

FCIA Domestic Violence Task Force

Domestic Violence Intervention: First Steps for Clergy and Faith Leaders

Domestic Violence Presentation:
***Understanding Domestic Violence and Its Victims
within Faith Communities***

Step 1:

Create a platform for discussion about Domestic Violence:

- Discuss what are the thoughts and feelings of those in leadership on the subject of DV
- Identify the path for those who would lead the discussion on DV within the Faith Community
- Identify what part the Faith Community wants to play (i.e., support, referral, temporary shelter, financial assistance)
- Create a process where people could come and express their concerns about a family or where the victim may acknowledge her/his abuse.

Step 2:

Acknowledgement: I (we) Believe You

- Allow the person to speak about what they have been experiencing uninterrupted.
- Develop your empathic listening skills
- Stay victim-focused
- Maintain confidentiality!
- Understand your limits
- Be honest about what the Faith Community stance has been and how that is changing
- Express your support and willingness to assist the family, but also let them know that this is new for you and the congregation

Step 3:

Ask how you can assist:

- Train yourself and your staff in Safety Planning & Crisis Care
- Develop the Faith Community's resource and referral lists
- Develop ways to stay connected to the victim and her/his family
- Provide resources for the abuser
- Provide an opportunity for ministry leaders/pastors to process their new knowledge
- Understand why DV professionals do not promote couples counseling by a professional or by the pastor

Recommendations: Safety Planning, Referrals, Staying connected to the victim and her family
<http://www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/DomesticViolence.pdf>

Homicide

On average, more than three women and one man are murdered by their intimate partners in this country every day. Intimate partner homicides accounted for 30% of the murders of women and 5% percent of the murders of men. (Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001, February 2003. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S. 1993-2004, 2006.)

Physical Injury

About half of all female victims of intimate partner violence report an injury of some type, and about 20 percent of them seek medical assistance. (National Crime Victimization Survey, 1992-96; Study of Injured Victims of Violence, 1994)

Stalking, Physical and Sexual Assault in Intimate Partner Relationships

Eighty percent of women who are stalked by former husbands are physically assaulted by that partner and 30 percent are sexually assaulted by that partner. (Center for Policy Research, Stalking in America, July 1997)

Three in four women (76%) who reported they had been raped and/or physically assaulted since age 18 said that an intimate partner (current or former husband, cohabiting partner, or date) committed the assault. (U.S. Department of Justice, Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, November 1998)

Seventy-six percent of female homicide victims killed by an intimate partner were stalked prior to their death. (MacFarlane et al., "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," Homicide Studies 3, no. 4 (1998): 300-16)