



**THE CHICAGO METROPOLITAN BATTERED WOMEN'S NETWORK**

Interfaith Committee Against Domestic Violence

# **Responding to Domestic Violence:**

## **An Interfaith Guide to Prevention and Intervention**

Elaine J. Alpert, MD, MPH

Reverend Al Miles

Vickii Coffey, MSA

A Project Supported by Little Angel Foundation



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# Preface

The Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network (CMBWN) is a coalition of more than 100 individuals and agencies providing domestic violence services throughout Cook County. Speaking as the collective voice of the Chicago-area domestic violence service community, the Network is dedicated to improving the lives of survivors of domestic violence and their children. Founded in 1980, CMBWN provides a forum for information exchange and collaboration; facilitates education and training to increase individual, family and community awareness; and advocates for system change focused on preventing abuse in all forms.

Faith community leaders interact on a regular basis with congregants who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence, or who have family members or other loved ones who have been affected. This guidebook is intended to be the first step in a comprehensive domestic violence information and resource tool-kit for the faith community. It provides up-to-date, practical information that can enable clergy, faith and spiritual leaders, and others whose work represents the faith community to respond more effectively to the needs of victims and survivors, and to serve as allies in prevention.

Specifically, this guidebook will:

- provide clergy and other faith and spiritual leaders with basic information about domestic violence;
- outline passages from selected religious texts that have been misused to justify violence;
- highlight passages from selected religious texts that can be used to promote non-violence;
- help clergy and other faith and spiritual leaders identify and assist survivors of abuse in their congregations and communities;
- provide guidance on how to engage individuals and congregations in efforts directed toward prevention; and
- offer an up-to-date directory of local and national resources for help and referral.

Clergy and other faith and spiritual leaders are often the first and sometimes the only individuals in whom survivors of domestic and other forms of violence may confide. These leaders can play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of violence and in promoting safe and healthy congregations. In recent years, religious and spiritual institutions across the nation have begun to reach out by creating dialogue within their congregations and by building alliances with community-based domestic violence service agencies. We at CMBWN feel honored to have heard the call from the faith community in Chicago. Our first step in answering this identified need is to offer this guidebook, which we hope will serve as a practical and specific resource to help model and promote standards for safe, effective and prevention-focused spiritual-based responses. This guidebook is an important first step in what we hope will be a dynamic dialogue that will foster health and safety among all members of our collective communities of faith.<sup>1</sup> We are excited to be a part of the road we must travel together.

## Acknowledgments

This guidebook would not have been possible without the sponsorship and support of the Little Angel Foundation. We are grateful beyond words. We applaud and thank the numerous anonymous participants of our domestic violence survivor and faith-based community focus groups who shared their experiences, expertise and moving personal stories of survival and healing. The invaluable leadership of Vickii Coffey and the expertise of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network Interfaith Guidebook Advisory Committee is gratefully acknowledged. Joyce Calvin served ably as Project Coordinator. Elaine J. Alpert, MD, MPH provided both content expertise and writing/editorial leadership. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Reverend Al Miles, who provided both text and direction on theological perspectives. Sections of this guidebook are adapted, with permission, from the Massachusetts Medical Society publication entitled, "Partner Violence: How to Recognize and Treat Victims of Abuse – a Guide for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals", 4th edition. Special thanks go to the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, MN for its kind permission to use its reference material: "When You are Called For Help – A Guide for Clergy on Responding to Domestic Violence Situations." Najma M. Adam, PhD, LSW; attorney Jan Russell; Amy Maizel Seeherman, PhD; Theresa Zingery and a host of Chicago domestic violence advocates are among the many local, regional and national experts who reviewed the manuscript and offered invaluable critique and insight, helping to shape the tone and content of the guidebook. Finally, we honor and acknowledge the input and perspectives of the countless survivors who opened our eyes not only to the devastating effects of abuse, but also to the incredible power of love, faith and human resilience as these courageous women, children, and in some cases, men, reclaim their dignity and march forward toward futures free from abuse. What an amazing, incredible team!

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## Introduction

This guidebook is written for members of the faith community: clergy and others who work in religious and spiritual care. It is designed to help clergy and other spiritual leaders recognize and respond more effectively to members of their congregations who are at risk for, or are affected by, domestic violence. This guide contains helpful, practical information and resources that can be used in your day-to-day work with congregants. It is meant to be a starting point for further inquiry and for lifelong learning — not an all-inclusive reference text. This guide does not supply rote answers but rather offers guidelines, support and consultation for some of the most complex and challenging situations faced by the faith community today.

Historically, domestic violence has been treated as a private family matter throughout all sectors of society, including faith-based, religious and community settings. Though considerable efforts have been made to change this public perception, many women (and in some cases, men) still face considerable challenges to achieving safety and well-being for themselves and their children in the face of domestic violence. True primary prevention is even more elusive.

Domestic violence is exceedingly common, occurs in many forms and has a universally adverse impact on survivors, witnesses, members of the community at-large, and even perpetrators. According to recent research, nearly one in every three U.S. women reported being physically abused by a spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life.<sup>2,3</sup>

Between 3.3 million and 10 million children are exposed to abuse in their homes every year.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Young people of all ages, including babies, can be adversely affected when their mothers are abused, even if they themselves do not see the abuse occur and are not directly physically harmed.<sup>7,8</sup> Even unborn children can be affected by domestic violence when their mothers are denied appropriate medical care or nutrition during pregnancy.

To many who work in the field, the terms “victim” and “survivor” carry distinct connotations with the term “victim” referring to someone actively being harmed, helpless, or at the mercy of another; and the term “survivor” implying a greater degree of distance, resilience, and self-determination. While respecting the work of both scholars and survivors, and acknowledging ongoing discourse about the use of language and terminology in the field, the terms “victim” and “survivor” are used interchangeably throughout this guidebook. Because the vast majority of victims of domestic violence are women abused by men, the victim/survivor is referred to as “she” and the perpetrator as “he,” throughout. That said, domestic violence is not exclusively a women’s issue. Although abuse of a woman by a man is by far the most common form of domestic violence, abuse also occurs in same-sex relationships and in a small proportion of cases in which the woman is the perpetrator and the man is the victim.

Research and experience tell us that although most abusers are men, most men are not abusers. The vast majority of men care deeply about their intimate female partners, and also their sisters, mothers, daughters, friends and neighbors, and stand side by side with women in our combined efforts to combat domestic violence. We are grateful for the support of all who care — sisters and brothers who are linked arm in arm to promote peace in all human relationships and in our relationships with God.

This guide contains up-to-date, practical information based on respected research and gathered from the experience of those who work with domestic abuse victims and survivors: community service providers; physicians and other healthcare providers; police and others who work in law enforcement and in the courts; and clergy and other spiritual leaders who have worked closely for many years with women, men and children affected by abuse in relationships. Most importantly, the voices of survivors themselves have been listened to, respected, and included in this guidebook. We honor survivors of domestic violence for their will to survive, their courage and determination, and their ability to carry on in the face of what often are unbearable conditions.



# What is Domestic Violence?

## Defining Abuse

Domestic violence (also known as spouse abuse, partner violence, intimate partner violence, battering, and numerous other terms) is a pattern of coercion used by one person to exert power and control over another person in the context of a dating, family or household relationship.<sup>9</sup> The spectrum of domestic violence includes much more than physical assault. Domestic violence encompasses a constellation of controlling behaviors that include:

- actual or threatened physical harm;
- psychological abuse;
- forced sexual contact;
- economic control;
- social isolation;
- destruction of a victim's property, keepsakes or personal possessions;
- abuse of animals / pets;
- misuse of divine beings or religious beliefs, practices, teachings and traditions; and
- asserting male superiority and attributing abusive behavior to cultural traditions.

These behaviors can occur in any combination, sporadically or chronically, over a period of up to several decades.

Most victims of domestic violence are women in heterosexual relationships. Men in heterosexual relationships can also be victims of domestic violence, as well as both women and men in same-sex relationships. Regardless of culture, race, religion, or socio-economic class, approximately 90% of reported domestic violence cases involve men who abuse women.

## What Causes Domestic Violence?

The short answer to this often asked question is, “no one really knows.” Research over time and around the world has shown us that domestic violence has existed for thousands of years, and has been documented in nearly every national, religious and cultural group worldwide. From a secular perspective, some researchers view domestic violence in terms of evolutionary biology, with aggressive and controlling behavior explained as the evolutionary remnants of a distorted yet effective means of survival in a world replete with threats. Others see a biological tendency for males of many species to act aggressively in a bid to exert dominance over a group, or over selected females, for competitive or reproductive advantage. Some conclude, fatalistically, that domestic violence has been “wired” into the human behavioral repertoire; therefore, nothing of substance can be done to address it or prevent it.

Regardless of how factual or politically correct the theories and explanations are, they no longer apply in twenty-first century U.S. civil society. As an intelligent and technically advancing species, we have the capacity to override base survival and dominance impulses and to communicate laws, regulations and non-violent methods of addressing conflict worldwide, often within seconds. Although laws are finally changing both in the U.S. and worldwide, some cultural traditions and customs have been evolving more slowly. We have come a long way in just a few decades, but we still have a long road ahead before we can achieve true respect and non-violence in relationships.

Domestic violence is learned, purposeful behavior and is a manifestation of the abuser's need to achieve and maintain power and control over the victim. Abusive behavior is learned and reinforced:

- through observation;
- through experience;
- in culture and in society;
- in the family;
- in communities including schools and peer groups;
- in faith, religious, and spiritual institutions; and
- through our failure to hold batterers accountable for their actions.

Domestic violence is not caused by:

- illness;
- genetics or biology;
- alcohol and drugs;
- out-of-control behavior;
- anger;
- stress;
- the victim's behavior or actions
- problems in the relationship;
- children;
- pets; or
- Satan, other demons or evil influences.

Simply put, "There is no excuse for domestic violence."<sup>i</sup>

## Myths and Facts about Domestic Violence

**Myth:** Domestic violence is a private family matter.

**Fact:** Domestic violence is everyone's business. Keeping domestic violence secret helps no one, has been shown to harm children, incurs substantial costs to society, and serves to perpetuate abuse through learned patterns of behavior.

**Myth:** Most of the time, domestic violence is not really that serious.

**Fact:** Domestic violence is an illegal act in the U.S. and is considered a crime with serious repercussions. Although there are aspects of domestic violence (e.g., emotional, psychological, spiritual abuse) that may not be considered criminal in a legal sense, serious and long-lasting physical, emotional and spiritual harms can, and often do, occur. Each and every act of domestic violence needs to be taken seriously.

**Myth:** Victims provoke their partners' violence.

**Fact:** Whatever problems exist in a relationship, the use of violence is never justifiable or acceptable. There is NO EXCUSE for domestic violence.

**Myth:** Domestic violence is an impulse control or anger management problem.

**Fact:** Abusers act deliberately and with forethought. Abusers choose whom to abuse. For example, an abuser will selectively batter his wife but not his boss.

**Myth:** No one would beat his pregnant wife or girlfriend.

**Fact:** Domestic violence may begin or escalate during pregnancy.

Homicide is the single most frequent cause of maternal death during pregnancy and in the first year after giving birth.

<sup>i</sup> Phrase coined by The Family Violence Prevention Fund.

**Myth:** Women are just as violent as men in relationships.

**Fact:** Some women report striking their male partners during the course of conflict, often in self-defense. Women, however, rarely commit deliberate acts that result in fear, injury, rape or death.

**Myth:** Domestic violence is bad, but it happens elsewhere. It doesn't happen in my community, my neighborhood, my culture, my religion or my congregation.

**Fact:** Domestic violence happens to people of every educational and socio-economic level.

Domestic violence happens in all races, religions and age groups.

Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

**Myth:** It is easy for a victim to leave her abuser, so if she doesn't leave, it means she likes the abuse or is exaggerating how bad it is.

**Fact:** Fear, lack of safe options, and inability to survive economically prevent many women from leaving abusive relationships. Threats of harm, including death to the victim and/or children keep many battered women trapped in abusive situations.

The most dangerous time for a battered woman is when she attempts to leave the relationship, or when the abuser discovers that she has made plans to leave.

**Myth:** Children generally are neither aware of, nor affected by, their mothers' abuse.

**Fact:** Nearly 90% of children who live in homes in which there is domestic violence will see or hear the abuse.

Children as young as toddlers can suffer from the effects of exposure to abuse.

Children exposed to violence and other forms of trauma may have permanent alterations in brain structure, chemistry and function.

**Myth:** Domestic violence can occur in older women, but it is quite rare.

**Fact:** Approximately half of all elder abuse in women is thought to be domestic violence "grown old." Older battered women are less likely to seek and receive help.

**Myth:** Anger management programs are briefer, more cost effective than, and just as successful as certified batterer intervention programs.

**Fact:** Although briefer and less expensive than certified batterer intervention programs, anger management programs are not effective to address the deep-rooted issues of batterers.

**Myth:** Since domestic violence is a problem in the relationship, marriage or couple-focused pastoral counseling is key to restoring tranquility in the family or relationship.

**Fact:** This type of counseling often increases the risk of violence to the victim.

Faith and religious community representatives can promote safety and restore personal integrity and self-esteem to the victim, and can suggest batterer intervention services for the abuser, but should not engage in couples counseling unless the long-term safety of the survivor, and of staff, can be assured.

**Myth:** Services for victims are staffed by people angry at traditional society who want to break up the family unit.

**Fact:** Programs that help battered women and their children, and counselors who provide assistance, are concerned first and foremost with the safety of the survivor and her dependent children.

The goal of counseling and other survivor services is not to break up the family unit but to preserve the safety of all its members. Achieving this goal, unfortunately, may mean that some relationships may need to end.

**Myth:** Since our religion doesn't condone divorce, an abusive man should speak with the religious leader to mend his ways.

**Fact:** Although some religions do frown on divorce, no religion advocates abuse. Some abusers misinterpret or intentionally misuse religious writings to justify violence against their partners and children or to prevent a marriage — even one wracked by violence and abuse — from dissolving. Helpful conversations with a batterer, even if conducted carefully by a religious leader, may bring short term relief, but cannot take the place of qualified batterer intervention services, and may even pose a safety risk for the victim and her children.

## How Prevalent is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is common in American society — so common, that the statistics are, frankly, quite alarming.<sup>10</sup> In the United States, between one quarter and one-third of all women report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some time in their lives.<sup>2,3,11</sup> Every year, between 1 and 3 million women are abused<sup>12</sup> and over 1,700 individuals are murdered by an intimate partner.<sup>13</sup> Children are our most precious resource, yet up to 10 million children are exposed to domestic violence in their own homes every year.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Further, approximately 50% of men who frequently assault their wives also report frequently assaulting their children.<sup>14</sup> It is hard to imagine a child of any age who does not suffer as a result of witnessing his or her mother's or other primary caregiver's abuse.

## The Dynamics of Domestic Violence

Listed below are features that highlight the dynamics seen in many abusive relationships:<sup>15</sup>

- The overall aim of the abuse is to assert power and maintain control.
- Abusive relationships generally are not violent when they begin, but become increasingly so over time, as the perpetrator exerts more and more control over the victim.
- Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, economic and/or spiritual.
- Abuse is generally one-way, although victims may strike back in self-defense.
- Survivors of violence in relationships often don't "look battered." There may be no physical evidence of abuse at the time of your encounter with the congregant.
- Physical violence is often cyclical and recurrent. Apologies and promises of hope and change often follow a violent episode. There is then a variable period of increasing tension, culminating in a subsequent episode of violence.
- Especially following an episode of violence, the survivor may feel hopeful that caring behavior, apologies, and promises herald an end to the abuse, and that the situation will improve.
- The survivor may be reluctant to disclose information about current or past abuse even when specifically asked because of embarrassment, shame, or fear of retaliation by the perpetrator. She may also believe that clergy and other spiritual leaders do not know about or understand this problem, may not take the situation seriously, may not believe her, or may even blame her.

## Who is at Greatest Risk?

Any person, anywhere, can be a victim of abuse. Domestic violence affects both women and men, and cuts across all age, racial, ethnic, religious, educational, and socioeconomic strata. Available research, however, indicates that domestic violence does appear to be more prevalent in certain groups:<sup>16,17</sup>

- women, including those who are single, separated, married or divorced;
- teens and young adults;
- women who lack access to their own financial resources;
- women who abuse alcohol or other drugs, or whose partners do;
- women who are pregnant and have been previously abused; and
- individuals whose partners are excessively jealous or possessive.

## Characteristics of Abusers

There is no universal profile of an abuser. Perpetrators of domestic violence can be young or old, male or female, professional or unskilled, educated or illiterate, rich or poor, religious or secular, or of any race or ethnicity. Abusers run the gamut of psychological “diagnoses,” ranging from perfectly normal to psychotic. However, abusers tend to:

- objectify their partners (i.e., treat them as a category or object, not as a full human being);
- feel entitled to get their needs met without regard to the needs or feelings of their partners;
- use power (be it physical, emotional, political, economic or spiritual) to make sure their agenda is accomplished;
- feel that coercion is an effective and acceptable way to get their needs met;

- have the opportunity to be abusive without being held fully accountable; and
- behave abusively with a particular victim.

Consciously or unconsciously, most batterers assume a sense of privilege, which is used to gain and maintain power, or the “upper hand” in the relationship. They tend to believe their behavior is completely justified and necessary to fulfill their role in the relationship as the one who is in charge, in control, is the provider and is “king of the castle.” They feel they have attained or have been endowed with privilege to behave the way they do, and do not believe what they are doing is wrong in any way. They believe the role of their partner is to do what she is told, and to further and support the batterer’s agenda and needs. Examples of privilege used as justification by batterers include: being male; being physically stronger; being heterosexual, or alternatively being a more experienced gay or lesbian; being white; being a U.S. citizen or being documented (if an immigrant); being the wage earner, or earning more money if both are employed; being more highly educated; being able-bodied; and being more religious or observant, among others.

In addition, the following characteristics are often seen in abusers:<sup>18</sup>

- Often, abusers will not clearly acknowledge that their behavior is abusive or even hurtful, even if they have been arrested and convicted of a violent crime. For example, an abuser may tend to focus on what “she said” that “made him” act in a way that he considers to be justified and not at all wrong. It often takes years for abusers to move through a process of healing within themselves.
- Following a discrete abusive incident, some perpetrators may be truly sorry for their actions. Some batterers are horrified that they have hit their wives or girlfriends, are overcome with remorse, and genuinely want to change. They may apologize profusely and shower their partners with gifts and extra attention. Unfortunately,

without professional help from a certified batterer intervention program, the cycle of violence usually begins anew, often with more dangerous consequences in future assaults.

- Abuse is likely to continue and to progressively escalate if abusers do not address their violent behavior. Voluntary or court-appointed professional help is almost always necessary for a perpetrator to change his behavior. Certified batterer intervention programs take between one and two years to complete.
- Some abusers blame their violent acts on external factors such as their partner's behavior or provocation, being drunk, coping with a medical or psychological illness, or simply having a bad day. Experts in batterer intervention are quick to remind clients that they themselves must take responsibility for their own behavior. There is no excuse for domestic violence.
- Finally, some abusers use the oppression of their race or culture as an excuse for abusive behavior. Cultural and racial issues may cloud or confuse abusive actions; however, the use of violence against another person, pet, or property is never acceptable.

## Tactics of Coercive Control

Domestic violence is purposeful, deliberate behavior, and abuse rarely is an isolated event. Violent behavior generally begins insidiously, usually recurs, and tends to increase in frequency and severity over time.

Although survivors may suffer serious physical injuries, they often experience less visible emotional effects that can be just as, or even more, debilitating.

The relationship usually begins with romance and promise, only to gradually disintegrate into abuse. Typically, progressive, incremental messages about who makes the rules and who follows them begin almost imperceptibly. Abusive episodes at first seem like confusing misunderstandings, leaving the survivor wondering what she did

to create a problem. The victim may take responsibility not because she actually "did" anything wrong, but rather because of the abuser's skill in placing the blame on her for his own actions. These episodes build incrementally on one another, setting the stage for future, more severe abuse. The abusive tactics of the batterer have a profound impact on the survivor. In some cases the effects are physical; in many cases there is progressive social isolation. In most cases there are psychological effects that seem to defy definition and description, and from which full recovery is exceedingly difficult, even when physical safety is finally achieved.

**Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs in a minority of cases, but when it does, it is always a red flag for serious danger. The spectrum of physical assault includes spitting, scratching, biting, grabbing, hair pulling, shaking, shoving, pushing, restraining, throwing, twisting, slapping, punching, choking, strangling, burning, and the use of weapons. Not all assaults end in visible injury. Regardless of the severity of physical trauma, all physical abuse tactics result in fear and intimidation, and often are accompanied by lasting psychological trauma for the abused individual and her children.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual assault, even within the context of marriage, is often part of an abusive relationship, although underreporting makes accurate prevalence figures difficult to determine. Sexual assault includes rape and other forms of coerced sexual activity, such as forcing the victim to participate in or watch pornography and reducing her dignity so that she feels like nothing more than a sexual object.

Victims of rape and sexual assault suffer both short- and long-term harm. Short-term effects include physical injuries from being raped, such as vaginal or anal bleeding, bruises or scratches. Survivors also may experience a profound sense of isolation and unreality following a sexual assault. Long-term effects include a host of medical and psychological maladies, including severe withdrawal, anxiety, depression and suicide attempts.

Many survivors choose not to disclose sexual assault because of embarrassment, self-blame or blame from others, and fear. Some, however, will welcome the opportunity to disclose to clergy and other spiritual leaders if they feel respected and validated in the pastoral setting. In some cases, women will disclose first (and sometimes exclusively) to female clergy or to women who are lay leaders in the religious institution. It is essential for clergy and other religious community leaders to be sensitive when interacting with congregants who have been sexually assaulted. Following disclosure, in addition to providing supportive pastoral care, clergy and other spiritual leaders should seek guidance from community-based sexual assault or rape crisis services, and encourage survivors to make contact with these invaluable agencies themselves, even if the assault took place months or years ago. Within the limits of applicable laws, clergy and other spiritual leaders should work to ensure that confidentiality and privacy are maintained and that the dignity of survivors is respected at all times. Approaches such as these have been essential to recovery for many survivors.

**Emotional/psychological abuse:** As compared to physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse is much more difficult both to recognize, and to recover from. Emotional abuse tactics are often used to break down the victim's sense of individuality and self-determination, and to increase compliance with the batterer's demands. Emotional abuse may involve controlling and delimiting the victim's behavior in a capricious and isolating manner (for example, dictating what she wears, where she can and cannot go, with whom she can and cannot speak, how much money she can spend and on what it can be spent, and how she is expected to behave inside and outside the home). The victim's ability to be in contact with the outside world also is often controlled by the batterer. Victims of emotional abuse may not be allowed to see or speak with family, friends, healthcare providers or clergy and other spiritual leaders, and may face derision, accusations of infidelity or even physical or sexual violence if they "break the rules." Additionally, emotional abuse can involve implicit and/or explicit threats to safety and security, such as attacks against property, pets and keepsakes. Victims may be made

to feel ashamed about their value as parents, spouses, lovers and community members. The victim may be told that she is an unfit parent and that the children can be taken away if the batterer's commands are not followed.

**Abuse of scripture and religious writings:** Victims may be required to participate in rituals that are inappropriate, or even abhorrent, to their values, or they may be prohibited from participating in practices that are held dear. They may be made to feel ashamed for the beliefs and values that they have; or castigated for being too observant, not observant enough, or for believing (or not believing) a certain way. Abusers may intimidate victims by selectively quoting or mischaracterizing Scripture to assert male entitlement and privilege, to provide justification for their actions, or as a rationale for punishment. They may also convince victims that they will be eternally damned because of their inadequacy as spouses, partners, or as a "person of faith." Clergy and other faith and spiritual leaders can be vital partners in breaking the cycle of violence and facilitating safety, health and recovery for survivors of abuse by preaching and reinforcing the value of females granted by divine beings and sacred texts.

**Economic abuse:** Many victims of domestic violence, regardless of their own employment or individual income, lack access to readily available funds necessary to live safely and independently. The batterer is often the sole account holder for bank accounts, the deed on a house, or the lease for an apartment, and may require the victim to get permission to spend money, even for basic family needs such as groceries and medications. Victims are often excluded from taking part in decisions about how financial resources are allocated and used. The victim may or may not have a job, but even if she does, paychecks often go into an account over which the batterer has sole control. When a batterer controls access to family financial resources, it is exceedingly difficult for a survivor to come up with the resources needed to flee from abuse and to establish safe and permanent housing, employment, childcare and transportation. Such a situation can keep victims of domestic violence trapped in abuse for decades.

## Obstacles to Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Many find it difficult to understand why anyone would stay in an abusive or a violent relationship. Some even believe that a woman who remains in an abusive relationship likes being abused or is exaggerating or lying about the abuse. Our experience with survivors tells us that none of this is true.

There are many reasons why it is difficult for victims to leave their abusers:<sup>19</sup>

**Fear:** The victim may believe, realistically, that it is more dangerous to leave than to stay in a violent relationship. The batterer may threaten to hurt or even kill the victim, or to take away or hurt the children if she attempts to leave. Indeed, research tells us that more battered women are murdered after obtaining orders of protection or while in the process of leaving their abusers than at any other time. Additionally, an immigrant victim may fear deportation or fear losing custody of dependent children, especially if she is not a legal U.S. resident.

**Economics and logistics:** Batterers often control the financial resources of the household as well as access to telephones, car keys, and even medication and food, making it difficult for victims to leave because they cannot (or believe they are unable to) independently support themselves and their children. Victims may not know how and where to seek safety and shelter, and may be afraid to ask. Additionally, the victim may be relatively unskilled in finding and retaining employment, managing money and paying bills. She may not know how to make ends meet without financial help from the batterer.

**Social isolation:** The batterer often constrains the ability of the victim to communicate with friends and family. Isolation leaves the victim less able to reach out to others for support. Increasingly, she becomes psychologically dependent on the batterer as the sole source of social support. If the victim does not speak English well, she may not be able to identify or access agencies that can help. Clergy and spiritual leaders

can help create an atmosphere of support by making it widely known that they are available to offer guidance to congregants who may be affected by violence and abuse, and to maintain both respect and confidentiality in all dealings with congregants to the extent permitted by local and state law.

**Feelings of stigma, shame and failure:** Many victims have been made to feel, by the batterer as well as by others, that they are failures and are responsible for having brought on the abuse. Some may feel tremendous shame and embarrassment about the partner's abusive behavior, and may view themselves as needing to figure out how to help the batterer learn to be less abusive, or to adapt or change in order to halt the abuse. Survivors may believe that their children deserve a two-parent family, even at the expense of their own safety. In some cultures and religious traditions, the victim is stigmatized and shamed for leaving a spouse - even an abusive one - or for seeking a divorce. In such instances, the victim may feel the additional pressure of staying because her honor is at stake and she risks humiliation of the entire family if she leaves.

**Hope and promises of change:** A survivor may believe her batterer's expressions of remorse about having become violent and his subsequent promises that it will never happen again. Some survivors also feel it is somehow their responsibility to change or redeem their batterers. The survivor holds out hope that the abuser will change. The abuser, in turn, may seek forgiveness from the victim and may persuade her to believe that it is a godly duty to give him another chance — a chance for redemption. Many survivors find that hope and promises of change are powerful obstacles to leaving an abusive situation. It is clear, however, that while some survivors may want the relationship to continue, most are clear about wanting the violence to stop.

**Cultural messages and prior lack of intervention:**

All too often, survivors of abuse are either blamed for the violence or not taken seriously by family, healthcare professionals, social service providers, law enforcement authorities, and clergy and other spiritual leaders, leaving them to feel even more helpless and vulnerable. The survivor may receive advice from clergy and other

religious leaders, relatives, or friends encouraging her to stay with the abuser in order to keep the family together or to comply with religious directives. A frequently cited edict in many religious traditions is: “Families must stay together at all costs.” The truth is, however, that some costs are too high for the physical and emotional safety of survivors and their children.

# Domestic Violence in Diverse Populations

Domestic violence, in and of itself, is a traumatic and despairing life situation, saddling survivors and their children and families with fear, confusion and a profound sense of hopelessness about what life can offer. As difficult as it can be for “ordinary” victims, there are categories of survivors who face even greater obstacles. This section outlines particular issues for adults, youth, elders and other populations.

## Adults

**Pregnant women:** Violence during pregnancy is a serious problem, with major health and social welfare implications for both mother and child. Homicide has been found to be the most common cause of maternal death, and a substantial proportion of homicide victims are murdered by current or former male intimate partners. Pregnant women should be routinely asked about new or ongoing domestic violence and referred to agencies that can help them through the pregnancy, delivery and post-partum process with maximal attention to safety and the health of the developing baby.

**Immigrants:** Domestic violence is prevalent in every culture and in every segment of society. Immigrants and members of minority cultures face extra hurdles as they attempt to access available services to achieve safety for themselves, their children and other dependents. Members of different, usually minority, cultures may hold belief systems and traditions that make it harder for them to perceive their own danger, understand their right to live in safety, know their legal rights and options, or even speak to anyone about their situation. Survivors whose native language is not English may find it especially difficult to communicate with healthcare providers, advocacy services and law enforcement. They may also harbor legitimate fear of becoming homeless, of

losing their children, or of deportation, should their abuse become known. In some cases, the abuser has legal, documented status while the victim does not, which translates directly into the abuser having near-absolute power over the victim. The abuser may hide his partner’s immigration paperwork and not allow her to apply for her citizenship so that he can use deportation as a tool of ongoing control. In some instances, a victim’s family’s sponsorship to this country or the marriage prospects of her siblings depends on her remaining in the marriage, even if it is an abusive one.

Recent immigrants and other members of minority cultures may not be aware of how their clergy or other spiritual leaders can help direct them toward safety, and may thus suffer in silence. Clergy and other spiritual leaders who are sensitive to the barriers and problems that immigrants and members of diverse cultures face can be in a better position to establish relationships of confidentiality and trust with their congregants - crucial steps toward recovery for those who are in danger.

**Substance abusers:** Recent research has taught us that survivors of domestic violence can also suffer from all forms of substance abuse, including alcoholism. Indeed, alcohol and other substance abuse problems are often responses to, rather than causes of, abuse. Although most domestic violence survivors are neither dependent on alcohol nor involved with other drugs, those who are addicted can be doubly stigmatized. They are often labeled as sexually promiscuous, unfit mothers, unworthy partners, or just plain “crazy.” They are more likely to be blamed for causing or contributing to the violence in their lives, making it more difficult to find help for both problems. The success of safety planning in domestic violence can be compromised by ongoing drug use, and the success of addiction recovery can be impeded by ongoing violence. Therefore, clergy

and other spiritual leaders should assess for domestic violence where there is evidence of substance abuse, and ask about substance abuse where there is evidence of domestic violence. Referrals to both domestic violence and addiction treatment agencies can be made simultaneously, and with respect, understanding and compassion for all involved.

**Same-sex relationships:** Domestic violence in same-sex relationships appears to be as common as in traditional heterosexual relationships.<sup>20</sup> Many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals do not feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation to clergy and other spiritual leaders, and are likely to be even more reluctant to disclose battering. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual victims of domestic violence encounter the same spectrum of abusive behaviors as their heterosexual counterparts. Additional obstacles specific to LGBT survivors further reduce their opportunities to discuss abuse. These obstacles include: homophobia and resulting discrimination in society; social consequences of revealing one's sexual orientation, such as loss of children and other family relationships, loss of job, and loss of congregation and community standing; fear of police inaction; and further discrimination. There is also a dearth of shelter space and support services for battered gay men and transgender individuals. Lesbian and bisexual women have the option of going to more traditional domestic violence programs that accept women, but many of these programs may not be trained and/or sensitive to working with members of the LGBT community. Transgender individuals face huge barriers in getting help because service providers, as well as the public in general, often understand even less about gender identity and expression than they do about sexual orientation.<sup>21,22,23</sup> Clergy and other faith and spiritual leaders should therefore develop special sensitivity to the difficult issues that battered LGBT individuals face.

## Youth

### **Children exposed to violence in the home:**

Observing or hearing violence can be as damaging to children as being abused themselves.<sup>24</sup> Even very young children can be affected. Witnessing violence affects children's abilities to focus and learn in school, to form healthy peer relationships, and to develop normally. Child "witnesses" grow up with a distorted view of the world, one that is not hopeful, welcoming, or safe. They have a constricted view of their lives, in which they cannot picture themselves as adults, or see a happy or hopeful future for themselves. Children who witness domestic violence are themselves also at greater risk of being physically harmed, especially if they attempt to defend or protect the victim, usually their mother, during an assault. Children, like adults, may find it difficult to talk to anyone about the violence in their lives, and thus become "silent victims."<sup>25</sup> Clergy and other spiritual leaders and institutions of faith can be attuned to signals in at-risk children, and can help the affected caregiver, usually the mother, achieve personal and spiritual safety and stability. Appropriate role modeling and intervention by clergy and other spiritual leaders can help children learn that violence perpetrated by anyone, especially by a family member or loved one, is wrong, unacceptable and not normal. Efforts such as these can serve as a crucial link to help children realize their full potential and develop into safe and healthy adults.

**Teenagers:** Teens may endure verbal and emotional abuse, physical abuse, rape, and even homicide. Some teens are battered by people with whom they are in a dating relationship, while others may be adolescent victims of parental abuse. Teens in dating relationships often confuse jealousy with love, and lack experience and perspective regarding what a healthy dating relationship can be. Striving for independence, battered teens may be especially reluctant to seek help from authority figures, including clergy and other spiritual leaders. Clergy and other spiritual leaders should reassure teenage congregants about the confidential and supportive

nature of the clergy-congregant relationship. Clergy and other spiritual leaders should inquire discreetly and sensitively about abuse, remembering that the abuser may be a parent, other family member, boyfriend, or girlfriend. An abused teen particularly needs to be told that the battering is not her or his fault and that help is available. Mandated reporting requirements for individuals under age 18 need to be followed.

## Elders

Elder abuse encompasses physical, sexual, psychological, and economic mistreatment or neglect, and can be intentional or unintentional. Experts now believe that

at least half of elder abuse in women is domestic violence in later life, or domestic violence “grown old.” Even when not being abused currently, elder congregants can suffer greatly from the after-effects of past abuse. For independently living elders, fear of being placed in a care home and losing autonomy may limit disclosure of current abuse. Clergy and other spiritual leaders who minister to elders often have developed long-term, established and trusting relationships with their congregants. Ministerial visits to the home can be both revealing and therapeutic to a lonely, fearful elder. Clergy and spiritual leaders should remain mindful of their mandated reporter responsibilities as they minister to elderly at-risk individuals.

# Theological Issues

## A Message to Religious Leaders and Faith Communities

It is the responsibility of clergy and other religious community leaders to work together to bring God's peace to all who suffer. Since survivors of domestic violence often seek assistance and counsel from clergy and other spiritual leaders before turning elsewhere for help, religious leaders can play a critical role in helping survivors attain safety while maintaining, and often strengthening, their faith.

*“By sharing the unequivocal message that God never intends for any human being to be abused or oppressed by another, and by linking victims with community resources, clergy can support and strengthen the victim’s faith in a loving and just God. This conviction can serve as an important resource for victims as they undertake the journey from an abusive relationship to a life of peace.”*<sup>ii</sup>

It is vitally important for religious leaders to be proactive in identifying and responding to domestic violence in their congregations. Addressing domestic violence - from the pulpit and in classrooms - as a pervasive and painful problem, and by hosting programs, support groups and advocacy efforts, can break the barrier of silence and help survivors emerge from isolation and despair. Conversely, when domestic violence is not addressed by religious leaders, or is dealt with in a well-intended yet uninformed manner, more pain and suffering can be wrought upon survivors and their families.

## Domestic Violence and Religious Beliefs, Practices, Teachings, and Traditions

The overarching message proclaimed in the Christian Scripture, Hebrew Torah, Islamic Quran, and Bahá'í teachings in regards to females and males centers on love and respect for all humankind. Allah/God grants to men and women equal value.

*“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”* (Genesis 1:26-28)

*“For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”* (Galatians 3:26-28)

*“O mankind! Be conscious of your Sustainer, who has created you out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. And remain conscious of God, in whose name you demand your rights from one another, and of these ties of kinship. Verily, God is ever watchful over you!”* (Sûrah al Nisa 4.1)

*“In proclaiming the oneness of mankind He [Bahá'u'lláh] taught that men and women are equal in the sight of God and that there is no distinction to be made*

<sup>ii</sup> From, “A Message from the Boston Coalition Religious Community Task Force, in Responding to Domestic Violence: a Guide for Clergy and Laity, Office of Attorney General Scott Harsbarger in cooperation with the Boston Coalition Religious Community Task Force.” 1997.

*between them. The only difference between them now is due to lack of education and training. If woman is given equal opportunity of education, distinction and estimate of inferiority will disappear. The world of humanity has two wings, as it were: One is the female; the other is the male. If one wing be defective, the strong perfect wing will not be capable of flight. The world of humanity has two hands. If one be imperfect, the capable hand is restricted and unable to perform its duties. God is the Creator of mankind. He has endowed both sexes with perfections and intelligence, given them physical members and organs of sense, without differentiation or distinction as to superiority; therefore, why should woman be considered inferior? This is not according to the plan and justice of God. He has created them equal; in His estimate there is no question of sex. The one whose heart is purest, whose*

*deeds are most perfect, is acceptable to God, male or female." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 174)*

Despite the egalitarian nature of Allah/God as revealed in sacred texts throughout history, religious beliefs, practices, teachings, and traditions have been used to justify violence against women and children. The use of sacred texts and divine beings to encourage, excuse, or to justify violence against women and children is a perversion of divine teachings, contrary to the explicit texts of the holy books of all religions, and a violation of the trust reposed in those who are spiritual shepherds. Suggestions that males have greater authority or more value than females constitute a misinterpretation of sacred texts and an affront to the overall teaching of the divine.

# Action Steps for Clergy and Other Spiritual Leaders (Part I):

## Individual Assessment and Assistance

This chapter addresses what to look for, what to say and what to do when faced with individual congregants who may be at risk for domestic violence, or who are dealing with its effects. The next chapter deals with congregation- and community-wide action steps that can be taken by clergy and other spiritual leaders to address, and ultimately prevent, domestic violence.

### Guiding Principles

Regardless of whether you are assisting a single, at-risk individual, or creating sermons, programs or other larger-scale efforts designed to reach an entire congregation or community, clergy and other spiritual leaders should bear in mind four guiding principles when addressing domestic violence with individual congregants: 1) safety, 2) autonomy, 3) offender accountability, and 4) advocacy for social change.<sup>26</sup>

These guiding principles, originally developed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund to guide healthcare responses to domestic violence, are equally applicable to faith community efforts as well as to others committed to ending and preventing domestic violence.

**Safety:** Assessment, assistance and follow-up must be conducted with utmost concern for the immediate and long-term safety of the survivor and her dependent children. Clergy and other spiritual leaders should ask, “Is what I am asking/saying/recommending/doing/going to help my congregant become safer, or at least not place her at risk for further harm?”

**Autonomy:** Abused individuals have had their freedom to make informed, independent choices about their (and their children’s) lives restricted by the batterer’s controlling and intimidating behavior. Facilitating your congregant’s ability to make her own choices is key to restoring a sense of purpose and well-being for survivors of domestic violence, and can facilitate an individual’s readiness to take steps toward safety.

**Offender accountability:** It is important to reframe the violence as occurring because of the perpetrator’s behavior and actions, not the victim’s. It thus follows that the problem of violence in the relationship, and thus, the need to take definitive steps to end the violence, is the perpetrator’s responsibility. This guiding principle assumes the importance of victim safety, but rejects victim-blaming and other excuses offered by the offender as “explanations” for abusive behavior.

**Advocacy for social change:** Clergy and other spiritual leaders acting alone simply cannot meet all the needs of survivors of domestic violence. As the faith community and other sectors of society grapple with the complex issues involved in understanding and responding to domestic violence, the need to collaborate with others, including those who work in advocacy, healthcare, law enforcement, education, and society-at-large, becomes clear. Clergy and other spiritual leaders can be important catalysts for social change so that domestic violence can be more effectively identified, and ultimately prevented.

## Who Should Be Asked About Domestic Violence?

The simple answer is, nearly everyone. Although “red flags,” for example, bruises; clothing that covers areas out of keeping with custom or climate; substance abuse; HIV/AIDS; depression; marital or relationship issues; or a partner who is overbearing or constantly present, can be indicators of current or past abuse, research tells us that domestic violence can — and does — happen to all kinds of people. Thus, everyone (old, young, married, unmarried, female, male, rich, poor, red flags or not) should be asked. Keeping in mind the first guiding principle of safety, however, is critical. No one should be asked about domestic violence unless the setting is private and the climate is respectful and confidential. In addition, before engaging in conversations about domestic violence, clergy and other spiritual leaders must first be well connected to service providers within their communities.

## Beginning the Conversation

Most clergy and other spiritual leaders are deeply spiritual on a personal level, and in addition are intensely dedicated to their congregations as well as to each congregation’s individual members. Beginning a conversation about domestic violence can be challenging, especially if the clergy member or spiritual leader has limited experience with the topic. Spiritual leaders, in general, prefer to be facilitative rather than directive, allowing disclosure to occur rather than proactively seeking it out. These laudable qualities, shared across religious traditions, should be acknowledged and celebrated. That said, congregants in general want to be asked about domestic violence — and in some cases are literally praying that the subject will come up in a private conversation with their religious leader. It is generally believed that survivors of domestic violence are more likely to disclose a history of abuse to their pastor, rabbi, imam or other religious leader, and to benefit from the support and assistance of clergy and other spiritual leaders, if the spiritual leader is perceived to be knowledgeable,

nonjudgmental, respectful and supportive. In this regard, it is important that spiritual leaders critically examine their own views and biases about women, men, relationships, and women’s roles within family and society, in order to provide the best assistance possible to women in crisis.

The gender of the clergy member or spiritual leader can potentially influence the willingness of some survivors to disclose or discuss abuse. Some women have been socialized to believe that validation received from a man is more meaningful than that received from a woman, and thus may feel more affirmed after disclosing to a male clergy member or other male spiritual leader. Other women may have been so traumatized by men during childhood or adulthood that they cannot trust any men, and feel more comfortable disclosing to a woman. Still other women may feel they are prohibited, by religious or cultural tradition, from speaking with a man about private or intimate issues, particularly if sexual violation has occurred. Regardless of gender, clergy and other spiritual leaders should be aware of the myriad complexities surrounding disclosure. Every attempt should be made to be open, accepting, respectful and sensitive to the needs of women who disclose histories of abuse. Male clergy and other spiritual leaders should make sure that women congregants are aware that they may speak freely with female clergy or lay leaders, should this be their preference.

## How to Ask About Domestic Violence

It is easiest to begin a conversation about domestic violence if posters, literature, sermons, discussion groups or other congregation-wide initiatives are already in place (see Chapter 5). If this is not yet the case, it is still quite easy to broach the subject to individual congregants — the vast majority of whom will welcome such an overture by their respected spiritual leaders. Clergy and other spiritual leaders can frame questioning about domestic violence by referring to sermons, posters, literature or programs, if available, or by simply stating:

*As you may know, abuse by a partner — a spouse, date or even an ex-partner — is unfortunately very common in our society, including in our own congregation. Because of this, I am now asking every female congregant if she is safe at home and in her relationships.*

Once the stage is set with an appropriate framing statement, accompanied by respectful yet actively engaged body language and eye contact appropriate to the congregant's culture, any one (or more) of the following simple, direct questions can be posed:

*At any time (or, 'in the past year', or 'currently') have you been hit, slapped, punched, strangled, threatened, made to feel afraid, or hurt in any way by a current or former partner/husband/date?*

*Every couple has conflicts - what happens when you and your partner disagree? Do conflicts ever make you fearful or turn into physical fights?*

*I see congregants who are being hurt or threatened by someone they love. Is this happening to you?*

*Do you ever feel afraid of your partner?*

*Do you feel safe in your home and around your spouse or intimate partner?*

Domestic violence is indeed prevalent throughout the world, but by no means directly affects a majority of congregants. Statistically speaking, therefore, the answer to an initial screening question is likely to be "no." Even so, most congregants are grateful to have been asked, as routine inquiry about domestic violence indicates a level of caring and compassion that so many seek and appreciate from clergy and other spiritual leaders. There are cases, however, in which a congregant may be in an abusive relationship, but may not be ready to disclose to anyone, including spiritual leaders. Such individuals are likely to offer a half-answer to a screening question, such as, "My husband loves me," or she may simply turn away and say nothing. Should this be the case, it is appropriate to gently follow up with an additional question, such as:

*When I speak with someone with a situation/sadness/problem such as yours, it is sometimes because someone has hurt her. Has someone been hurting you?*

## **When a Congregant Discloses Abuse**

Should a congregant disclose that she has been battered, asking the following specific questions in a safe and confidential setting can help to determine the extent of abuse and the possible danger:

*Would you like to speak with me or with someone else about what happened?*

*Has this happened before?*

*When did it first occur?*

*How badly have you been hurt in the past?*

*Have you ever needed to get emergency help because of an assault?*

*Have you ever been threatened with a weapon, or has a weapon ever been used on you?*

*Have you ever tried to get an Order of Protection against a partner?*

*Have your children ever seen or heard you being threatened or hurt?*

*Have your children ever been threatened or hurt by your partner?*

*Do you know how you can get help for yourself if you were hurt or afraid?*

## Dos and Don'ts

Specific interventions by clergy and other spiritual leaders should include:

- listening to the survivor, and believing and validating her account, without asking for “proof” or “verification” that she has been maltreated;
  - reframing the abuse as spiritually and morally unacceptable, and even criminal;
  - communicating concern for the congregant’s safety;
  - acknowledging how difficult and courageous it is for a survivor to disclose abuse;
  - placing responsibility for the violence unequivocally on the perpetrator;
  - assuring confidentiality to the extent possible under the law;
  - evaluating the need to file a mandated report to the appropriate agency for children, elderly, or disabled persons;
  - making referrals to local or national hotlines and community-based domestic violence programs;
  - conveying ongoing concern and assuring follow-up;
  - letting the survivor set the pace for action and healing;
  - providing the survivor with religious texts or passages appropriate to the denomination or congregation that promote love, healing, hope, strength, courage, trust, blessings, and access to spiritual healing; and
  - striving to make the congregation a safe haven, in which domestic violence is not tolerated or supported, and in which survivors can find God’s/Allah’s peace.
- Most survivors do not identify themselves as abuse victims *per se* because of the perception of shame, helplessness and worthlessness associated with such a value-laden term. Therefore, avoid using labels such as “victim,” or “battered” when speaking with congregants. Instead, use resilience-promoting terms like “survivor” whenever possible.
  - Do not inquire about abuse in the presence of the partner, friends, or family members.
  - Do not break confidentiality by disclosing information, discussing your concerns or providing advice to the abuser without the victim’s explicit consent.
  - Never ask a congregant what she did to provoke the abuse. There is no excuse for domestic violence.
  - Do not ask why she has not terminated the relationship or left her partner.
  - A survivor may leave an abusive relationship only to return at a later date. If this is the case, avoid asking why she has returned to the batterer.
  - Listen attentively, but do not ask a survivor of any type of sexual violence to provide you with more details than she feels comfortable offering.

As important as it is to ask the right questions, it is equally important to refrain from asking questions in a manner that might frighten or intimidate the congregant, increase the sense of humiliation and shame about the violence, or be interpreted as blaming the victim for her situation. Here are some pitfalls to avoid:

## Is the Situation Dangerous?

Once a congregant has disclosed being in a threatening or violent relationship, clergy and other spiritual leaders can play an invaluable role in helping assess the level of risk, initiating a discussion about the need for a safety plan, and making referrals to appropriate, usually community-based services.

The most important determinants in assessing risk are the survivor’s level of fear, and her own appraisal of her immediate and future safety needs. However, since congregants may misread, minimize or deny the danger of their situations, the following indicators of escalating risk should be explored:

- an increase in frequency or severity of the abuse;
- increasing or new threats of homicide or suicide by the partner;
- the presence or availability of a firearm or other weapons; and
- new or increasingly violent behavior by the perpetrator outside the relationship.

Disclosure of domestic violence may herald a particularly dangerous period for both survivor and children.

Therefore, once disclosure is made, particular attention must be paid to the safety and well-being of children and others living in a home in which domestic violence is occurring.

Some victims decide to reconcile with their abusive partners out of fear of being hurt further or killed if they remain separated, losing the children, becoming homeless, being stigmatized as a victim, or living alone. Other victimized women love their husband or partner, and only wish the abuse — not the relationship — to end. Still others wish to reconcile if there is true hope of forging a healthy, non-violent union. Should a survivor wish to reconcile with her batterer and there is reasonable certainty that her abuser has engaged fully in batterer intervention and is no longer violent or even a potential threat, clergy and other spiritual leaders can take cautious steps toward reconciliation in collaboration with domestic violence advocates, provided survivor safety can be assured.

## Managing Your Time

Some spiritual leaders may be reluctant to inquire about abuse because of concerns about having insufficient time to respond in a careful and patient manner, given the multiple responsibilities and time pressures that they face in their daily work. Sensible time management, however, will allow clergy and other spiritual leaders to take the time needed to screen for abuse, and to set aside time to delve into the spiritual and logistical issues that may arise from disclosure. Asking about domestic violence in the context of

meeting with an individual congregant should take no more than one minute yet should have a dual beneficial effect: the spiritual leader will be reassured that the congregant is not at risk for domestic violence (or that the individual, if affected, is not ready or able to disclose at that time); and the congregant will be made aware that her imam, pastor or rabbi is concerned, knowledgeable and able to respond should domestic violence become an issue at any time in the future.

Despite dealing with a difficult, often wrenching, issue, many congregants who disclose are not in acute danger at the time they meet with their spiritual leader. Should the congregant disclose domestic violence, clergy and other spiritual leaders should conduct a brief danger assessment (see previous section), offer information and hotline numbers (see resource section at the end of this guide), convey concern and support for the congregant, and arrange to see the person in a follow-up meeting to offer more in-depth support and to provide resource and referral options. A conversation of this nature should take no more than five minutes.

Only rarely will the spiritual leader be confronted with a congregant who has pressing needs or who is in extreme danger. In this situation, urgent and at times lifesaving action will need to be taken, for example, encouraging a survivor to call 911, or offering to make this call for her.

## How to Help

Domestic violence issues may come to light in the context of “routine inquiry,” or, in the context of meeting about what seems to be an issue unrelated to possible abuse. In addition, particularly in a congregation that is viewed as “domestic violence literate,” in non-crisis situations, congregants may approach spiritual leaders specifically for spiritual or logistical help regarding their own abuse, or to help a family member. Alternatively, the congregant herself may be in an acute or crisis situation. This section outlines questions that can be asked, actions that can be taken, and issues to keep in mind, once domestic violence has been disclosed.<sup>27</sup>

**Questions to ask following disclosure:** When a victim of domestic violence seeks help following disclosure, the following questions, all of which deal with immediate safety, should be asked in a private setting:

- Is it safe for you to talk freely?
- Are your children safe and cared for right now?
- Where is your abuser?
- Do you feel you need to flee immediately for your safety?
- Do you have somewhere safe to go? Where would you go?
- Do you have injuries? Do you need medical attention?
- Do you have an Order of Protection against your abuser?
- Would you like to call 911? Would you like me to make the call with you or for you?

**Actions to take:** When a victim contacts you for help, take the following actions:

- Assure the victim that she is not responsible or to blame for the abuser's actions.
- State clearly and repeatedly that she does not deserve to be treated this way.
- Listen attentively and respectfully, and offer support.
- Provide names and phone numbers of area shelters, programs and services. Ask if she would like to contact any of these now.
- Abusers often search their victims' belongings. Before giving any written materials to the victim, ask her if she feels it is safe for her to take materials with her.
- If she is ready to leave or feels she must leave, ask her if she would like someone to provide moral support or help care for her children on a short-term basis.
- Ask her if she needs help getting to a safe place or to a medical facility. Assist with emergency transportation arrangements if necessary.

- Discuss childcare plans and provide assistance when needed.
- Ask her to call you back after contact has been made with a community service provider to let you know how things went.

**Issues to keep in mind:**

- Consider the immediate safety needs of all family members involved.
- Believe what the survivor is telling you and convey your belief to the congregant.
- Understand that leaving takes tremendous effort and courage on the survivor's part.
- Be alert and compassionate to related issues such as drug and/or alcohol abuse.
- Understand that the danger for the survivor increases when she begins disclosing the abuse to others or attempts to leave her offender.
- Understand that the victim may be isolated and have limited financial and emotional resources.
- Know that your role is to support the survivor's decision, even if you don't agree with it.
- Be aware that the survivor may choose to stay at this time because she believes it is safer to stay than to leave the offender.
- Understand that individuals from non-privileged races, cultures and lifestyles face special barriers. Ask survivors from immigrant and minority communities if they wish to have someone from their own community help them or if they prefer their situation to remain private, in which case an interpreter or representative from another community can be called upon to provide support.
- Acknowledge — again and again — that no one deserves to be abused and that she deserves better.
- For reasons of safety, time management and treatment, do not attempt to speak with or counsel the abuser in an acute or volatile situation.
- Do not recommend or attempt couples or marriage counseling.

- Do not try to fix the relationship or the family. Healing comes later, and will be facilitated by your quiet, steady support. Safety for the survivor and her dependents must always be your primary concern.
- Do not expect or encourage immediate reconciliation or instant forgiveness. Without sincere remorse on the part of the abuser, accompanied by actual changes in attitude and behavior and a commitment to engage fully in a batterer intervention program, forgiveness may not be feasible and reconciliation can even be dangerous.
- Make sure the survivor is aware that local domestic violence programs provide free and confidential services, and that experienced advocates from these programs can provide information regarding legal rights, police and court procedures for protective orders, shelter availability, support groups, and other critical support resources.
- If the survivor is an immigrant on a visa, assure her that seeking assistance for being a victim of abuse will not cause her to be deported.
- Be aware that, for many reasons, people from minority cultures may be mistrustful of mainstream resources or government assistance.
- Encourage, but do not force, a survivor to phone the police, a local domestic violence hotline, or the City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line (877) 863-6338 for further information. Should she choose to make one or more of these calls, provide a private, safe space for her to do so.
- Quite often, the same information needs to be provided more than once to a survivor.

The survivor's role is to decide when it is safe to leave and when the spiritual, economic and emotional resources to support this decision are in place. The spiritual leader's role is to provide the survivor with options, support, and information about resources in a manner that is compassionate, concerned, and nonjudgmental.

A survivor who remains in a dangerous or potentially dangerous relationship should not be labeled as a spiritual failure or disobedient. Choosing not to leave usually reflects the limited resources available to the victim, or her reasonable assessment of available options and safety needs. Deciding to stay may also reflect fear of being ostracized by one's own family or of having the children lose a parent, or may represent an unwillingness to risk losing a significant relationship with someone who once seemed to be a loving and caring partner.

## Safety Planning

A safety plan is an individually-developed protocol that a survivor can use to get and stay safe. Even though there are booklets, pamphlets and sheets of paper that are called "safety plans," it is important to understand that safety planning is a process, not a "thing." Although spiritual leaders should know the elements and importance of a good safety plan, the specific details of each plan ideally should be worked out by the survivor, with the guidance of an experienced domestic violence advocate. To develop a safety plan, the survivor's level of danger and the specific resources needed to flee suddenly and to maintain violence-free, independent living, must be addressed. The plan should include:

- a safe place to go along with an alternative place if possible (friends, family, shelter or safe house);
- a list of necessary items to take, including cash, driver's license or other identification, car keys, medications, and a change of clothing for the survivor and her children;
- a list of important personal records to take and/or keep secure, such as birth certificates, visas, passports, Social Security numbers, prescriptions, bank account numbers, credit card numbers, other financial information, school records, and work history or resumé;

- contact information for friends, relatives, spiritual leaders and healthcare providers;
- a copy of the survivor's Order of Protection, if one has been issued; and
- other items as deemed necessary when the safety plan is being developed.

## Past Abuse, Current Pain

Some congregants, male and female alike, may be living with current pain from prior victimization, usually as a child witness to domestic violence, or as an adult survivor of child sexual abuse. Even if the abuse occurred decades ago, the pain can be as intense as if it occurred just yesterday. Congregants who approach you in personal pain from prior abuse should receive pastoral support and the utmost of compassion for their plight. Clergy and other spiritual leaders should seek out the advice and support of colleagues who have had experience in providing spiritual assistance for adult survivors of domestic violence or child sexual abuse, and should also refer congregants to area domestic violence and/or rape crisis programs.

## Identifying and Connecting with Community Resources

It always helps to be prepared. Each parish or congregation should create and maintain a resource and contact list of local agencies and programs to which congregants can be referred. These agencies and programs can become natural partners with the faith community, working together towards a sustained coordinated community response to domestic violence. Examples of local resources that can be of value to clergy and other spiritual leaders include local police departments; domestic violence service, advocacy and intervention agencies; batterer intervention programs; social service agencies; programs and services offered by different religious communities; local government or county court offices; culturally-specific agencies, programs and community centers; schools and other educational institutions; health center or primary medical care facilities; political and community opinion leaders; and local companies that address violence in the workplace. Specific Chicago-area, state and national resources can be found in the Endnotes.

## Action Steps for Clergy and Other Spiritual Leaders (Part II):

### Congregation and Community-Wide Steps to Address and Prevent Domestic Violence

*Reverend Walters looks out from the pulpit at members of the congregation he has served as senior pastor for the past two decades. His words are spoken in a gentle, yet matter-of-fact tone. “Sisters and Brothers, this morning we are going to discuss an issue we’ve not previously talked about,” he says. “In fact, I myself must confess that my early years in ministry were spent attempting to deny the existence of this problem within our own congregation and community. We’re going to focus today on situations of domestic violence occurring within the homes of some religious couples.”*

*In the weeks leading up to this sermon, Reverend Walters and his entire congregational leadership team enrolled in a 40-hour course on domestic violence awareness. The workshop was facilitated by local community service providers. On the Sunday the homily was delivered, the senior pastor invited the same service providers to set up tables in the narthex of the sanctuary to display information and resource materials related to their respective agencies. Advocates, batterer intervention counselors, law enforcement officers, legal professionals, shelter workers, and victim-witness assistance personnel were all in attendance.*

*The benevolent nature of divine beings was the primary theme of the sermon. “All the great spiritual teachers down through the centuries have had as their core values love and respect for one’s self and all others,” Reverend Walters said. “Thus, if we are to live spiritually healthy lives, we can never perpetrate any acts that are emotionally, physically, psychologically, sexually, or spiritually abusive*

*or violent toward another person. We must also never violate pets, plants, or property. Such behavior is always sinful and an insult to divine principles. In many instances, the acts are also criminal.”*

*Following the service, more than fifty congregants, victims-survivors and perpetrators alike, sought guidance and support from the community service providers, and from the congregational leadership team and Reverend Walters.*

Our focus on domestic violence as a spiritual issue is in keeping with the efforts of others who work to deliver the important cultural message that it is morally and spiritually wrong, and against the law, to address conflict by the use of intimidation and violence. Clergy and other spiritual leaders can communicate this important message effectively and successfully in the course of their work. When clergy and other spiritual leaders, and their staff, model competence and concern about domestic violence, congregants can face these difficult issues with courage, determination, and the knowledge that they are not alone in despair. In addition to clergy and other spiritual leaders establishing a tone of dignity and respect in the faith setting, the entire congregation can work together toward healing for affected individuals, and towards healthy congregations, healthy communities and healthy societies for all.

There are many ways to raise awareness about domestic violence on a congregation- or community-wide level:

- Sermons can include and discuss relevant texts and passages on the value and respect that should be shown towards women, and can also deal explicitly with the unacceptability of domestic violence or any other tactics of coercion in relationships. Sermons and special programs can be timed to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month (every October) and with Sexual Assault Awareness Month (every April).
- Frank discussion with individual congregants about how to develop and sustain healthy relationships, respect for the autonomy of others, and nonviolent means to address conflict should be encouraged.
- Educational offerings during Sunday School and adult and premarital education that focus on defining the characteristics of healthy families that are free from abuse can be developed and delivered.
- Posters and brochures can be displayed prominently in public rooms throughout the congregation, and in private areas such as bathrooms.
- Clergy, other spiritual leaders and office staff can participate in training programs offered either by the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network (CMBWN) or by other groups to become more knowledgeable about domestic violence dynamics, referral resources, protocols, and safety procedures.
- Clergy, other spiritual leaders and office staff can develop and maintain a resource and referral list that can be used to tailor recommendations for education and help for individual congregants. Many useful resources are included in the Endnotes section of this guide. Names and contact information for psychologists, social workers, congregants whose residences can be used as a temporary "safe homes," translators, attorneys and others who can be of assistance to survivors can be included.
- Clergy and lay leaders alike can host separate "coffee chats" or "tea times" for women and men during which topics of safety, family health, and ultimately domestic and sexual violence can be discussed in a safe and supportive setting. Such discussion groups should have generic, non-threatening names that speak to general health and wellness for women and men. For example, for women, discussion groups on women's health, healthy families, healthy relationships, and "what's on your mind?" can invite discussion on topics that include, but would not be limited to, domestic violence. This type of approach would not necessarily threaten male partners. For men, discussion groups on men's health, family safety, men as allies in the quest to end violence, and "what's on your mind?" can be offered.
- Separate-sex discussion groups for teenagers can be offered to discuss healthy relationships and what to do if "a friend" needs help.
- Congregants, with support from their parish or congregation, can become involved in community-wide volunteer projects to promote domestic violence awareness and prevention. Examples include holding book, toiletry and household product drives for women and children in or emerging from shelter; organizing homework supervision and enrichment programs for children living in shelter; and participating in fundraising walks and other activities to benefit local shelters or other support agencies.
- An individual congregation can "adopt" an entire shelter or agency to assure that its evolving needs are met on an ongoing basis. Congregants can then participate in an expansive range of helpful initiatives defined collaboratively with shelter staff.
- Individual families can "adopt" a woman in shelter (and/or her children) to make sure they have tangible necessities such as school supplies, clean clothes and winter jackets, hats and gloves, mentoring and support for job training, and education and spiritual support to help them

attain long-term safety, independence and freedom from abuse.

- A “safe home” network can be developed either within an individual congregation, or in collaboration with a nearby congregation or domestic violence agency. Safe homes provide short-term, emergency refuge for women and children in crisis and allow them breathing space to define next steps while working with advocates from a local domestic violence agency. A flexible, high-quality safe home network is necessary because battered women’s shelters are almost always filled to capacity.
- Congregants can be encouraged to receive training to become volunteer advocates and hotline staff for local domestic violence programs, and to bring their new knowledge back into the spiritual setting.

- The congregation can participate in joint efforts with local agencies, police, schools, healthcare providers, and with other congregations to foster a true coordinated community response. Collaborative efforts are crucial to create effective long-term prevention.

CMBWN and other local agencies and colleagues can provide invaluable assistance and support in developing and conducting each of the above initiatives.

# Talking with Children and Teenagers

Children themselves can become victims of domestic violence directly by being physically or sexually hurt, or indirectly by witnessing violence or living in an abusive household. Children — even very young ones — are deeply affected by what transpires in their environment, and can sustain severe emotional and psychological trauma from being exposed to domestic violence. It is wise to invest in the future by believing the stories children share, having compassion for and taking care of children who have been affected, and taking proactive steps to prevent exposure to violence and abuse. When dealing with children exposed to domestic violence, pay attention to what they say and do. A baby or toddler — even one who is pre-verbal — may mimic abusive acts; react to noises, lights, and changes in the environment; or react in an exaggerated manner to “ordinary” separations from caregivers. A preschooler may not be able or willing to talk about the abuse she/he has witnessed, but may re-enact the experience in the play setting. A latency-age child may regress to bed-wetting, thumb sucking, or other telling behaviors. A preteen may become sexually active, start smoking, become truant, or act out in other ways that appear on the surface to be “bad behavior.” But, in reality, she/he may be manifesting intense fear and anxiety. Teenagers may replicate what they have learned at home, and become either victims or perpetrators. At no age is abuse unnoticed by children, and they are always adversely affected.

In addition to suffering the effects of witnessing violence in the home, teenagers also may become involved in abusive relationships themselves. It is helpful to ask teenagers questions such as these when screening for abuse:

- Have you begun to date?
- Has your boyfriend/girlfriend ever threatened to hurt you, or have you ever threatened to hurt him/her?
- Are you ever afraid of your boyfriend/girlfriend or of an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend?
- Have you ever had a pushing or shoving fight with a boyfriend/girlfriend?
- Have you ever gotten hurt from a fight with a boyfriend/ girlfriend?
- Have you begun to have sex?
- Has anyone ever forced you to have sex when you didn’t want to?
- Have you been able to talk to anyone else about this?

When dealing with a child or teenager who has been exposed to domestic violence, be a steady, firm, loving and reassuring presence in his or her life. Realize that a young person’s misbehavior may be the result of being abused, witnessing violence, or living in an abusive household. Recognize related behaviors, such as aggressive behaviors against themselves or others, apathy, isolation, withdrawal, emotional outbursts, depression, excessive weight gain or loss, poor school performance, self-mutilation, and talk of suicide. Reassure the young person (again and again) that the abuse is not his/her fault. Listen carefully to the child’s perspective on the situation at home, or if the child is younger, observe for the effects of child exposure to abuse. Do what you can to ensure that the child is safe, and make sure you adhere to your mandated reporter responsibilities regarding child abuse and/or neglect (see Chapter 8).

# Perpetrators in Your Congregation

## Identifying the Abuser

At every service and during every sermon, there will be women and children present who are survivors, and men sitting in the pews who are their perpetrators. Clergy and other spiritual leaders should keep an eye out for congregants who leave abruptly during a service, or whose demeanor, body language or clothing raises red flags for abuse. In addition, be aware that there may be survivors who want to speak with you, yet don't know how to initiate a conversation, or who are unable to seek you out alone because the perpetrator is controlling their actions, hovering around them or monitoring with whom they speak and what they say.

## How to Act and What to Say

Whenever a man, or in rare cases, a woman, comes to you on his own because he wants to seek advice or to talk about his relationship, always listen carefully for possible clues of domestic violence. While keeping safety for the possible victim, yourself and your staff in the foreground, listen carefully, attentively and respectfully, while making your stance clear about violence in any form for any reason.

A male congregant who approaches you to talk about domestic violence in his own current life will most commonly claim that he, himself, is the victim, and then rapidly turn the conversation to what she did that made him do what he did. Although in some cases men truly are the victims, experience tells us that except for domestic violence in same-sex couples, male victimization is the exception, not the rule. Offer open-ended statements, such as, "Help me understand," or "Please tell me more;" listen carefully to the congregant's narrative; and remain composed, level

and respectful at all times. It may be difficult to discern who the perpetrator is, especially in relationships that you are told include "mutual combat," as is often claimed. Since the hallmark of domestic violence is power and control on the part of the abuser, and fear and intimidation on the part of the victim, it is often helpful to ask a male congregant claiming victimization if he is afraid of his partner, or if he has ever been injured or needed emergency help of any kind. In general, perpetrators scoff at the notion that they would be afraid, and deny any material injury.

In the uncommon situation in which a congregant discloses that he has hit or hurt his partner, thank him for choosing to disclose to you. Let him know that it takes a "big man" to have the guts to admit behavior that he knows is wrong, and that you will work with him to help him find resources to help change his behavior and to promote spiritual healing. Referral to a certified batterer intervention program is a critical next step. Offer to stand by as the initial call is made and to support his enrollment in and completion of a recognized program.

In some cases, a man who approaches you to talk about domestic violence may want to unburden himself about having committed abuse in a past relationship. Men who approach you to talk about prior perpetration may be seeking help to prevent violence in a potential future relationship, or may be in a current relationship that is at risk for violence. In either case, it is critical to acknowledge the courage it took to approach you about such a sensitive topic, to recommend, in the strongest terms, enrollment in a certified batterer intervention program, and to provide ongoing spiritual care.

In all cases, it is important to convey your respect for the individual congregant's dignity — even if he is an abuser — while not condoning his abusive behavior. It is important to emphasize your and your congregation's belief, that violence — whether verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual — is always wrong, that the precepts of your religious faith do not condone behavior of this sort, and that no one deserves to be mistreated. Emphasize

that it is the abuser's responsibility — not the victim's — to find a way to stop his violent behavior. Inform the abuser about appropriate steps to take, particularly enrolling in a certified batterer intervention program. Provide one or more phone numbers for referral. Offer to have the abusive congregant make the call himself with you present. Do not offer or agree to provide couples or marriage counseling.

# Domestic Violence Laws and the Illinois Domestic Violence Act

Although clergy and other spiritual leaders may not be directly involved in the legal procedures described below, it is important to know of their existence and purpose. Your role, when abuse is identified, is to refer the survivor to a trained advocate who will help explore options, assist with safety planning, and make other appropriate referrals.

## The Illinois Domestic Violence Act

### What is the Illinois Domestic Violence Act?

The Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA) is a comprehensive law that protects victims of domestic violence by creating Orders of Protection and by requiring the police to perform certain functions. In some cases, violation of an Order of Protection can be charged as a criminal offense.

### Who is covered by the Illinois Domestic Violence Act?

The IDVA protects victims of domestic violence who are related to the abuser in one of the following ways:

- related by blood or by present or prior marriage;
- share or formerly shared a common dwelling (apartment or home);
- have or allegedly have a child in common;
- share or allegedly share a blood relationship through a child; or
- have or have had a dating or engagement relationship.

The IDVA also provides the following specific provisions:

- An adult with disabilities can obtain an Order of Protection against his/her personal assistant.

- Any person who lives in the petitioner's household can be listed as a protected person on the petitioner's Order of Protection, whether or not the person has a family or household relationship with the respondent.
- Anyone can file for an Order of Protection on behalf of a person who is prevented by age, disability, health or inaccessibility from filing on their own behalf. An Order of Protection filed in this manner cannot be extended over the objection of the victim.

**Definition of Abuse:** Abuse under the IDVA includes physical abuse, harassment, interference with personal liberty, intimidation of a dependent, willful deprivation, neglect and exploitation.

**Order of Protection:** An Order of Protection (OP) is a court order that prohibits the abuser from committing certain behaviors or orders him to perform certain acts. To obtain an OP, the victim must prove that abuse has occurred in the past. In some cases, violation of an OP can result in an arrest for the crime of Violation of Order of Protection, carrying a penalty of up to 364 days in jail. If the abuser has prior convictions related to domestic violence, the penalty can be up to 3 years in prison. The following types of relief can be granted on an OP.

- prohibit further abuse;
- grant exclusive possession of the residence to the victim and prohibit the abuser from entering or remaining at the residence;
- order the abuser to stay away from specific locations, such as the victim's place of employment or the child's school, or to stay away from the protected persons wherever they may be;

- prohibit possession of firearms;
- provide for the protection of minor children by granting care of the children to the victim and prohibiting child abduction;
- provide for child or other support and require reimbursement of certain expenses related to the abuse;
- grant the use of personal property and prohibit the abuser from taking or destroying property; and/or
- order the abuser to attend counseling.

#### **Where can an Order of Protection be obtained?**

An Order of Protection can be obtained in civil court, in criminal court or in juvenile court. In civil court, an OP can be obtained with the assistance of an attorney; as an independent proceeding; or as part of a divorce, guardianship, probate or other civil proceeding. In criminal court, an OP can be obtained in connection with a criminal charge if the petitioner is the victim and the respondent is the defendant in that case. An OP can also be obtained in juvenile court, in connection with a delinquency petition or a criminal prosecution.

#### **What are the different types of Orders of Protection?**

There are three types of Orders of Protection: an Emergency Order, an Interim Order, and a Plenary Order. There are no fees for filing or serving Orders of Protection.

**Emergency Order:** An Emergency Order is valid for 14 - 21 days. It can be entered without notice to the respondent under certain conditions. An Emergency Order cannot grant counseling, temporary custody, payment of support, monetary compensation, or reimbursement of shelter costs, nor can the Order prohibit possession of weapons.

**Interim Order:** An Interim Order is valid for up to 30 days. It is issued after the respondent has been served or the petitioner has served notice on the respondent and has satisfied the court that she or he is diligently attempting to complete the required service of process. An Interim Order may not include counseling, payment of support or monetary compensation, shelter reimbursement or weapons remedies unless the respondent has filed a general appearance or has been personally served.

**Plenary Order:** Plenary Orders of Protection can be valid for varying lengths of time. If entered in conjunction with a divorce, a Plenary Order can remain in effect for the life of the final decree. If issued in conjunction with a criminal offense, a Plenary Order can run for the length of the defendant's sentence plus two years. If entered in conjunction with another proceeding, it can remain in effect until the conclusion of the case.

**Obtaining an Order of Protection:** Orders of Protection are available:

- in civil court, usually with an attorney, as an independent proceeding or as part of a divorce, guardianship, probate or other civil proceeding; or
- in criminal court, in connection with a criminal charge if the petitioner is the victim and the respondent is the defendant in that case.

In Chicago, victims of domestic violence may seek an OP either in conjunction with a pending criminal case, or in civil court unconnected to any other civil case, at the Centralized Domestic Violence Court at 555 West Harrison.

**Violation of an Order of Protection:** Violation of an Order of Protection is a Class A misdemeanor for the first offense, carrying a penalty of up to 364 days in jail. Second or subsequent violations can be charged as a Class 4 felony, carrying a penalty of 1 to 3 years.

**Law Enforcement Responsibilities Under the IDVA:**

Every law enforcement agency must develop, adopt and implement written policies, consistent with the IDVA, regarding arrest procedures for domestic violence incidents. Agencies are encouraged to consult with other law enforcement agencies and with community organizations, including clergy and other spiritual leaders who have expertise in recognizing and handling domestic violence incidents.

Responding police officers must make a written report of any good-faith allegation of domestic violence, even if an arrest is not made. The report must include the disposition of the officer's investigation, the victim's statements as to the frequency and severity of prior incidents of abuse by the same offender, and the number of prior calls for police assistance.

Whenever a law enforcement officer has reason to believe that a person has been abused by a family or household member, the officer must immediately use all reasonable means to prevent further abuse, including:

- arresting the abuser, when deemed appropriate;
- seizing and taking any weapons used in the commission of abuse;
- accompanying the victim to his or her residence, for a reasonable period of time, to remove personal belongings or possessions;
- offering a written summary of available procedures and relief in a language appropriate to the victim;
- providing the responding officer's name and badge number to the victim;
- offering referral to an accessible domestic violence service agency;
- advising the victim about seeking medical attention and preserving evidence, specifically including: taking photographs of injuries or property damage and retaining damaged clothing or other property; and

- arranging or providing accessible transportation to a medical facility for treatment of injuries or to a nearby place of shelter or safety. When a victim chooses to leave the scene of the offense, it is presumed that it is in the best interest of the children or other dependents in the victim's care to remain with the victim or a person designated by the victim, and not with the abusing party.

**Criminal complaints:** Criminal prosecution of abusers plays an important role in stopping domestic violence. It sends a clear message that there are consequences for committing domestic violence and that such violence is not just a private or family matter.

A criminal complaint is often initiated by the arrest of the abuser following an incident of domestic violence. When an arrest is not made, the IDVA requires officers to inform the victim of steps that can be taken to file a civil complaint.

In Chicago, after having made a police report, a victim can seek criminal charges at the Centralized Domestic Violence Court at 555 West Harrison. There, the victim will be interviewed by an Assistant State's Attorney who will determine if criminal charges are appropriate. If charges are filed, an Order of Protection will normally be sought as part of that case.

If an arrest has been made in Chicago, the victim can also come to the courthouse to obtain an Order of Protection as part of that criminal case. Victims are advised to arrive at the courthouse no later than 1:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

For crimes occurring in the suburbs or in other counties, victims and other interested parties are advised to contact a local domestic violence program or the Illinois State's Attorney's Office for further information.

## Mandatory Reporting

Domestic violence against competent adults is a crime under both federal law and Illinois state law, however, it does not fall under any mandatory reporting statutes in Illinois. In fact, reporting domestic violence to law enforcement authorities without a woman's explicit consent breaches confidentiality and can be dangerous. The survivor is the only person who should make the decision to report domestic violence. Clergy are not required to file any reports related to domestic violence unless the issue involves children, incompetent elders or disabled persons. Each of these three categories is described in detail below.

**Child abuse:** If the spiritual leader suspects that there might be physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of children, he/she, as a mandated reporter, is required by law to contact the Illinois Child Abuse Hotline, (800) 25-ABUSE [(800) 252-2873]. If a report to child protective services (CPS) needs to be filed, the clergy member or other spiritual leader should inform the CPS caseworker that the mother (or other caregiver) is living with domestic violence. The child protection team can then consult with specialists in domestic violence to take action geared to promoting safety for the mother and children together. Clergy and other spiritual leaders should explain clearly and compassionately to the non-abusive parent/caregiver why it is necessary to contact child protective services. Such a conversation, although difficult to initiate, can help to establish a basis of honesty and trust, and ultimately, to promote safety for both mother and children.

**Elder abuse:** For individuals 62 years of age or older and who are determined to be incapable of making informed, competent decisions on their own behalf, reports must be filed with an elder protective service agency. To file a report of domestic violence against an elder otherwise not capable of deciding to report independently, contact the Elder Abuse Hotline, (800) 279-0400.

**Abuse of disabled persons:** For persons with mental or physical disabilities, reports must be filed with the Illinois Hotline for Abuse of Adults with Disabilities, (800) 368-1463.

In all cases, when a report must be filed to comply with a legal mandate, every effort should be made to communicate the reasons for filing to the congregant, along with an affirmation of the survivor's dignity, her right to live free from abuse, and a pledge to stay in close and supportive contact. In addition, it is wise to help the congregant identify resources that will help to ensure safety for herself and her family if there is a fear of, or reason to suspect, retaliation by the perpetrator. A spiritual leader or any other mandated reporter who fails to comply with his/her mandated reporting responsibilities may be subject to disciplinary action, fines, or civil liability.

# Preventing Domestic Violence: A Spiritual Calling

## Creating a Climate for Prevention in Your Congregation

Although identifying and addressing abuse that affects individual congregants is a critical first step, true primary prevention for the congregation and for the community at-large is the ultimate goal. Clergy and other spiritual leaders can be key in the quest for prevention by supporting efforts by individual congregants and by working in collaboration with clergy and spiritual leaders from other congregations and from multiple community agencies to view domestic violence prevention as a spiritual calling. Clergy who take a leadership role can set a tone and prepare the stage for a profound and sustainable change in the way each and every congregant views both healthy and unhealthy relationships. Every time the words domestic violence, healthy relationships, respect for women and children, and prevention are mentioned in sermons, individual and group discussions, publications and newsletters, and in communications with the community at-large, a climate for prevention is fostered and a legacy of peace and respect is sown.

## Clergy and Other Spiritual Leaders as Change Agents in a Larger Community Response

Clergy and other spiritual leaders are in a position to exert the leadership necessary to make a difference. Leadership starts with providing and communicating a

vision and taking a stand against domestic violence. Clergy and other spiritual leaders need to provide and communicate this vision clearly through public statements, messages in bulletins and newsletters, and interactions with colleagues. Clergy and other spiritual leaders can engage in ongoing communication that flows adequately through organizational levels, thereby ensuring that the rank and file remains attuned to key issues. In addition, religious communities need to promote the availability of viable domestic violence services that support and nurture healing and helping. Finally, there is a critical need for more female and male clergy and other religious leaders to seek education and training in appropriate domestic violence prevention and intervention strategies.

The spiritual leader's job should not be restricted to the sanctuary or consultation room. Clergy and other spiritual leaders are respected in the community, their opinions are sought out and given great credence, and their influence as role models and community leaders is clear. Thus, it is crucial that spiritual leaders use their positions of leadership and respect in joining community coalitions; advocating for improved services, laws, and practices; and modeling respectful, nonviolent behavior. In short, spiritual leaders can very effectively "teach peace" in the course of their professional and personal activities.<sup>28</sup> The "public" role of the spiritual leader as advocate and change agent is perhaps as important as the "private" job of providing spiritual care for individual congregants.

# Help for Clergy, Other Spiritual Leaders and Their Families

Although the lay public generally perceives clergy and other spiritual leaders as being capable of remaining calm — even serene — in the most tense or heart-breaking of situations, spiritual leaders are human beings, and as such possess the same strengths and frailties as their congregants.

Individual clergy and other religious community leaders may themselves have been victimized as children or as adults, or may be in an abusive relationship currently

as a victim or a perpetrator. Those spiritual leaders whose lives have been affected by abuse are urged to seek help from a hotline or direct service organization; or from a trusted colleague, therapist, family member, or other source of support.

For emergency assistance, please call your local police or 911 (where available), a local domestic violence hotline, or the City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line at (877) 863-6338.

# Endnotes

Congregants being victimized or at risk of domestic violence can benefit greatly from your support, understanding, and sensitive care. As a member of the faith and spiritual community, you may be the only individual in whom a congregant experiencing abuse confides, so

it is critical that you have the best available information for yourself and for your congregants. For more information to assist you in supporting and advocating for individuals experiencing partner violence, please contact the following resources:

## Local and Statewide Resources

This listing includes many, but not all, of the existing resources in Illinois that provide support and services for victims of domestic violence.

**For emergency help, dial 911.**

### Chicago–Area Resources

#### Domestic Violence

City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line, 24-Hour Toll Free Confidential Help Line  
(877) 863-6338

#### Child Abuse

Illinois Department of Child and Family Services  
Child Abuse Hotline  
(800) 252-2873  
[www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs)

#### Elder Abuse

Illinois Department of Aging  
Elder Abuse Hotline  
(800) 279-0400

#### Abuse of Disabled Persons

Illinois Department of Human Services  
Adults with Disabilities Domestic Abuse Program  
(800) 368-1463

#### Advocacy Organizations, Service Providers and Support Groups

Arab-American Family Services  
(708) 974-8084  
[www.aafamilyservices.org](http://www.aafamilyservices.org)

Between Friends  
(800) 603-4357 (Crisis Hotline)  
(773) 274-6508 TTY  
[www.betweenfriendschicago.org](http://www.betweenfriendschicago.org)  
*Also offers civil/criminal advocacy and counseling*

Break The Silence Foundation  
Fundacion Rompe El Silencio  
(708) 795-3333

Community Crisis Center  
(847) 697-2380  
[www.crisiscenter.org](http://www.crisiscenter.org)

Crisis Center for South Suburbia  
(708) 429-7233  
[www.crisisctr.org](http://www.crisisctr.org)

Family Rescue  
Community Outreach Program  
(773) 375-6863  
[www.familyrescueinc.org](http://www.familyrescueinc.org)

Harris YWCA  
(888) 293-2080  
(773) 955-3100

Hull House Uptown  
Women’s Counseling Center  
Jane Adams Association  
(773) 561-3500  
[www.hullhouse.org/uc/dviolence.asp](http://www.hullhouse.org/uc/dviolence.asp)

Journey Home Ministries  
(630) 852-5273

Korean-American Women in Need (KAN-WIN)  
(773) 583-0880  
[www.kanwin.org](http://www.kanwin.org)

Life Span  
(847) 824-4454  
[www.life-span.org](http://www.life-span.org)

Metropolitan Family Services  
(773) 884-3310  
www.metrofamily.org

Mujeres Latinas en Accion  
(312) 738-5358  
www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org

Neapolitan Lighthouse  
(773) 722-0005  
www.neopolitan.org

Pillars Community  
Services/Constance  
Morris House  
Lagrange Park  
(708) 485-5254  
TTY: (708) 485-5257

Polish-American Association  
(773) 282-8206

Rainbow House  
(312) 762-6611  
www.rainbow-house.org

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago  
Women with Disabilities Center  
(312) 238-7238

SHALVA  
(773) 583-HOPE(4673)

St. Pius V Parish H.O.P.E. Program  
(312) 226-6161

Sarah's Inn  
708-386-4225  
www.sarahsinn.org

South Suburban Family Shelter  
(708) 335-3028, (877) 335-3020  
www.ssfs1.org

Southwest Women Working Together  
(773) 568-2733 Crisis Line  
www.swwt.org

Universal Family Connection, Inc.  
(773) 881-1711

Wellspring/Manantial  
(847)-882-7580

WINGS  
(847) 348-3001  
www.wingsprogram.com

YWCA of North Shore  
(847) 864-8780, (877) 718-1868

## Emergency Shelters

Apna Ghar  
(773) 334-4663 (24-hr hotline)  
(773) 334-0173 (office)  
<http://www.apnagar.org>  
*Domestic violence shelter and  
counseling services for South  
Asian women and their children*

A Safe Place  
(847) 249-4450  
*Also offers children's services,  
legal support and counseling*

Chicago Abused Women Coalition  
Greenhouse Shelter  
(773) 248-4566  
www.cawc.org  
*Also offers children's services,  
legal support and counseling*

Community Crisis Center  
(847) 697-2380  
www.crisiscenter.org  
*Also offers domestic violence  
& sexual assault counseling &  
court advocacy*

Crisis Center for South Suburbia  
(708) 429-7255  
www.crisisctr.org  
*Also offers counseling, civil  
& criminal legal advocacy*

Constance Morris House/  
The Pillars Community Services  
(708) 485-5254  
*Also offers counseling*

Evanston Shelter  
(847) 864-8780

Family Rescue  
Rosenthal Family Lodge  
(773) 375-8400  
(773) 375-8774 TTY  
*Also offers counseling and children's  
services. Accepts male teens  
accompanying their mothers*

House of the Good Shepherd  
(773) 935-3434 — Intake open  
8:30am -5:00pm  
*Also offers children's services,  
legal support and counseling*

Neapolitan Lighthouse Shelter  
(773) 722-0005  
(773) 826-2883 TTY  
www.neopolitan.org  
*Also offers children's services,  
legal support and counseling*

Rainbow House  
(773) 762-6611  
*Also offers children's services,  
legal support and counseling*

Safe Harbor/Puerto Seguro  
(773) 342-1850  
*Also offers children's services,  
legal support and counseling*

South Suburban Family Shelter  
(708) 335-3028, (877) 335-3020  
www.ssfs1.org  
*Also offers civil & criminal  
legal advocacy*

Southwest Women Working Together  
(773) 737-2500, (773) 568-2460  
www.swwt.org  
*Also offers counseling, civil  
& criminal legal advocacy*

### **Transitional and Second-Stage Housing**

Bobbie E. Wright CCMHC  
(773) 722-7900

Casa Central  
(773) 645-2400

Crisis Center For South Suburbia  
(708) 429-7255  
www.crisisctr.org

Family Rescue  
Ridgeland Transitional Living &  
Day Care Program  
(773) 667-0715

Korean American Women in Need  
(KAN-WIN)  
(773) 583-0880  
24-Hour Crisis Hotline  
www.kanwin.org

Matthew House  
DV Services  
(773) 536-2528

Sanctuary (SSFS)  
(708) 283-1421

Southwest Women Working  
Together Courage Homes  
(773) 568-2733  
www.swwt.org

United Human Services Center  
(773) 373-3194

### **Sexual Assault Services**

Chicago Citywide  
24-Hour Hotline  
(888) 293-2080

Alivio Medical Center  
(773) 254 -1400

Mujeres Latinas en Accion  
Sexual Assault Program  
(312) 738-5358  
*Also offers legal support*

New Hope Community  
Services-Sexual Assault  
(773) 737-0401

Pillars Community Services/  
The Constance Morris House  
(708) 741-4500  
*Focusing on the needs of  
Arab-American women*

Rape Victim Advocates  
(312) 663-6303

Rape Crisis Hotline  
(888) 293-2080  
www.rapevictimadvocates.org

Southwest Women Working Together  
(773) 737-2500  
www.swwt.org

YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago  
(888) 293-2080  
*Services available at the following  
locations: Harris Center, Loop, Rise  
Children's Center, and Logan Square*

### **Children's Services**

Chicago Child Care  
Society Project KIDS  
(773) 256-2400  
*Also offers counseling services)*

Between Friends  
(800) 603-4357  
(773) 274-6508 TTY

Heartland Alliance Women's Program  
(773) 847-5602

Korean American Women in Need  
(KAN-WIN)  
(773) 583-0880  
24-Hour Crisis Hotline  
www.kanwin.org

Life Span  
(847) 824-0382  
www.life-span.org

South Suburban Family Shelter  
(708) 798-7737  
www.ssfs1.org

### **Batterer Intervention Programs**

Avance Domestic Abuse Batterer Intervention Program  
(773) 293-1770

Center for the Prevention of Family Violence, Ltd.  
(877) 218-3779

Crisis Center For South Suburbia  
(708) 429-7255  
www.crisisctr.org

Circuit Court of Cook County Domestic Violence Program Batterer Treatment  
(773) 869-6056

La Familia Unida Batterer Treatment  
(773) 522-7798

Salvation Army Family Services Partner Abuse Intervention Programs  
(773) 275-6233

South Suburban Family Shelter  
(708) 798-7737  
www.ssfs1.org

Westside Domestic Abuse Project  
(773) 862-5408

### **Legal Advocacy/Representation**

Hull House Court Advocacy Program  
(312) 325-9175

Chicago Legal Clinic — Loop  
(312) 726-2938  
*Other locations in Pilsen and Southside*

Family Rescue Court Advocacy Program  
(312) 325-9300  
(312) 747-5493  
*Criminal, civil and felony*

Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago-Project SAFE & Family Law  
(800) 824-4050  
*Criminal and civil*

Life Span-Legal Clinic  
(312) 408-1210  
*Criminal and civil*

Pro Bono Advocates  
(312) 827-2420

### **Substance Abuse Treatment/ Counseling Services**

Center for New Horizons Counseling Program  
(773) 924-1423

Counseling Center of Lakeview Latino Counseling Services Program  
(773) 769-6200

Hamdard Center For Health & Human Services  
(630) 860-2290/ 860-9132

Haymarket House Domestic Violence Counseling Program  
(312) 226-8048/226-7984

SHALVA  
(773) 583-HOPE (4673)

Samaritan Community Center Domestic Violence Services  
(773) 761-5119

Wellspring  
(773) 723-2119

### **Immigration Assistance**

Healthcare Alternative Systems BASTA! BASTA!  
(773) 745-7107

Korean American Community Services  
(773) 583-5501

Life Span  
(312) 408-1210  
www.life-span.org

Midwest Immigrant & Human Rights Center - a Program of Heartland Alliance  
(312) 435-4550, (312) 660-1370

## National Resources

### Faith-Based Organizations

Christian Recovery International  
[www.christianrecovery.com](http://www.christianrecovery.com)

FaithTrust Institute  
[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

Family Refuge Center  
[www.familyrefugecenter.com](http://www.familyrefugecenter.com)

Family Renewal Shelter  
[www.domesticviolencehelp.org](http://www.domesticviolencehelp.org)

Global Institute on Violence & Exploitation (G.I.V.E.)  
[www.G-I-V-E.org](http://www.G-I-V-E.org)

HOPE NOW  
[www.hopenow.net](http://www.hopenow.net)

Jewish Women International  
[www.jwi.org](http://www.jwi.org)

Northwest Family Life Learning & Counseling Center  
[www.northwestfamilylife.org](http://www.northwestfamilylife.org)

Shalom Bayit: Bay Area Jewish Women Working to End Domestic Violence  
[www.shalombayit.org](http://www.shalombayit.org)

Union Gospel Mission  
Olympia Branch  
[www.ougmm.org](http://www.ougmm.org)

World Evangelical Alliance  
Commission on Women's Concerns  
[www.worldevangelical.org/cwc.html](http://www.worldevangelical.org/cwc.html)

### National Non-Governmental Resources

American Psychological Association  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)  
*Offers journals, articles and information on the psychological effects of family violence on men, women and children.*

Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence  
(415) 954-9988  
[www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute](http://www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute)

Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP)  
(800) 903-0111 ext. 1  
[www.bwjf.org](http://www.bwjf.org)

CAVNET (Communities Against Violence Network)  
[www.cavnet.org](http://www.cavnet.org)  
*Interactive website for experts in domestic violence, sexual assault and other related fields.*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/dvp.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/dvp.htm)  
*Provides up-to-date information on research and statistics related to child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and suicide and youth violence.*

Family Violence Prevention Fund  
[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)  
*This is the national healthcare resource center for family violence. The endabuse.org website contains*

*comprehensive information and resources for survivors and those who are in the helping fields.*

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community  
(877) NIDVACC (643-8222)  
[www.dvinstitute.org](http://www.dvinstitute.org)

Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse  
[www.mincava.umn.edu](http://www.mincava.umn.edu)  
*An excellent website providing access to research, education and other violence-related resources.*

National Center for Children Exposed to Violence  
[www.ncccev.org](http://www.ncccev.org)  
*A research and advocacy organization addressing the consequences of exposure to violence in children.*

National Center on Elder Abuse  
[www.elderabusecenter.org](http://www.elderabusecenter.org)  
*The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) is a national resource for elder rights, law enforcement and legal professionals, public policy leaders, researchers, and the public. The Center's mission is to promote understanding, knowledge sharing and action on elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.*

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)  
[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)  
*Serves as a national information and referral center for the general public, media, battered women and their children, allied and member agencies and organizations.*

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
(800) 799-SAFE (7233)  
www.ndvh.org

*The National Domestic Violence Hotline operates a 24-hour, toll free, confidential hotline that provides support and information for victims of abuse and for friends and family who are concerned about a victim.*

National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence  
www.dvalianza.org

*Promotes understanding, initiates and sustains dialogue, and generates solutions toward the elimination of domestic violence affecting Latino communities.*

National Organization for Women  
www.now.org/issues/violence/  
*Provides information and links to resources for promoting equality and justice for women.*

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
(800) 537-2238  
www.nrcdv.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center  
(877) 739-3895  
www.nsvrc.org

National Training & Technical Assistance Center on DV Trauma & Mental Health  
(312) 726-7020  
www.dvmhpi.org  
*Promotes dialogue, builds capacity and generates policy in response to the trauma and mental health*

*needs of domestic violence survivors and their children.*

National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center  
www.vawprevention.org  
*Provides useful information for scientists, practitioners, advocates, grassroots organizations, and other professionals or lay persons interested in current topics related to violence against women and its prevention.*

Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International  
www.nnvawi.org  
*The mission of NNVAWI is to eliminate violence through advancing nursing education, practice, research and public policy.*

Partnerships Against Violence Network  
www.pavnet.org  
*This website houses a “virtual library” of information about violence, representing data from seven different Federal agencies.*

Project DVORA: Domestic Violence Outreach Response & Advocacy  
www.jfsseattle.org

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)  
National Sexual Assault Hotline  
(800) 656-HOPE  
www.rainn.org  
*The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. RAINN operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline and carries out programs to prevent*

*sexual assault, help victims and ensure that rapists are brought to justice.*

Sacred Circle National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women  
(877) 733-7263  
www.sacred-circle.com

VAWnet  
www.vawnet.org  
*An online resource for advocates working to end domestic violence, sexual assault, and other violence in the lives of women and their children.*

Violence Against Women Act Outline and Links  
www.urban.org/crime/vaw-hglt.htm#highlights

## **Federal Agencies Addressing Domestic Violence Issues**

Centers for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov/>

National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
www.ncjrs.org  
National Institute on Aging  
www.nih.gov/nia/

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism  
www.niaaa.nih.gov/

National Institute on Drug Abuse  
www.nida.nih.gov/

National Institute of Justice:  
Bureau of Justice Statistics  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/  
welcome.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/welcome.html)

National Institute of Justice,  
Violence Against Women Office  
(VAWO)  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo)

National Institute of Mental Health  
[www.nimh.nih.gov/](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/)  
U.S. Department of Health and  
Human Services  
[www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov)

U.S. Department of Justice Office  
on Violence Against Women  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo)

U. S. Department of State  
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violence/violenlinks.htm](http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/women/violence/violenlinks.htm)

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Programs. [www.avp.org](http://www.avp.org)

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Office Of Justice Programs, U.S.  
Department Of Justice, Washington,  
DC: November 2004.  
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