Speaking of Faith

Domestic Violence Programs and The African American Church

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IDVAAC
University of Minnesota
Institute on Domestic Violence In The African American Community

Prepared by *Dr. Oliver J. Williams*
For the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, e patient toward all mankind" —I Thessalonians 5:14 (KJV)

Rev. J.R. Thicklin

Acknowledgments

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Foreword

by Rev. J.R. Thicklin

There is a great responsibility that we have as pastors and ministers to embrace our mandate to serve as stewards to our congregations. It is not only our commission, but it is our duty to fulfill it both in word and in behavior. As preachers of the Bible, we must acknowledge that its message of liberation transcends race, color, creed, and gender. As we hold to the words of the prophet Isaiah, "…the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound…to comfort all that mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2, King James Version), we have to embrace that the liberation we proclaim should and does include the liberation of women in general; but specifically, victims of domestic violence .

Clergy, ministers, and theologians from across denominations agree that the message of Christianity is a message of freedom. Yet, historically, many who preached this gospel erred in their application of it, using it to oppress certain people, including African Americans. From this reality came Black Liberation Theology, which in many ways paralleled the Civil Rights Movement, as its founders attempted to educate, advocate, organize, and mobilize to bring liberty to those who were oppressed. In, the black church – both women and men – played an integral role in the Civil Rights Movement as it sought freedom from racial injustice. Yet, today church leaders, may misapply scripture, and denied equal access and treatment to the women within its auspices.

As pastors, faith leaders, and ministers we must recognize the fact that the good news that we preach does not allow room for the oppression of women. Women make up 70% or more of most of our congregations. Yet, it is the issues that affect women, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking as well as other forms of violence and abuse that often go unaddressed or under addressed that impact the lives of victims attending their churches and seeking support; leaving their voices unheard. We have a responsibility to create an environment that supports healing and demands accountability.

I ask that you would have an open heart and mind as you engage in reading this Guide and acknowledge the voices of those who have been and are currently oppressed, in greater proportions, in our congregations and communities through the scourge of domestic violence. Domestic violence affects women, men and children. It is an issue that affects families and results in harm physically and emotionally, for many years beyond the use of abuse. We must find ways to confront those who perpetrate violence and hold them accountable not to repeat this behavior to anyone. Most importantly we must create a haven of support, safety and solace for those who have suffered due to domestic violence. I pray that you would embrace this work and countless hours of prayer, reflection, and effort, primarily by ministers and also people of faith, that have gone into the development of this Guide. Please let this guide encourage you, equip you and empower you as you minister to your congregation.

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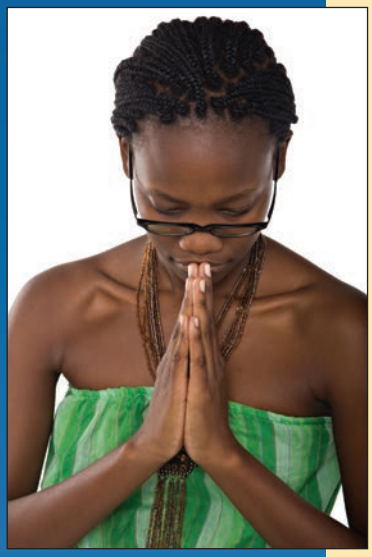

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Executive Summary

Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D.

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Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D.

This first volume of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community's (IDVAAC's) guide entitled *"Speaking of Faith: Domestic Violence Programming in the African American Community"* and the companion DVD with the same title, was developed as a tool for clergy – both ordained and non-ordained – as well as for lay leaders to educate church leadership with information about faith-based approaches to address domestic violence. We offer this guide as a resource to help other churches find similar support and success in their congregations when dealing with domestic violence.

This Guide presents recommendations for Clergy and Other Spiritual Leaders: A Call for Faith-Based Prevention for those engaged in the prevention and intervention of domestic violence. Based on the recognition that faith-based groups and organizations have strong relationships with communities of color, older women, women with disabilities, and immigrant communities, five action plans are presented for the church, including: (1) committing to making the problem of violence against women a critical concern; (2) ensuring that faith-based environments are safe to allow victims of violence to discuss their experiences and seek healing; (3) developing strategies to address the needs of all women and girls exposed to violence; (4) drawing on the resources of secular victim services, as well as advocacy and abuser treatment programs, to enhance community responses to violence against women; and (5) helping to secure financial support for religious, spiritual, or faith-based groups and organizations developing responses to violence against women and children.

This guide also provides cautions in moving forward to help implement domestic violence prevention and intervention programs. These two tools are a start for the Faith leaders to begin thinking about how to respond to this problem that affects society in general but also church members as well. The DVD, will show the viewer how some churches respond to domestic violence to support the battered women, accurately understand her challenges and get her to safety. The churches we feature in the DVD vary in location from Florida, Mississippi, Michigan and in Illinois (Urban, Rural, and Suburban communities, Northern, and Southern) in size (very small churches, medium size churches and mega churches) and income (from very poor to upper middle class congregations) but all are committed to addressing domestic violence. The viewer will see examples of sermons, programming and training of lay ministers to address domestic violence. And, will find Pastors, and Pastors former wives and other members of the church that were battered victims, describe the challenges they and other family members faced at the hands of their abusive partner or father figure. The DVD will further show the work of the New Life Church, in the Mississippi Delta, under the leadership of Bishop Roderick Mitchell and Our House, Battered Women's Services programs, Directed by Dr. Pat Davenport, respond to the needs

of victims but also work with men who batter through their MASH program (Men Against Spousal Harm). Men with histories of violence take responsibility for their behavior and discuss their process of change through the MAS program and the church.

In the readers guide there are recommendations about how Ministers must hold men accountable for their abuse, rethink what it means to be a character witness for him in domestic violence court cases and develop church policy that apply to the entire church membership. Ministers are also directed to avoid doing pastoral couples counseling when the issue is domestic violence but instead direct the victims to safety and support and direct the abusers to batterer intervention programs. This readers guide will offer suggestions about addressing this problem with the abuser while making sure the victim is supported through the church.

Many women have spoken about reaching out to clergy for guidance when they experienced partner abuse. They were told to be a stronger partner and be patient with the abuser rather than responding to the danger of being harmed and going to a safe place. Often clergy did not understanding that dealing with violence is an entirely different matter than dealing with conflict in a relationship. The readers guide and the DVD will provide insight as to what to consider in being a spiritual wellness center for victims and abusers of domestic violence.

The guide resulted from IDVAAC's meetings with faith leaders from around the country, many of whom are knowledgeable about resources for violence prevention and intervention. While coming together to synthesize direct service strategies for churches, faith leaders expressed a desire for an educational tool to: (1) connect the dots between the work they do as pastors and the needs of the faith communities they serve; (2) identify and expand the context of what clergy offer; (3) outline social justice and ethical issues; and (4) raise consciousness that domestic violence is a crisis for the church and the family. Pastors were also clear that the church and its services programs must connect with domestic violence organizations such as battered women's organizations and batterer intervention programs but as collaborator with them. A recurrent theme of the DVD and the readers guide is that "domestic violence brake-up the families not the services to support or protect battered women and confront abusers." As ministers noted in the DVD "by addressing domestic violence you can encourage strong individuals; when you have strong individuals you have more intact families; when you have strong intact families, you have stronger communities; when you have stronger communities you have a stronger country… and violence prevents the development of strong communities."

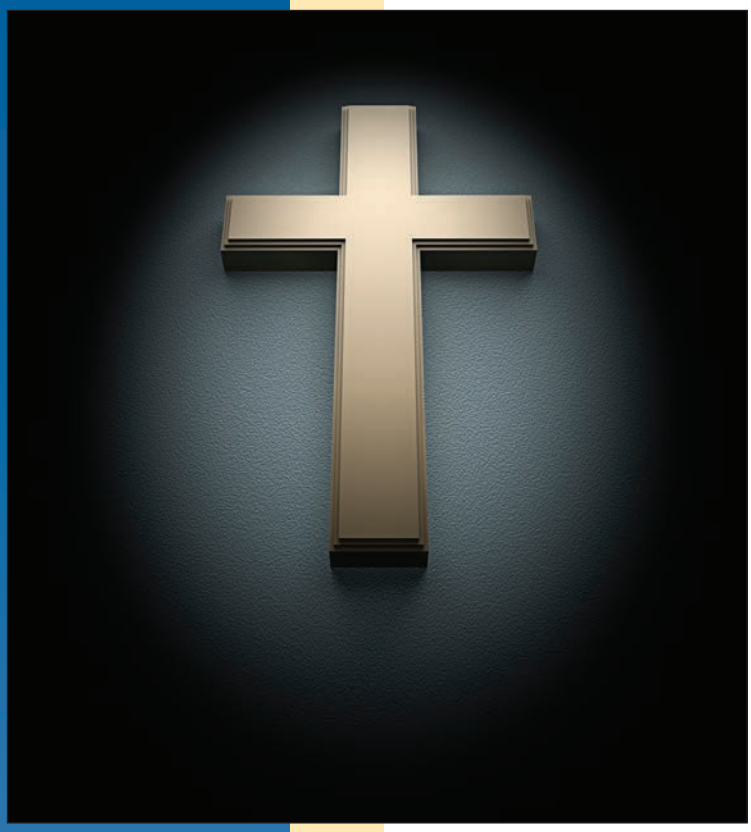
In this guide Reverend Dr. Sharon Ellis-Davis noted that victims often go through a theological and spiritual crisis where they ask questions such as: "God does not want me to be harmed like this?" "God does not want my children to suffer like this?" "Where is God?" and "Why hasn't God answered my prayers?" "Am I expected to stay married when my life and/or my children's lives are being threatened?" Pastors and other church leaders must be educated in domestic violence as well as domestic violence within the context of the church, in order to assist victims facing such a crisis.

This guide should be considered a basic resource tool for developing programs and for training clergy. But this is not the only resource; the Faith leaders and all of lay people in the DVD have been trained in domestic violence and obtained other resources and training in doing this work. This shows their level of commitment to the issue and to improving how to serve their members on this issue. You will hear the philosophies of the various ministers concerning why each decided to do this work and why it is included among the various ministries of their church.

In addition to the resources in this readers guide and the accompanying DVD, there are additional resources as well that include the Faith Trust Institute in Seattle Washington Directed by the Reverend Dr. Marie Fortune and Reverend. Beyond these materials, the minister is encouraged to use this guide and companion DVD, to apply various concepts to their work. Please look for contact information in the attached appendix.

The Guide's contributing authors include: Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D., Co-founder and Senior Pastor of God Can Ministries United Church of Christ in Ford Heights, Illinois and Adjunct Professor at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois ; Evangelist La Donna M. Combs of Greater Grace Temple in Detroit, Michigan and Domestic Violence and Sisters Against Abuse, Detroit; Rev. J. R. Thicklin, Senior Pastor at Kingdom Harvest Ministries and CEO/Founder of Destiny By Choice, Inc. in West Palm Beach, Florida; Dr. Tameka Gillum and Dr. Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D., Professor of Social Work at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul.

This Guide is a resource for addressing domestic violence in the context for the faith-based Christian African-American community, with each section exploring the need for social justice, healing, and safety. The rationale for the content is based in research of cultural definitions and spiritual alliances, as well as methods for intervention and application. The focus of the collaboration is comprehensive response for safe and healthy individuals, families, congregations, and community relationships. A theological and biblical approach is presented to assist in modeling faith application for positive outcomes and reduced recidivism for violent behavior in families and communities.



In the opening chapter entitled, Domestic Violence 101 Education and Awareness, Minister La Donna Combs looks basic concepts about domestic violence and its dynamics. She defines domestic violence, while also presenting information about victims and abusers of domestic violence. She also defines what a safety plan is and an alternative to violence plan for the abuser. Also what challenges the African American community faces as it relates to domestic violence.

Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis offers a faith-based perspective for understanding domestic violence in the chapter entitled, Faith-Based Domestic Violence. She outlines the goal of helping the church understand domestic violence and its far reaching impact on victims, abusers and the entire village, including the church, with a complementary goal that intervention and prevention programs will be created to promote healing, hope, and wholeness within the African-American community and larger society. She also notes that the church is uniquely positioned to provide ministry to domestic violence victims and their abusers indicating, "The church is probably the one place where the pastor will most likely come in contact with the entire family before, during, and after the abuse." Dr. Davis states that African-American liberation theologies can be used as a basis to develop strategies designed to break the gender entrapment of African-American battered women described by Dr. Beth Richie (1989). Black liberation discourse has evolved through the decades from James Cone's early black theology to second- and third-wave black theology, she says. The developments have increased the understanding of and raised consciousness among blacks and others concerning the impact of racism, poverty, and other forms of oppression and the need for a liberation agenda. Meanwhile, it was the critique of womanist theologians that raised the consciousness regarding issues of black women that called for an integration of race, class, and gender into the liberation ethos, she says. This discourse has contributed to the understandings of the interlocking systems of oppression that impact the everyday lives of African American women.

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of coercive behavior centered on power and control. Dr. Davis defines domestic violence as including sexual abuse, emotional abuse, spousal rape, and economic abuse. It impacts all people but is particularly acute among women, children and teens. In the chapter, she looks at issues and concerns of African-American women who experienced sexual and domestic violence in their relationships with African American men, with whom they had been co-partners in the struggle for racial equality, saying these subjects, until recent decades, have been ignored in black liberation discourse. In the section, she attempts to: (1) develop a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence and the role of the church; and (2) provide a theological, ethical, and Christological basis for the development of intervention strategies. She states that the development of models of prevention, intervention, and care based on the insights of black and womanist theologians is crucial if we are to break the cycles of gender entrapment and violence that are destroying African-American families.

The section ***What Churches Can Do***, authored by Rev. J. R. Thicklin, informs us that domestic violence has reached epidemic proportions, affecting 3 to 4 million women per year, and millions of other victims such as children, other family members and friends. He further states that there has not been a sufficient response from the church or faith-based communities at-large to the domestic violence issue, although it is they who traditionally respond to the needs of the homeless, the needy, the hurting, the incarcerated, and the castaways. These communities have been strangely silent and absent when it comes to preventing and responding to domestic violence situations. Rev. Thicklin issues a call to action, summoning the church to become equipped, educated, and empowered to address the plight of violence. He also offers important objectives for the church: (1) to bring awareness of the vital role churches can play in addressing the issue; (2) to help churches foster a proactive attitude in the prevention of domestic violence; (3) to assist them in establishing clear guidelines and policies for addressing domestic violence; (4) to help them understand their role in coordinating a response to domestic violence; and (5) to assist them in establishing clear objectives of education, assistance, restoration, and transformation.

This guide on Faith-Based domestic violence, has been extensively written with domestic violence-related terminology and definitions, methods, approaches, and models; and offers a rationale for the work clearly defined by the authors. A goal has been to bring about a diversity of understanding as it relates to community, cultural, and alternative definitions. The issue of domestic violence has been framed in biblical, theological, ethical, and social context with the writers drawing a connection between healthy congregations and domestic violence. The over all message is that prevention and healthy relationships should be integrated into the church mission.

In the Guide, the authors discuss various types of domestic violence, including that involving heterosexuals in intimate partners, as well as dating relationships. The various forms of domestic violence mentioned in the Guide are not exhaustive, and those developing the Guide are aware that there are still other types of domestic violence that also must be addressed. Bibliographies, worksheets, and exams are included in this guide to help users better understand domestic violence issues.

Domestic Violence 101 Education and Awareness

Evangelist La Donna M. Combs, M.A. and Dr. Oliver J. Williams

La Donna M. Combs

Introduction

In this chapter the writers will provide definitions and an overview of the issue of domestic violence and address many myths that exist in society about intimate partner violence.

Domestic violence goes by several different names that include but are not limited to the following:

- Domestic violence
- Spouse abuse
- Partner abuse
- Intimate partner violence
- Dating violence

In the "Speaking of Faith" DVD (IDVAAC, 2011) Bishop Roderick Mitchell recommends that to accurately address domestic violence in the Faith Community we must combine the spiritual with the secular. That is, churches have a responsibility to help and to extend to all those who are hurting: women, men and children, victims and abusers. But we need to understand what help is.

Support for Victims

Victims of abuse need someone who is willing to listen to their story, to believe them and understand they deserve to be out of danger that there is no justification or excuse for the abuse. Further, victims need support, if she chooses to stay in the relationship or to find safety when she needs it or if she chooses to leave the relationship.

Ministers must not promote the notion that her experiences are the result of a simple mis understanding that can be resolved through a nice dinner; prayer alone without or instead of any action; or the belief that she must stay due to her marriage vow. Bishop Charles Ellis III states that pray alone when you have the capacity to do more to be helpful, is not what God expects from his people (Speaking of Faith DVD, IDVAAC, 2011). We know that God answers prayer but many women have been killed waiting for God to heal the violent person. God may heal them but does not require her to be present in an unsafe circumstance until he changes, if he ever changes. In the "Speaking of Faith" DVD (2011), there are several women of the church that were previously not connected to a supportive church, they explain how faith leaders and church members let them down when they were being severely abused. They did not understand her story, the danger or brutality she experienced.

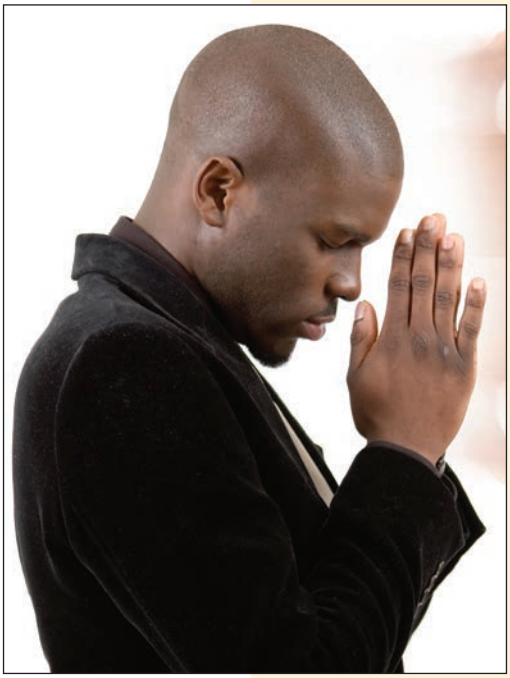
These battered women proclaim that God gives them the strength to carry on; but their previous church was not the resource for safety, support, and true spiritual guidance during their abuse and crisis of faith. In the DVD you will see numerous examples of churches that do appropriately respond to victims needs and that developed their ministries with pastoral guidance and with church folks that lived with violence and explored how communities of Faith should respond.

Battered women need a safety plan

There are still so many women suffering in silence and trying to manage the abuse on their own and when women leave domestic violence relationships, it can be a very dangerous time for her. The abuser may stalk, threaten, and attempt to kill or even kill her as a consequence. Hart (1990) reports the following in trying to measure lethality with abusers:

- Abusers threats of suicide or homicide including: killing himself, the victim, the children or the relatives.
- Fantasies of homicide or suicide in the guise of "who, how, when, and/or where to kill.
- Weapons owned by the perpetrator who has threatened to use them or has used them in the past (the use of guns is a strong predicator of homicide.)
- Feelings that the abuser "owns" the victim.
- "Focus" on the victim (this is an extremely dangerous time when perpetrators make decisions to kill).
- Separation from the victim (this is an extremely dangerous time when perpetrators make the decision to kill).
- Dangerous behavior increases in degree with little regard for legal or social consequences.
- Hostage – taking
- Depression
- Repeated calls to the police by the victim or neighbors

Yet, many women report that after leaving, they feel free from the continuous terror, violence and abuse they and their children, lived with daily. Accordingly, when battered women plan to leave they need a safety plan. What is a safety plan? It is a set of activities and tasks that battered women, her helpers and supports execute, when she decides to leave a battering relationship. Such a plan increases her ability to leave. Although it is not a guarantee of safety, without these interventions, domestic violence can escalate in severity. Hart (1990) recommends that a safety plan should always be put in place once the victim has made the decision to leave but prior to actually leaving and include the following tools:



- Money
- Extra keys: house, car, safety deposit boxes, friend's house
- Birth certificates
- Passports
- Medications
- Children's school and vaccination records
- Insurance cards
- Personal Protection Orders
- Immigration status papers
- Photo ID's

This list is not exhaustive; all safety plans should be individualized. The victim is always the expert about their needs for help to survive and exit the relationship. However, many of the items are similar for women. It is always good to have these things at a trusted friends or a relative's house.

Other safety considerations include:

- Avoid going to a meeting with him alone to discuss issues of relationship and/or children
- Don't think that you can control him or decide he won't be a threat
- Avoid having arguments in places where there may be weapons like the kitchen
- Avoid arguments (if possible) within the bathroom.
- Avoid having arguments in places where there may be weapons
- Review your safety plan monthly

When a victim of domestic abuse attempts to leave her partner, the abuser may escalate the physical violence.

The Decision to Leave

The reasons why women stay with men who beat them can be challenging for many to understand. Leaving any important relationship is difficult, and leaving a batterer can have serious physical consequences for the abused person. When a victim of domestic abuse attempts to leave her partner, the abuser may escalate the physical violence. This escalation often becomes lethal as he seeks to regain control in the relationship. When viewed from this perspective, the seemingly counter-intuitive decision to stay with an abuser makes sense as a survival tactic. The threat of serious injury, including death, upon separation from the batterer is not the only obstacle to the victim escaping abuse (Jones, 73 MI Bar J 896 1994; & Ganley, 1995). Additional barriers include:

- Concern for the children's welfare;
- Lack of employment skills, or resources like money and financial dependence on the abuser;
- Lack of housing upon leaving the relationship;
- Inability to afford legal assistance with divorce, custody, or protection order proceedings;
- Fear of the court system's intervention;
- Fear of losing children in custody dispute because violence is reported or revealed in divorce proceedings;
- Abusers deliberately give their partners misinformation about their legal rights to prevent them from seeking legal recourse
- Fear of losing social or family connections that could provide support, if she leaves the relationship
- Acceptance of the blame for the abuse. Some abused individuals attempt to change in the hopes that the abuse will stop
- Belief in the abuser's expressions of remorse and promises to change;
- Lack of self-confidence caused by believing statements made by the abuser such as, "You are worthless without me," or "Nobody cares about you but me;" and
- Religious or cultural constraints. If a woman believes that her male partner must be the dominant figure in her household, she may regard his abuse as an acceptable extension of his dominance.

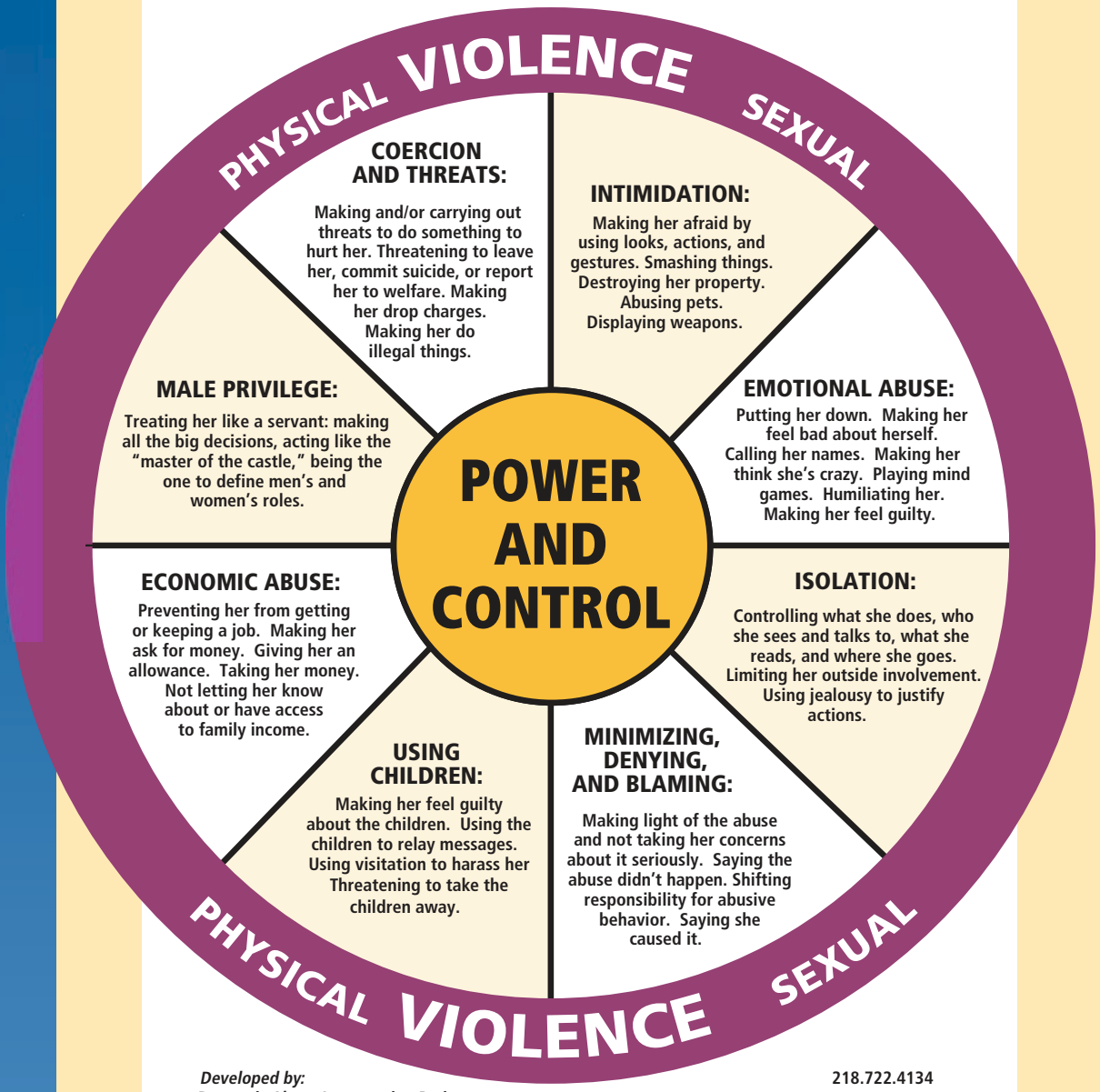
- Spiritual abuse which refers to when abusive men demand that the victims remain in the abusive relationship (regardless of the violence and abuse) in order to be a good Christian women even though the abuser terrorizes, physically, emotionally or sexually abuses her and/or the children. Victims question their faith and are told that "leaving is not what God's wants", "And she is not being a good Christian" and "if they leave, report or challenge his behavior and that it is against church teaching because God's people don't get divorced." Christian women ponder questions like, "Should I forgive him," "Am I allowed to let him beat me, if I disobey him;" " Should I stay as a Christian woman and bear my cross." Reverend Marie Fortune describes this phenomenon in her book entitled "Keeping The Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse, 1987." Dr. Sharon Ellis-Davis says more about this below in her section below entitled "Domestic Violence A Faith Based Introduction". She describes women having a theological and spiritual crisis of Faith and gives recommendations to ministers about how to understand this challenge for women and what to say to victims about this issue. One clear message is that they don't deserve the abuse, that God does not want them to suffer and that they must consider their own safety. Also she cannot stop his abuse rather he must end it with God's help. But, she must be in a safe place because he may never change. There have been so many women who have been seriously injured or killed hoping for the best but for many changes never came.

Connecting Victims to Battered Women's Advocates

In the Speaking of Faith DVD (IDVAAC, 2011) the viewer will see several examples of churches collaborating with battered women's advocates (that also may be members of their churches) but also there are examples of churches that collaborate with secular domestic violence programs in order to find safety and support for the victim. Some Ministers may fear that the goal of such organizations is to break-up the marriage or the relationship. It is the belief of the Ministers and advocates that have produced this document and companion DVD believe that abuse and violence of the abuser has broken the relationship and has resulted in her needing to find safety, support and shelter. Domestic violence programs and churches that collaborate with battered women's advocates, fills the gap for her safety. It is important to consider collaboration with such organizations: domestic violence shelters, sexual assault programs, Batterer Intervention Programs, and domestic violence units within police departments; please refer to Reverend JR Thicklin in the Speaking of Faith DVD (IDVAAC, 2011) demonstrating such a collaboration, in West Palm Beach Florida. In the absence of knowing where a shelter is, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline that will direct parities to the correct location of support within their area; the number is 1-800-799-7233. This number can also provide information for men who are victims of abuse.

The Power and Control Wheel represents the experiences of women who live with men that batter them and, thus, is not gender neutral.

Working with men who abuse:
The Power and Control Wheel



Developed by:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

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The staff at the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota began developing curricula groups for perpetrators and victims of domestic violence in 1984. The power and control wheel was a result of their explorations of how men attempt to dominate their partner in an abusive relationship. Although the list is not exhaustive, these are common abusive behaviors or tactics used against women by many batterers.

Power and control are at the core of the wheel because these words represent the pattern of actions a batterer uses to intentionally dominate or control his intimate partner. Batterers systematically use coercion to instill fear in their partners by using threats and intimidation. These and related behaviors are the

spokes in the wheel. The physical and sexual violence represent the all-encompassing tools used by batterers to control their intimate partners; thus, these types of violence are represented by the the rim of the wheel.

The Power and Control Wheel represents the experiences of women who live with men that batter them and, thus, is not gender neutral. It does not attempt to give a broad knowledge or understanding of all violence in the home or community. It instead gives a more specific explanation of the tactics men use to assault their intimate partners. Women are the primary focus because the battering of women by men continues to be a significant social problem. Statistics convey that men commit 86% to 97% of all criminal assaults, and women are killed 3.5 times more often than men in domestic homicides (Adams, 1999).

The Power and Control Wheel can be found in manuals, books, articles, and on the walls of agencies that have an active role in seeking prevention of domestic violence (please review the other domestic violence related "wheels" such as the equality wheel and the dating violence wheel at the Domestic Violence Intervention Programs website: www.theduluthmodel.org/training/wheels.html or the State of Michigan website: http://www.michigan.gov/datingviolence/0,4559,7-233-46553-169739--,00.html It has been seen and used by millions on national television and other media.)The wheel makes the pattern, intent, and impact of violence and abuse visible.

Men who batter give these excuses for their violence:
A Batterer's Alphabet

The following are statements used by actual batterers in intervention programs in relation to their abuse toward their intimate partners. Developed by David Garvin. This list was compiled by Alternatives to Domestic Aggression, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"It was an ***accident***."

"I ***blew*** up."

"I couldn't ***control*** my temper."

"I was ***drunk***."

"I can't handle my ***emotions***."

"I ***fly*** off the handle."

"It happened in the heat of an argument."

"I went ***insane***."

"It's ***just*** how I deal with things."

"I didn't ***know*** better."

"I ***lost*** control."

"It was a ***mistake***."

"It came out of ***nowhere***."

"It just came ***out***."

"She ***provoked*** me."

"I have a ***quick*** temper."

"It's a ***reflex***."

"I ***snapped***."

"I wasn't thinking ***straight***."

"I was ***up*** all night."

"My ***verbal*** turned into physical."

"That's just the ***way*** I am."

"I ran out of ***Xanax***."

"I ***yelled*** before I knew what I was doing."

"I just ***zipped***."

Programming with abusers

Batterers programs and Churches should engage men who batter to re-evaluate the way they think, feel and behave toward their partner. Also to recognize that she may need to eventually leave him due to his behavior. Men who batter need to understand the affect of their behavior on her and their children and others. They need to learn that violence is a choice and not the natural result or consequence of conflict (Williams, 2007). Although most men and women in intimate partner relationships experience conflict, most people respond to it without abuse or violence. Abusers tend to use emotional and physical abuse to resolve conflict, repeatedly. Williams, (1990) found that non-abusers tended to use three non-abusive strategies to resolve conflict; in contrast, to men who batter that used 10-15 non-violent and violent strategies to resolve a conflict. Men who abuse also tend to be carriers of the abuse from one relationship to another. In the "Speaking of Faith" DVD you hear a man with a history of violence and abuse, talk about how Bishop Mitchell's MASH program (MEN AGAINST SPOUSAL ABUSE and HARM) taught him to think and behave differently and to understand how God expects men to behave toward his love ones; without emotional and physical abuse.

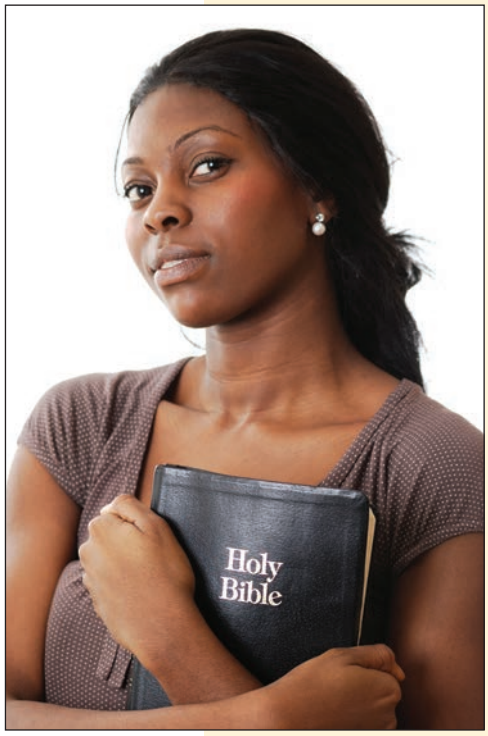
When men take responsibility for their behavior, they understand how to own their attitudes, feelings and behavior. That means that although they may not be responsible for all the conflict that exist, they are 100% responsible for all the violence and abuse they do. In BIP's they learn how and when they escalate their feelings, attitude and behavior to become violent. They also learn how to confront irrational belief systems. That is, the way they view a situation or mistrust or devalue their partner due to fear or anticipation of something happening. He may have a heighten expectation that she will do thing wrongs or not to his expectation or is not forgiven for some perceived error. Williams and Goodly, (2009) found that in a group of men who battered that they interviewed, most of them viewed women and children as having the same status which was less than men. Garfield (2010) in interviews with men with histories of violence reported that some changed their violence toward women when they were able to value them as they valued themselves.

Batterer Intervention Programs (BIP)

Often these programs teach those who batter about what is involved in producing their violent behavior. It is not due to a simple conflict or argument or disagreement. Usually it is due to their desire to control a person or situation and when verbal means of control are not satisfying enough, he uses violence in addition to verbal and emotional abuse. If it happens once it happens again and again. Some batterers make promises that it won't happen again but they don't know how to change their behavior alone. Typically, more than one women and/or set of children are affected before or if violent behaviors ends.

Again, in the DVD you will hear men describe their involvement in the Men Against Spousal Harm (MASH) group in Mississippi. This is an example of a BIP that re-educates the person who abuses. It encourages them to acknowledge their violence and abuse, teaches what causes of their violence and other forms of abuse, how they thinks and devalue the victim; they teach alternatives to violence and abuse, help them to recognize the signs when they begin the process of escalation to abuse. They also help abusers develop a plans for alternatives to violence. BIP's help people with such histories consider the following:

1. Their emotional states; that is, what they have felt either prior to or during a violent episode
2. Situations that have resulted in their violent and abusive behavior: what are the themes
3. Their escalating set of words, feelings, attitudes, behaviors and choices that resulted in their violent and abusive behavior
4. Who is usually the victim of their emotional and physical abuse
5. Exploring the choices that they could employ in their escalating set of words, feelings, attitudes, behaviors and choices that resulted in their violent and abusive behavior
6. To commit to using those alternative words, feelings, actions and behaviors that do not devalue or belittle the victim
7. Recognize that the victim is not responsible for their abusive behavior
8. What helps him to self sooth (Stosny, 2008)



Such efforts only work when the abuser acknowledges his abuse; takes ownership of his behaviors; employs the methods learned in the group; calls on support when he feels vulnerable; recognizes there is no excuse for abuse and commits to change. In the speaking of Faith DVD, Bishop Mitchell et al describe their Batterer Intervention Program (BIP) would do; they call their program MASH (Men Against Spousal Harm). This program challenges men who batter about their behaviors as any other BIP but if the subject of how scripture predetermines men's right to dominate and control, they do not shy away from the topic. Rather they are able to accurately provide a correct interpretation of the Bible in these matters. They also direct men to understand how they can learn new ways to behave with non- abusive behaviors in either current or future relationships. Please see contact information for this and other programs such as the ADA alternatives to violence programs created by David Garvin at Catholic Social Services in Ann Arbor Michigan; also his BISMI program that focuses on developing batterer intervention programs in the State of Michigan and the Emerge Batterer Intervention Program, Created by David Adams, in Boston Massachusetts created and is among the first such programs in the country. Finally, the Duluth Project in Duluth Minnesota is developing a response to working with men who

batter in the church (information in Appendix *). These four resources offer insight to batterer intervention, programming and community collaboration through Faith communities.

The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Slightly more than one-half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under the age of 12. An increasing number of studies document the concurrent incidence of domestic violence and child abuse within families. Most of this research indicates that 30% to 60% of families experiencing child maltreatment also experience domestic violence. In a national survey of more than 6,000 families, researchers found that 50% of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently assaulted their children. Studies also suggest the presence of domestic violence in approximately 40% of lethal child abuse cases. In fact, in 1995 the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggested that domestic violence might be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in the country.

Many children may not be direct victims of abuse but rather are exposed to violence in their homes. Data from a Gallup Poll of family violence suggest that 1.5 million to 3.3 million children witness or experience parental domestic violence each year. Another leading family violence researcher estimates that as many as 10 million children are exposed to parental violence each year.

Exposure to parental domestic violence and abuse, although not to be considered automatically a form of child abuse, may be associated with a series of childhood problems, primarily behavioral and emotional. Child witnesses of domestic violence on average exhibit more:

- aggressive and antisocial behaviors,
- fearful and inhibited behaviors,
- anxiety,
- depression,
- trauma-related symptoms,
- temperament problems, and
- lowered social competence.

The harm that individual children experience as a result of exposure to domestic violence varies depending on many factors, including the level of violence in the family, the child's exposure to it, the child's ability to cope, and the protective factors in the child's environment such as a primary adult that the child can turn to for safety and support. Many adolescents who have grown up in violent homes are at risk for recreating the abusive relationships they have observed. They are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, and run away from home. Research has found that violent adolescents suffered serious physical abuse by a parent and witnessed the use of weapons in the homes significantly more often than non-violent adolescents. In Domestic Violence: A Guide to Civil & Criminal Proceedings, the Michigan Judicial Institute (2009) remarks:

> Whether they witness the abuse or are abused themselves, children suffer from involvement with adult domestic violence. In addition to causing physical injury, domestic violence can have a profound impact on children's core beliefs about themselves, those in authority, and those with whom they have intimate relationships. The trauma and anxiety it produces can impede children's development by preventing them from forming healthy emotional attachments with others and derailing their efforts to learn basic social skills. This devastating emotional, cognitive, and behavioral damage can be manifested even after a child reaches adulthood. (pp. 1-30)

The following discussion explores some specifics of these effects.

Working with children

For children who have been exposed to violence in the home, churches need to understand how they suffer and how they are daily challenged in home with fear and anxiety about their safety and that of their mother (2011, Bishop Roderick Mitchell, Speaking of Faith DVD, special feature) . Many adolescent children consider killing their mother's abuser (fathers, step-fathers, boy-friend) after being exposed to the abuse for years ("Taylor, 2010, Journey to Healing", DVD, IDVAA; Williams et al, 2001). In "Speaking of Faith" DVD two Pastors describe how they grew up in homes of violence and how that exposure has affected them through their adult years. In homes where there is domestic violence, there is often a high co-occurrence with child abuse and neglect (Edleson, 2001). Grahm-Berman, 20** suggest that In such homes children are six times more likely to come to the attention of child protective services. Children need safety and peaceful spaces away from the turmoil in the home; they need to have someone ask what is going on in their lives. Children and adults, men and women need accurate interpretations of what the Bible describes regarding healthy male and female, loving relationships and how youth and adults can operate in loving and caring relationships without violence and abuse (examples of churches doing this work refer to the (2011) "Speaking of Faith, DVD). To learn what adult children have to say about their experiences with childhood exposure to violence and abuse refer to the (2010) "Journey to Healing: Finding the Path" DVD, IDVAAC.

What Causes Domestic Violence?

History has shown that domestic violence has existed for thousands of years. The first documented case of domestic violence lethality was between Cain and his brother Abel in Genesis 4:8 (King James Version). It has been documented in nearly every nation, as well as religious and cultural groups 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.

Vctims of domestic violence can be in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. For the purposes of this guide we will focus on women or men in heterosexual relationships. Research indicates that regardless of culture, race, religion, or socio-economic class, men perpetrate greater percentages of abuse against women.

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

We know that most 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,
- children, or
- pets.

Simply put, there is no excuse for domestic violence. It is simply the result of the perpetrator's need for power and control (Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, 2004).

Regardless of how factual or politically correct the theories and explanations for domestic violence are, they are inadequate in 21st century society. As an intelligent, civil, technologically advanced, and faith-based culture, individuals have the capacity to override base survival and dominance impulses. People have learned to communicate laws, regulations, and non-violent methods that address worldwide problems and conflict. Although laws are finally changing both in the U.S. and worldwide, some cultural traditions and customs have been evolving more slowly. Society has come a long way in just a few decades, but still has a long road ahead before achieving true non-violence in relationships.

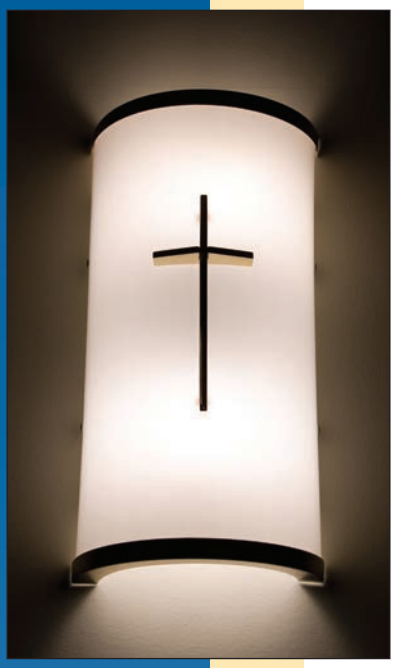
Definitions and Facts about domestic violence

From: www.criminal.findlaw.com

Domestic violence refers to physical harm inflicted on one member of a household or family, by another member of the same household or family (usually between spouses). Domestic violence (sometimes called "spousal abuse") usually involves repetitive physical and psychological abuse, and a "cycle of violence". Specific crimes charged vary based on 1) severity of the victim's injuries, 2) whether a minor was present, and 3) whether a protective or restraining order was violated.

Domestic violence can take a number of forms, including:

- physical behavior (slapping, punching, pulling hair or shoving)
- forced or coerced sexual acts or behavior (unwanted fondling or intercourse, or sexual jokes and insults)
- threats (threatening to hit, harm or use a weapon)
- psychological abuse (attacks on self-esteem, attempts to control or limit another person's behavior, repeated insults or interrogation)
- stalking (following a person, appearing at a person's home or workplace, making repeated phone calls or leaving written messages), or
- cyberstalking (repeated online action or email that causes substantial emotional distress).



From: www.domesticviolence.org

Domestic violence and emotional abuse are behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other. Partners may be married or not married; heterosexual, gay, or lesbian; living together, separated or dating.

Examples of abuse include:

- name-calling or putdowns
- keeping a partner from contacting their family or friends
- withholding money
- stopping a partner from getting or keeping a job
- actual or threatened physical harm
- sexual assault
- stalking
- intimidation

Violence can be criminal and includes physical assault (hitting, pushing, shoving, etc.), sexual abuse (unwanted or forced sexual activity), and stalking. Although emotional, psychological and financial abuse are not criminal behaviors, they are forms of abuse and can lead to criminal violence.

The violence takes many forms and can happen all the time or once in a while. An important step to help or someone you know in preventing or stopping violence is recognizing the warning signs listed on the "Power and Control Wheel" (please power and control wheel in appendix **).

ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM! Victims can be of any age, sex, race, culture, religion, education, employment or marital status. Although both men and women can be abused, most victims are women. Children in homes where there is domestic violence are more likely to be abused and/or neglected. Most children in these homes know about the violence. Even if a child is not physically harmed, they may lead to emotional and behavior challenges throughout their life time.

From: **www.ncadv.org**

- **One in every four women** will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.
- An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year.
- 85% of domestic violence victims are women.
- Historically, females have been most often victimized by someone they knew.
- Females who are ***20-24 years of age*** are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence.
- Most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police.

From: **dvinstitute.org**

Facts about African American (Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community website)

Statistics

- In a nationally representative survey conducted in 1996, 29% of African American women and 12% of African American men reported at least one instance of violence from an intimate partner.
- African Americans account for a disproportionate number of intimate partner homicides. In 2005, African Americans accounted for almost 1/3 of the intimate partner homicides in this country.
- Black women comprise 8% of the U.S. population but in 2005 accounted for 22% of the intimate partner homicide victims and 29% of all female victims of intimate partner homicide.
- Intimate partner homicides among African Americans have declined sharply in the last 30 years. Partner homicides involving a black man or a black woman decreased from a high of 1529 in 1976 to 475 in 2005, for a total decline of 69%.
- Intimate partner deaths have decreased most dramatically among black men. From 1976-1985, black men were more likely than black women to be a victim of domestic homicide; by 2005, black women were 2.4 times more likely than a black male to murdered by their partners. Over this period, intimate partner homicides declined by 83% for black men vs. 55% for black women.

Risk Factors

- Intimate partner violence among African Americans is related to economic factors. Intimate partner violence among blacks occurs more frequently among couples with low incomes, those in which the male partner is underemployed or unemployed, particularly when he is not seeking work, and among couples residing in very poor neighborhoods, regardless of the couple's income.
- When income and neighborhood characteristics are controlled for, racial differences in IPV are greatly reduced.
- Alcohol problems (drinking, binge drinking, dependency) are more frequently related to intimate partner violence for African Americans than for whites or Hispanics.
- As with other abusive men, African American men who batter are higher in jealousy and the need for power and control in the relationship.
- As with women of other races, among African American women killed by their partner, the lethal violence was more likely to occur if there had been incidents in which the partner had used or threatened to use a weapon on her and/or the partner has tried to choke or strangle her.
- Among African American women killed by their partner, almost half were killed while in the process of leaving the relationship, highlighting the need to take extra precautions at that time.
- Among African American women who killed their partner, almost 80% had a history of abuse.

Impact of Abuse

- Black women who are battered have more physical ailments, mental health issues, are less likely to practice safe sex, and are more likely to abuse substances during pregnancy10 than black women without a history of abuse.
- Battered women are at greater risk for attempting suicide particularly if they were physically abused as a child, for being depressed and to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Domestic violence occurs in heterosexual, as well as same-sex partnerships, and crosses all ethnic, racial and socio-economic lines.

Dynamics of Abuse

- Domestic violence re-occurs. In a large sample of battered black women, in about half of the cases in which abuse happened, the violence did not happen again; however, over 1/3 of women reporting abuse had at least one other incident of severe domestic violence in the same year, and one in six experienced another less severe act of domestic violence.
- Women attempt to leave abusive relationships. Seventy to eighty percent of abused black women left or attempted to leave the relationship.
- Women in abusive relationships need the support of friends and family. Battered black women who reported that they could rely on others for emotional and practical support were less likely to be re-abused, showed less psychological distress, and were less likely to attempt suicide.

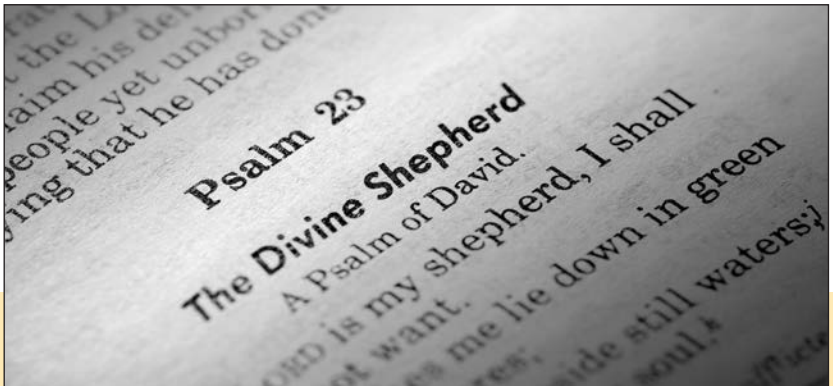
From: **www.mass.gov**

Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) in the State of Massachusetts

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviors and tactics used by one person over another to gain power and control. This may include verbal abuse, financial abuse, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. Domestic violence occurs in heterosexual, as well as same-sex partnerships, and crosses all ethnic, racial and socio-economic lines.

Domestic Violence Facts:

- 95% of Domestic Violence victims are women (U.S. Department of Justice).
- Over three million women are battered each year (FBI 1990).
- The Surgeon General has declared Domestic Violence as the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15-44; more than rapes, muggings, and car accidents combined.



- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites that a woman is in nine times more danger in her own home than on the street
- Nearly one-third of all women murdered in the US in 1998 were killed by a current or former intimate partner; guns were used in almost two-thirds of the homicides (Homicide Trends in the US, 2001).
- Thirty-seven percent of all women who sought emergency room treatment for violence-related injuries were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend (US Department of Justice, 1998).
- Between twelve percent and thirty-five percent of teenagers have experienced some form of violence - from pushing and shoving to hitting - in a dating relationship (Simon and Golden, 1997).

What are the Causes and Dynamics of Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence is often thought of as resulting from exposure to modeling of violence by parental role models as a children
- It also can be learned from exposure to violence in other environments as well
- Men who batter tend to be poor problem solvers and have difficulty resolving conflict
- Persons who are violent have a low frustration tolerance
- Although in intimate partner violence situations the female partner is the likely target, there is a high co-occurrence with child abuse and neglect

Myths about causes for domestic violence

- What about the role of drugs and alcohol-- although there is a high association between the incidence of violence and substance usage, intimate partner violence is typically the result of substance abuse
- Many men who have had histories of substance abuse and violence and have years of sobriety still have continued their violent and abusive behaviors (Bennett and Williams, 2000)
- It is important to address both issues and not think that if you resolve the substance use the violence will end (TIP's ,19**)

Myths about remedies for domestic violence

- Getting into a substance abuse program will stop the violence
- Historically marital counseling has helped to stop the violence
- Historically family intervention has stopped the violence
- Women redoubling her efforts to be a good wife will change men who batter
- Reasoning with him will change him
- Going to church more, by itself, will change an abusive person
- More Bible study, by itself, will change an abusive person
- Involvement in the church is a protective factor against domestic violence

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Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic Violence: Examining the Historical Oppression of African-American Women

Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D. and Tameka Gillum, Ph.D.

African-American liberation theologies can be used as a basis to develop strategies designed to break the gender entrapment of African-American battered women. Gender entrapment is defined as a socially constructed process through which women have been persuaded to adopt sets of gender and racial identities, principles, and concepts (Richie, 1996, p. 4). Through the decades, black liberation discourse evolved from James Cone's early black theology, pioneering in identifying traditional American theology as "racist," to second- and third-wave black theology that have worked to identify means to free us from contemporary racism (Tran, 2012). These developments have increased the understanding of and raised consciousness among blacks and others concerning the impact of racism, poverty, and other forms of oppression and the need for a liberation agenda. However, it was the critique of womanist theologians that raised consciousness regarding issues of black women that called for an integration of race, class, and gender into the liberation ethos. In her book *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Alice Walker (1983, p. xi) coins the term "womanist." The term is used in the context of mothers referring to their daughters as "acting womanish, or trying to be grown and acting fast." According to Walker, a womanist loves herself, is eager to learn, and loves other women. A womanist is committed to the survival of her community and will not separate except for periods of health. A womanist loves to love and is not afraid of struggle. Womanism is not a term intended to replace feminism. To the contrary, Walker states, "I dislike having to add a color in order to become visible, as in *black feminist*. Womanism gives us a word of our own." A womanist, she states, "bring[s] a racialized and often class-located experience to the gendered experience suggested by feminism."

Delores S. Williams (1995, p. 7) is considered a first-wave womanist theologian in that her book, Sisters in the *Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk,* is the first book on womanist theology. In this book she takes the womanist perspective and challenges the Exodus story of black theology as not being the paradigm for black women's struggles. Williams asserts that the story of Hagar best describes the survival story of black women. Kelly Brown Douglas (1995, p. 9) was the first womanist to focus on Christology that takes root in the recognition of a black Christ. JoAnne Marie Terrell (1998, p. 105) is an example of a second-wave womanist theologian who, through her writings, challenged the legitimacy of the cross as an image of suffering.

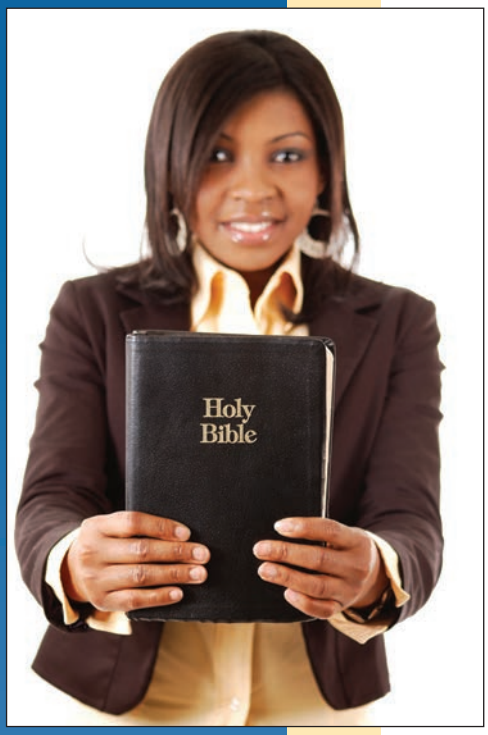
The call to action from womanist theologians to integrate key factors into the liberation ethos has opened the door of black theological discourse to include the specific oppressions of African-American women who experience the triple oppression of race, class, and gender. This discourse has contributed to the understanding of the interlocking systems of oppression that impact the everyday lives of African-American women. What are the specific concerns of African-American women who suffer the triple jeopardy of race, class, and gender? How are sexual and domestic violence and other forms of violence against women impacting African-American women, their intimate relationships, and their family life?

Domestic violence includes sexual abuse, emotional abuse, spousal rape, economic abuse, and just as importantly, spiritual abuse. It impacts all people but is particularly acute among women, children, gays, lesbians, and teens. This Guide's focus is on domestic violence that exists within African-American heterosexual relationships. What are the specific issues and concerns of African-American women who have experienced sexual and domestic violence in their relationships with African-American men with whom they have been co-partners in the struggle for racial equality?

These unique challenges, until recent decades, have been ignored in black liberation discourse. In the book *Black Theology: A Documentary History, Volume 2: 1980-1992*, Cone and Wilmore (1998, p. 287) acknowledge the tri-dimensional realities of African-American women as a fertile context for more holistic and liberating discourse. The discourse is fertile because it emerges from the interconnectedness of other experiences. Cone states that it is potentially liberating because it rests not on one single issue that could be considered only a middle-class issue relevant to one group of people, but it is multi-faceted. Black theology and womanist discourse, combined with well thought out intervention models, can become powerful allies of African-American battered women. The faith-based section in this document attempts the following: 1) to provide a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence and the role of the church; and 2) to provide a theological, ethical, and Christological basis for the development of intervention strategies. The development of models of prevention, intervention, and care based on the insights of black and womanist theologians are crucial if we are to break the cycles of gender entrapment and violence that are destroying African-American families.

Point of Departure

As a survivor of domestic violence, I became an advocate for victims of domestic violence and have served in this capacity for over 18 years. During the 1980s when I was actively working as an advocate for victims of domestic violence, many of the younger white activists often approached me with the same question. They asked why blacks are not as actively involved in the domestic violence movement even though many African-American women are victims of domestic violence. I had no substantive answer for them at that time. After several years of working as an advocate – combined with my personal, police, and pastoral experiences – I discovered several things that could shed some light on this question and facilitate continued discussion on responses to domestic violence in African- American communities. In addition, through my counseling and ministering with victims of domestic violence, I discovered how the church could participate more actively within this movement toward advocacy, accountability, healing, and overall wellness of African-American families impacted by domestic violence.

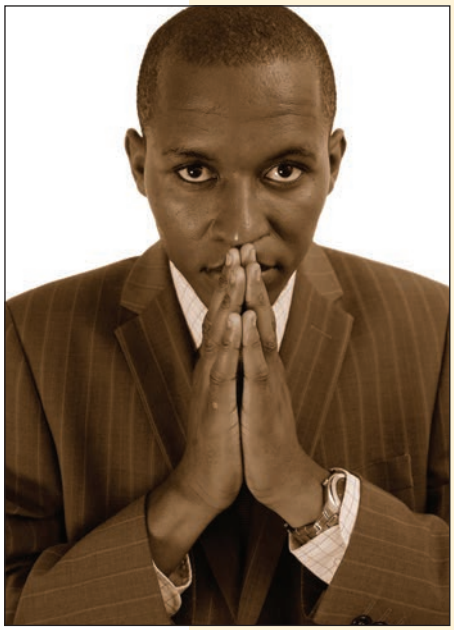


First, I discovered that the standard advocacy model for domestic violence, which has its basis in the mainstream feminist movement, was too heavily focused on the criminalization of domestic violence. Where criminal justice intervention is necessary, its goals of arrest; incarceration; and, recently, mandatory groups for the abuser, is often hailed as *the* answer. Criminal justice institutions, as well as feminist-based domestic violence agencies, have commonalities in their foundational purposes and philosophical framework. They view domestic violence as a crime, not as a family matter, and assert that the approach should be law enforcement- based toward arresting the violator. Consequently, the criminal justice system and domestic violence agencies' philosophical (and foundational framework for intervention) does not leave adequate room for understanding and intervening in the deeper issues within African-American families (Office for Victims of Crime, 2001, p. 15). Until the late 1970s, domestic violence in the larger society was ineffectively handled and not acknowledged by the criminal justice system as a serious crime against individuals and/or society. The criminal justice system, consequently, became a necessary and long overdue constituent in addressing violence against women. Yet, for African American battered women, this has still not proven to be *the* answer.

Many African American battered women do not see calling the police and engagement in the criminal justice system as a viable option for assistance for a number of reasons. These women have often experienced inadequate police response and negative encounters with the system when seeking legal recourse, Among them include lack of police response and dissatisfaction with imposed penalties, or lack of imposed penalties, for abusers, both of which increase their risk for further and more severe victimization. These types of responses have left

some African American battered women feeling that defending themselves with physical force when assaulted by their batterers was their most viable option for survival. Legal repercussions from this have left women feeling re-victimized by the system with penalties imposed on them for their actions that were often harsher than those ever imposed on their batterers (Gillum, 2008b). In addition, African American battered women are aware of a history of racism within the U.S. criminal justice system and are hesitant to interact with the system themselves or turn abusive partners over to such a system fearing harsher treatment and his victimization by this system (Gillum, 2008b; Robinson & Chandek, 2000). These experiences and sentiments are supported by an existing literature that identifies people of color, particularly African Americans, as being subject to unequal protection of the laws, "neo-slave labor" via incarceration, excessive surveillance and overrepresentation in the legal system (Brewer & Heitzeg, 2008). In light of these circumstances, it is understandable that women may not criminalization as the answer.

Second, I discovered that the need for power and control, singularly, was not an adequate base from which to understand and intervene in issues of domestic violence within African-American families. This is particularly true when the intervention of choice emphasizes the forced separation of abusers from the abused. Many women find this intervention undesirable because of the history of racism and oppression and its impact on African-American men and families.



Still, because of the history of activism against racism, many women continue to turn to the black church for assistance as the one trusted institution in the African-American community. However, the response of the black church has, in many cases, presented challenges and implicitly supported the abuse, causing additional harm. Many abused women have found that the church did not take seriously the issue of domestic violence or allow them to address the issue within the context of the church. This situation can become even more complex when abused African-American women approach the church for advocacy and intervention and are blamed, shamed, and made to feel guilty by the pastor and other members for causing their own victimization. This happens because many of the theological, doctrinal, and Christological ideals of the church support the power, control, and influence of men and the subordination of women. Gillum & Nash (2010) discuss at length the numerous ways in which clergy and the faith communities enact this in ways that facilitate women's suffering. They include: endorsing beliefs that abuse does not happen in their congregations; ignoring abuse in the name of ideological preservation; limited knowledge of clergy due to lack of training; failing to provide assistance and validate the experiences of victims; pressuring victims to "forgive" perpetrators and continue the relationship; condemning women for leaving abusive relationships; faulting women for marital difficulties; endorsing "traditional" unequal gender roles, fostering patriarchy and sexism; and, preaching doctrines of unconditional submission of wives to their husbands (Gillum & Nash, 2010). Consequently, the blaming, shaming, and guilt continue. It became very clear to me that domestic violence and its impact on African-American families, marriages, and communities had been, at best, under emphasized and, at worst, overlooked in African-American liberation theologies and black church teaching, preaching, and advocacy. Consequently, with African-American battered women having no real place to turn, the cycle of violence and gender entrapment continues.

Models of intervention must be developed that will facilitate breaking this entrapment. There must be an ethical, sociological, and theological critique of the experiences of slavery and other events that shaped the theological, Christological, and social understandings of the black church and community, and, thus, the family. The black church and the black family share some of the same roots; therefore, it is important to understand the constructs of both institutions, as well as the black community. In his book, *The Church in the Life of the Black Family, Wallace Smith* (1985) demonstrates his understanding of the connection of black church doctrine and the sociology of the black family. The two, he states, have the same roots and similar expressions. He quotes Dr. J. Deotis Roberts in his introduction:

> We have studied the history and sociology of the black family and have allowed our doctrine of the church in the black tradition to emerge out of the context. The extended family has been employed as a way of imaging the black church...Since black families are the source of black church's life and growth, the measure of its ministry to black families will determine the quality of its own mission. (p. 13)

The gender entrapment of African-American battered women must be seen, within this mission, as a primary issue in the continued struggle for black liberation, and as crucial for the survival, healing, and empowerment of African-American families. Eugene and Poling (1998, p. 23) in *Balm for Gilead* indicate that African-Americans, both men and women, are suffering and as a consequence leaves many vulnerable and intricately damaged individuals. This state of the community calls for more attention to family violence in African-American relationships in liberation theologies. Most importantly, a paradigm shift in the ways we understand our social, ethical, theological, and Christological heritage can help us create useful strategies of prevention, intervention, and care. These strategies will facilitate an intentional ministry focus for African-American women impacted by domestic violence that would make visible and audible that which has virtually been invisible and silent.

Dwight Hopkins (2002, pp. 4-5) suggests the most important question to ask is whether the gender relationships that are taking place produce an environment of liberation and freedom for all people. If not, then liberation theologies have a social, ethical, and moral responsibility to advocate against the privileges and oppressive structures that prevent liberation and freedom. The roots of gender entrapment have indeed taken place in a cultural context that did not produce freedom and equality for African-American women. Therefore, theological and ethical investigation that can facilitate and foster the liberation of African-American women is just and necessary.

Despite gender entrapment, African-American women have historically spoken out against gender oppression. Cone (1984, p. 123) posits that black churchmen and black scholarship should not be surprised by militant female voices. He states, "Black church women have been speaking out for a long time." There are those, however, for whom the silence, abuse, oppression, and cries for liberation continue. African-American battered women may benefit from African-American liberation models of ministry that break this entrapment. It is the spirit of these battered women that needs attention and intervention, the broken spirits of African-American churchwomen that need compassion. Women of faith who are victims of domestic violence experience a great deal of spiritual distress as a result of their experience and identify their spirit as being in need of healing. These women often experience feelings of betrayal, despair, spiritual anguish, powerlessness, absence of God's presence, and fear. Addressing this wounded spirit is integral to their healing and clergy and faith communities can plan a crucial role in facilitating their coping and restoration of meaningfulness to their lives (Gillum, 2008a, 2008b; Gillum & Nash, 2010). It is the spirit of African-American male-female relationships that needs attention and correction. Gillum (2007) discusses destructive elements that have hindered healthy relationships between African American women and men (including a history of broken families, fears of infidelity, negative stereotypes, economic hardship, and gendered expectations) and calls for more understanding of these issues and ways to address them that foster healthy relationships and African American families.

It is within these liberating models of intervention and prevention that healing will be realized. It is by breaking the cycle of gender entrapment and violence of African-American battered women that we can find liberation for all people because gender entrapment impacts everyone, both male and female, thus it impacts the entire community. The ministry in the African-American church, using liberation and womanist models of intervention, will become a major contributor toward breaking the cycle of violence that is destroying black family life. Cone (1998) remarks:

> A clock of destiny is ticking out. We must declare where we stand on the great issues of our time. Racism is one of them. Poverty is another. Sexism another. Class exploitation another. Imperialism another. We must break the cycle of violence in America and around the world. For Malcolm and Martin, for America and the world, and for all who have given their lives in the struggle for justice let us direct our fight toward one goal – the beloved community of humankind. (p. 318)

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Domestic Violence
A Faith-Based Introduction

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Objectives

- To facilitate the church's understanding of the importance of its role in addressing domestic violence in the African-American community.
- To describe the varying "Wounds of the Spirit" women who experience domestic violence suffer and its impact on the spiritual and emotional health (short and long term) of victims/survivors.
- To help churches understand how to provide pastoral care for victims/survivors of domestic violence.
- To help churches understand how to care for abusers in the theoretical framework of accountability.
- To help churches understand the history of oppression (e.g., slavery and racism) and its connection to issues of abuse and victimization.

PRE-TEST

Domestic Violence: A Faith-Based Introduction

Note: This test is to be given prior to the workshop. After the workshop, the same test will be given to demonstrate knowledge obtained as a result of the workshop. The answers, with some comments, are included.

1. The church must realize that domestic violence is a _____.
2. Domestic violence not only affects the individual and the family, it affects the _____.
3. Socially induced responses, including those of the church, have contributed to the _____ of women.
4. The church must provide pastoral care to victims/survivors of domestic violence. However, the church cannot do it alone. The church must also _____ with other agencies that may be better able to provide places of care and safety for the victim/survivor. This is known as _____.
5. The lenses through which care and support should be provided for victims/survivors are _____ and _____.
6. When the victim/survivor's normal, established relationship with God and accompanying theological worldviews are violated and rendered seemingly helpless/useless, she can experience a _____.
7. _____ is a normal reaction to the losses the victim/survivor experiences within the relationship that will allow her to go through certain stages during her recovery.
8. The lens through which pastoral care for the abuser is given is_____.
9. Advocating for the rights of victims/survivors and challenging systems of oppression that re-victimize and oppress women is the _____ _____ of pastoral care.
10. Both the victim/survivor and abuser will most likely be members of your local congregation, which will allow you access to them in ways that other agencies may not have the immediate opportunity to. T or F (circle one)
11. Preaching, teaching, and providing worship opportunities that address issues of domestic violence will help to break the _____ and provide an environment where victims/survivors know they can trust the church to provide pastoral care, offer advocacy, and hold abusers

Introduction

Previous sections of this Guide have provided the definition of domestic violence, as well as information regarding the causes, statistics, and the specific types and characteristics of domestic violence and its impact on individuals and families. This Guide component focuses on the importance of understanding domestic violence from a faith-based perspective.

The Acknowledgement

Although both men and women have suffered as victims of domestic violence, statistics have shown that women have disproportionately been victims of domestic violence and suffered the devastating effects of violence in intimate relationships. Therefore it is important to approach this topic from the stories and views of the many women who have suffered this "sin of abuse" in silence for many decades. For this reason, "she" will be used to refer to victims/survivors, and "he" will be used to refer to abusers/perpetrators. Please note that abuse by anyone – male or female, whether in heterosexual or same-sex relationships – is a sin, and the abuser must be held accountable.

The Moral Imperative

Holding abusers accountable, caring for victims and survivors, and providing models of prevention and intervention are not simply the job of secular agencies and the criminal justice system, but the church as well. The church must see itself as a part of the healing cycle for those who suffer abuse, as well as a place of accountability for those who abuse being a "very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, New Revised Standard Version).

Crisis in the Village

Domestic violence is not simply a crisis for the individual or the family; it represents a crisis in the village. Theologian Robert M. Franklin (2007) defines the village as the extended family, which includes the church, and the communities where individuals live, worship, and work. Since slavery was not intended to keep families together, African-Americans have learned and mastered the art of creating extended families that extend far beyond the traditional understanding of the nuclear family. (Franklin, 2007, pp. 40-45). Consequently domestic violence upsets, disorients, and disempowers the village.

The Goal

The goal of this section it to help the church leaders understand domestic violence and its far-reaching impact on victims; abusers; children; and the entire village, including the church. And, that churches can create programs of intervention, prevention, care, justice making, and advocacy to promote healing, hope, and wholeness within our communities and, thus, society.

The Opportunity

The church, in general, and the African-American church, in particular, is uniquely positioned to provide ministry to victims, their abusers, and their children. The church is probably the one place where the pastor will most likely come in contact with the entire family before, during, and after the abuse. The pastor most often has established a relationship with one or more members of the family who is impacted by violence. This established relationship makes it much easier to observe and enter into the lives of the congregants in ways that may take secular institutions weeks or months to establish. Therefore it is important to see the church as a valued and needed resource in the fight against domestic violence.

The Question

Can the church (as a whole, to include members and pastors of local congregations) become a place where victims feel safe and secure enough to reach out to for help and care? Developers of this Guide believe the answer is "Yes." However, churches must first understand the spiritual, emotional, and psychological impact domestic violence has on victims, as well as their own contribution to the re-victimization of abused women. These are sometimes referred to as "wounds of the spirit" (West, 1999, p. 2).

Wounds of the Spirit

Scholar Traci West (1999) in her book, Wounds of the Spirit, focuses on the violence that has historically occurred in the lives of African-American women. In her studies and research, she has found that most of the spiritual wounds suffered by African-American women are a result of being rendered invisible, silenced, and rendered irrelevant in the consequences of intimate violence. Because of this, she states, "Women are compelled to assume the qualities of shamefulness and invisibility" (West, 1999, p. 2). The spiritual wounds suffered by victims/survivors of domestic violence are the consequences of these socially induced responses that have further contributed to the emotional and spiritual trauma women endure in the aftermath of "male assault" (West, 1999, p. 2).

Many may challenge the very notion that African-American women can be silenced when they typically are considered "big-mouthed" and "aggressive, states West." Yet, she posits there are several ways this can happen. Consider the following explanations and examples adapted from Wounds of the Spirit (West, 1999):

- **Not heard:** When black women make efforts to resist the abuse and violence in their lives, they are often dismissed. As part of this dismissal, black women are characterized by negative labels and typecast as provokers.

Example(s): A black woman who is "not heard" may be the overt focal point of jokes or accusations made by friends and family members. Accusations may also be apparent through the behaviors and/or attitudes of friends and family members (p. 11).

- **Not listened to:** As women attempt to articulate the violence they experience at the hands of male perpetrators, the response is generally off-putting. Rather than being well-received, they become the target of hostile messages about themselves – oftentimes from authoritative figures (p. 11).

Example(s): Within the church context, "not heard/not listened to" may be apparent in the preaching and stereotyping of certain women in the Bible as unworthy, immoral, prostitutes, lustful, aggressive, or not to be trusted. These women of the Bible are sometimes compared to women within the congregation.

- **Not permitted to speak out:** Rules established by the abuser, the criminal justice system, and the church can be prohibitive to women who want to speak out against the violence they experience. Many of these rules are rooted in racism and/or patriarchy, and the penalty for disobedience to said rules can be dreadful for the woman who dares to violate them (p. 12).

Example(s): Within the church context, "not permitted to speak out" is reflected in the preaching and teaching of pastors. In many churches, the pastor is revered as an individual who has all the answers to questions from parishioners and the definitive resolutions to situations experienced by parishioners. This individual is also hailed as the authority on how the Bible should be interpreted. Thus, when women offer any opposition to church doctrine, organizational structures, and/or interpretations of the Bible that result in their oppression and/or re-victimization, they are silenced, shamed, and made to feel unwelcome in the church environment. Such behaviors make it nearly impossible for them to overcome the canons of the church.

- **Censored to the point of losing one's sense of self:** Pre-defined roles and identities for black women can result in their having no sense of self. Not only are these women at a loss for how to express themselves regarding the violence they experience, they are also at a loss as to how to find their way in life. These women may be overwhelmed by demands to behave appropriately as dictated through psychological torture by their abusers. Other demands may come from the church and the black community at-large. Still other demands are based on the supposed knowledge of the black woman regarding her role in the black family (p. 12).

Example(s): Within the church context, "censored to the point of losing one's sense of self" is most evident in the misinterpretation of biblical text such as the "household codes" as described in Ephesians 5. These codes endorse the blind submission and obedience of women to their husbands. The misinterpretation of biblical text restricting the leadership and ordination of women in the church offers another example of censorship. The text cited to support such restrictions indicates that women should be silent in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35) and that women should not have authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11-16).

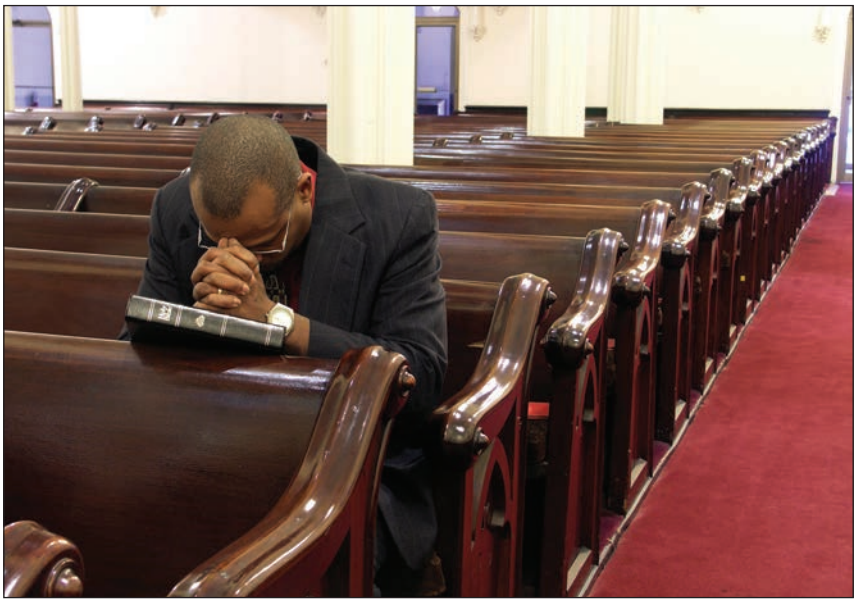
Domestic violence should be viewed as a major traumatic experience, often similar to that of terrorism.

Silencing the voices of abused women, however well intentioned the preaching and teaching is, can have devastating effects on victims of domestic violence. And when the church participates on any level – intentional or unintentional – it is engaging in acts that harm the spirit of women who attend church and ask, "Is there a word from the Lord?"

Because the wounds of the spirit have already occurred in many of the victims/survivors of domestic violence, it is important that the church recognize its possible participation in their re-victimization. This churches admission/confession can lead to true repentance that can allow the it to be a place where victims/survivors can go for advocacy, justice, and the process/facilitation of healing.

One of the greatest ministries of the church is to identify, unmask, and advocate for change in those socially induced structures, including the church, that continue to re-victimize victims. This is the prophetic dimension of pastoral care. Consequently, healing the spiritual wounds of victims/survivors requires advocacy for the rights of victims; doing justice, which requires accountability of the abuser within the church context; and pastoral care.

The church should be an agent of healing, justice, and reconciliation. However, the church cannot do this work alone. Partnering with domestic violence agencies and the criminal justice system will facilitate awareness of resources to assist the victims/survivors in finding places of refuge, joining domestic violence support groups, and navigating the court system. These, too, are pastoral care needs of the victim. An example of justice making, in this instance, is going to court with the victim. Most often, clergy and congregants go to court with the offender and forget or neglect the victim. Justice can be a simple act of making certain that in addition to supporting the offender in court, the victim is supported as well.



Also, remember that believing the victim and maintaining confidentiality are the lenses through which clergy should always provide pastoral care and advocacy to the victim/survivor. Pastoral care for the abuser should be discussed in a different context and will be examined later in this Guide component (in section entitled "Pastoral Care for the Abuser").

Crisis of Faith

Crisis of faith is an important spiritual issue for victims and survivors of domestic violence. Crisis of faith occurs when one's normal, established relationship with God and accompanying theological worldviews are violated and rendered seemingly helpless/useless, (Webb, 2005, p. 10). A crisis of faith occurs when one or more of the following five core beliefs and/or worldviews are destroyed or called into question:

- The belief that the world is just and fair;
- The belief and value that comes with trusting others;
- Self-efficacy and self-esteem;
- The need for safety; or
- Order, faith, and religion.

The act of domestic violence causes one to question these core beliefs causing her to enter a state of spiritual crisis. The following are the symptoms of crisis of faith:

- Feeling abandoned by God,
- Finding it hard to pray,
- No yearning for righteousness,
- No spirit of thankfulness,
- Hopelessness, or
- Seeing no value in biblical scripture.

Many times the abuser has already, prior to physical violence, convinced his victim that no one, not even God, cares about her. The violence, absent appropriate responses from the criminal justice system, secular institutions, and the church, simply confirm these ideas.

Domestic violence should be viewed as a major traumatic experience, often similar to that of terrorism.

Crisis of Faith as a Delayed Response to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence should be viewed as a major traumatic experience, often similar to that of terrorism. However, the manifestation of spiritual symptoms of trauma may be delayed until the victim/survivor regains her cognitive and emotional stability. This is why the crisis of faith must be viewed in the same context as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Questions of Understanding

The following are theological questions victims/survivors often face:

- Why is God allowing this evil to happen to me?
- Why has God left me? Why I am feeling alone and abandoned by God?
- Will I still be a good Christian if I divorce my husband?
- Am I suffering because of the sins I committed?
- Is my suffering the "bed I made" so I must lie in it?

These and other questions are the theological and biblical reflections to which victims/survivors seek answers from the pastor. The answers/responses from pastors, pastoral caregivers, and congregants could either lead toward healing or re-victimization. It is important that these theological and biblical reflections occur on an ongoing basis within the church context – through regular Bible classes, preaching, and the entire worship experience – prior to any known abuse. The victims/survivors will most likely have heard these sermons and teachings. Consequently, these prior messages will serve as a guide as they are attempting to make decisions to leave an abusive relationship, file for divorce, or flee to a shelter or other places of safety.

Consider the first-person example that follows. As a victim of domestic violence, emotional and physical, I needed to flee my abuser. However, I was entrenched in the religious tradition of forgiveness, keeping marriages together, and the sin of divorce. As I engaged in my own biblical and theological reflection from past teachings, looking for internal permission from the church to leave, all I was able to recall are the following messages (verbal and non-verbal) I learned from the church: it was my fault; I should try harder; it's my job to fix it; I must serve and respect my husband; there is value in suffering; I'm not worthy; and many other disempowering messages. There was nothing I could recall that empowered me to leave, be safe, and seek refuge from a shelter or other helping organization. Consequently, I stayed in the abuse and suffered in silence. The spiritual wounds grew even larger.

Shame and Guilt

Many victims/survivors confuse shame with guilt. They will come to the pastor and ask for prayer that they be forgiven. The pastor usually begins to pray for God to forgive the victim/survivor without finding out what this person is seeking forgiveness for. In the case of victims/survivors, the issue most often is not guilt; it is shame. Shame is the internal and external reaction of victims/survivors who have taken on the blame, embarrassment, and burden of being a victim. The external reaction is the victim saying and believing that the abuse is her fault. The internal reaction is the victim lowering her head, being unresponsive, and internalizing through physical and spiritual, this victimization, she sees as her fault. The prayer request for forgiveness is her way of releasing this burden. However, the victim/survivor needs to understand that this reaction is one of shame and not guilt and that she has nothing to be ashamed of because the shame belongs to the abuser. Prayer, therefore, however expedient, will not be the healing balm she needs. She needs understanding, clarification, support, and love. There are times, however, when guilt is the real issue. When the victim/survivor requests prayers for forgiveness, clergy should make certain the guilt is a reality. In such cases, praying to God for forgiveness is appropriate.

Grief

Grief is a normal reaction to loss. Domestic violence represents loss in the life of the victim/survivor. She could experience loss of trust; loss of a relationship, through separation and/or divorce; loss of her sense of stability; or even loss due to the changes that will occur as a result of the abuse. Unresolved grief due to these losses could also result in a crisis. Effective pastoral care entails identifying those experiencing grief and helping the victim/survivor normalize her feelings, helping her to understand that grieving is a healthy and natural healing process and not a sign of weakness, and helping her to engage in prayer and quiet meditation.

Pastoral Care for the Abuser

The theoretical and theological framework and lens through which ministry with abusers must occur begins with accountability. This means taking responsibility for and ownership of the harm and sin he has committed. In these actions, he will find true repentance and pathways to end his abusive ways and make restitution for the damage he has committed. This is necessary for authentic pastoral care of the abuser and the continued facilitation of healing of the victim/survivor.

Accountability

An example of the church holding the abuser accountable is not allowing him to serve in leadership positions until the violence/abuse ends, responsibility for the abuse is accepted, and repentance and restitution happens. Another example of the church holding the abuser accountable is to require him, before being restored to his leadership position, to participate in a batterer's intervention group. These groups would incorporate the following:

- Responsibility – Being held accountable for the abuse; criminal accountability or social stigma
- Repentance – Stopping the violence and abuse
- Restitution – An act of repentance
- Reconciliation – Receiving forgiveness but this does not necessarily mean asking his victims for forgiveness or re-engaging in the relationship. It may mean the abuser is viewed as being safe enough to rejoin church without fear he will harm is former partner
- Reincorporation – Reintegration into the village

Additional information regarding this topic is available in the article African-American Abusers and Historical Oppression, provided as an appendix to this Guide component. Also for more information about Batterer Intervention Programs accountability please contact Bishop Roderick Mitchel from New Life Church in Cleveland Mississippi or David Garvin's ADA program through Catholic Social Services in Ann Arbor Michigan.)

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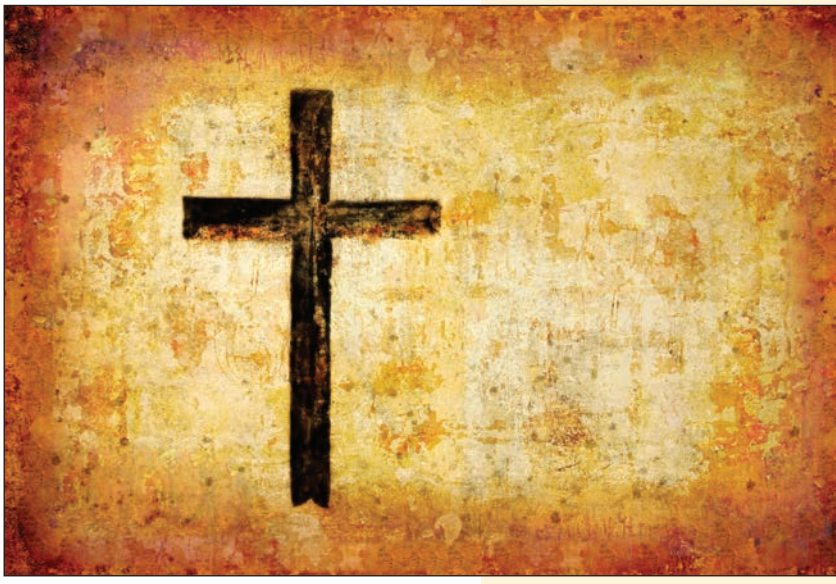
Answer Key for Pretest

1. Sin – Most people think of domestic violence as a criminal offense, and it is. However, the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual damage caused by the abuser is also, most important to the church, a sin. Actions of abuse are contrary to the abundant life God offers to all of His people. Sin requires repentance and restitution before any reconciliation should be discussed and/or considered.
2. Entire Village – The victim is harmed, as are children, family members, church members, and friends. Domestic violence harms the entire community. It is not, as many people think, a personal issue between two people.
3. Re-victimization – How the church chooses to intervene in the lives of the victim, through preaching, teaching, or individual contact, can be a roadblock or resource. If it is a roadblock, the victim can suffer even greater injuries than her original trauma.
4. Partnering, referring
5. Believing the victim, confidentiality
6. Crisis of faith
7. Grief
8. Accountability
9. Prophetic dimension
10. True
11. Silence



A well-informed minister can serve as a bridge, rather than a barrier, to healing and wholeness

What Ministers Need To Know

Pastor J.R. Thicklin

Abstract

The objective of this section is to identify vital areas in which ministers need to be knowledgeable as it relates to domestic violence. Raising ministers' awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence and its occurrence within the faith community is critical in equipping and empowering them to become agents of healing and peace, rather than perpetuators of abuse and re-victimization. A well-informed minister can serve as a bridge, rather than a barrier, to healing and wholeness and can be of great assistance to the victim and a broker of accountability and transformation for the perpetrator. Ministers should develop the knowledge and skill sets that would allow them to effectively collaborate with other service providers in the community that addresses domestic violence and can become a vital part of the systematic response to domestic violence.

Introduction

Crisis occurs in many ways and on many fronts. In times of crisis, people tend to turn to faith leaders and law enforcement. The reality is that clergy and spiritual leaders are oftentimes the only individuals in whom survivors of domestic violence may confide. Domestic violence perhaps seems like an unnatural fit or subject matter for church leaders to address, yet the plight of domestic violence is real and does exist within the church.

The Prevalence of Domestic Violence

Clergy must know that domestic violence does not discriminate by race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or religious denomination. On a national average, every 9 seconds a female is battered in a domestic violence incident; every 6 hours a female dies in an incident directly related to domestic violence. It is important to recognize that silence about the subject matter does not mean that domestic violence is not occurring. The impact of domestic violence is so far reaching that one of the greatest allies of domestic violence could be uninformed, untrained clergy. Domestic violence rips at the very heart of the human soul and spirit. The violation of covenant, morals, and values makes domestic violence a lethal weapon. Anytime there is violence between people who are related by blood or marriage; have a child in common, or have had a relationship beyond a platonic one, it injures the human spirit. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it;

neither was it he that hated me, then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked into the house of God in company" (Psalms 55:12-14, King James Version).

Ministers need to know that when domestic violence occurs, it is the ultimate act of betrayal and hurt. Victims during these times feel confused, frustrated, and torn between their loyalty to the relationship with their partner and their relationship with God.

The Impact

Ministers need to know that domestic violence impacts more than just the victim and perpetrator; it also affects the children and extended family, including the church family. Ministers hold a position of influence with members and the community at-large. It is critical that ministers receive proper training in domestic violence so that they can better relate to both the victim and perpetrator. A well-trained and informed minister can be a great ally to those who are hurting and suffering victimization at the hands of their partners.

The Perspective and Approach

Domestic violence is not just another family issue, relationship problem, or lovers' quarrel and, therefore, should not be taken lightly or minimized. Because it is not a routine issue, clergy must address it from a different approach and perspective than that taken with a couple having disagreements over finances, for example. There are adjustments to the normal approach of addressing couples issues that must be made, including believing the victim without re-victimizing her, but also abandoning the traditional approach of couples counseling. Ministers have to understand that anytime there has been an inkling of domestic violence, precaution is to be taken to protect the victim in order to ensure her safety, as well as to maintain her confidentiality. Ministers may wrestle with the credibility of the claim of domestic violence, if their perception of the couple has been compromised because of their familiarity with either or both of them. It is critical that the minister not minimize the abuse or the situation because of his/her perceived knowledge of the individuals. It is not uncommon for clergy to feel a sense of divided loyalty when dealing with the issue of domestic violence, especially when one has a rapport with the victim or the perpetrator. Divided loyalty occurs when the pastor or counselor feels compelled to believe or not believe the victim or perpetrator based on his/her own personal relationship or dealings with them or their families. In this case, the minister might feel that to take the side of or to believe the victim over the perpetrator causes him/her to have to make a choice that disregards the loyalty of the individual to the church and/or the pastor. In such situations, it is important for ministers to promote peace and safety, rather than position or status.

Domestic violence is the number one unreported and underreported crime in America.

Many people will not come forth about their abuse because of shame and fear of being judged or not believed.

Perspective and Perception

Many ministers when asked about domestic violence and its occurrence in the church quickly get defensive and state that domestic violence does not occur in their congregations. When asked how they can say that it does not occur, they usually remark that no one has reported being abused. This way of thinking can be harmful. Domestic violence is the number one unreported and underreported crime in America. Many people will not come forth about their abuse because of shame and fear of being judged or not believed. It is up to the pastor to make it known where the ministry stands when it comes to domestic violence. If there is never a message, workshop, or group formulated around this issue, nor a mention of the subject, most victims will feel very hesitant to come to the pastor about it. It is incumbent upon ministers to set the standard and position of the ministry as it relates to domestic violence or abuse of any kind. Ministers must understand that the parishioners are often conditioned in their thinking to believe that perhaps domestic violence is a private matter. Until it becomes the topic of sermons and a no tolerance stance has been established, members will continue to suffer in silence. Ministers need to know that their presence is vital to a victim who might be suffering and agonizing over the abuse in silence, oftentimes blaming herself or even God for the abuse she has suffered. The impact of domestic violence in the life of a person of faith can be and oftentimes is compounded by a crisis of faith. The question of why God allows this to happen is the one that is most commonly asked. Clergy must recognize the internal torment that a victim wrestles with in the midst of an abusive experience. In addition to the crisis of faith is the dilemma of the justification of the abuse through misunderstanding and misapplication of biblical scriptures. Ministers must bring theological clarity to the matter.

The Importance of Collaboration

Addressing domestic violence is a complicated matter that must be handled with caution, compassion, and specialized knowledge of the subject matter. It should not be handled alone, as the issue of domestic violence does not lend itself to a "Lone Ranger" mentality. Ministers must seek knowledge regarding community service providers, such as victim advocates, shelter workers, batterer intervention programs and other experts and professionals that address domestic violence. It would be to the advantage of both the minister and the domestic violence organizations to build a rapport and get to know each other so that they can form a healthy collaborative toward developing a systematic response to domestic violence. Ministers have to be aware and willing to examine their own biases as it relates to secular organizations, and secular organizations must be aware and willing to examine their own historical biases concerning churches. It is imperative that they build bridges and restore lives, rather than create barriers for the victim and the perpetrator. Nancy Nason-

How Can the Community of Faith Respond to Domestic Violence?

Ministers who suspect abuse should remember:

1. Not to use confidentiality as an excuse not to act to protect someone from further abuse.
2. Not to interview a victim and an abuser as a couple. Do not attempt to counsel them together in order to stop the abuser's violence.
3. Not to minimize the incidents that a victim shares. Assume that the information shared is only the tip of the iceberg.
4. Not to refer couples who you suspect are dealing with abuse to marriage enrichment programs, mediation sessions, communications workshops, or the like.
5. Not to try to deal with the problem alone. You probably do not have the time, energy, or expertise that you need. Refer. Refer. Refer.
6. Not to become emotionally or sexually intimate with a victim. A victim is very needy and in crisis. Such a person does not need to have to deal with the emotions or sexual feelings of her minister.
7. Not to be taken in by a batterer's claim of a religious conversion experience.
8. Not to help the batterer avoid the legal consequences of the violent behavior.
9. Not to forgive an abuser quickly and easily.
10. Not to provide a character witness or act as an advocate for this purpose.
11. Not to offer absolution without evidence of true repentance.
12. To beware of lip service.

Excerpts for this list were taken from the *Pastor's Handbook on Domestic Violence* by Violeta Olmoguez (1998, pp. 45-46.)

Proper Counseling Recommendations

In times of crisis, both victims and perpetrators might find themselves turning to clergy. Though it is very common for clergy and faith leaders to intervene; it is very important that faith leaders resist the urge to provide traditional couples counseling.

Proper counseling techniques are crucial when dealing with victims or suspected victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Couples counseling is regarded as a "no-no" and is not considered a best practice. This is one of the many reasons that clergy and faith leaders need to be educated and empowered about how to recognize the propensity of violence and properly assess the lethality danger in a relationship. It is so very important to remember that although both the victim and the perpetrator need ministering, they should not be counseled together. Ignoring this recommendation could put the victim in greater danger and might only compound her fear.

It is equally critical that the faith leader not try to give the victim a prescription to fix the violence in the relationship because it can come across as blaming the victim or asking the victim to fix something she did not break. Faith leaders, though well meaning, often mistakenly approach couples involved in domestic violence from the same traditional approach of a romantically troubled relationship; it is critical that they understand the dynamics of the relationship and the safety issues surrounding the victim.

> ***For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.***
>
> ***—Psalm 55:12-14***

A common characteristic among all the churches we visited and that were apart of the Speaking of Faith DVD, is that they all had been trained by a domestic violence organization and, if they worked with abusers, batterer intervention program. This would increase their ability to understand the challenges of victims, safety and supports for victims and the methods abusers use to intimidate, emotionally abuse and physically abuse victims. The knowledge they received was not a guess or an uninformed effort to do good rather it was based on specialized knowledge about domestic violence.

Counseling Principles for the Victim

Counseling principles for the victim focus on empowerment for her to regain control of her life. These principles are outlined in the text that follows (adapted from Olmoguez, 1998, pp. 45-46).

1. The safety of the victim and her children are of primary importance. Therefore, at some point the counselor may need to suggest or even recommend separation.
2. The most powerful words a counselor can say are, “I believe you.”
3. Allow the victim to talk without interruption.
4. Help her to challenge her own minimization of abuse by asking her specific questions about incidents or forms of abuse.
5. Empower the victim. Avoid making decisions for her, as this will cause her to feel re-victimized.

6. Communicate understanding of the extent of her loss by affirming her free choice to reconcile or not by conveying recognition of the difficulty of each step taken in the relationship.
7. Encourage her to connect with others outside her immediate circle.
8. Work with abuse victims is slow and often unpredictable due to crisis.

Counseling Principles for the Abuser

Counseling principles for the abuser focus on terminating the abuse. These principles are outlined in the text that follows (adapted from *Olmoguez*, 1998, pp. 45-46).

1. Group and/or individual therapy is the proper treatment context.
2. The abuser must be held fully responsible for his battering
3. There should be a high degree of counselor-initiated structure in helping the relationship.
4. Access to weapons should be denied if there is a history of physical assault or threat.
5. Abuse should be monitored closely including up-to-date spouse reports each session.
6. The abuser should be held accountable to a community of individuals and/or agencies concerned for the well being of the abuser and the victim
7. Because some voluntary clients may perform poorly in therapy of this type, threats of separation or divorce, prosecution, or loss of employment should be viewed as triggers for abuse. But these elements in the long run can potentially be useful as essential motivators for treatment
8. Marital counseling should not be attempted before he completes a batterer intervention program and all forms of abuse have ceased and the spouse feels safe in this setting and chooses to go forward with counseling on behalf of the children or martial counseling. Two models to review include Dr. Sandy Stith, University of Kanas or Reha Almada, Family therapy Institute of New Jersey

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What Ministers Need to Know

La Donna M. Combs, M.A.

Introduction

The faith-based introduction focused on strategies needed to address the threat of gender entrapment (Richie, 1999) and bring about a paradigm shift for churches creating strategies and models for prevention. As previously discussed, the African-American church is the most influential institution in the African-American community and is equally seen as a resources among those that do not attend church.That said, the following information outlines models that ministers can use to help advocate for women who are suffering in domestic violence relationships, and help them and their families navigate the healing process.

A Spiritually Healthy Culture

In order for effective prevention and intervention to take place within the church, clergy must first be aware of their own biases, practices, and teachings concerning the role of women in the church and within marital relationships. Strategies have to be put in place by healthy men within the church. 1 Timothy 3:2-5, talks about leaders being sober, self-controlled, non-violent, gentle and peaceful. They should be capable of managing their own families and should be respected by their children. Managing does not mean terrorizing but instead behaving as described in Galatians 5:22-25. The scripture speaks of a man being led by God by the fruits of the Spirit. If he is Christian, he operates in love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, and temperance. These attributes do not make a man weak, but a child of God. If these behaviors in a Christian marriage are not being modeled and domestic violence is present, then clergy must intervene for the sake of victim, the batterer, and the church.

Accountability Process

Ministers need to know that religiosity is a silent killer. People are so used to "doing church" and wearing a mask that healing is not in place because of secrecy. The woman is still re-victimized and her faith is called into question when church members do not accurately understand her challenges and cries for help. A challenge for victims includes exposing her husband's abuse. But exposure brings accountability for the abuser and support for the victim. Exposure also brings healing where secrecy continues the sin, shame, and pain. If ministers are going to have effective domestic violence programs, holding

batterers responsible for their actions must take top priority within their faith communities. Intervention and prevention policies based on challenging abuse that applies to all in the church and this includes: the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, Deacons to each member's in the church. This may include the abuser going to another church until his abuse has ended and the victim feels safe. It may also mean that the victim develops a support system with in the church. Accountability can also include that the victim and the abuser are monitored regarding the status of their circumstance until it is no longer a challenge for her.

Ministers must challenge the abuser's beliefs about his right to have control over the woman, his exercise of power, as his right given male privilege.

Things Ministers Need to Consider and Remember

Self-Action

Ministers may feel discomfort with the idea of making the batterer experience the negative consequences of his behavior and the possibility of the criminal justice system being involved. It may feel troubling to say, "You are responsible for your behavior and I will not protect you from the consequences of it." Ministers may confuse what caring means, thinking that taking care of people means making them feel better, when actually taking care of people is holding them responsible for their behavior (Fortune & Poling, 1993, p. 491).

Ministers must challenge the abuser's beliefs in his right to have power and control over the woman, his exercise of power, and his beliefs in male privilege. This confrontational style can feel uncomfortable, but ministering to a man who batters means confronting him. Confronting him is also the loving thing to do, as one's brother's keeper, first respectfully challenging his behavior and then ensuring that meaningful consequences are imposed.

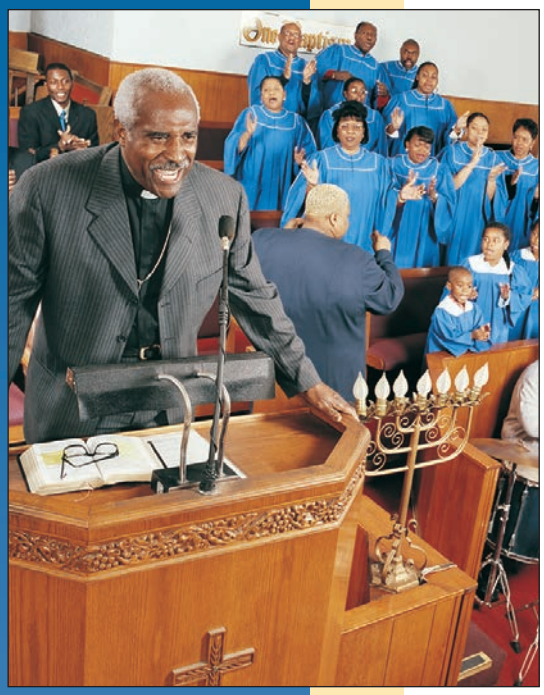
Feelings of Impatience

Ministers may be disheartened by the time it takes a battered woman to act according to what they think she should do, or with the way they feel she should respond to help. They may feel a strong desire that the problem be taken care of. Her need for pastoral care intervention may feel ill-timed. Beware of these unrealistic expectations and impatient responses. The victim must be allowed to walk through this process with the help of clergy at her own pace and not be told what she must do or how fast she should respond. This behavior re-victimizes her and is another form of power and control. She needs to feel empowered and not rescued.

Distrust of the Criminal Justice System

African-American ministers may feel hesitant to use the criminal justice system. "White, middle-class people want to avoid the criminal justice system because they do not see it as relating to them, it challenges their self-image; and thus ministers who are white and middle class want to keep their people out of the system" (Adams, 1994, p. 54). African-Americans want to stay out of the system because they believe they will be treated unjustly. Nevertheless, the use of the criminal justice system is often in the woman's best interest. This being so, it is also in the community's best interest. That being said, it is also useful to

encourage men acknowledge in the church their violent and abusive behaviors. They should be referred to a batterer intervention program in the community or through the hurch. With the consequence of a criminal justice response, if abuse continues engagement and prevention is also important. He should be taught in the church that violence against women is wrong and when they are willing to acknowledge this the church must be prepared to help and hold him accountable for his behavior while supporting and protecting the battered women and children.



Arguments Against Couples Counseling

When a woman reveals that she is being battered, the seemingly helpful response may seem obvious: Get the two of them together, and help them work out the problem. This response, especially if it involves church members, while understandable, is erroneous. It does correspond with the orientation of traditional pastoral counseling, working with the family or the couple. But a difference does exist between marital conflict and abusive behavior. The offer also reinforces the idea that private resolutions to violence are effective when they are not.

When a man is violent against his partner, the abuse is his responsibility alone. The abused person can do little or nothing to stop the violence. In fact, Carol J. Adams (1994) says:

> Couple counseling presumes an equal relationship, in which neither person is afraid to voice his or her own perspective. In fact, in a relationship with a man who batters, one person holds power over the other. Because of the power inequity, there is no reason for them to tell the minister the truth. Actually, each person has reason to lie: she because she fears for her safety, and he because denial and minimization are a part of the mechanism of abusive behavior. (p. 57)

A clergyperson who specializes in family therapy described a couple in which months of couples counseling had gone by with no progress. He was confused. Then the couple just stopped coming. Only after the divorce did the wife confide in him that her husband had been beating her for years. At the last session, she sat throughout bleeding into her hair from a head wound. Just before coming to the session, her husband had rammed her head against a wall in the house with a protruding nail. None of his abusive behavior was ever

Remember that couples counseling threatens the batterer and his sense of control. Because a third person is present, the abuser is threatened with the loss of control. It also endangers the battered woman. The dynamics that create the legitimacy for the perpetrator to commit violence do not end within the walls of the minister's office. In fact, bringing them together works to reinforce control – the abuser continues to be present, monitoring all that she says and does.

Other reasons for refusing couples counseling include unexpected outcomes. The woman may request counseling because she wants the abuse to stop, and agreeing to joint counseling may seem to be the only way to get him to seek help. But a skilled and manipulative perpetrator may choose to participate because he believes that the clergyperson can be won over to his perspective. Not only does he continue his pattern of denial by displacing his responsibility for violence onto her, but he also will manipulate the situation so that the minister will be more likely to identify with his pain rather than hers. Clergy should be trained comprehensively on the tactics of an abusive man and be prepared to confront him in a way that brings his intimate relationship into accountability.

Domestic violence has reached epidemic proportions, affecting 3 to 4 million women per year and millions of children and countless other victims.

Insurance and Liability

Something to think about is liability insurance. Although worship centers are important places for members, guests, and friends, without insurance coverage this secure environment could be jeopardized. Providing Pastoral Counseling and Care to families for spiritual hope and healing is crucial. Liability insurance is a prudent measure to take, even though it is not a requirement.

Depending on what the exposure of services provided to a congregation will determine how much insurance would be needed. Religious Community Liability Insurance, which covers counselors, directors, and officers may be something to think about. It is recommended by faith-based organizations that when seeking insurance, that companies which specialize in insuring churches and/or faith-based institutions is used. Then, a more customized policy can be designed to fit the special needs of a religious organization. It is recommended that the more people who counsel on behave of the church, the more insurance the church should have.

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What Churches Can Do

Rev. J. R. Thicklin

Objectives for this section

- To bring awareness to the church regarding the vital role it can and must play in addressing the issue of domestic violence within congregations and communities.
- To help churches foster a proactive attitude in the prevention of domestic violence by creating an environment that is conducive to the safety of victims and accountability of perpetrators.
- To assist the church in establishing clear guidelines and policies as it relates to addressing domestic violence.
- To help churches understand their all-important role in being part of a coordinated response to domestic violence.
- To assist churches in establishing clear objectives of education, assistance, restoration, and transformation as they address domestic violence.

Pre-test

True or False

1. __T or __ F Churches should stick with just preaching and teaching the Word of God and not get involved with parishioners' personal business.
2. __T or __ F Churches should provide a platform to speak out about domestic violence that condemns abusive behavior and promotes healthy relationships.
3. __T or __ F Churches can have education awareness provided by domestic violence service providers as a part of fostering an atmosphere of safety.
4. __T or __ F Churches should have a closed-door policy as it relates to domestic violence and not allow secular organizations to come into the sanctuary.
5. __T or __ F Introducing domestic violence information in pre-marital counseling is a key to setting the tone for a future marriage.
6. __T or __ F Churches can raise awareness by displaying family violence brochures, pamphlets, and referral cards in the foyer of the church and in the women's restroom.

7. __T or __ F Attempting to educate the congregation through monthly newsletters, weekly bulletins, and through all pre-marital counseling classes is a waste of time and resources.

8. __T or __ F Speaking out against domestic violence from the pulpit could cause many silent victims to leave the church and possibly puts their lives in greater danger.

9. __T or __ F Churches can lead by example by establishing a code of ethics that addresses domestic violence and healthy relationships for all in leadership.

10. __T or __ F Implementing and establishing fathering and men wholeness programs would be counterproductive in holding men abusers accountable for their behaviors.

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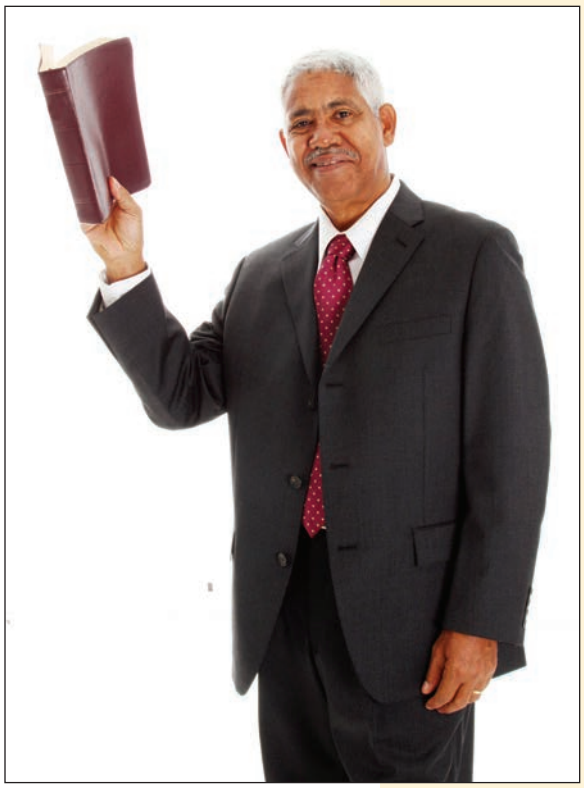


Introduction

The African-American church with its deep rich history has had a far-reaching impact on the lives of African-Americans and their culture. Religion and faith for many is as significant as the air they breathe. It shapes their ideas and governs their thoughts and behavior, serving as a gauge that determines how they perceive and determine that which is good or bad. The African-American church is diverse, yet still holds fast to the very rich traditions and customs that have influenced their culture and shaped their view of the world and themselves.

Domestic violence is an epidemic in society that literally destroys the lives of children; families; and, ultimately, communities. Though domestic violence has reached epidemic proportions, affecting 3 to 4 million women per year and millions of children and countless other victims, there has not been a sufficient response from the church or the faith community at-large. Traditionally these communities are the ones that have responded to the homeless, the needy, the hurting, the incarcerated, and the castaways. Yet they have been mostly silent when it comes to preventing and responding to domestic violence situations.

You cannot change that which you are unwilling to confront...

You cannot confront that which you are unwilling to identify...

You can't identify that which you are unwilling to acknowledge...

You cannot acknowledge that which you are unwilling to accept.

A Call to Action

The objective of this Guide is to call the church into action by moving them from concerned citizens as well as spectator to participant, in resolving issues of domestic violence. The churches must be equipped and educated to address the issue of violence, especially domestic violence, occurring in churches and communities nationwide. As mentioned earlier all the churches involved in the speaking of Faith DVD were trained on how to address domestic violence. You will note in the Mississippi and the Detroit churches they provided on going education about domestic violence. Also, the leaders, pastors and ministers where trained about domestic violence by domestic violence programs. To date, no religious denomination has offered sufficient response from the church in addressing domestic violence. However, the Committee for Domestic Social Policy (1994) laid the foundation for a church response by developing Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action. This Framework was approved by U.S. bishops at a conference in 1994 and includes the following message: "Our families are torn by violence. Our communities are destroyed by violence. Our faith is tested by violence. We have an obligation to respond." This message rings true across denominational lines, but particularly in the African-American church where all too often the communities are disproportionately affected by other forms of violence, trauma and abuse.

Challenging and Changing

The impact of silence within the church concerning domestic violence reaches far and deep within the church and community, creating an apathetic environment and a secret partnership with the abuser and violence. As I stated at the 20th Annual National Preventing Crime in the Black Community Conference, convened in Tampa, Florida, *"You cannot change that which you are unwilling to confront; you cannot confront that which you are unwilling to identify; you can't identify that which you are unwilling to acknowledge; you cannot acknowledge that which you are unwilling to accept."*

This Guide component further stresses the need for and importance of the church being committed to being a place of healing, restoration, and peace by embracing and confronting the issue of domestic violence through the implementation of prevention and intervention programs, as well as the investment of time, energy, prayers, and finances. Churches can begin by having a practical perspective of empowering victims/survivors and holding accountable abusers/perpetrators. The fundamentals of their work should be predicated on the premise of being agents of hope and change, espousing the foundational understanding that God is love and the failure to convey that love by reaching out and extending themselves to those who are hurting is not an option. The church should consider holding support groups for victims, as well

as offer an accountability group for perpetrators that would complement community-based batterer's intervention programs they may be ordered to attend. Churches can be agents of change in educating parishioners and communities about domestic violence. They can help foster an atmosphere of safety and accountability by raising awareness through education and by partnering with service providers that assist victims and perpetrators of domestic violence along the path of healing and transformation. The fundamentals of their work should have as a foundational mission: 1) education, where awareness can be brought to the subject matter; 2) assistance, where there is a presence of free-flowing support, understanding, and guidance; 3) commitment to change: Among some batterers that have changed have said that change does not occur unless the abuser develops the commitment to think, feel and behave differently; 4) deal with the consequences of the crime through the criminal justice system or social consequences-the church, female partner, relatives and friends that shun the abuser until he reconciles his behavior towards the victims of abuse.

Creating Environments for Safety and Support

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) works to inform the public about issues that affect the natural environment and the actions that must be taken to remain safe. This same premise can be applied to the work of the church in addressing issues of domestic violence. This section addresses the importance of the church establishing an EPA by fostering an environment of safety for parishioners and individuals who are experiencing and/or have been impacted by domestic violence. The church has both a unique opportunity and perhaps a perceived challenge in that oftentimes both the victim/survivor and the abuser/perpetrator attend the same church. With that in mind, it is paramount that the church assumes responsibility for making sure there is a safe environment for the victim. The church should ensure that the abuser is held accountable and responsible for his actions.

The following sections about action plans for churches, give steps to establish domestic violence policies and guidelines that outline spiritual, moral, and ethical responsibilities of officers and members of the church. These guidelines should have a firm disciplinary plan of action for those who violate them. In addition to guidelines and policies, warning signs and safety planning cards should be placed in the women's restroom, as well as other strategic areas of the church. Finally, this section highlights the importance of speaking out against domestic violence from the pulpit.

Coordinated Community Response

Two out of every three Americans are affiliated with a religious, spiritual, or faith-based group or organization, and approximately one out of every four Americans is an active member of such a community (National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women, 2001, ch. 12). Based on the breadth and reach of these organizations, it is not surprising that many women, men, girls, and boys turn to religious leaders for guidance in dealing

with violence. In times of crisis, it is not uncommon for people to turn to their faith leaders and law enforcement first. Clergy can attend and churches can offer ongoing trainings that address abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault. The church should have a directory of all the local and state hotlines for domestic violence, as well as contact information for victim services and shelter providers (please contact your State Domestic Violence Coalitions and local domestic violence programs for such information). Churches can be of assistance to local shelters by donating clothes, books, hair products, and the like to assist victims and their children. The church should seek to develop an alliance with law enforcement, as well as victim advocates, fostering a relationship through which there can be reciprocal education, trainings and referral for the involved entities (please note the West Palm Beach section of the Speaking of Faith DVD as an example).

Drawing Strength from Our History

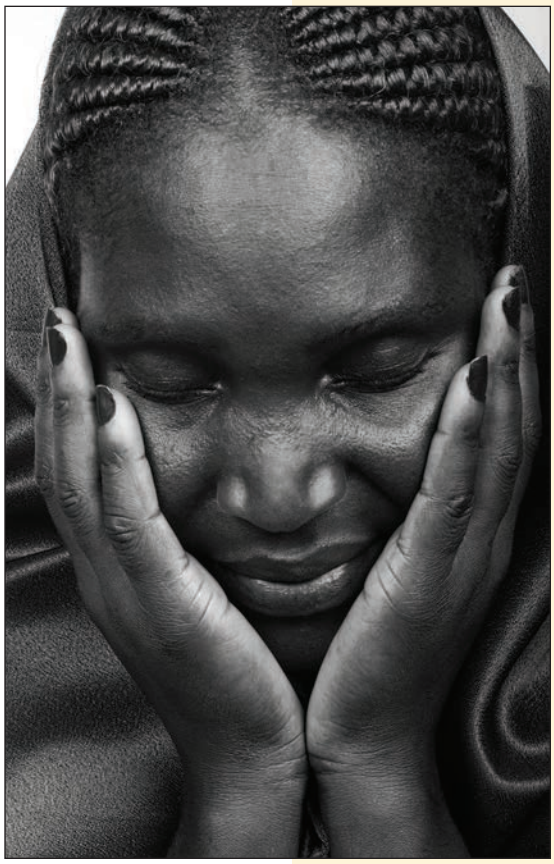
The church has long been seen as one of the most vital pillars of society. Nowhere else is that more evident than in the African-American church. It has been the bedrock, the glue, the compass, the hospital, the education center, and the beacon of hope for African Americans. The church has historically been one of the most influential institutions in the lives of African Americans, promoting education, outreach, and benevolence.

This section of this Guide examines African-American history, with a focus on the contributions of ancestors and predecessors who were deeply inspired by their faith in God and nurtured through church. The African-American church has been a birthing ground and the catalyst for some of the most powerful and influential leaders in history, such as Frederick Douglass; Sojourner Truth; Harriett Tubman; W. E. B. Du Bois; Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Rosa Parks. Many of the drum majors for social justice, equality, and peace drew their inspiration from the church and literally felt that the work they were inspired to do was "God's work." This same ideology is relevant to the church in acknowledging the impact of domestic violence and its destruction of families and communities. Addressing the issue of domestic violence is most certainly "God's work"; as demonstrated by the work of those involved in the Speaking of Faith DVD, including: New Life Church in Cleveland, Mississippi, Greater

Grace Temple in Detroit, Michigan, God Can Church in Ford, Heights Illinois and Destiny by Choice in West Palm, Beach, Florida. Each church has demonstrated a commitment to include addressing domestic violence and the safety and protection of victims as a part of their ministries and for some of the above the transformation and rehabilitation with men who have had a history of violence, if possible.

A Call to Action: Enough Is Enough

"Our families are torn by violence. Our communities are destroyed by violence. Our faith is tested by violence. We have an obligation to respond" (Committee for Domestic Social Policy, 1994). It is a fact that domestic violence in the African-American community occurs at a disproportionately alarming rate. According to *Intimate Partner Violence* in the United States, a report released by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, while the rates of nonfatal intimate partner violence decreased for black females between 1990 and 2003, the rate increased from 3.8 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older in 2003 to 6.6 per 1,000 in 2004 (Catalano, 2007). Black females are victimized at a higher rate than white females, and black females report such incidents at a higher rate than white females – 68.4% compared to 53.5%. The statistical research alone serves as a summons to the African-American church. The church must awaken and respond in a practical manner with the goal of prevention, safety, intervention, accountability, healing, and transformation.



"For many black women who choose to seek help in the black community, experts say that the black church instead of a shelter or hotline may be their first stop. But women are not always met with the help they need," said Sherry Turner, vice president of student affairs at Spelman College and an ordained minister (Religion Newsblog, 2007). "Very often, for those of us who are members of conservative communities of faith, there are sacred texts and passages that are being used to justify the oppression of women."(2007) The African-American church has historically had ministries within the church to address different social ills and needs in the community and within the local church itself. This issue of domestic violence calls for the same type of initiative and attention. The concept of having domestic violence ministries is still in its infancy stages. The congregation (not necessarily denomination) and the way parishioners view domestic violence could play an important role in how churches approach and respond to domestic violence within their churches and communities.

Following are a few examples of how the scope of the church's work is influenced by its perspective of domestic violence and its willingness to be part of a systematic response team.

Men with power, control, and anger issues need to be confronted. The church can be an effective change agent. The church can educate men and women in the roles of husbands and wives, emphasizing love and respect in marriage.

Congregation A has a limited scope but deeply embraces the domestic violence mission and may choose to handle an issue of domestic violence independently as a sole agent, without the assistance of any other agency or organization. Though it might seem to this church that it is being discreet and serving the victim and/or perpetrator, the church could better serve the individuals by connecting them with other services that can meet their immediate and future needs.

Congregation B has a clear understanding of the gospel and is open to allies but does not deeply embrace the domestic violence mission. The church is more apt to provide referrals for individuals engaged in domestic violence, but is less likely to ever speak out against domestic violence from the pulpit or create any other platform for domestic violence, thereby failing to create an atmosphere that fosters safety and accountability. The failure to create a platform within the church may send the wrong message to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Congregation C has a progressive scope, deeply embraces the domestic violence mission, and is open to allies and working to establish healthy/safe alternative communities. Participating in trainings and giving trainings are part of educating the church's ministry staff and other partners. This congregation does speak openly from the pulpit and fosters an atmosphere of safety.

Congregation D has a progressive scope, deeply embraces the domestic violence mission, and is open to allies and working to establish healthy/safer alternative communities. The church also develops programming within the church by fostering relationships with its allies and creating opportunities and platforms to educate and serve its membership with in the church as well. Historically churches have been a place to respond to the "spiritual needs" alone of the church membership. Some churches have not included more than that in their efforts. But today many churches have incorporated ministries that include: civil rights, social justice, substance abuse, homelessness, prisoner reentry, oversees mission and domestic violence, among others. They are guided to include these elements because they believe it is God's will to help people negotiate the challenges of daily life in what Bishop Mitchell (Speaking of Faith DVD, 2011) describes as "Integrating the spiritual with the secular". The churches that do this understand how domestic violence produces a crisis of faith and fully supports their capacity to be supported through the church or through collaborating community services. Members may join the church because they see how the church has engaged them holistically and supported them in their daily living. Such churches help the victim access help, safety, and resources, but leaders can hold men accountable for changing abusive and controlling types of behavior s (as demonstrated by the Men Against Spousal Harm Program (M.A.S.H) programs, in New Life Church and Our House in the Mississippi and Destiny By Choice (in West Palm Beach Florida (Speaking of Faith DVD, 2011) . . Battered women feel as though they are accurately understood and supported. Some men who abuse feel as though they can be directed and redeemed for their transgressions.

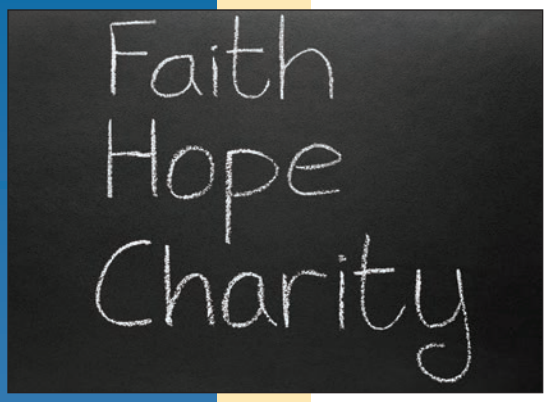
Practical Domestic Violence Ministry

When churches include domestic violence among their ministries, they provide an opportunity to be at the forefront of intervention and prevention of abuse. Pastors and church leaders may be the first to hear about abuse or identify a victim. Because Churches are often seen as a cultural healing center, victims and some abusers may seek out guidance from the church earlier than other resources. Not only can they help the victim access help, safety, and resources, but leaders can hold men accountable for changing abusive and controlling types of behavior.

Domestic violence and abuse are sinful patterns that need to be confronted. Pastors and leaders can address the inaccurate theology about leadership issues, which may exacerbate power and control issues and contribute to abuse in relationships. Men with power, control, and anger issues need to be confronted. The church can be an effective change agent. The church can educate men and women in the roles of husbands and wives, emphasizing love and respect in marriage.

Churches can do the following:

- Do not remain silent.
- Raise awareness by displaying family violence brochures, pamphlets, and referral cards in the foyer of the church and in the women's restroom.
- Educate the congregation through monthly newsletters, weekly bulletins, and through all pre-marital counseling classes.
- Speak out against domestic violence from the pulpit. People's attitudes, perspective, and beliefs can be greatly impacted by church leaders.
- Preach; teach; and, ultimately, create the platforms that acknowledge and address domestic violence as a serious spiritual issue.
- Lead by example. Have a code of ethics that addresses domestic violence and healthy relationships for all in leadership.



- Offer or have a meeting place for support groups. Also, have a place for supervised visitation when parents need a safe place to visit their children.
- Implement and establish fathering and men wholeness programs.
- Sponsor activities and events that help raise awareness.
- Establish accountability programs for batterers (Brother's Keepers).
- Offer spiritual support; reaffirm the worth of the victim/survivor.
- Collaborate with community service providers and domestic violence agencies.
- Commit to making the problem of violence against women and girls a critical concern.
- Emphasize the teachings, practices, and organizational structures that promote a woman's right to be free from violence, such as teachings that support equality and respect for women and girls.
- Develop theologically based materials that emphasize a woman's right to safety and support and a perpetrator's personal responsibility for ending the violence.

- Adopt policies developed by religious leaders that outline appropriate responses to victims and perpetrators of violence and educate leaders about child abuse reporting requirements, the importance of confidentiality, misconduct by clergy or spiritual leaders, and other safety issues.
- Support local advocacy programs that provide services to victims and survivors by encouraging congregants to donate time, money, and other material resources.
- Encourage victims to seek spiritual guidance and additional professional help.
- Know the law as it pertains to domestic violence and protection orders.
- Implement healthy relationship programs as part of youth programs.
- Introduce domestic violence information in pre-marital counseling.

The conversation as it relates to the intergenerational impact of domestic violence is critical in addressing male wholeness as well, particularly given the link between males witnessing domestic violence and their likelihood of becoming perpetrators.

Challenge and Change

Churches can be proactive in raising awareness by first and foremost delivering sermons, workshops, and seminars on domestic violence. It is imperative that churches establish a collaboration with service providers that addresses domestic violence. The church has both a unique opportunity and perhaps a perceived challenge in that oftentimes both the victim/survivor and the abuser/perpetrator attend the same church. With that in mind, it is paramount that the church assumes responsibility for making sure there is a safe environment for the victim. The church should ensure that the abuser is held accountable and responsible for his actions.

Churches can began implementing male accountability groups for those men who batter and can implement fatherhood classes, as well as other platforms, that address men's behaviors and responsibility. Churches must make this worthwhile investment a reality because domestic violence not only affects the primary victim and perpetrator, but also affects extended family, friends, and the church.

Churches must play a very active role in addressing male wholeness and brokenness. The conversation as it relates to the intergenerational impact of domestic violence is critical in addressing male wholeness as well, particularly given the link between males witnessing domestic violence and their likelihood of becoming perpetrators. The church must have dialogue around these types of issues and factors. It is imperative that the church do more than address the symptoms of domestic violence; rather, it must look at the intergenerational link of the behaviors that contribute to domestic violence, including socialization, personal and community environment, and perceived gender roles and responsibilities.

The black church is a powerful institution in the prevention, education, and healing of domestic violence. In order for the church to be actively engaged in the battle against domestic violence, church leaders and congregants must choose to make this a priority. The eradication of domestic violence is a community effort; the church, which plays a critical role for social change in the black community, must take the lead in addressing domestic violence and partnering with the community to end this epidemic (Bent-Goodley, 2007).

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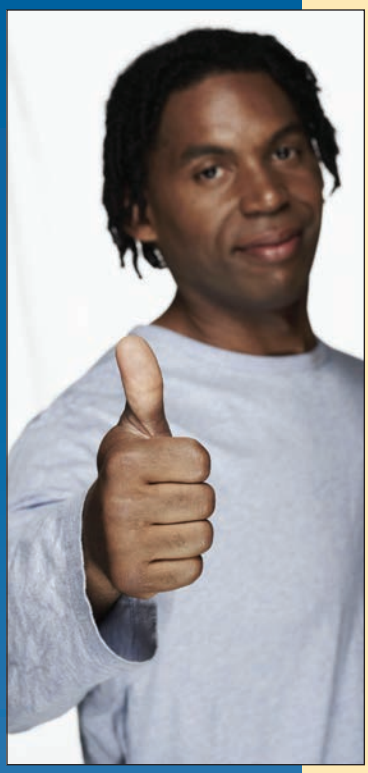


Answer Key for Pretest

1. X T or __ F Churches should stick with just preaching and teaching the Word of God and not get involved with parishioners' personal business.

2. X T or __ F Churches should provide a platform to speak out about domestic violence that condemns abusive behavior and promotes healthy relationships.

3. X T or __ F Churches can have education awareness provided by domestic violence service providers as a part of fostering an atmosphere of safety.

4. __T or X F Churches should have a closed-door policy as it relates to domestic violence and not allow secular organizations to come into the sanctuary.

5. X T or __ FIntroducing domestic violence information in pre-marital counseling is a key to setting the tone for a future marriage.

6. X T or __ F Churches can raise awareness by displaying family violence brochures, pamphlets, and referral cards in the foyer of the church and in the women's restroom.

7. __T or X F Attempting to educate the congregation through monthly newsletters, weekly bulletins, and through all pre-marital counseling classes is a waste of time and resources.

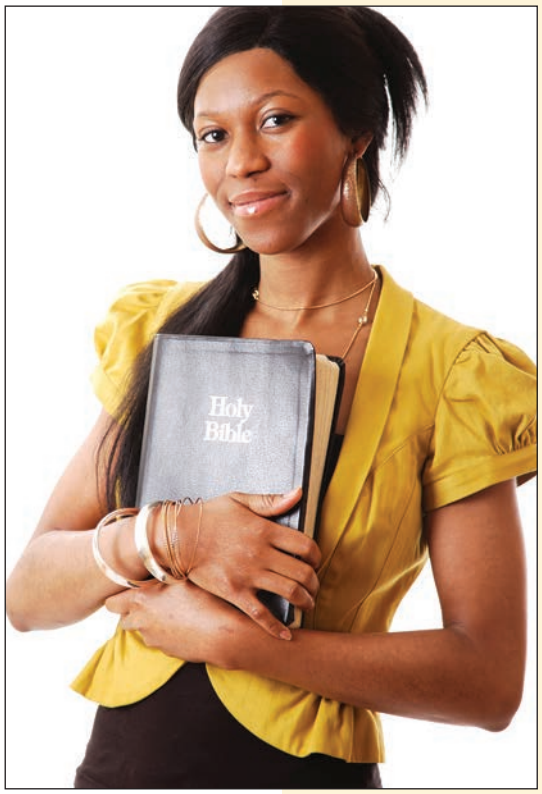
8. __T or X F Speaking out against domestic violence from the pulpit could cause many silent victims to leave the church and puts their lives in greater danger.

9. X T or __ F Churches can lead by example by establishing a code of ethics that addresses domestic violence and healthy relationships for all in leadership.

10. __T or X F Implementing and establishing fathering and men wholeness programs would be counterproductive in holding men abusers accountable for their behaviors.

Action Plans for Clergy and Other Spiritual Leaders/ a Call for Faith-based Prevention

Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D.



Religious organizations are essential to the culture and sustenance of communities and are uniquely positioned to champion efforts to end violence against women. Although philosophical differences have created tension between some religious, spiritual, and faith-based organizations and victims' advocates, common ground can be found in shared interests to end violence against women.

Two out of every three Americans are affiliated with a religious, spiritual, or faith-based group or organization, and approximately one out of every four Americans is an active member of such a community. Based on the breadth and reach of these organizations, it is not surprising that many women turn to religious leaders for guidance in dealing with violence. Some religious, spiritual, and faith-based organizations provide victims with well-informed, practical, and spiritual guidance, including referrals to other organizations.

Faith-based groups and organizations often have strong relationships with communities of color, older women, women with disabilities, and immigrant communities. Religious organizations can reach the large numbers of people often underserved by other groups with messages of safety and support for victims and with information about offender accountability. Establishing training for and by members of religious communities and building the capacity to address the issue will strengthen the role of religious communities in ending violence against women and children.

Religious Communities Can:

1. Commit to making the problem of violence against women a critical concern.

- Emphasize the teachings, practices, and organizational structures that promote a woman's right to be free from violence, such as teachings that support respect for women and girls.
- Develop theologically based materials that emphasize a woman's right to safety and support and a perpetrator's personal responsibility for ending the violence.
- Support local advocacy programs that provide services to victims and survivors by encouraging congregants to donate time, money, and other material resources.

2. Ensure that faith-based environments are safe to allow victims of violence to discuss their experiences and seek healing.

Four primary guiding principles when addressing domestic violence with individual congregants are: **1) safety, 2) autonomy, 3) offender accountability, and 4) advocacy for spiritual and social change.**

- Encourage members and leaders to seek training on victim and survivor experiences and on support that will restore and heal the victim.
- Develop consistent policies for responding to misconduct or abuse by spiritual leaders or clergy to ensure that action is taken to protect congregants, and that appropriate cases of clergy misconduct are referred to law enforcement agencies.
- Create opportunities for survivors to discuss their experiences and needs. Form support groups in collaboration with local sexual assault and domestic violence programs for women who desire faith or spiritual based healing.
- Create or provide materials that address victims' concerns, and offer informed referrals to various advocacy organizations.
- Encourage men, particularly leaders in the community, to speak out and use their influence to communicate intolerance for violence against women and young ladies in all forms.
- Integrate information on sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking into existing activities.

3. Develop strategies to address the needs of all women and girls exposed to violence.

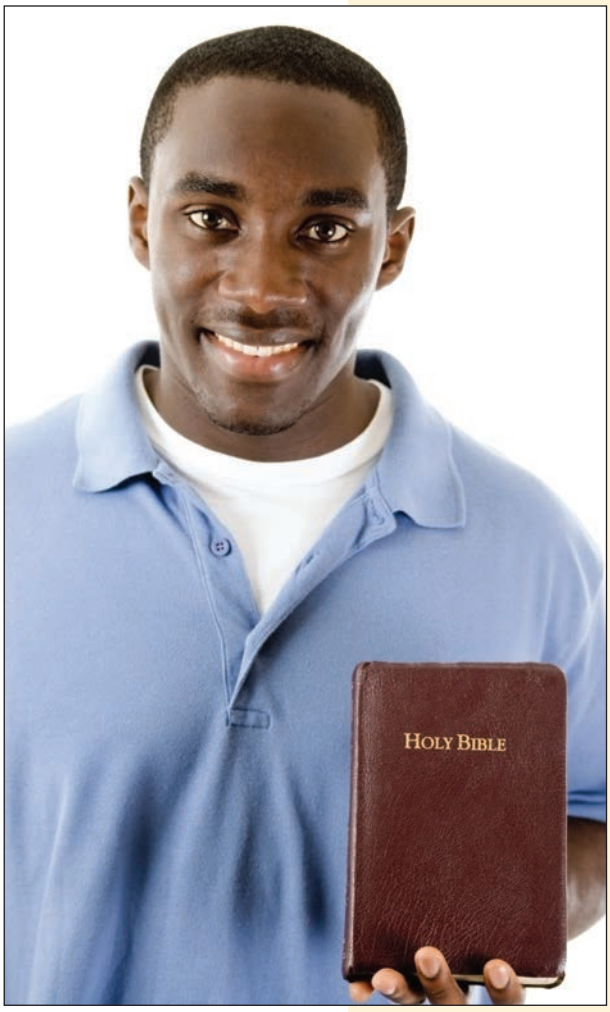
- Seek advice from various age groups within communities on ways to address violence.
- Organize youth ministry and leadership groups to educate young people about the dynamics, impact, and prevention of sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking.
- Train youth to support victims and to constructively confront peers about violence against women and girls.
- Inform leaders about the particular vulnerabilities of older people and people with disabilities who may be dependent on abusive partners or caregivers.

4. Draw on the resources of secular victim services, advocacy, and perpetrator treatment programs to enhance community responses to violence against women.

- Network with victim service and advocacy programs to locate religious and secular allies on the local, regional, state, and national levels.
- Learn about local secular community protocols for handling sexual assault, dating and domestic violence.
- Make appropriate and informed referrals to local secular programs that have the expertise to help victims or perpetrators, including the legal community, health care system, and child welfare system.

5. Help secure financial support for religious, spiritual, or faith-based groups and organizations developing responses to violence against women and children.

- Encourage federal, state, and local governments to award grants within current legal restrictions to religious groups working with service providers to address violence against women.
- Reach out to other faith-based organizations not familiar with grant seeking to facilitate active participation in program development.



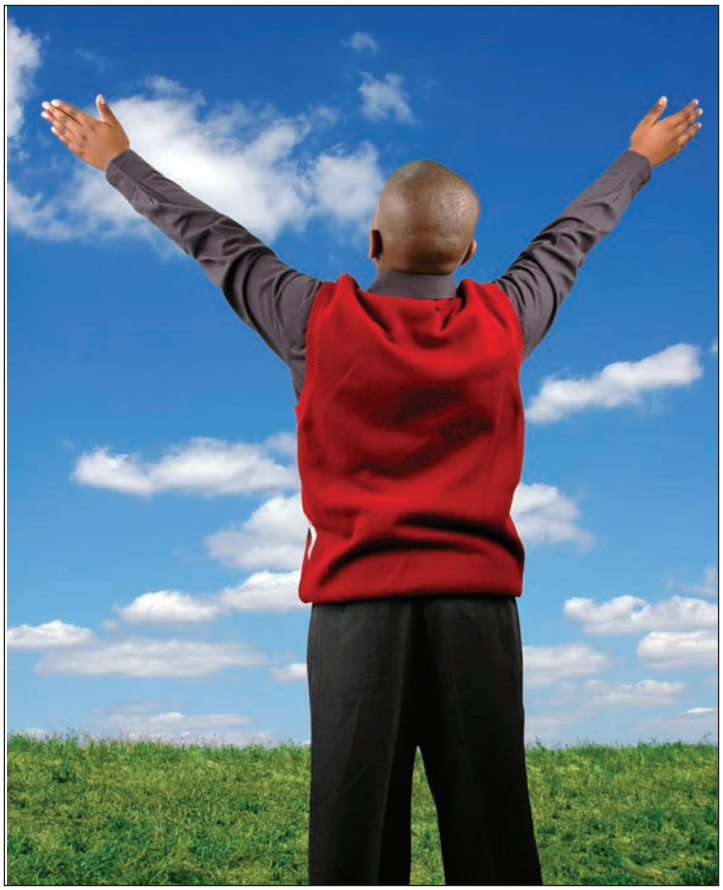
Proposed Outcome Objectives

1) To provide a sisterhood of prevention and a place for counseling and healing.
2) To provide a faith-based outreach intervention that will help an underserved population of women ensnared in domestic and sexual abuse.
3) To reduce to incidences of domestic violence & sexual assault within the community.
4) To educate the congregation as a whole of the debilitating effects of domestic violence.
5) To obtain and secure resources for treatment and prevention
6) To save souls.

Conclusion

The spiritual leader's job should not be restricted to the sanctuary or consultation room. 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.

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 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 are mentioned in sermons, a climate for prevention is fostered and a legacy of peace and healing is established sown.



African-Americanl Abusers and Historical Oppression

Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor, McCormick Theological Seminary

Many African-American men who are abusers sometimes feel that they also are victims. Pastoral care providers must understand, when caring for abusers, that many times these feelings of victimization are very real and are acted out, sometimes unconsciously, in black male-female relationships.

Although abusers must be held accountable for their actions, their victimization should be understood in the context of historical oppression beginning in slavery that continues in many forms to this day. African-American men can understand their victimization more when they understand the history of slavery, racism, and Eurocentric construction of gender and how these institutions impact their family relationships and lead to domestic violence. In this understanding, serious attention needs to be given to the construction of gender because both African-American men and women are victims of such construction.

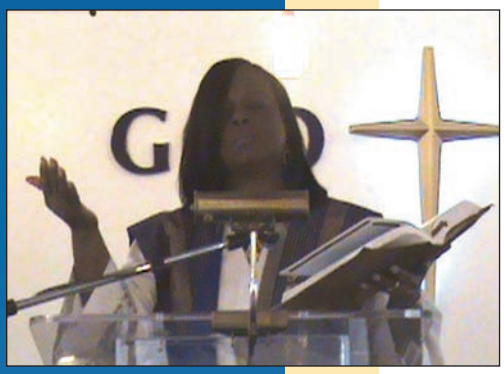
Dr. Earnest Johnson (1998, p. 4), in his book *Brothers on the Mend*, describes the many wounds of African-American men living in a racist society as a "sore that will not heal." Many times this woundedness is played out in the form of family violence. The disempowerment and abuse of African-American men can leave them seeking power over their spouses in ways that are unhealthy and potentially lethal.

Oftentimes, the anger and rage African-American men feel are suppressed. Johnson (1998) states:

> Many black men prefer to suppress their anger and rage, suffering the consequences, rather than open up and talk out their feelings. These 'cool brothers' express their angry feelings in a number of nonproductive ways – overuse of tobacco, overuse of alcohol, or releasing the welled-up feelings in a burst of violence – often against loved ones. Talking through the feelings is not seen as an option because they want to appear strong and manly. (p. 4)

Gender Construction

Male victimization also stems from how men, as well as women, have experienced gender constructions and the expectations that surround these male-female roles. Scholar and theologian Dwight Hopkins (2002) remarks:



> Gender construction remains a socialization process influenced by child-rearing and parenting models, peer pressure and positive examples, movies and other media, educational institutions and training organizations, and biblical interpretation and faith communities. Human beings make other human beings into specific male and female genders. (p. 92)

Consequently, men can be victims, as can females, of their socially constructed gender roles in ways that when they are unable to fulfill those roles can lead to shame. For example, if a man learns early in life that it is his sole role to be the financial provider of the family, yet he is unable to find employment, his role as a man and his self-worth are diminished. To compensate for this, he joins a church that teaches that he is the head of his house and can rule his wife. Now he feels more empowered. However, his empowerment stems from being able to oppress his wife. He is simply looking for a place to feel worthy. He is unable to fulfill his socially induced gender role and looks for pathological ways to fulfill this role to feel like a man. Hopkins (2002) states:

> In the process of socialization, black men experience a double male gender reality, and both are negative. On one hand, the larger culture of white society defines and portrays black men as subordinate to white men. African-American men are socialized as a male gender but as men who are subordinate to the racial supremacy of another male gender. On the other hand, within the African-American community, black men are socialized to adopt the normative definition of the male gender that is established and defined by the larger white male culture. As a result, black men strive toward and enjoy male privileges over black women and children within the African-American family and community. When black men adopt and implement the patriarchy of the larger white male culture, they can act out a very sinful and potentially deadly force on those around them. Specifically, too often, African-American men store up both their frustrations and anger against white men with power and then release these two demons onto the women, children, and other black men within their own families and communities. (p. 94)

Consequently, pastoral care for African-American men must center on the ethic of mutual sharing, equality, and removing male privileges from the male gender (Hopkins, 2002, p.94). Pastoral care for abusers should focus on themes of mutuality, sharing, and respect as pastors care for individuals, families, and faith communities through counseling, teaching and preaching. Remember, care for the abuser, at any level, must include accountability and consideration of the care of the victim in ways that would never put the victim at risk. This explanation does not justify the violence and abuse rather it provides another explanation for his violence compared to the traditional perspectives of the field. In fact, not all African American men are violent. But, Williams, (1998) describes the violence and abuse used by some African American men as maladaptive responses to social context and a response to internalized oppression. This is in addition to traditional explanations rather than instead of them. In order for these concepts to be understood and integrated into working with men who batter, the practitioner must be trained on both sets of concepts.

Appendix — Bios

La Donna M. Combs is a Minister and the Director of *Violence Prevention by Faith* at the Greater Grace Temple Church in Detroit, Michigan. She is the president and founder of the *Sisters Against Abuse Society (SAAS)*, a nonprofit organization. For over 10 years she has provided advocacy and services to victims and survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Along with being an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Spring Arbor University in Michigan, She is an intimate partner violence expert who has worked with law enforcement and judicial systems as an expert witness. La Donna M. Combs also works with faith-based organizations and universities to provide community awareness, training, and prevention strategies for young adults and teens. Her goal and passion is to bring hope, help and healing cross-culturally and universal to victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis is a Pastor of the United Church of Christ. Currently, she serves as Senior Pastor of God Can Ministries in the far south suburbs of Chicago, Illinois and is the Executive Director of their 501 c 3 outreach, The Education and Family Life Institute. Dr. Davis serves as Adjunct Professor and Director of the Center for African American Ministries and Black Church studies. Dr. Davis recently retired from her full time position as a Chicago Police Officer of over 31 years. In this capacity she worked in patrol and several other capacities within the Department including being appointed in 1991 as its first female Chaplain. Since retirement Dr. Davis volunteers her services as a Police Chaplain ministering to over 10,000 police officers and their families.

Sharon is a retired Board Certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains. As a professor, Dr. Davis teaches Sexual and Domestic Violence; Pastoral Care in Times of Crisis; and Pastoral Care in African American communities among other subjects. Dr. Davis also serves as a Faculty Mentor at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio for a Doctor of Ministry Focus Group she mentors Doctoral Students through a focused group she organized titled, "The Peacemakers." To this date she has led six cohorts through this program who have all graduated with Doctor of Ministry degrees in this field of study.

Educationally, Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis has an earned Bachelor of Arts Degree, a Master's of Divinity Degree, a Doctor of Ministry Degree (in Pastoral Care), and a Ph.D. in Theology, Ethics, and the Human Science (Sociology). Her dissertation was titled, "Hear Our Cries: Breaking the Gender Entrapment of African American Battered Women". Sharon is a published author and scholar in the field of theology and ethics.

As a survivor of sexual and domestic violence Dr. Davis is committed to the healing and empowerment of God's people and to speaking truth to power setting the captives free. Dr. Davis refers to herself as, "more than a conqueror." Her favorite scripture is Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run, and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint."

J.R. Thicklin is the Senior Pastor and Teacher of ***Kingdom Harvest Ministries***, a non-denominational ministry located in West Palm Beach, Florida. He is the President and CEO of ***Destiny By Choice, Inc.*** where he is empowering lives and shaping destinies of those lives impacted and affected by domestic violence and related abuse. He is a strong advocate and activist in the plight to end domestic violence and fatherlessness through prevention and intervention, programs, community forums, seminars and conferences. He has been on the front lines in addressing domestic violence for nearly 2 decades, having worked in Domestic Violence Centers, making presentations and educating in middle and high schools, colleges, universities, Dept. of Children & Families, state and national conferences as well as in churches and the social services arena. His vast knowledge of the subject matter and passionate dynamic delivery has made him a much sought after speaker, lecturer, presenter, trainer and consultant in both the Faith and Secular Communities. Thicklin received his Bachelor in Ministry from Southeastern Theological Seminary. He has studied at South University and University of Phoenix where he is pursuing a degree in Psychology and Sociology He is a Certified Cultural Competency Trainer, Anger Management Specialist, and Domestic Violence Specialist. He is a Certified Trainer with both ***The National Center on Fathering*** (7 Secrets of Effective Fathering) and the ***National Fatherhood Initiative*** (24/7 Dad and Doctor Dad). His vision is to equip and empower a new generation of Fathers and Men to reduce and eliminate domestic violence.

Appendix — Organizations

National Domestic Violence Organizations

National Domestic Violence Hotline
www.ndvh.org or www.thehotline.org
1-800-799-SAFE
National Domestic Violence Hotline
PO Box 161810
Austin, Texas 78716 (512-794-1133)

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
3605 Vartan Way Suite 101
Harrisburg, PA 17110
1-800-537-2238
nrcdvTA@nrcdv.org
www.nrcdv.org

National Network to End Domestic Violence
1400 16th St NW, Suite 330
Washington, DC 20036
phone: 202-543-5566
fax: 202-543-5626
choward@nnedv.org

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
University of Minnesota (IDVAAC)
290 Peters Hall 1404 Gortner Avenue
St. Paul Minnesota, 55108
612-624-5257
Dr. Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D. Co-Director of IDVAAC
owilliam@umn.edu

Various types of the power and control wheel
www.the duluthmodel.org/training/wheel.html.

State of Michigan website
www.michigan.gov/datingviolence/0,4559,7-233-46553-169739--,00.html.

Faith Based Domestic Violence Programs

Dr. Patricia Davenport, Executive Director and Bishop Roderick Mitchell
ourhouse@ourhousenewbirth.com
Post Office Box 3956
Greenville, MS 38704
New Life Church
1265 S Main St, Greenville, MS 38701
(662) 332-2301

Reverend, JR Thicklin
CEO/Executive Director
Destiny by Choice
561-439-3145
manofpurpose2000@aol.com
P.O. Box 18573
West Palm Beach, FL 33416

Minister LaDonna M. Combs
Sisters Against Abuse Society, (SAAS)
2057 Alberta Street
Westland, MI 48186
phone: 248-943-7632
email: preventionsister22@yahoo.com

Reverend Dr. Sharon Ellis-Davis
6301 Double Eagle Drive
Whitesett North Carolina, 27377.
email: sdavis52830@gmail.com
phone: 773-398-0996

Reverend Marie Fortune
Faith Trust Institute
http://www.cpsdv.org
info@faithtrustinstitute.org
FaithTrust Institute
2900 Eastlake Ave E., Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98102
206-634-1903 tel
206-634-0115 fax

Reverend Tracy Jackson and Reverend Anne Marie Hunter
Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Abuse
http://www.interfaithpartners.org
SafeLink 24 Hour Hotline 877.875.2020
617-951-3980
info@interfaithpartners.org
89 South Street, Suite 601
Boston, MA 02111

Batterer Intervention Programs

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Appendix — Operationalizing Accountability: The Domains and Bases of Accountability

Jeffrie K. Cape ACSW, LMSW & David J. H. Garvin MSW, LMSW

Defining the Problem

The Anti Domestic Violence Batterer Intervention Program movement has had conversations about accountability from the beginning. Many of these focused on how to hold batterers accountable, this usually involved the community; probation, the courts, religious institutions etc. In more recent years the discussion has evolved into how men can BE accountable. This concept we have termed 'personal accountability'. Many programs and professionals operated under the "I'll know it when I see it" principle. This is hard to teach and even harder to sustain. Additionally, many of the of accountability discussions were singularly focused on whether or not the participant had been violent or physically abusive towards their partner despite the fact that that there was general agreement that abuse encompassed more than just physical violence and that much of the worst abuse wasn't physical at all. Underlying all this is the presumption that abusive men didn't know how to be accountable.

"I don't have contact with my wife/partner so I couldn't be accountable"

Early on in our program development we incorporated self reports from participants of how they felt they had been accountable or unaccountable in the previous week. Often group members would give responses like: "I wasn't accountable this week", "I didn't get angry about anything", "I don't have contact with my wife/partner so I couldn't be accountable" or "nothing happened in my life this week". We knew this was impossible because everyone has multiple opportunities to be accountable every day. It became clear that many participants felt that they could only be accountable if something 'went wrong' in their life or they got angry or upset. Many also felt that accountability only involved their partner or victim (whom they may or may not have been able to be around).

In our programming we strive to develop an analysis regarding everything we teach that is simple, clear and can stand up to scrutiny. Accountability as a concept, was not just difficult to teach, but utilizing the "I'll know it when I see it" standard was impossible for group participants to conceptualize, personalize and integrate. This led us to the realization that we had to develop a way to explain personal accountability that was both theoretically sound and user friendly. We started with the idea that we had to create a definition of accountability that could be operationalized the way we wanted it to be used in the program. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, accountability is defined as: the quality or state of being accountable;especially: an obligation or

willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. This fit in perfectly with the external consequences many of our participants had experienced (probation, separation from their partner or family, divorce, etc) but was clearly not sufficient for our purposes. What we wanted to focus on was internal or personal accountability. After several false starts we created the following definition.

Accountability: Actions toward or involving others that reflect the integrity of the person that you want to be. This definition incorporates several key components. First, it emphasizes that action is a critical part of accountability. Second, it sets a standard that is both individualized and strength based. Our experience is that men who participate in our programs have an image of who they would like to be that is usually quite high and reflective of socially appropriate values. The inclusion of the word integrity was to highlight the need for the action to run true or be consistent with their personal standard. Third, the definition was short, specific and clear which helped participants understand what was expected of them.

The Domains of Accountability

Once we had a working definition for the word and concept of accountability, the next step was to examine where one can be accountable. Working from a systems perspective we not only were aware that accountability was a part of interactions in all areas of a person's life but that most of our participants had experience being accountable somewhere in their life. This allowed us an opportunity to build on an individual's strengths in order to help them expand accountability into a purposeful and intentional part of their life. We knew there was a problem with having accountability limited to intimate partners because it kept them focused on the instant offense and did not open the door for discussions on their ability to be accountable in other areas of their life. An intimate partner, usually the victim of the instant offense, is often the primary focus for the service participants of BIPs and to a certain extent the BIP as well. We wanted service participants to think beyond the instant offense into areas of their life that existed before their involvement with the legal system and would continue after. We thought about the areas where people have an opportunity to be accountable and categorized them to help make it easier for participants to focus and understand. This was a trial and error process as group participants helped us identify omissions and refine who was included in each domain. This led to the creation of the Domains of Accountability.

INTIMATE PARTNER: This domain includes all of the intimate partners in their lifetime. The manual states: This is anyone who you have been with, with the intent of building a relationship that may or may not have included sex, anyone you had sex with, whether or not you were in a long term relationship. This includes past and present partners. We were careful not to limit the definition by using words like wife or girlfriend because we wanted this domain to be inclusive of all women they were involved with intimately. In wanting the scope to be bigger we included both sexual partners of any type and anyone they were involved with where the intent, however short or long, was to build a relationship. This delineation serves the dual purpose of expanding participant's understanding of intimacy while eliminating group discussions such as "how many times

a person, before you consider them to be an intimate partner?" In spelling out that this included both past and present relationships we eliminated the obfuscation tactic of men who wanted to remove their past partners or ex-wives from this category. Basically once someone is in this domain they cannot be removed.

COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS: This domain focuses on the area that everyone is involved with on a daily basis and one service participants talk about regularly in batterer intervention groups, the community, which includes but is not limited to drivers on the road, store clerks, people at concerts or movies, the courts, etc. The manual states: This includes people you interact with that you do not have a personal relationship with (store clerks, other drivers, etc) or institutions you have a relationship with like parole, police, or the courts. Participants specifically share a lot about their interactions with probation and the court system, which is included in this domain. The key here is these are individuals they may or may not know the name of but interact with as member of the community. This is also the domain that is often easiest for them to get the concept of their personal accountability and one in which many of them regularly demonstrate accountability.

EXTENDED RELATIONSHIPS: This domain includes anyone the participant has a personal relationship with that is not an intimate partner or children. It includes friends and neighbors, inlaws, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and other relatives. The manual states: This includes your extended family; brothers, sisters, parents, aunts, uncles and friends. This domain is also one where participants may have had a lot of experience being accountable. A word of caution, this is the category where service participants want to move past intimate partners, this is an attempt to distance themselves from the intimacy and sometimes is a way to diminish the significance of that person. As stated before, intimate partners should always remain in the same domain and do not change.

PARENTING: This domain includes relationships with children regardless of custody issues, step-children any other child where the participant's role may be that of a parent. The manual states: This includes your children whether you have custody of them or not, stepchildren or any other child where your role is primarily parental, a niece or nephew where you are the parental figure. This domain focuses on the role of parent as opposed to the legality of such a relationship. This is an area where many participants are motivated to be accountable. It is often in this domain that they discover that being disrespectful or hurtful to their child's mother is unaccountable to their children.

EMPLOYMENT: This domain focuses on interactions that occur in their role at work or school. The manual states: this includes anything related to work or school. This includes co-workers, employers, employees, customers, teachers, etc. The inclusion of school in this domain was in recognition that many young men came into the programs and school was their primary focus. Experience had shown us that many men were often accountable in this domain and were

able to recognize how and when this occurred. Sometimes participants get confused between this domain and community interaction. For instance if the individual works at a coffee shop and does not know the customers personally; but is reporting accountability in their interaction with a coworker and/or customer, they may label it as community interaction because they work with the public. However, because they are acting in their capacity as an employee when the interactions occurred it falls under the domain of employment.

SELF CARE: This domain originated in the understanding that many service participants were struggling with substance abuse issues and that anything they did as part of their recovery was accountable. The manual states: This includes anything that impacts how you feel about or care for yourself; recovery, health care, spiritual involvement, etc. The original intent of this domain was specific actions aimed at personal care. This evolved as the program participants began to see self care as an element in may of the interactions (accountable and unaccountable) that they had in other domains. One caveat on this, many participants want to short cut through the accountability process and say "it is always self care" but, they must know and be able to articulate how it is accountable in this particular domain.

Domains of Accountability

The Visual Diagram

The diagram is designed with the person (me) at the center. Then the arrows, which point in both directions and connect to each domain. Having the arrows point in both directions is intentional. It is meant to demonstrate that there is a healthy reciprocity between and individual and the various domains.

In a codependent relationship the diagram would look the same, except all the arrows would point away from the individual toward the domains. This signifies that the individual is giving a lot but accepting/receiving little if anything from others. Conversely a person with narcissistic characteristics has all of the arrows focused from the domains toward the person in the center… "It's all about me". This individual expects and is often receiving from all domains but feels no need to give back.

The underlying message: Healthy relationships are interactional, dynamic and systemically reciprocal.

The Bases of Accountability

The Bases of Accountability was developed after the creation of the domains. We had helped participants see that accountability was a way of life and occurred in many domains. The next challenge was expanding the understanding of the process of being accountable. The need for this was made clear to us as many participants used language depicting a continuum of accountability, such as, "I was more accountable this time" or "I was less

accountable this time". The program staff also reinforced this by asking questions like, "how could you be more accountable", "what could you do next time to be more accountable", etc.

One of the initial struggles was dealing with the "absolutist" concept of an action being either accountable or unaccountable, with no gray area. Additionally many participants and staff determined accountability based primarily on the outcome of the situation without factoring in the process. The concern about this is that short-term outcome based thinking is exactly how many participants choose to be abusive. In group discussions we were increasingly aware that the service participants were really pushing us on the conceptualization of accountability. We knew what we were talking about, but we were not transmitting it in a way that was helpful to others in their pursuit of accountability and to individually evaluate how they were doing. We have found that the use of metaphors and analogies can be very helpful in developing an understanding of difficult concepts. So we began to experiment with different analogies involving escalators, elevators, yardsticks and others. When we put them into practice in groups it was clear that there were inherent problems with our choices. Escalators and elevators allow a person to skip floors and we believed that the process of being accountable required following certain steps that could not be skipped. Yardsticks gave the impression that once a person had reached a certain point they were always at that point and never moved backward. None of them accounted for each situation being considered separately or had away of addressing unaccountability.

Analyzing what was wrong with other metaphors and refining what we felt were the key features of accountability, led us to baseball as a metaphor. Baseball as a metaphor had a lot of the components we needed. Most of the time in baseball, runs are scored not because of a home run but as an RBI (runs batted in), which requires the help of others. We believe that participating in group can help someone move from where they started by receiving some additional information from other group members (team) or facilitators (coaches). Baseball also has rules about moving from one base to another. The rules require a person to touch each base, even for a fraction of a second before being able to move onto the next. It doesn't count if a player goes to second base without touching first. This matched our belief that there is a process to accountability and to move forward one has to touch each base.

In the middle of the bases we have 'Life' as the pitcher. In baseball, batters can not say to the pitcher… "Listen up here… I don't do curve balls". They have to be able to hit whatever the pitcher throws at them. Good baseball players use their strength and skill to be able to consistently connect with the ball and get on base. They practice and get feedback from coaches in order to improve their skill. This fit perfectly with our belief that in life a person needs to be able to manage whatever life throws at them. Participants need to practice looking at the situations in their life and utilize feedback from group members and facilitators to improve their accountability skill. There is no trick to being accountable when things are going the way a person wants. Just like there is no trick to hitting the baseball when a pitcher is throwing easy balls right to you. The trick is being able to handle a variety of pitches/life situations even when they are unexpected or difficult.

One of the other things we felt was key is that in baseball every time a player comes up to bat they have a new chance to score. While their previous times at bat might have an influence on their skill level it does not predetermine how they would handle the next pitch. The same applies to accountability. Each situation a person is faced with allows them the chance to be accountable and while their previous experience may influence their perception and skills they start fresh each time. This was especially important to us as many participants felt that because they had handled a situation poorly in the past they were doomed so why even bother or if they had handled it well there was no need for them to put any effort in as they were already safe.

Baseball players get better with practice and coaching. They also have to learn their idiosyncrasies, strengths and weakness in order to improve their skills. Participants in the programs need to understand what skills they have and learn how to use them in order to improve their accountability.

One of the things we learned from the participants in the programs is that any action can be accountable or unaccountable. Actions are neutral. Changing the context of any action can make it accountable or unaccountable. Understanding that the context of an action can make it un/accountable helps in exploring and utilizing the bases of accountability.

Another issue that many programs get stuck on is that in order for something to be accountable it has to be different than what the person did before. This is problematic for two reasons. First, it implies that the participant never did anything accountable before and doesn't allow the individual the opportunity to learn from his positive past. Second it implies that all change is good. Many times in groups service participants will state that I used to always do _____ and now I do something different. Simply doing something different is not accountable. If a service participant used to always slap his wife when she challenged his authority and now he spits on her, that is different, but it is certainly not accountable.

Spilling The Milk

A man walks into a room and is not paying attention to his surroundings he happens to be talking with his hands and knocks over an open container of milk.

First Base: This is the acknowledgement of stating, "I'm sorry, I was the one who spilled the milk." At this point the only thing that has been accomplished is the acknowledgement of what has been done.

Often times this is the point that many BIPs stop and say "eureka he's got it!"

Second Base: In addition to saying I spilled the milk, I clean up the mess . I also go out and buy more milk to replace that which lost due to my actions.

Third Base: My plan is that I will always put the top back on the milk once I am done with it. I will also plan to be more conscientious of my hands when I talk.

Home Run: I will be more conscientious of my space in relation to others and objects. I will also put the tops back on anything I use to prevent future accidents (waiting to happen). I will do this with pop, milk, water, paint, oil, etc.

FIRST BASE: The first base of accountability is to acknowledge what one has done; this could be an apology, remembering what they've have done in the past, etc. First base is focused on the past. It is what the individual has already done and can not change. Acknowledgement may take place out loud, as a thought to ones self, with or without others. In many programs this is where accountability stops

SECOND BASE: Second base is either changing the behavior and/or repairing the situation. Second base is always focused on the present, the here and now. It requires some action.

THIRD BASE: Third base is where things become more complex and often comes with the erroneous assumption that "if I was at second base last week, then this week I should be at third base." Not recognizing that every time the baseball player gets up to bat, it is different than it was the last time. Third base is future focused and requires action that is rooted in a plan the individual has both committed to and implemented.

HOME RUN: A home run is integrating the change into a person's life or when they can extrapolate from one situation to another. The home run is building the future on the past; I know where I've been, I know what works for me and now that has become a part of my life. Often a person who hits a home run will report not realizing it until after the situation is over or until someone else commented on the change (often partner or child).

Putting it into Practice

The opportunity for building on the baseball metaphor is rich with options. It is not necessary that one be a baseball aficionado in order to make dynamic use of this in a batterer intervention group. In fact, neither of the writers of this article possesses any particular or special knowledge of the game of baseball. The service participants of our groups quickly began to educate us as to the myriad options for improvising with the metaphor. We learned about a "pickle". A pickle is when the runner is between bases, for example the runner has overrun second base, yet can't quite make it to third base. The pickle is what often happens to participants when they are changing their behavior but really have not committed to a plan or they have a plan but no commitment.

Second base and third base can often look very similar because the action may look the same. What is different is the process. This is where the art of learning to listen to what the person is sharing is critical. One of the ways to differentiate between someone being at second base or at third base is in how they tell the story. If they are on second base they will focus a lot of the story on what they did in the past. If they are on third the focus will be on what they are working toward in the future.

An example would be; a person is speaking about a driver on the road that did something they didn't like. They share "in the past I would have honked my horn at them, given them the finger, raced my engine as I sped around the other driver nearly cutting them off, etc. But this time I told myself that it is not that important, I'm going to get where I'm going eventually, the roads are slick, my kids are in the car, I don't need to cause any problems…so I backed off and went on my way." This is second base, because it is present focused on this particular situation on this day and a lot of the thinking is directed at what he has done in the past.

The same incident in third base would sound like… "somebody cut me off, I recognize that I was getting upset…in the past I might have given this person the finger, but I am working on the fact that I need to look at other peoples perspectives and I thought…I don't know this guy, I don't know where he is coming from and I thought it doesn't really matter, it is not going to take that much longer to get where I am going, so I took a deep breath and said to myself, maybe I need to stay away from this guy." In this second example, the actions are very similar. What is different is the future focus and the implementation of a plan that goes beyond this single situation. He is identifying that he is working on looking at things from others' perspectives which can go beyond this single traffic incident.

Third base requires three things; a plan, a commitment to the plan and the implementation of the plan. Sometimes there is confusion in third base between a goal and a plan. The chart to the right can help clarify.

A plan requires behaviorally specific actions; 'I will take a deep breath, count to 3, ask someone for advice, etc, 'A goal is a general idea of an outcome but no specific details are attached; 'I want to be a better father 'or 'I want to stay married'.

In a home run, using the traffic example, it might sound like: "Someone cut me off in traffic, I used to get upset at that sort of thing, I have been working on remembering I don't have control over what everyone is doing and how they are doing it. I swerved to move out of the driver's way. I really barely noticed what happened, but my five year old said to my wife "Mommy, look how nice daddy was to that crazy driver".

Often when someone hits a home run they don't recognize it until after the fact. This can be a sign that the individual has incorporated this new behavior to the point that an alternative to the behavior now seems like the exception to the rule. This is a good measure of integration. Extrapolation is when the individual recognizes that "if I can do this differently on the road, at work, etc…I should be able to do things differently at home. I can take what I have learned in one area and apply it in another. Some people are concerned about the use of the words 'integration' and 'extrapolation' because they feel they may be too difficult or intimidating for program participants. Our experience is that participants like when we teach up. They enjoy learning new words and how to use them appropriately.

The baseball metaphor continues in addressing unaccountability. There are two ways to be unaccountable in this metaphor, a strike out or a foul ball. A foul ball is when the story sounds like it is going to be accountable and then by the end of the explanation it ends in foul ball territory. An example of this is: "Mary asked me to drive her to work because her car was in the shop. I got up and drove her to work which I don't usually do"…sounds good so far… "but all during the car ride I was yelling at Mary, you are darn lucky that I'm giving you a ride today and you better not complain when I go out with my friends tonight…because I got up early this morning to drive you to work."

In baseball, a player could get to first or second base but then the ball is caught or lands out of bounds. The person is still out even though they tagged the bases. In accountability a participant may share something that appears to be accountable but exploration revels that it is actually unaccountable. An example; "Annabelle wanted me to paint the living room. I have been putting it off for weeks. Last weekend I finally decide to paint it and I got the paint and painted the room. Annabelle was happy" after some exploration the participant shares that he did this because he expected Annabelle to be grateful and have sex with him. While he did change his behavior in the end because of his expectation of sex it ends up in foul ball territory.

A strike out is usually very clear, there is no attempt at accountability "Mary asked me for a ride to work and I yelled get your own damn ride I'm tired and rolled over and went back to sleep".

There are an infinite number of behaviors that can be abusive or accountable. Knowing how to differentiate the two in order arrive at a correct answer is just as important as knowing the correct answer. In some ways it is more important to know how to get to the right answer than it is to know the right answer. We often use a math metaphor to illustrate this. In order to get full credit in higher level math the person has to have the right answer and be able to "show their work". The process of knowing how the right answer was derived is critical if the person wants to be able to replicate the process with a different number. So it is with accountability. The process by which the participant arrives at their behavioral choice is often more important than the actual choice they make. It needs to be a sound process that will allow someone to be able to be consistently accountable.

Accountability can often be confused with either a good deed or a responsibility. A person may say "I was accountable because I paid the bills." Paying the bills is a responsibility not an act of accountability. How he paid the bills may be the act of accountability not that he paid the bills. Accountability might be, "I organized all my bills so I could pay them on time" or "I made sure I had enough money to pay all the bills". A good deed or a favor might be "I saw a guy on the side of the road with a flat tire and stopped to help him' this is a nice thing to do but is not necessarily accountable. Accountability would again be connected with the thinking process. Expanding on the previous situation, "I saw a man on the side of the road with a flat tire, in the past I would have driven by but this time I thought 'if I was on stuck on the road I would want someone to help me and I have the time' so I stopped and helped change the tire."

A common pitfall is using the outcome of the event as the primary criteria for determining accountability or unaccountability. Sometimes something turns out well but in looking at the process it is actually unaccountable. An example; "I lent Karen money to buy a car. We agreed on a repayment plan and Karen has been paying me monthly. Last week I saw a notice that Karen's license was suspended for an unpaid parking ticket. I went to Karen and said "if you want you can skip paying me this month and pay the court instead, but if you do that you have to bring me the receipt from the court. If you don't bring me the receipt you will need to call your sister or your mother and borrow the money from them to pay me" Karen agreed so that is what we did. In the past I would have wanted my money no matter what." On the surface this may seem accountable and in fact

the participant intended it to be accountable but in examining the process it is apparent that he still made the decision alone and that he imposed conditions on his partner. This is actually a foul ball in the domains of intimate partner and self care. It might have been accountable if he had talked with Karen and seen what she wanted to do and what conditions she thought were appropriate. They might have ended up in the same place but the process would have been different.

Conversely sometimes something doesn't work out well but the person handles themselves in an accountable way. An example; Janelle and I got an apartment together. We spent 2 weeks moving in and I paid a penalty to get out of my apartment lease. Two nights ago Janelle told me that she wanted me to move out and she wanted me to leave right away. I felt myself getting angry and thought 'why did you have me move in if you were going to change your mind?' Then I thought 'I can go to my brother's for the night' and I left. The next day I called Janelle and she said she definitely wanted me out and didn't want to be with me any more. I started thinking 'who the hell does she think she is?' Then caught myself and thought I can't make her want me and I better find a place to live. I called my brother to see if I could stay with him for a while and I called a storage place for my stuff. I called Janelle and asked when it would be okay to come get my stuff. She said she'd get back to me. In this case the person did not get what he wanted and the situation is unresolved but he did act in an accountable fashion. This would be a second base in the domains of intimate partner, extended relationships and self care. Another permutation is when an action is on different bases in different domains. Example: "My boss came and told me he needed me to stay late at work. Usually I would make an excuse and leave but I needed the extra money so I stayed." This appears accountable but after some exploration he reveals that he did not call his wife and let her know he was staying late and he missed his son's soccer game. In this case it would be second base in the domain of employment, strike out in the domains of intimate partner and parenting and split decision in self care.

Sometimes group participants are anxious to get to third base or a home run. Here are a few more baseball facts to address this. In baseball if a player consistently gets to second base he is considered to be an excellent hitter. So too in the bases of accountability, if a participant is consistently making it to second base he is doing a good job of being accountable. While everyone wants to hit a home run when they go up to bat that is not the norm and the same is true for accountability. It is okay to have the goal of a home run but the reality is that there will be very few home runs at least during the time someone is in the program.

Some participants will attempt to use jargon to make it appear that they are third base when they are really at second. This usually sounds like 'I had a plan and was committed to _____,' but they can't identify what the plan is or how they implemented it. It is also usually a situation specific behavior not something that could be used in multiple situations.

In choosing what to share regarding accountability participants may use anything that happened in the preceding week, but are not allowed to use the group as part of their accountability. This is explained to them. The purpose is for them to learn how to be accountable in their life in the domains that will be a part of their lives after they complete the program. They need to practice recognizing this in order to facilitate their understanding of accountability in ways that will be useful to them in the future.

Participants often start out sharing examples of accountability in the domain of community interactions, often probation, but as they gain confidence in themselves and the group they will move into more significant areas like their partners or children. The group members will often challenge each other when they feel someone is playing it safe and only sharing superficial accountability. One of the most surprising things is that participants who seem to understand the concepts and appear to want to make change often choose to share how they were unaccountable so they can process how that happened and get feedback on other options.

The domains and bases provide a solid theoretical framework for understanding and opening dialogue about accountability in a way that engages participants and allows for exploration of the complexity of accountability.

Appendix —
Batterer Intervention Technical Support, Program Design and Development And National/International Networking Information

ADA

In 1986 **David J.H. Garvin** MSW, LMSW, founded the Alternatives to Domestic Aggression (ADA) Program in Toledo, Ohio. In 1987, ADA became concurrently located with Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor, Michigan. ADA was ounded on the premise that service providers must have absolute conceptual clarity (Garvin, 2003) regarding the strategic and instrumental behavior of men who batter their intimate partners. Utilizing that clarity, group co-facilitators are well trained to address the batterers' behavior, which is designed and tailored to effectively coercively control (Stark, 2007) their intimate partners. The framework of group co-facilitators' approach to intervention is the progressive deconstruction of the service participants' entitlement to male privilege. By unapologetically, thoroughly, strategically, logically, and consistently confronting the service participants' sense of entitlement, the group co-facilitators are also encouraging and promoting the service participants' process of establishing accountability for their behaviors.

Within ADA, accountability is a personal journey and defined as: "Actions toward or involving others that reflect the integrity of the person I want to be." This parallel process of confrontation and encouragement takes place over 52 sessions, in a four tiered group process. The four groups include: Discovery, Foundations, Tactics, and Options. During the initial Discovery group service participants answer the question, "Do I have a reason to be in this program?" This exercise not only provides a basis for subsequent program sections, it allows for and accommodates the resistance that many service participants initially bring

to ADA. Accountability is a key theme throughout the entire program and is built on the understanding of the "Bases and Domains of Accountability."

Jeffrie K. Cape MSW, LMSW, ACSW developed a curriculum for HEAL and ADA programs and has long believed that it is not the curriculum that is most important it is the process utilized by the program that is critical. Along with David Garvin Jeffrie has referred to this as Conceptual Clarity in our trainings separately and together around the country. Conceptual Clarity is the process of ensuring that every part of the program is congruent with underlying theory philosophy and goals.

Engaging in the process of consistently reviewing and updating is a part of conceptual clarity. Many programs want "turnkey" programs that require minimal training, very little introspection and can be quantified with a test. Unfortunately the population we work with doesn't respond well to this type of programming even though it is often what they want when they come in.

Lisa Young Larance MSW, LMSW is a Fulbright Scholar and social work practitioner whose publications, trainings, and practical work focus on meeting the needs of marginalized women and their families. Lisa currently serves as the Domestic Violence Intervention Services Coordinator at Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County. In addition to coordinating the community-based ADA Program, Lisa coordinates the homeless shelterbased Expanding Options Program, jail-based Choices Program, and the community-based RENEW Program.

Lisa's experience includes:

- Cofounder of two community-based programs providing intervention, advocacy and support for women who have used force in their relationships, including the CSSW RENEW program.
- Co-wrote Meridians for Incarcerated women that have experience domestic violence in any way.
- Chaired the first national conference addressing women's use of force.
- Works as a consultant to Harmony House's Nurturing Heart Women's Violence Prevention Project, Hong Kong, China.
- Is an Editorial Review Board Member of the international, interdisciplinary journal "Violence Against Women".

RENEW

Reflectively Embracing Nonviolence through Education for Women (RENEW)* is an advocacy, intervention, and support group program for women who have used force in their intimate relationships. The program's framework is grounded in the philosophy that a community and social systems approach to assessment, advocacy, group member education and support is critical to effectively serving the complex needs of this population.

The RENEW Program's philosophy and mission are driven by the belief that women — whether they are domestic violence survivors or not — who use force against a partner escalate the level of violence again themselves and, potentially, put others in their lives at risk of harm.

RENEW participants will work to better understand their use of force and benefit from advocacy, education and peer support as they navigate complex circumstances and work toward violence-free lives. Women who use force may do so in response to the abuse they have suffered and/or because the women believe their behavioral and institutional options to be limited. The group process is an eclectic mix of compassionate confrontation and group member interaction, grounded in education, where women are empowered to explore more useful behaviors. Group members have referred to this dynamic exploratory process, and opportunity for female peer support, as a time for personal renewal that sustains them after their time in the group has come to an end.

BISC-MI Mission Statement

- We will provide a working forum for interaction and information sharing among agencies and individuals concerned with the provision of batterer intervention services in Michigan.
- We will help create and maintain coordinated community actions that hold batterers accountable for their behavior and promote safety and empowerment for victims.
- We will give safety, needs, and concerns of victims/survivors priority over the interests of batterers or any batterer intervention service model.
- We will promote social change which works toward a society based on equality and nonviolence.

AQUILA STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The AQUILA Working Group is dedicated to providing accurate, evidence-based information about batterer intervention programs and their impact on men who batter. We are committed to enhancing dialogue and public awareness about these programs and about the potential for change for many men who have a history of domestic violence.

We support and promote program practices that:

- Center on the safety and well-being of adult victims/survivors of intimate partner violence and children.
- Promote responsibility and safe, nurturing relationships for men who have a history of domestic violence.
- Encourage multi-institutional, community and family capacity to hold men who batter accountable for their conduct and encourage them to change.
- Acknowledge that many men who attend batterer intervention programs face multiple obstacles to longterm change (such as poverty, exposure to trauma, racism, addiction and disproportional impact of our systems), and promote holistic services to help men deal with issues that destabilize the change process.

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