth experiences violence in his or her intimate or dating relationships. *In Love and in Danger* is a guide designed to help teens help themselves. Chapters provide profiles of dating abusers, help readers identify whether their relationships are abusive, and offer suggestions for coping and making a difference. The quasi workbook format is helpful for young people embroiled in abusive relationships.

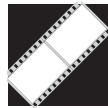
Levy, Barrie, Patricia Griggans. *What Parents Need to Know About Dating Violence: Learning the Facts and Helping Your Teen*. Seattle, WA, The Seal Press, 1995.

*Love - All That and More*. Seattle: WA, Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 2001.

- A new video series and six session curriculum on healthy relationships. Includes Christian and Jewish facilitator guides. For use with high school and college age youth.

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## **VIDEOS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES**

*Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence Parts I and II.* 1994 (59 minutes) Available from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

*Love Shouldn't Hurt.* (25 minutes) Addresses what is abusive behavior, perspectives of women of color and rural women, and wrongful use of scripture to justify abuse. Available from the Catholic Diocese of Sioux City.

*Not in My Congregation.* 1991 (48 minutes) Intended for Jewish audiences. Available from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

*Peace in the Home.* A series of focus study sessions on how the church addresses domestic violence. Available from the Presbytery of East Iowa.

*Wings Like a Dove - Healing for the Abused Christian Woman.* 1997 (34 minutes) Available from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

*To Save a Life: Ending Domestic Violence in Jewish Families* 1997 (35 minutes) Available from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

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## **SPECIFIC CULTURAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In addition to the following resources, your local domestic violence program has access to information specific to a variety of cultural communities. Please contact them for more information and assistance.

### **AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN**

#### **The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community**

290 Peters Hall  
1404 Gortier Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
Phone: 612-624-5357  
Fax: 612-624-9201  
[www.dvinstiute.org](http://www.dvinstiute.org)

- The Institute is an organization of African American scholars and practitioners working in the area of violence in the African American community. They publish a biannual newsletter, *Assembling the Pieces: An African American Perspective on Community and Family Violence*. In addition they work to: further scholarship in the area of African American violence, raise community consciousness of the impact of violence in the African American community, inform public policy, gather and disseminate information, organize and facilitate local and national conferences and training forums and identify community needs and recommend best practices.

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### **The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute**

2740 Greenbriar Parkway  
Suite 256  
Atlanta, GA 30331  
Phone: 770-909-0715  
www.bcdvi.org

- A diverse group of African American people who are concerned about the issues of domestic violence in families and in all relationships and the response of the Black Church. They believe in the Church's mission to improve the quality of life and recognize the linkages of violence to all social problems in the history of Black communities. They sponsor a national training conference annually and offer information and technical assistance.

Burns, M. C. (Ed.). *The Speaking Profits Us: Violence in the Lives of Women of Color*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1986.

Collins, P. H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

hooks, b. *When Brothers are Batterers (African Americans and Domestic Violence)*. *Essence*, 25, 148, 1994.

hooks, b. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston: South End Press, 1990.

Richie, B. E. *Compelled to Crime: The Gender Entrapment of Battered Black Women*. New York: Routledge Press, 1996.

Rodgers, B., Taylor, M., & McGee, G. *Black Women and Family Violence: A Guide for Service Providers*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Institute on Black Chemical Abuse (16 pp.).

White, Evelyn C. *Chain, Chain, Change: For Black Women Dealing With Physical And Emotional Abuse*. Seattle, WA, The Seal Press, 1985.

- Offering practical information for African-American women in physically or emotionally abusive relationships, the editor of *The Black Women's Health Book* discusses identifying abuse, the cycle of violence, agencies and shelters, and using the legal system. From how to protect yourself using methods proven to reduce battering to making the decision to stay or leave, this packs in important facts.

*Sister I'm Sorry*

Phone: 800-291-8561

[www.sisterimsorry.com](http://www.sisterimsorry.com)

- A video bringing the issue of domestic violence in the African-American community into the public eye.

## **LATINAS**

Zambrano, Myrna M. *Mejor Sola Que Mal Acompañada: For The Latina In An Abusive Relationship*. Seattle, WA, The Seal Press, 1985.

- *Mejor Sola Que Mal Acompañada* offers support, understanding, and practical information on many issues and questions, including: what abuse is; family and cultural expectations; getting police, medical, and legal assistance; where you can go if you leave your home; what the church may say; protecting your children; and dealing with discrimination.

This book also discusses special problems of the undocumented woman, the woman with few resources, and the woman who speaks

little or no English. Informative and affirming, *Mejor Sola* is an invaluable resource for counselors, shelter workers and activists, and an empowering handbook for the Latina who wants to break free from the cycle of abuse.

Pomesas Quebrantadas: Perspectivas Religiosas acerca de las Violencia Doméstica / Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence Parts I and II. 1994 (59 minutes) Available from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence has many of their resource materials (books, pamphlets videos) available in Spanish. Contact them for more information. See *National Resources*.

### **NATIVE WOMEN**

Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Domestic Violence Against Native Women.

722 Saint Joseph Street

Rapid City, SD 57701

Phone: 605-341-2050

Fax: 605-341-2472

E-mail: [scircle@sacred-circle.com](mailto:scircle@sacred-circle.com)

- This Resource Center provides technical assistance, policy development, training institutes and resource information regarding domestic violence and sexual assault to develop coordinated agency response in American Indian and Alaskan Native tribal communities.



Contact Minnesota Program Development, Inc. at 218-722-2781 for additional information on the following videos:

*The Journey*, Minnesota Program Development Inc. 1990's (55 minutes)

- Personal stories of violence, discussion of barriers; things that have helped victims with "healing", including PowWows and increased knowledge about their culture and themselves.

*The Journey Part II, Bah-Ma-Di-Zi-Win*, Minnesota Program Development Inc. (55 minutes) 1990's

- This video discusses personal stories of racism, sexual abuse, Spirituality and "Sisters" affirmation that women are a great source of support and strength for one another.

## **LESBIANS AND GAY MEN**

Island, D; Letellier, P. *Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them*. Harrington Park Press, Binghamton, NY, 1991.

Lobel, Kerry, Editor. *Naming The Violence: Speaking Out About Lesbian Battering*. Seattle, WA, The Seal Press, 1986.

- Sponsored by the Lesbian Task Force of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, this book is "by and for battered lesbians and those who work to support their empowerment." Lobel alternates personal histories with commentary by counselors, activists and others who offer advice on how to treat victims and how to deal with the problem generally. This collection constitutes a challenge to lesbians who abuse their lovers and to those who tolerate such abuse.

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## TOOLS FOR CHANGE

This wheel can help guide faith leaders and religious communities in their work with battered women.

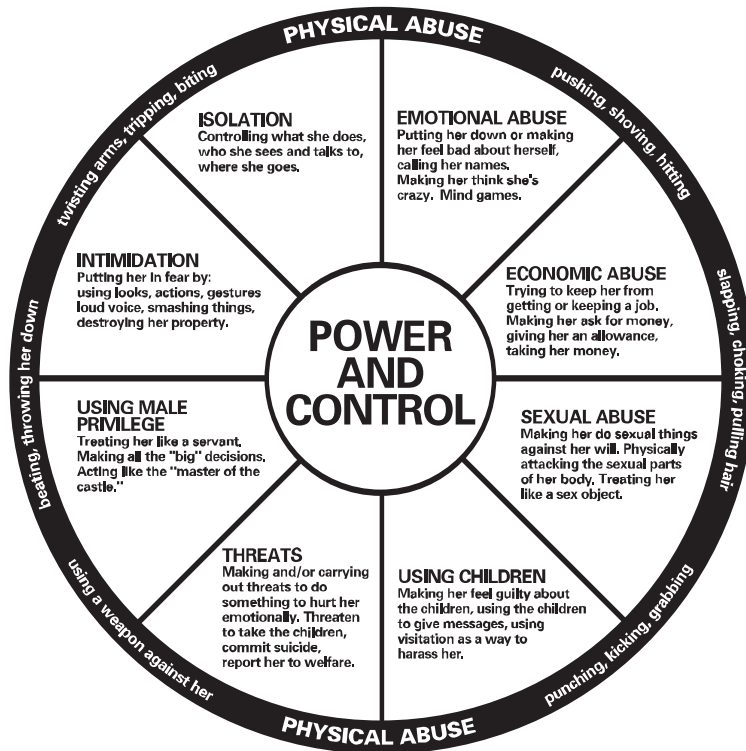


The "Support from Parish Team Wheel," developed by Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Green Bay, is based on the "Medical Power and Control Wheel" developed by the Domestic Violence Project, Inc., 6308 8th Ave., Kenosha, WI 53143, 414-656-8502.

Both are based on the "Power & Control and Equality Wheel" developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 202 East Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802, 218-722-2781. Used with permission.

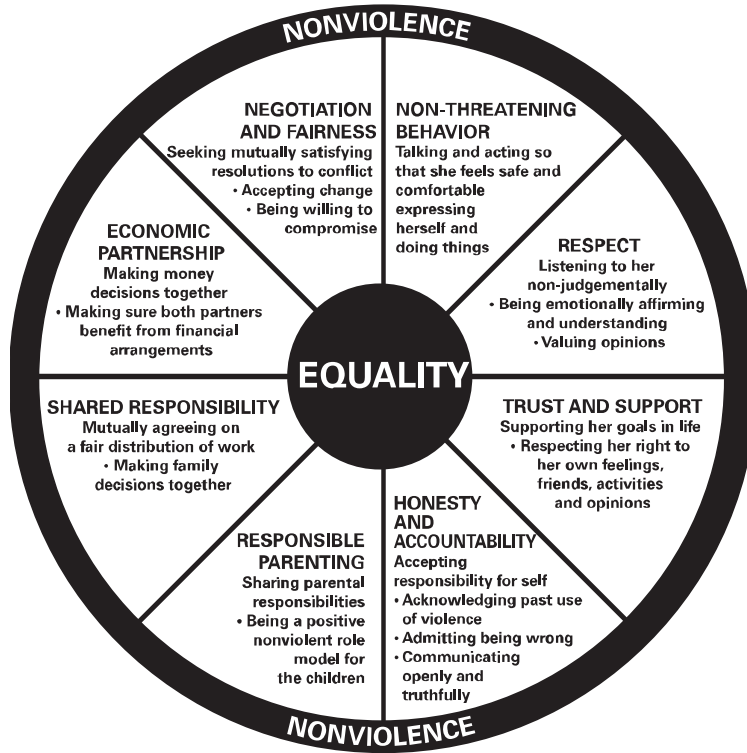
*Helping Rural Battered Women and Their Children:  
A Guide for Faith Leaders and Religious Communities*

The wheels that follow have been used in the domestic violence movement when counseling victims of abuse. They help women understand the differences between a healthy and unhealthy relationship.



Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project  
202 East Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802, 218-722-2781.  
Used with permission.

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202 East Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802, 218-722-2781.  
Used with permission.