



CLERGY RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Developed By
The Clergy Committee
of the
York County Task Force on Domestic Violence

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What

would

you

do

if...

- ... A woman comes to you and says that her husband is abusing her?
- ... You notice a worshipper has fading bruises from a black eye?
- ... A child tells you that "Daddy spans Mommy?"
- ... An abusive member asks you to testify for him at his trial?
- ... During couple's counseling one spouse is very controlling, answers all the questions and does not allow his/her partner to respond?

INTRODUCTION

“What would you do if...?” The preceding questions are not hypothetical! Domestic violence and abuse really happens within all communities of faith regardless of one’s faith tradition or religious persuasion. **Victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse are present in every local congregation and faith community.**

As leaders in our faith communities, we are uniquely positioned to respond helpfully in situations of domestic abuse. Frequently we have the opportunity and the challenging responsibility to relate both to the victim and to the perpetrator of the abuse. **Unfortunately, for most clergy, our formal training and preparation for ministry have not equipped us to understand, recognize, or know how to respond appropriately to domestic abuse. Therefore, we often miss the indicators and signs of abuse** and go on as though abuse doesn’t exist in our local faith community.

The sad result of this lack of awareness is that the abuse remains hidden and secret. The perpetrators continue to oppress and wound their victims, and the victims are left to suffer in isolation, assuming the faith community doesn’t care or is powerless to help. **Sometimes, our well-meaning words actually serve to reinforce the abusers’ power and undermine the victims’ efforts to become free from the oppression.**

This Clergy Manual on domestic violence was developed **to equip religious leaders to recognize and respond appropriately to situations of domestic abuse in our faith communities.** It is intended to be a resource guide – providing basic information for quick reference and pointing the way to books, videos, web sites, and other resources for more in-depth study of this vital issue.

This manual is dedicated to those who have suffered from domestic violence and to those who continue living in fear of those who claim to love them in their own homes.

Members of the Clergy Committee
York County Task Force on Domestic Violence

For information about this committee or the Task Force call 717-845-2631, ext 226

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A PASTOR'S PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Experience is said to be the best teacher. Unfortunately, I was a pastor who learned about domestic violence by experiencing a murder and suicide within a church family.

Several days before the tragic event, I was made aware that a woman of the church was being physically abused by her husband. At first I could not believe that the husband could have an abusive character. The wife was part of a weekly women's Bible study and prayer meeting that my wife taught. Wasn't this the couple that attended a Sunday School class I taught? Wasn't this the couple that my wife and I had known for years and enjoyed group fellowships together? No, I couldn't believe what I was being told! How could this be?

I was totally unprepared for the phone call I would receive at one o'clock in the morning from the husband who was asking if there were any sins God wouldn't forgive. To be awakened at a time when you are in the deepest sleep made it hard to comprehend his question at that time. I did tell him that God could forgive any sin as long as it was confessed. I suggested we meet the next morning for coffee, and we would discuss God's forgiveness.

The next morning when I awoke, I thought about the call and the question asked. I went to the office and was shocked when the secretary told me that there had been a murder/suicide of the wife and husband who were members of our church.

I reacted in shock! Now I understood the late night phone call. I asked myself, "How can this be?" I was supposed to meet

the husband for coffee to discuss his question. I was overwhelmed with grief, anger, and guilt. I was experiencing an emotional breakdown. Anger and guilt were the two emotions that affected me the most. I was angry with myself and a deep sense of remorse and guilt overpowered me. I castigated myself for not responding immediately to the phone call. I called a fellow pastor who heard me as I wept tears. I found myself caught in a vice of incompetence. I then began to think of the congregation and how they would respond to the news.

Naturally, the congregation was grieving, and they also would have emotions to deal with and questions that needed to be answered. I contacted a local domestic violence program and they helped me get through my emotions. They also helped me organize an evening seminar. This seminar was held at the church and over one hundred people attended which not only included church members but people from the community. This event could have been swept under the rug with the hope that time would bring healing. I chose to address the tragic event, and it brought understanding and closure for the church and community.

Pastors, I would encourage you to educate yourself about domestic violence so that you are not caught as unprepared as I was and have to rely on experience to be your teacher.

Today, the memory of the tragedy still stirs up those emotions even though the tragedy happened years ago.

A Pastor

TEN KEY PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

1. ***Safety must always be the highest priority!*** Nothing is more important than making the safety of victims and potential victims the highest priority. Everything we say and do regarding domestic abuse must first be tested concerning safety and potential risks for victims.

Ask yourself, for example: How could what I say or do be used by the perpetrator against the victim? Might the victim be punished or made to pay for what I do? What could or might happen as a result of my actions when I'm not with them? If in doubt, check with the victim privately before doing anything. **Believe that her fear is real!**

2. ***Assume that there are always victims and/or survivors of domestic violence and abuse, as well as perpetrators of abuse, within your congregation or faith community.*** Just because you don't know about abuse doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Secrecy and denial create the environment in which domestic violence and abuse flourish.
3. ***Domestic violence and abuse is about controlling and/or exerting power over another person. The primary root cause is a sense of entitlement*** – the belief that it is one's right, privilege, or duty to dominate and control one's partner or children and to judge and punish insubordination. Issues like anger, an explosive temper, alcohol or drug abuse, mental illness, or poor social or relational skills may be factors that contribute to abuse, but they DO NOT cause it.
4. ***Most perpetrators perceive themselves to be the victim and blame their abuse on their partner.*** They can be quite convincing and are often skillfully dishonest in hiding their abuse to avoid accountability.
5. To figure out who the primary victim is, ***pay attention to and find out which partner is most afraid of the other*** – consider fear of physical and emotional harm. **Who's "walking on egg shells?"**
6. ***When you know or suspect that there may be a pattern of verbal, emotional, or physical abuse in a relationship, DO NOT meet with the couple together or do any form of couple's counseling. Meet with each one separately.*** As long as there is fear in the relationship, couple's counseling will either be ineffective, because the victim cannot be honest, or dangerous, because if the victim is honest she risks retaliation or retribution for disclosing family secrets.
7. No one deserves to be abused or to live in fear in a relationship. ***It is NOT God's will or desire to have abuse or violence in marriage.*** The perpetrator's violence and abuse is sin. It breaks the marriage vows and destroys the relationship. The abuser is responsible for the dissolution of the marriage. It is NOT a sin for a victim to leave or divorce an abusive partner. **DO NOT pressure the victim to stay!**

8. ***Always refer the victim to a domestic violence victim's services agency. Always refer the perpetrator to a domestic abuse and battering intervention program (batterers' intervention services).*** For local services see the Human Services section of the phone book or the back of this manual. Remember, you cannot provide everything they need. Try to continue relating in a supportive and pastoral way to both victim and abuser, if you can, but this may not be possible or may not be accepted by one or the other.
9. ***Victims need to be empowered and supported to make their own decisions and to take back their own personal power. Be careful not to tell them what they must do or to harshly judge decisions they make.***
10. ***Perpetrators need to be held accountable*** – there needs to be full honest disclosure of their abuse, awareness of the effects it has had on others, and acceptance of responsibility for the impact of the abuse. However, ***remember that holding abusers accountable must be done in ways that keep safety for victims as the highest priority (see #1 above).*** Separation, at least for a time, is usually necessary to assure safety for the victim while calling the perpetrator to accountability and change.

Ending abusive patterns and changing the underlying beliefs that support those patterns is definitely possible, but it is a difficult and long-term process. **Never accept remorse and pious repentance to be sufficient, nor accept claims of quick transformation. Accountability must continue and become a way of life.**

Written by Rev. Roger L. Steffy of the Clergy Committee and director of ADVANCE,
a program of Lutheran Social Services of South Central Pennsylvania



Religious Perspectives

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

The quandary that Christian communities face today is dealing with the unfortunate historic teachings of the Faith that demeaned gender relations. The Faith must acknowledge the fact of this reality, confess and focus on the biblical teachings of love, mercy and grace. The Christian perspective must address the issues found in our scripture, mainly the most quotable, the Apostle Paul's conversation and roles within relationships found in Ephesians chapter 5.

[22] Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. [24] Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

(New Revised Standard Version – NRSV)

This quote, taken out of context, has destroyed the structure of families within and outside the community of faith to which Paul addresses his letter and how God intends the message to be received. One needs to take into account the full text, more importantly, what Paul says in verses following:

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, [26] in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, [27] so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind--yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. [28] In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, [30] because we are members of his body. (NRSV)

Love towards one's spouse does not entail domestic violence, whether it is verbal, mental and/or physical (as described elsewhere in this manual). People of faith are called to a love of self, God and one another. One should also take into account the cultural tradition to which Paul speaks, a time in which women were considered property. This is the message that Paul wanted to squelch. Paul spoke of the importance of loving God and one another. A belief in personal dignity and self worth of each individual precludes understanding and treating spouse, lover or family as property.

Thus, our focus should be on Paul's perspective that speaks to the equality of people (Galatians 3). This can, and will change the relationships we have with one another moving us away from the historical hierarchical nature of our culture, towards a loving, and compassionate community. Oppressive behavior cannot be tolerated in the Christian community. For we hear from our Savior Jesus that the greatest commandment is to love God and neighbor. Loving does not entail overtones of dominance of one over another.

As pastors, we cannot sit idle; we can be advocates for an end to domestic violence. Ministers must be alert to the surroundings of the parishes which they serve. We should be challenged to address the problems of domestic violence in all forums possible, whether in educational classes, sermons or newsletters. Ending domestic violence should be a priority in pastoral ministry. Ending such violence, which is a sinful act against God and all people threatened by it, should be a higher priority than an insistence on couples remaining together. Without counseling, violence will probably continue. If the conditions of trust and communication are critical in order for meaningful

and stable families to be created and nurtured, then domestic violence must not be tolerated. As clergy, we have this biblical authority found in Ephesians 5:11 to discuss this and all situations pertaining to domestic violence.

[11]Take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them
(NRSV)

We must have the patience to hear a victim's experiences and empower that person to move forward in his or her life and faith. Ministers must also have attentive eyes and ears for the stories of victims. Ministers are challenged to break the silence that fosters abuse and to partner with local agencies and advocacy groups to end domestic violence in our communities.

Rev. Brian A. McClinton

A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Susan Weidman Schneider writes: “The last taboo in Jewish life may be domestic violence. And it’s being broken.” Till recently a battered Jewish woman was generally unacknowledged or the act was excused as an aberration. Abused wives, taught to believe in the value of “shalom bayit” – “keeping peace in the home” – endured silence to protect the reputation of the community. Women who might report an abuse to the religious authorities were often blamed and shamed, with such questions as, “What did you do to deserve it?” Rabbinical courts tended to undervalue the destructiveness of violence against women. Indicative of this attitude is the rabbi who asked a woman how often she was beaten, “once a month? Let’s say once a month. That’s only 12 times a year...how bad can that be?” Such a wife might be told to return to her husband and seek to be a better wife.

Stories from the biblical tradition, such as the casting out of Hagar, the rape of Tamar, the sacrifice of Jephtha’s daughter to her father’s pride and vanity, sanction violence against women. The story of the nameless wife of Potiphar, when seen from the feminine perspective, is a classic tale of the “women who cried rape.”

Sometimes the woman’s voice can be heard through the veil of silence. Many scholars regard Psalm 55 as the cry of an abused woman: “It is not an enemy who reviles me – I could hide from him; but it is you, my equal, my companion, my friend...He harmed his ally, he broke his pact; his talk was smoother than butter, yet his mind was on war; his words were more soothing than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”

Some authorities are more understanding of the battered woman’s plight and less tolerant of the abuser. The 16th century Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg writes: “One deserves greater punishment for striking his wife than for striking another person, for he is enjoined to respect her. Far be it from a Jew to do such a thing!”

The authoritative code, the Schulchan Aruch, acknowledges the prevalence of family violence, saying “a man who beats his wife commits a sin, as though he has beaten his neighbor, and if he persists in the conduct, the court may castigate him and place him under oath to discontinue this conduct; if he refused to obey the order of the court they will compel him to divorce his wife at once because it is not customary or proper for Jews to beat their wives...” Some say the abuser should be warned once or twice before being punished. In any case, he is excused if his wife is not doing her work to his satisfaction.

As a result of the women’s movement, the Jewish community has begun to confront the reality of spousal abuse and its foundation in traditional texts. Voices of pain are being heard. Most of modern streams of Judaism regard spousal abuse as immoral and unacceptable. They support legislation that criminalizes domestic abuse and enforces such laws. The Reform Movement has been in the forefront of this effort as seen in the 1991 resolution of The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), “Violence Against Women,” It supports the “promotion of vigorous enforcement of existing laws prohibiting all forms of violence against women.... [and] promotes the formation and governmental funding of local programs to aid women who are survivors of violence and to prevent further violence.”

Furthermore, the Reform Movement reflects the mainstream Jewish view when it teaches: “Our tradition teaches us that mental anguish and moral degradation are the equivalent of physical murder. We are commanded not to stand idly by while our neighbor bleeds. The sanctity of human life is one of the core values of our value

system. In an increasingly impersonal and alienating society, the dehumanization of the human being and the carelessness with which human life is abused or even taken stand in direct violation of these affirmations of our traditions. Therefore, it is our responsibility to attempt to protect the safety of all citizens, a small part of which can be accomplished with education and prevention of domestic abuse.”

Rabbi Irwin N. Goldenberg, York, PA

A MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

Violence against women is not an Islamic tradition. Prophet Muhammed (Pbuh) instructed Muslims regarding women, "I command you to be kind to women." He said also, "The best of you is the best to his family (wife)." The Qur'an urges husbands to be kind and considerate to their wives, even if a wife falls out of favor with her husband or disinclination for her arises within him.

Dr. James Badawi, author of "Gender Equity in Islam," discusses Chapter 4, verse 34 of the Qur'an that is often used to justify maltreatment of women. He indicates, "Under no circumstances does the Qur'an encourage, allow, or condone family violence or physical abuse." Prophet Muhammed (Pbuh) said, "Do not beat the female servants of Allah."

Domestic violence is preventable by building our iman (faith), remembering and implementing the commands of Allah and the example of His Prophet (Pbuh). Marriage preparation education and premarital counseling can help future spouses learn skills that will assist them in developing a healthy, violence free family life. Anger management, communication skills, stress management, decision making and problem solving skills are also very important life skills that can help to prevent domestic violence.

As Imams, community leaders, brothers and sisters we cannot be tolerant of family violence on any level. This is a problem that will not be eliminated unless we act. We must recognize the signs of spouse abuse and act to prevent it or work toward its elimination. We must encourage couples to seek spiritual and professional help.

Shelters are needed for women and children seeking a safe, protective, Islamic environment. Islamic Social Services are needed to provide preventive education, support and crisis intervention. Insha Allah, we must become partners against domestic violence. Spread the word. Stop the hurt.

Aneesah Nadir, MSW, CISW

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Domestic Violence

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

- In the United States every year, about 1.5 million women and more than 800,000 men are raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner. (*Tjaden and Thoennes 2000a*)
- There is no evidence that the rate of domestic abuse is lower in religious households than in the general population.
- The costs of intimate partner rape, physical assault, and stalking exceed \$5.8 billion each year, nearly \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services. (*As reported in the study, "Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 2003.*)
- One recent national survey found that 1 in 11 high-school students said they had been hit, slapped, physically hurt or had been forced to have sexual intercourse by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year. (*CDC Surveillance Summaries, June 9, 2000*)
- Slightly more than 11% of women living with a same sex intimate partner report being raped, physically assaulted or stalked. Approximately 15% of men with male live-in partners report experiencing violence. (*Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence, 2000*)
- In 2003 and 2004, York County had the 3rd highest number of reported domestic violence related deaths in Pennsylvania. (*As reported by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence*)
- In the state of Pennsylvania over the last five years, there were 552 reported fatal domestic violence incidents resulting in 780 deaths. Of these, 584 were victims murdered in acts of domestic violence, the remaining individuals were perpetrators who committed suicide or were killed in the commission of a domestic violence crime. (*As reported by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.pcadv.org*)
- Over the last five years, **3234** petitions for Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders were filed in York County.
- ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York, including Still Waters, its transitional housing program in Hanover, serves over 3000 victims, significant others and their children each year.
- ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York, including Still Waters, its transitional housing program in Hanover, shelters over 500 victims and children each year.
- YWCA of Hanover Safe Home serves over 700 victims and children each year.
- ADVANCE, a program of Lutheran Social Services, serves nearly 500 perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse each year. Of these, about 185 are new clients each year. Of new clients, normally about 80% have a legal mandate to attend the program.
- Since being established in 1988, ADVANCE has served over 3500 clients.

Being abused?

Call ACCESS-York, a program of YWCA of York at 1-800-262-8444, 717-846-5400;
or its Still Waters program in Hanover at 717-637-2235;
or YWCA of Hanover Safe Home at 717-632-0007.

Being abusive?

Call ADVANCE at 717-852-9706

INTIMATE VIOLENCE: AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRAGEDY

To be battered, beaten or raped by a stranger is to live in constant fear of the possibility of seeing and being hurt by that stranger again...the possibility of running into him around a corner, passing him on the street, or seeing his face from behind a door.

To be battered, beaten or raped by one with whom we have shared our love and our life is to be keenly aware that we **will** face the perpetrator of the violence against us again...and again...often waking next to him every morning, never knowing **when** the violence will occur, but being very, very sure that it will occur time and time again...never knowing when, how, or why.

To be attacked by a stranger is a tragedy. To be under siege in our own home is the ultimate in fear and desperation.

To those of us fortunate enough to have a safe and secure home, domestic violence is not an issue upon which we often dwell. To those of us not as fortunate, the violence within our homes is the center of our universe – the only factor around which our every thought, word, and deed is decided, the factor which determines the health and safety of our lives and often the lives of our children.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VIOLENCE

Domestic violence must be defined as far more than the number or force of slaps, punches, or strikes against the body. Such abuse is the use of forceful, controlling behavior to cause a person to do what the abuser wants without regard to the person's rights, body, or health. Victims of this intimate violence experience deliberate, repeated and escalating physical and psychological violence perpetrated upon them by an intimate partner.

Issues of **power and control** are at the core of such relationships. Abusers tend to believe they have the right to maintain complete power and control over their partners in order to "keep them" from straying or leaving the relationship. Such power and control takes a number of forms as demonstrated by The Cycle of Violence and The Power and Control Wheel (both found elsewhere in this manual).

In a list developed by Amnesty International describing the most powerful forms of psychological torture inflicted upon hostages by their terroristic captors, the following measures of control were presented:

- Isolation
- Deprivation of food and sleep
- Monopolization of attention
- Degradation
- Threats
- Forced administration of alcohol and other drugs
- Occasional indulgences which serve to keep hope alive.

This list accurately describes precisely the tortures experienced by battered victims of domestic violence, not by unknown terrorists in foreign lands, but by intimate partners within their own homes.

While victims of domestic violence describe episodes of physical abuse as being terrifying and painful, virtually all victims of domestic violence, regardless of the extent of the physical violence against them, maintain that the emotional abuse is, by far, the most terrible! External scars and bruises eventually heal, they say, but scars and bruises of the heart and spirit could remain forever.

" 'He would never hit a woman', he told people with great pride for years, while his wife smiled through trembling lips and looked away quickly before anyone could see the fear in her eyes. Instead of hitting her with his fists, her husband struck her with ugly names and hurtful words. Instead of physically beating her, he beat her verbally with obscenities and insults, and terrified her with threats and curses. Daily, he chipped away at her spirit, her optimism, and her loving and trusting nature. Daily, he bludgeoned her self-respect and self-esteem. Daily, he robbed her of her dignity and peace of mind." (By Niki Scott, "Working Women" column, Universal Press Syndicate.)

Victims of domestic violence, too, are prisoners of war - a war within their own intimate relationship.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Domestic violence is an "equal opportunity" crime, having no regard for age, gender, income, educational level, culture, religion, and overall socioeconomic status of those it engulfs. Victims of intimate violence are the unborn, newborn, and the elderly. They are white, African-American, Hispanic and Asian. They live in poverty and are wealthy. They are PhDs and school dropouts. They are our employers, next door neighbors, physicians, and our children's teachers ... our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons and ourselves. Each of us is at risk!

In terms of the gender of the majority of reported cases, approximately 95% of reported domestic violence lists women as the adult victims. The basic rule in determining who is truly the victim is to first determine who in the relationship is in fear.

Victims are often misconstrued and generalized as being passive, undecided, depressed, confused, evasive, introverted, reclusive, and even protective of the very one who clearly violates her. "She **must** like it and come to expect it", some say. According to Susan Shecter, program coordinator at Boston Children's Hospital for Advocacy for Women and Kids in Emergency (AWAKE), "these are not character traits; they are survival and coping strategies. When a woman is in a traumatic or life-threatening situation, she tries to avoid making the batterer angry; she tries to placate. She tries not to show her strong or real feelings because she could get hurt for them. It's called 'frozen fright'."

Society has, for years, taught little girls that, if they are "good", they will be loved. Little girls, finding themselves in relationships in which they are told they are not only "bad", but stupid, ugly, untrustworthy, crazy, inadequate mothers and wives, and worthless, find themselves isolated and alienated from anything which could reinforce their self-worth, and often come to measure their worth and see themselves in the angry eyes of their perpetrators. In efforts to "make things better", to "keep the peace" within their homes, to "get it right" for their partners (consequently keeping him from becoming upset with them), battered women (and children) try again and again, harder and harder, to change themselves into the people they are told they **should** become. Every time the woman attempts to change in order to please her partner, every time she sacrifices another "piece of herself" in hopes of stopping the violence, the balance of power and control within the relationship is, once again, tipped. She loses a bit more of her own power; her partner gains more control.

Victims of domestic violence do not love the violence; they love the times when their partners are not violent - the good times. Most victims of domestic violence do not want to leave their partners and their homes; they simply want the violence within their homes to end.

WHO ARE THE ABUSERS

Most domestic **abusers are quite ordinary**. They...

- Seem like normal everyday people
- Likely have a job and get along with people pretty well
- Maintain a positive public image and good reputation for the most part
- Do not typically fit the “angry, scary man” or “monster” stereotypes

You might ask why victims get into relationships with abusive partners? The reason is fairly simple – **no one can pick abusers out of a crowd**. Most abusive men...

- Are sometimes charming and caring
- Are really good early in a new relationship
- Gradually increase their abusive control over time
- Begin with verbal and emotional abuse that is subtle and difficult to recognize

The vast majority of **domestic violence and abuse is perpetrated by men** – about 95%. Although women can and sometimes do use violence, it is very unusual for a woman to muster the same pattern of domineering control and terrifying intimidation over a man that abusive men typically exert over their victims – usually women and children. Therefore, we may use male language to refer to perpetrators of abuse and female language for victims.

Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse, often called batterers, **come in all shapes, sizes, and personality types**. They might be 16, 25, 52, or 61. They include men from...

- All races, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and religious affiliations
- All kinds of vocations – laborer, factory worker, tradesman, professional, executive
- Every level of education or lack thereof
- All income brackets
- All social environments including rural, suburban, and urban settings

Abusers are our attorneys, school board members, local politicians, leaders in our churches, police officers, our bosses or coworkers, and our plumbers. **They are our brothers, fathers, sons, and perhaps ourselves**.

There is **no personality or mental health profile** or simple means of identifying who is a batterer or who might become abusive. However, there are common behavioral characteristics that are true of most abusive men. **With an amazing degree of consistency, most batterers will exhibit a significant number of the following behaviors**, called

The Behavior “Profile” of a Batterer

- Controlling
- Sense of entitlement
- Self-centered with narcissistic tendencies
- Believes he is the victim
- Manipulative
- Maintains good public image
- Good early in a relationship
- Skillfully dishonest
- Disrespectful, superior
- Objectifies and depersonalizes
- Externalizes responsibility
- Rule maker
- Punishes, retaliates
- Abuses serially (repeatedly and in subsequent relationships)
- Danger increases during and after separation

This Behavior Profile was adapted from *The Batterer as Parent* by Lundy Bancroft and Jay Silverman, by staff of the ADVANCE Program of Lutheran Social Services of South Central Pennsylvania

WHY MEN BATTER

Because they can.

It is learned behavior.

They perceive that they benefit from it because they achieve control in the short term.

They believe they are entitled. They think they must maintain control of situations and other people.

Society allows it. Society reinforces an institutionalized and gendered imbalance of power.

They have very little sustained experience with introspection and self-examination. They prefer to focus on someone else at fault.

They minimize and deny the negative effects of their control and abuse.

They don't see it as their duty to monitor their behavior or to be accountable.

They've been socialized to believe they have limited options for emotional expression.

* * * * *

Other factors exacerbate their abuse and might impede intervention or treatment. These are not common to all abusive men and are not the cause of their battering.

Some have poor self-esteem or mental health problems. They might need individual therapy in addition to domestic abuse intervention services.

Substance abuse might complicate their lives and could make them more dangerous. They might need substance abuse counseling before, after, or in addition to domestic abuse intervention services.

Some are in unhealthy relationships or are with a partner who is in need of individual therapy.

It is important to recognize that women's use of violence is different from men's. The above information cannot be generalized to women.

-Based on information from ADVANCE, Lutheran Social Services of South Central PA

* * * * *

In order to escape accountability for his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting. Secrecy and silence are the perpetrator's first line of defense. .. To this end, he marshals an impressive array of arguments, from the most blatant denial to the most sophisticated and elegant rationalization. After every atrocity one can expect the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it on herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more completely his arguments prevail.

From Trauma and Recovery, Judith Herman, M.D.

INDICATORS OR SIGNS OF ENTITLEMENT

The following are examples of the kinds of things to look for that indicate the presence of inappropriate entitlement or male privilege in a relationship.

These are NOT proof of domestic abuse, but they may indicate patterns of control or abuse in the relationship. The greater the number of these indicators, the higher the likelihood that abuse is present in the relationship.

REMEMBER: Always keep SAFETY as the highest priority.

1. Language claiming ownership of communal or joint items
 - my kids, my house, my bank account, my car (even the one she drives)
2. Attitude of superiority – better and smarter than partner and often women in general
3. Very rational explanations of his opinions as though they are universally agreed upon, self-evident knowledge – opinions stated as irrefutable truism.
4. Dismissive of the opinions, ideas, and feedback of others
5. Above the law or deserving of exceptions – driving with suspended license; violations of PFA protection order; probation/parole violations; continues calling after being ask/told not to call
6. Stalking behaviors
7. Degrading, disrespectful, or insulting language or talk about partner
8. Speaks of his abuse/violence matter-of-factly without remorse, conveying a strong sense of justification, that anyone in his situation would do the same.
9. Functions as exclusive rule-maker, judge, and enforcer of punishment for non-compliance. Enforcement often inconsistent and conditional.
10. Believes he is owed whatever he thinks he needs or wants from his partner or the children, including physical, emotional, and sexual caretaking.
11. Makes it clear he has established his own limits beyond which he is not responsible for his actions – a man can only take so much; push me too far and you'll be sorry; she pushed my buttons; she knows what sets me off
12. Exclusive control over certain belongings or aspects of the relationship: the TV and/or the remote control; who his partner talks to or where she goes; how children are disciplined; sets times for meals or other family schedules; demands his partner and children serve/pamper him, clean up after him, etc.
13. Very long relationships (often producing children), but no marriage – benefits without commitment. Perhaps simultaneous relationships like this.
14. Takes away his partner's and children's right to be angry, especially with him or at his controlling, abusive, or violent behavior
15. Skillfully twists what others say by making extreme assumptions or conclusions and accusing the person of saying things they never said, or by interpreting everything as criticism or judgment, or by claiming that what the other person said is exactly what he himself said or meant or thinks.

➤ Continued on back ➤

16. Self-centered, narcissistic tendencies – everything is about him
17. Above criticism, has the right to NOT be accountable
18. Acts or seems emotionally needy, but whatever one does for him or gives him is never enough and is never appreciated – takes and takes but never gives
19. Presents himself, often quite convincingly, as the real victim. He interprets any effort his partner makes to defend herself (verbally, or physically) as an act of aggression against him for which he then punishes her with further abuse, but claims it is self-defense; protecting himself from her aggression.
20. Gives detailed accounts of incidents involving his partner or child, including apparent quotes of who said what when he wasn't even present for the incident. But then claims he can't remember the details of what he himself said or did in an argument or an abusive incident.
21. Unfair and unreasonable expectations
22. Demands absolute compliance without complaint
23. Quick to judge, criticize, or ridicule partner or children
24. Strong need to be right and to win with the expectation that other will concede

Prepared by the ADVANCE Program of Lutheran Social Services of South Central Pennsylvania
750 Kelly Dr. York, PA 17404 717-852-9706
Several items above were adapted from, *Why Does He Do That?* by Lundy Bancroft

WOMEN WHO USE VIOLENCE

Women's violence is different from men's battering. Battering is a pattern of abuse in the presence of systematic terrorization and/or domination of one person by another. Women are not usually in a position to wield such power, owing to social conditioning, "pink collar" jobs and the "glass ceiling," and the biological fact that the majority of men have more muscle and physical strength than the majority of women.

Men's violence with an intimate partner is a strategy intended to assure power and control. Women use violence because not using violence hasn't served to keep them safe. Women's violence is generally predicated on one of three primary motivations:

1. Most women's violence is reactive or self-defensive. In the course of defending herself from battering, sometimes a woman inflicts more injury on her partner than he has inflicted on her. If police are not trained to recognize defensive injuries or if dual-arrest policies exist, women may be inappropriately charged with domestic violence crimes.
2. Some women are primary aggressors who perpetrate violence with a sense of entitlement to control their partners. These women are most often in same-sex relationships, though a small minority are abusive in heterosexual relationships.
3. Some women who have a history of having been battered in a previous relationship now use violence, including preemptive strikes, as a means of survival or assurance that they will not be victimized again. More research is needed and is being conducted in this area.

Intervention strategies vary and arise from the motivation for using violence. Providing services to a woman who has used violence requires the counselor to conduct a thorough assessment to ascertain her motivation. When both parties have used violence, a simple test that can sometimes be used to sort victim from perpetrator is to ask which one is afraid. The perpetrator will more likely be annoyed or bemused rather than fearful. Some victims will, however, deny fear, so additional assessment is, of course, required.

The woman who uses reactive violence must still be seen as a victim herself. She must develop a comprehensive safety plan, and she may well require other services offered in victim's programs. Locally, ACCESS-York, a program of YWCA of York, including Still Waters, and YWCA of Hanover Safe Home provide shelter, transitional housing, advocacy, support groups, and empowerment counseling. Victims should be allowed to protect themselves, and it is inappropriate for women who do protect themselves to be ordered to anger management or batterer services. The National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women (1-800-903-0111) can provide additional information and assistance to battered women charged with crimes.

The intervention for women who are primary aggressors is similar to batterer intervention services for men. Group settings provide the opportunity to examine beliefs and social constructs that foster privilege or entitlement. Anger management may be a component of such services.

Finally, a woman who uses first-strike violence out of fear for her own safety is often the victim of trauma in this or a previous relationship. She may now experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress. She may benefit from individualized services, but the group setting again can affirm her so that she can critically analyze her thoughts and emotions with others in a similar plight. She will also need risk assessment skills so that she can more accurately make decisions about when and how best to protect herself without being abusive to others.

ARE YOU IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

Abusive relationships rarely begin as such. In fact, such relationships generally appear to begin far more wonderful than most. Potential controlling and abusive partners often **seemingly** begin their relationships with more passion, a deeper need for instant and total commitment, and a desire to be "everything and everyone" to their partner. While these things often seem flattering and attractive initially, the same traits generally turn, ever so subtly, to tactics of control and power.

The following questions can help identify potentially abusive relationships:

1. Is your partner extremely jealous and possessive of you?
2. Does your partner object to your relationships and activities with others (friends, family, school, church, a job, etc.)?
3. Do you sometimes do things your partner wants you to do, simply in efforts to "keep peace"?
4. Is "not making your partner angry" a major consideration in your decision making?
5. Does your partner tend **not** to take responsibility for abusive behavior? Does your partner see him or herself as the victim, often blaming others (generally you) for the abuse/behavior and what happens to him/her as a result of the abusive behavior?
6. Did your partner grow up in a home where there was violence?
7. Does your partner use violence to resolve conflicts?
8. Does your partner abuse substances, alcohol and other drugs?
9. Does your partner have a rigid view of gender stereotypes and roles?
10. Does your partner chip away at your self-esteem?
11. Does your partner have a "Jekyll and Hyde" personality (wonderful one moment, frightening the next)?
12. Does your partner minimize or deny the abuse or behavior exhibited?
13. Is your partner verbally, physically, sexually, economically, or emotionally abusive?
14. ***Are you afraid of your partner?***

While not every abusive individual exhibits each of the above characteristics, many do possess a number of these traits. To own any of these characteristics does not mean that an individual is a bad person, it merely suggests that one may have a propensity toward some form of controlling or abusive behavior in relationships.

QUIZ:

How is your relationship?

Does your partner:

- Embarrass you with bad names and put-downs?
- Look at you or act in ways that scare you?
- Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go?
- Stop you from seeing or talking to friends or family?
- Take your money or Social Security, make you ask for money, or refuse to give you money?
- Make all the decisions?
- Tell you you're a bad parent or threaten to take away or hurt your children?
- Act like the abuse is no big deal, it's your fault, or even deny doing it?
- Destroy your property or threaten to kill your pets?
- Intimidate you with guns, knives, or other weapons?
- Shove you, slap you or hit you?
- Force you to drop charges?
- Threaten to commit suicide?
- Threaten to kill you?

If you checked even one, you may be in an abusive relationship. If you need to talk, call us.

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

~ Se Habla Español ~

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP ALLOWS YOU RIGHTS

1. The right to be treated with respect.
2. The right to live without fear of abuse.
3. The right not to be perfect.
4. The right to constructively express your feelings and opinions.
5. The right to fulfill your own needs.
6. The right to reject stereotypes and set your own standards.
7. The right to participate in decision making, to change your mind, and to say no or disagree.
8. The right to privacy and time alone.
9. The right to maintain old friendships and make new ones.
10. The right to leave.

Barrie Levy

WHY DO THEY STAY?

Most do not. For those who do, however, the following reasons are most often cited:

Leaving can be dangerous. Many victims of domestic violence have been killed by their partners after leaving the violent home or ending the relationship. A victim of domestic violence, therefore, may believe that after leaving will not necessarily make their life or the lives of their children safer. Many batterers escalate the violence to coerce their victims into reconciliation or to retaliate for their departure. This may include threats to kill the victim, threats of suicide, or threats to kill others if the victim leaves or does not return after having left.

Hope for change. Many abusers become remorseful after inflicting violence. Their contrite behavior may include: promising never to hit again; seeking counseling if the victim will stay in the relationship; reminding the victim of how hard the abuser works; pointing out the stress under which the abuser is operating; acknowledging the wrongfulness of the violence to others and asking their help in stopping it; or demonstrating love in meaningful ways. Some victims of domestic violence mistakenly believe they can “rescue” their abuser from violent behavior. When the batterer acknowledges the wrongdoing and concedes the need for dramatic change, hope is born anew for many victims of domestic violence.

Isolation. Many victims of domestic violence lose their support systems during their relationship with the abuser. Some of the ways a batterer may isolate the victim are: preventing the victim from using the telephone; preventing the victim from attending and/or humiliating the victim at family or other social gatherings, insisting on driving the victim to work or not allowing the victim to work; censoring the mail; or convincing the victim other people are the source of their problems.

Social Denial. Many victims of domestic violence fear that no one will believe that their partners abuse them. Batterers can be very charming and popular people who keep their terrorizing and controlling behaviors well hidden when outside the home. Victims of domestic violence who try to leave often become discouraged when potential helpers in the community trivialize the impact of the violence.

Belief in Counseling for the Batterer. Victims of domestic violence are reluctant to leave when their abusers are in counseling. It is very important that victims of domestic violence have full information about counseling programs for batterers and are in contact with their partners’ counselors. Only in this way can the victim evaluate whether or not the counseling is likely to bring about the changes that are needed for the batterer to end the violence. (Gonddolf, 1988; Okun, 1986)

Leaving is a process. Most victims of domestic violence leave and return several times before permanently separating from their abusers. The first time a victim of domestic violence leaves may be only a test to see whether or not the abuser will try to get some help to stop the violence. When the violence occurs again, the victim may leave to gain more information about the resources available to her/him.

*An excerpt from **Domestic Violence: General Information**. Developed and printed by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

OBSTACLES TO LEAVING

Fear

1200 to 1400 women a year lose their lives to their abusive partner, many within weeks of leaving their abuser.

“He threatened to hunt me down and kill me if I left. I never felt safe. The police would come and the next day he would be right back home, threatening me all over again.”

Fear

Fear that they won't be believed if they told someone, or that they would be blamed.

“People think he's so nice. They'll think I am crazy.”

Fear

Fear of embarrassment, shame...previous insensitive response, inadequate response or lack of response after disclosing to law enforcement, clergy, health care, family and friends.

Fear

“He threatens to take away my children and that I will never see them again.”

“My mother tells me that he is a good man and that it is my fault he gets upset. She tells me I need to learn how to be a better wife.”

Fatigue

Victims are beaten *down* long before they are beaten up.

“He told me so often that I was stupid I started to believe him. A lot of time I am so tired I can't think straight, with him yelling at me half the night.”

Faith

Many times individuals will stay in abusive relationships because of faith or cultural beliefs.

Separation or divorce may ostracize the person from their community.

“After I told my pastor about my husband's physical abuse, my pastor asked me, “and what is your sin?””

Finances

The victim may have no financial resources, or job skills. Many victims have not been allowed to work outside of the house or allowed to keep their paycheck. If there are children, it becomes more difficult to leave, with no resources to get transportation, food or housing.

“Think how hard it would be to walk out your front door, down the steps with two kids on either side of you, not knowing where you are going to sleep that night or where you will get food for your children.”

Hope

Hope that the abuse will end.

Isolation

Often there is no access for support systems. This is especially true for vulnerable populations, teens, elders, immigrants, rural individuals and victims in same sex relationships.

Rather than ask “why do victims stay”, it would be a far wiser thing to question “why do people batter?” Rather than scrutinize victims of domestic violence for remaining within the violence, wouldn't it be more appropriate to look at what we, as a community and society, should do to assist victims in escaping the violence, safely and finally?

An excerpt from **Domestic Violence: General Information**. Developed and printed by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The cycle of violence can happen many times in an abusive relationship. Each stage lasts a different amount of time in the relationship, with the total cycle taking from a few hours to a year or more to complete. Emotional abuse is present in all three stages.

A person does not need to have experienced the following behaviors to be in an abusive relationship. These are some examples of abusive behaviors. There are many more not listed.

	Batterer may:	Partner may:
Phase 1: Tension Building Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pick fights * Act jealous & possessive * Criticize, threaten * Drink, use drugs * Be moody, unpredictable * Be crazy-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Feel like she's walking on eggshells * Try to reason with the batterer * Try to calm the batterer * Try to appease the batterer * Keep silent, try to keep children quiet * Feel afraid or anxious
Phase 2: Crisis Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Verbal abuse * Sexual assault * Increase control over money * Restrain partner * Destroy property, phone * Emotionally assault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Experience fear, shock * Protects self & children * Use self-defense * Call for help * Try to flee, leave * Do what is necessary to survive
Phase 3: Calmer Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ask for forgiveness * Promise it won't happen again * Stop drinking, using drugs * Go to counseling * Be affectionate * Initiate intimacy * Minimize or deny abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Forgive * Return home * Arrange for counseling * Feel hopeful * Feel manipulated * Blame self * Minimize or deny abuse

- Although these stages are common in abusive relationships, it is important to know that not all abuse follows this cyclical pattern.
- A 2003 National Institute of Justice Report stated that 20% of fatal or life-threatening incidents in intimate relationships are the first physical incident.

POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

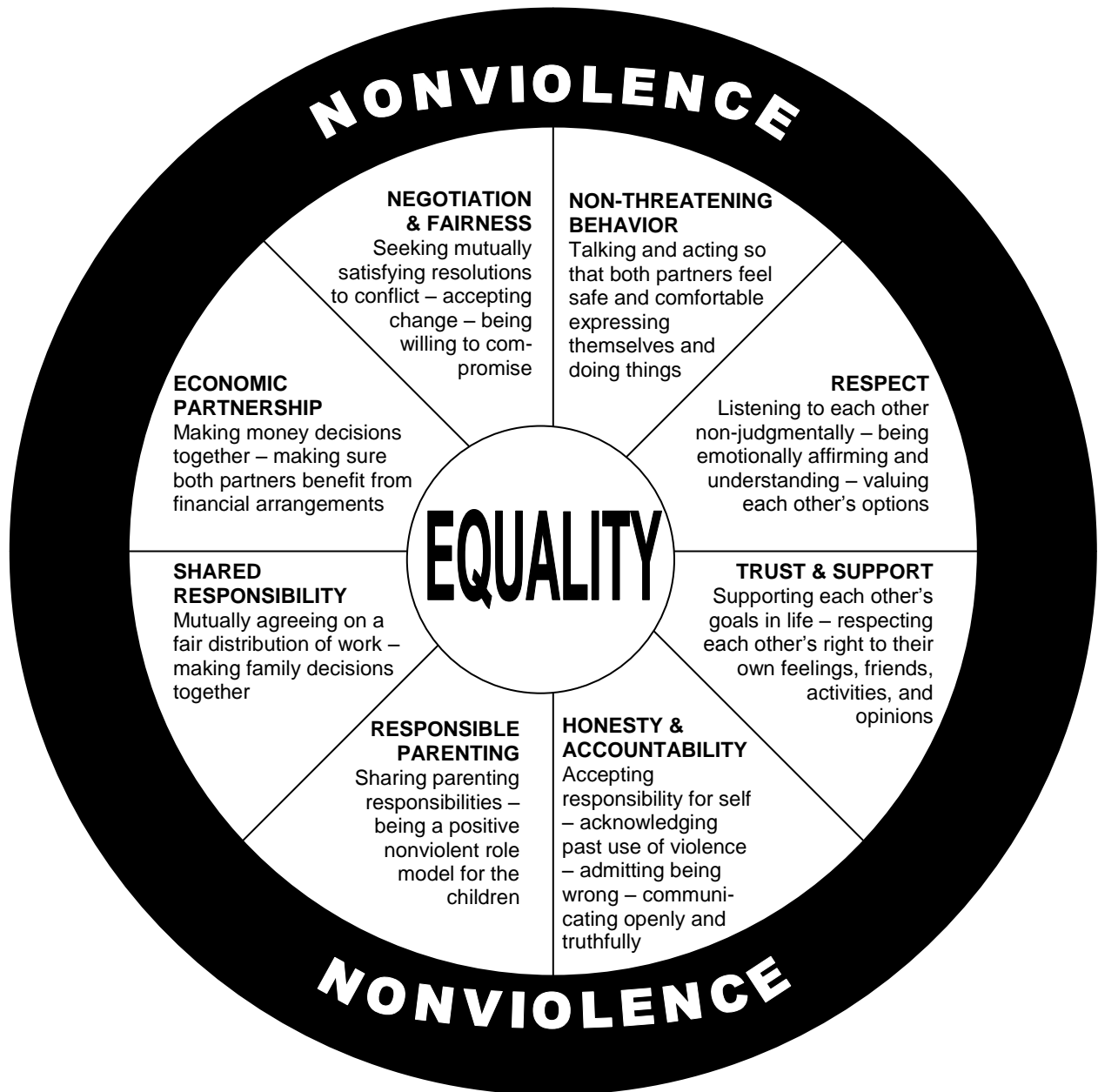
This wheel describes various tactics that may be used by abusers to establish, maintain, or enforce their power and control over their partners and/or children. Physical and sexual violence, or the credible threat of either one, form the rim of the wheel and strengthen the effect of the other tactics.



Adapted from Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

EQUALITY WHEEL

Each quadrant on the Equality Wheel corresponds to the same quadrant on the Power and Control Wheel and describes non-abusive behaviors that are the opposite of the abusive actions. A commitment to non-violence holds this wheel together and is essential for healthy relationships.



Adapted from Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project

STALKING

Stalking – When a person engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts toward another person, including following the person *without proper authority*, under circumstances which place that person in reasonable fear of bodily injury.

Harassing – A person commits the crime of harassment when, with the intent to harass, annoy or alarm another person:

- strikes, shoves, kicks or otherwise subjects the victim to physical contact, or attempts or threatens to do the same.
- follows a person in or about a public place or places.
- engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts which alarm or seriously annoy such other person with no legitimate reason.

Stalking Prevention Tips

- Trust your instincts. If something doesn't seem right about a situation, don't dismiss it. Report it to the police.
- Avoid dangerous situations. Use good judgment about where you go, who you're with and what you do.
- Use an answering machine to screen your phone calls. Report any harassment you receive over the phone.
- Maintain good home security. Contact your local police department for a security survey.
- If you think someone is inside your home, don't go in. Call the police from a nearby phone.
- If you think you're being followed, go to a store or other well-lit public place and call the police.
- Develop a plan of action in case you are ever attacked.
- **ALWAYS BE ALERT!**
- Remember your goal is to escape and survive.
- Document and report incidents to the police

Because each case is different, there is no catchall advice for victims of stalking.

All 50 States have statutes outlawing stalking behavior.

Profile of a Stalker

Stalkers include men and women, straight and gays, but the most common seem to be men who've been rejected by women.

Stalking Categories

Definitions are based on the relationships between the stalkers and the victims

Simple Obsession – stalker and victim were once involved in a previous consensual (romantic) relationship. Most dangerous of categories and is domestic violence stalking.

Domestic violence victims run a very high risk of becoming stalking victims the moment they leave their abusive relationship.

Love Obsession – stalker has had no relationship or only a casual relationship with the victim. Star stalkers. Socially insecure. “I can make you love me.”

Erotomania – stalker thinks they have a romantic relationship with the victim. Few social skills, live a fantasy life, little or no history of romantic involvement.

Vengeance Stalkers – Retribution for perceived wrong, diabolically clever, consumed with hatred, wants to “make victim pay.”

Psychological Impact on Victim

Symptoms of PTSD – nightmares, flashbacks, increased hyper-vigilance

Severe and/or pervasive anxiety

Insomnia, decreased appetite, low motivation/energy, feelings of hopelessness, social withdrawal, suicidal thoughts or attempts

Decreased confidence and self-esteem (from self-blame, feeling responsible)

Substance abuse or compulsive behavior

Stress related illnesses

WHAT IS STALKING?

While legal definitions of stalking vary from one jurisdiction to another, a good working definition of stalking is *a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.*

STALKING IN AMERICA

- 1,006,970 women and 370,990 men are stalked annually in the U.S.
- 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime.
- 77% of female victims and 65% of male victims know their stalker.
- 87% of stalkers are men.
- 59% of female victims and 30% of male victims are stalked by an intimate partner.
- 81% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner are also physically assaulted by that partner.
- 31% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner are also sexually assaulted by that partner.
- 73% of intimate partner stalkers verbally threatened victims with physical violence, and almost 45% of victims experienced one or more violent incidents by the stalker.
- The average duration of stalking is 1.8 years.
- If stalking involves intimate partners, the average duration of stalking increases to 2.2 years.
- 28% of female victims and 10% of male victims obtained a protective order. 69% of female victims and 81% of male victims had the protection order violated.

[Tjaden & Thoennes. (1998). "Stalking in America," NIJ.]

IMPACT OF STALKING ON VICTIMS

- 56% of women stalked took some type of self-protective measure, often as drastic as relocating (11%). [Tjaden & Thoennes. (1998). "Stalking in America," NIJ]
- 26% of stalking victims lost time from work as a result of their victimization, and 7% never returned to work. [Tjaden & Thoennes.]
- 30% of female victims and 20% of male victims sought psychological counseling. [Tjaden & Thoennes.]
- The prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression is much higher among stalking victims than the general population, especially if the stalking involves being followed or having one's property destroyed. [Blauuw et.al. (2002). "The Toll of Stalking," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*]

THE STALKING RESOURCE CENTER

The Stalking Resource Center is a program of the National Center for Victims of Crime. Our dual mission is to raise national awareness of stalking and to encourage the development and implementation of multidisciplinary responses to stalking in local communities across the country.

We can provide you with:

- Training and Technical Assistance
- Protocol Development
- Resources
- Help in collaborating with other agencies and systems in your community

Contact us at: 202-467-8700 or src@ncvc.org.

RECON STUDY OF STALKERS

- 2/3 of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.
- 78% of stalkers use more than one means of approach.
- Weapons are used to harm or threaten victims in 1 out of 5 cases.
- Almost 1/3 of stalkers have stalked before.
- Intimate partner stalkers frequently approach their targets, and their behaviors escalate quickly.

[Mohandie et al. "The RECON Typology of Stalking: Reliability and Validity Based upon a Large Sample of North American Stalkers." (In Press, *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 2006).]

STALKING AND INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE*

- 76% of intimate partner femicide (murder) victims had been stalked by their intimate partner.
- 67% had been physically abused by their intimate partner.
- 89% of femicide victims who had been physically abused had also been stalked in the 12 months before the murder.
- 79% of abused femicide victims reported stalking during the same period that they reported abuse.
- 54% of femicide victims reported stalking to police before they were killed by their stalkers.

*The murder of a woman.

[McFarlane et al. (1999). "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," *Homicide Studies*].

STALKING ON CAMPUS

- 13% of college women were stalked during one six- to nine-month period.
 - 80% of campus stalking victims knew their stalkers.
 - 3 in 10 college women reported being injured emotionally or psychologically from being stalked.
- [Fisher, Cullen, and Turner. (2000). "The Sexual Victimization of College Women," NIJ/BJS.]

STATE LAWS¹

- Stalking is a crime under the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government.
- 15 States classify stalking as a felony upon the first offense.
- 34 states classify stalking as a felony upon the second offense and/or when the crime involves aggravating factors.²
- Aggravating factors may include: possession of a deadly weapon; violation of a court order or condition of probation/parole; victim under 15; same victim as prior occasions.

¹ Last updated October 2005.

² In Maryland, stalking is always a misdemeanor.

For a compilation of state, tribal and Federal laws visit: www.ncvc.org/src

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

“Husbands often suggest that they beat their wives because their wives drink. But several studies have shown that many battered women start drinking subsequent to the battering. So, it may be defensive behavior on the part of women, trying to cope with an intolerable situation.”

Linda Salzman, PhD, criminologist at Centers for Disease Control

Domestic violence and chemical dependency are both life-threatening and should therefore be parallel priorities in all interventions with chemically dependent victims of domestic violence. **When domestic violence is not identified in the life of a woman who is abusing substances, both her recovery and her safety are compromised.** Additional facts to consider:

Violent partners often sabotage a woman’s treatment by: stalking her or by threatening physical harm unless she leaves the program.

With the consent of the victim, substance abuse treatment providers should inform all staff when a client has an order of protection and should keep a copy of the order in a confidential on-site location.

A batterer may bully or manipulate her to “use” as a sign of her love for him. After substance abuse treatment, a victim may be pressured to use alcohol or other drugs as part of the “making up” phase with her abuser.

Even if a victim is able to complete a substance abuse treatment program, being re-victimized is predictive of relapse.

Some abusers are more violent when sober or abstinent, so substance abusing battered women may be seen as “enabling” when they are actually trying to be safe by encouraging drinking or drug use.

Substance abuse is a coping strategy, often beginning with seeking relief from physical and emotional pain. Recovery must include being able to recognize options and alternatives before they can replace their substance use with positive coping strategies.

Substance abuse treatment providers should recognize that, at times, the legitimate survival and safety strategies employed by victims (such as resistance, non-compliance, and dishonesty) may conflict with recovery strategies.

To become independent and to live free from violence, women should receive assistance for substance abuse problems in addition to other supportive services. However, safety planning must take precedence over any other considerations.

ABUSERS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

“If you drink and get violent, you have two problems.” Non-Violence Alliance

Battering is a socially learned behavior. **The tendency to link substance abuse and domestic violence is a component of society's view of battering as an individual deviant behavior rather than a social problem among all ethnic and socio-economic levels of America.** But many abusive individuals attempt to avoid responsibility by blaming alcohol or other drugs. Additional facts to consider:

Some men who abuse substances batter only when they're under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, some only when they are not under the influence, and others have no particular pattern.

However, there is an undeniable link between alcohol and domestic violence. In a 2004 study funded by the Centers for Disease Control, men who got drunk in a given three-month period after treatment were three times more likely to use violence again in that same period, even if not drinking. No other variable was statistically significant in predicting violence.

Someone who batters only when he's drunk might be getting drunk so that he can batter.

Alcohol and other drugs affect one's sense of personal power, especially when coupled with narcissism or a gendered sense of entitlement. Because cognitive functioning is impaired, innocuous behaviors or situations may be misinterpreted as malevolent or aggressive.

Undeniably, some substances have a direct chemical effect in the brain, especially in those individuals with a low level of serotonin. More research is needed in this area, but so far there is no indication that this phenomenon usurps individual decision-making.

Acquiring illegal drugs exposes the user to a subculture that is inherently violent. That, added to the conflict some couples have over when or whether to use substances, creates a situation that is conducive to abuse.

Substance abuse treatment does not "cure" battering behavior. An alcoholic batterer who becomes clean and sober is usually a clean and sober batterer.

Traditional approaches to addressing addiction have the potential to further endanger victims and often fail to hold batterers accountable for their violence. When domestic abuse interventions programs fail to address substance abuse, safety and responsibility plans for batterers will be inadequate.

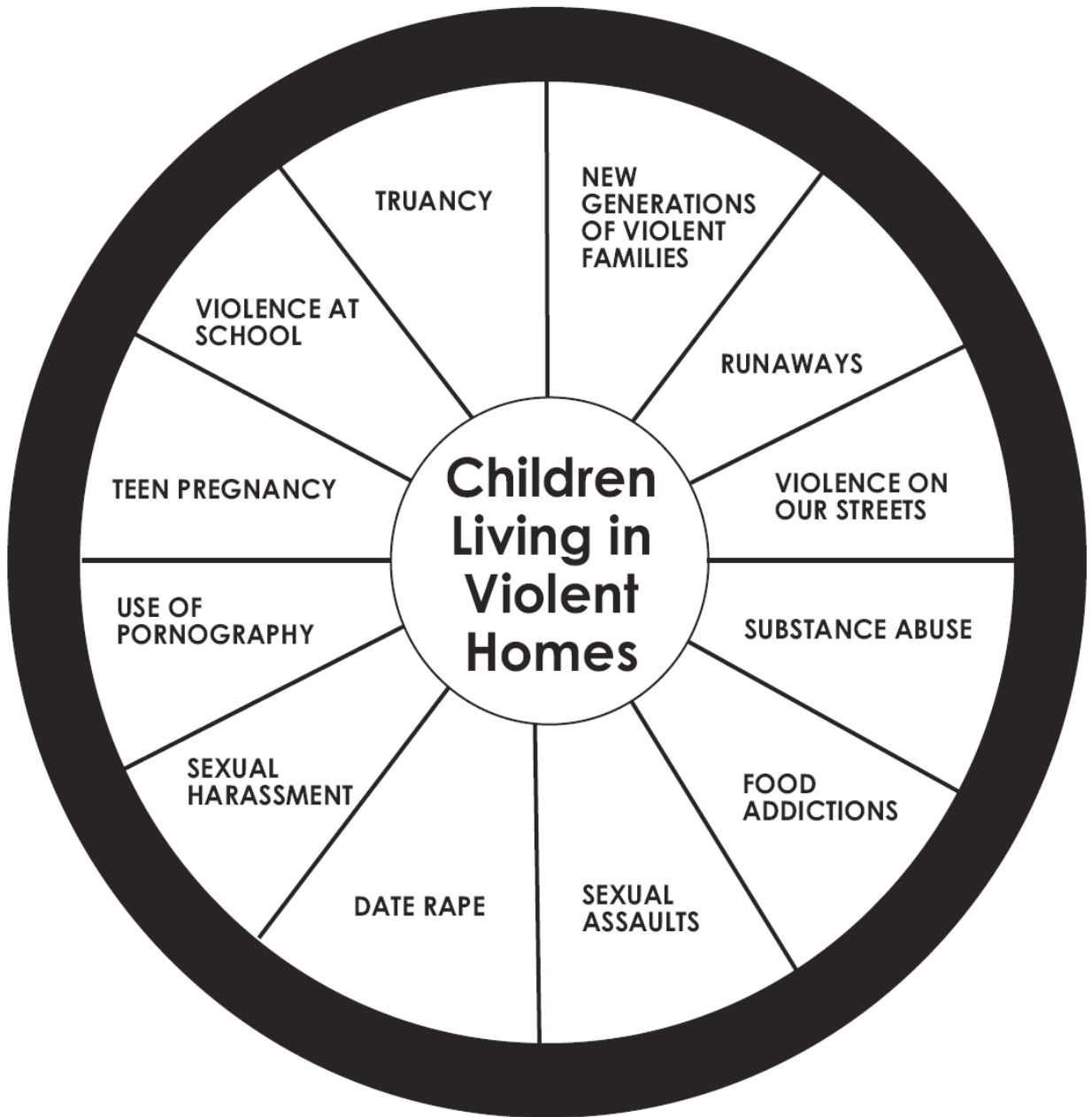
COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WHO WITNESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. For some children, the problems of domestic violence begin before they are born.
2. Domestically violent families are often socially isolated; therefore parents may be the child's only available role models.
3. The child learns that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems and assumes that violence is the norm.
4. The child blames himself/herself for the violence.
5. Mom's helplessness communicates to the child that the violence is inevitable. The child sees few options.
6. There tends to be violence toward their siblings and sometimes toward their parents in later life.
7. The family moves frequently, often separating family members for periods of time.
8. Children often experience school adjustment problems.
9. Children tend to have difficulty establishing relationships with peers.
10. Children are taught stereotypical sex roles.
11. There are often role reversals in the family which confuse children as to who they are.
12. The children frequently fantasize "saving" their parents' relationships. When this fails, they may fantasize escaping from home (running away, early marriage, pregnancy, etc.).
13. Children sometimes fantasize killing themselves and/or their parents (either father or mother) and sometimes attempt or complete suicide or homicide.
14. The children are likely to continue the pattern of violence in their own adult relationships.

From UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A Training Manual for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Instructors.

THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN LIVING IN VIOLENT HOMES

**CHILDREN COPING WITH
FAMILY VIOLENCE**



Developed from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
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Produced and distributed by:



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on Domestic and Sexual Violence
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THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

Additional characteristics that may be observed in children of abusive homes:

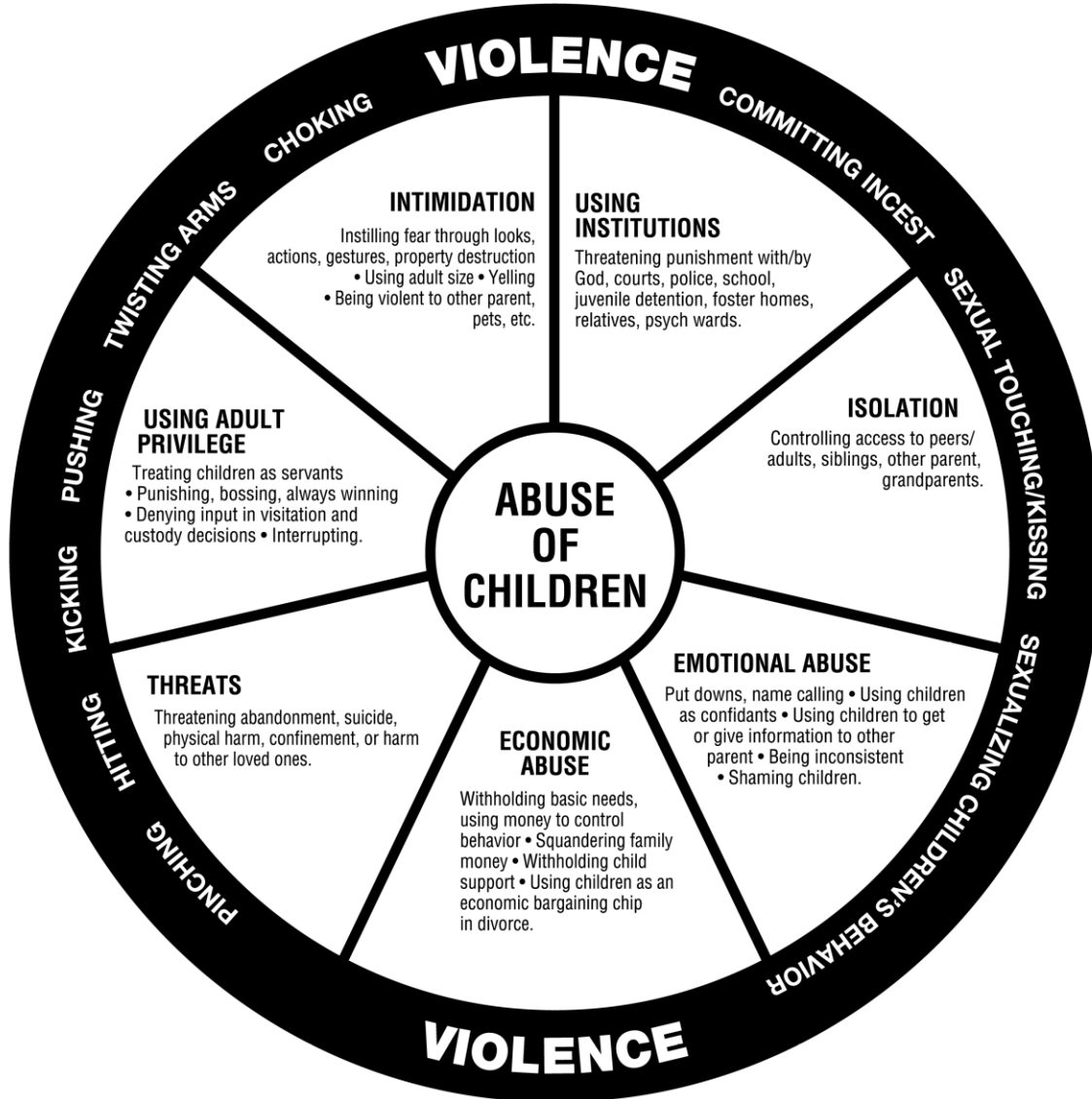
1. Demonstrate increased aggressive behavior
2. Have extreme behaviors (nothing “middle of the road”)
 - sometimes very affectionate, desperate for positive attention, wanting to be held or just touched by anyone
 - sometimes very angry and aggressive, taking any and every opportunity to give you a little punch, kick or bite
3. Anger
 - toward abuser for the abuse he/she sees and/or receives
 - toward victim for being “weak”
4. May be developmentally delayed
5. Show signs of physical and psychological difficulties
 - signs of suicidal behaviors and ideations
6. Show signs of physical abuse
 - child may also be physically abused
 - child may have gotten hurt unintentionally when household items were thrown or weapons were used
 - child may have gotten hurt when trying to protect their parent
7. View violence as the norm

Ex: A rather sad-looking, well-worn baby doll was donated to the ACCESS-York Emergency Shelter for abused women and children years ago. It was very soiled and almost appeared to have a blackened eye. A little boy staying in the shelter with his battered mother carried the doll to one of the counselors. “Look, this must be a girl baby,” he explained, pointing to the doll’s “bruised” face.
8. Seem “lost”, have an emptiness that can be seen in their eyes
9. Display nervousness, anxiousness, worry
 - look like they have the weight of the world on their shoulders
10. Have nightmares, recurring bad dreams
11. Display fright
 - frightened of the unknown
 - What will happen next?
12. Display deep insecurity
 - fear abandonment
13. Display guilt
 - feel guilt for not being able to stop the abuse from happening
 - think everything wrong in their parents’ relationship is their fault, that the fighting is about them
14. Have low self-esteem
15. Need to be controlled
 - cannot seem to make any decisions for themselves
 - used to someone else always being “in charge” of every situation
16. Need to be in control
 - models after the abuser’s actions

17. Places responsibility for his/her own actions onto others (placing blame)
 - models after the abuser's actions
18. Take on adult responsibilities
 - take care of younger siblings and/or themselves
 - take care of mom's and/or dad's needs
 - clean, cook, etc. at a very young age because they feel they need to help out
19. Unable to face problems and seek solutions for them
20. Unable to concentrate or listen, preoccupied with other thoughts
 - often children from abusive homes are diagnosed with A.D.D. or A.D.H.D. because they are unable to concentrate
21. Alcohol and other drug abuse
22. Juvenile delinquency
23. Sexual promiscuity (in adolescents)
24. Early marriage, seen as "a way out"
25. Teenage pregnancy, see the baby as a source of unconditional love

ABUSE OF CHILDREN WHEEL

Adults who are abusive to others may also be abusive toward children.
This wheel identifies tactics and actions used by adults that are abusive to children.



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NURTURING CHILDREN WHEEL

This wheel identifies the healthy behaviors and actions that adults need to use to nurture children and enable them to grow to be respectful and responsible adults.



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DATING VIOLENCE

WHAT IS DATING VIOLENCE?

Dating violence is the physical or verbal abuse between partners in a casual or serious dating relationship.

Physical Abuse Includes:

- * Pushing or shoving
- * Slapping, hitting and kicking
- * Hitting with an object
- * Threatening with a gun or knife
- * Forcing sexual relations

Verbal Abuse Includes:

- * Name calling
- * Threatening
- * Belittling

DATING VIOLENCE FACTS

- * Violent behavior in dating relationships is a serious matter - it is a crime!
- * One in every three teen dating relationships is violent.
- * Dating violence leads to marital violence.
- * Over 90% of the injuries in dating violence occur to the woman in the relationship.
- * 92% of teenage rape victims knew their attackers according to one study.

WHY TEENS ABUSE

Teens, like adults, learn to use physical and emotional assertions of control to:

- * Feel powerful with peers and partners
- * To release frustration and anger
- * As an expression of jealousy

The most pervasive reason for dating violence is the rigid view of each partner regarding sex role expectations.

SAFETY PLAN FOR TEENS

1. Trust your instincts - if you are uncomfortable, leave or end the relationship.
2. If you suspect that your partner is abusive, don't be alone with him/her.
3. Make sure you have your own money - either to pay your own way or at least enough to get home.
4. Do not allow yourself to become isolated from your friends.
5. Introduce your partner to your parents.
6. If abuse occurs, don't keep it a secret. Tell parents, friends, police, or someone you trust.
7. Do not allow your partner to control your life - clothes, friends, activities, etc. This control leads to abuse.
8. Know the phone number of police, the local domestic violence program and other available resources.

ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York.

ELDER ABUSE

(Submitted by The Area Agency on Aging)

What is Elder Abuse?

As many as 1 in 20 older adults are victims of abuse. An older person can be the victim of physical abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or other mistreatment. Many times the victim is female, over age 75 and dependent on a spouse, relative or friend to provide care, food and shelter. The abuser is likely to be a spouse or adult child who lives in the same house and is responsible for providing care to the older person. Abuse may occur when a caregiver fails to meet the needs of the older person or when older people fail to take care of themselves. Elder abuse is often precipitated by caregiver stress, personal problems of adult children, a cycle of violence in the family and impairment of dependent elders. Caregiving can be a 24 hour job, with little or no relief. Financial difficulties, mental and physical health problems of the caregiver, multi-generational responsibilities and alcohol or drug dependency are all contributors to a situation potentially fraught with low tolerance and little patience. The more frail, disabled or confused an older adult becomes, the more dependent he/she is upon caregivers and the more unable to protect him/herself.

What Should I Look For?

Elder abuse is not always easy to identify. The abuse may be hidden, disguised or denied by the victim out of fear of placement or loss of caregiver support.

- Bruises and broken bones may be blamed on falls when the real cause is punching or beating.
- Weight loss may be blamed on illness or lack of appetite when the real cause is starvation or neglect.
- Dementia may be blamed on "old age" when the real cause is malnutrition or drug misuse.

Some victims are confused and unable to recall how injuries may have occurred or how funds were spent. There are certain indicators that may suggest the older adult is receiving inappropriate or abusive care. An older adult may have suspicious bruises or broken bones, or may have abrasions suggestive of restraints. They may appear malnourished or dehydrated. Glasses, dentures or other prosthetic devices may be missing. They may present as confused, anxious, withdrawn, depressed, fearful or show evidence of improper medication administration. Their caregivers may be observed to display violent or excessive anger or be verbally abusive.

Besides physical signs, there are other clues that may indicate elder abuse, such as:

- A neighbor may notice that the older person next door never goes outside or sees visitors.
- A bank teller may find that an older customer or someone claiming to represent the older person is withdrawing large sums from a savings account without apparent reason.
- An attorney might question why an older person would sign over his or her home to a relative.

Although these circumstances do not always mean elder abuse, it's important to be aware that elder abuse can occur at any time and to anyone.

How Do I Report It?

If you suspect mistreatment of an older person, you should report it to the York County Agency on Aging. Even if you are not positive abuse has actually occurred, but feel you have reason to be concerned about the older person's well-being, you should call the elder abuse helpline number. The agency is mandated to begin an investigation within 72 hours of receiving a report; however, most investigations begin within 24 hours.

Unfortunately, many people don't want to become involved when they suspect elder abuse is occurring. Some feel it's "none of their business". Others, including the victim, are afraid of the abuser. The tragic result is that many cases of suspected elder abuse go unreported and the abuse continues.

Reporting a case of suspected elder abuse in Pennsylvania is not mandatory, but certainly encouraged. Referral sources may remain anonymous and are protected under the law from retaliation when a report is made in good faith.

What Happens When I Call the Area Agency of Aging?

When you call the Area Agency on Aging to report a suspected case of elder abuse, a specially trained staff person will investigate the report. The staff person will telephone or visit the older person. If abuse has occurred, steps will be taken to protect the victim, stop the abuse and prevent it from occurring again.

The Area Agency on Aging may offer temporary shelter if the victim is in physical danger, or provide other protective services. These may include medical care, daytime or overnight care, in-home services, home-delivered meals, transportation, counseling, financial or legal advice. The type of services depends on the abused person's immediate needs. If abuse has not occurred, but the older person or family appear to need assistance, the staff person may refer the family to other services available through the Area Agency on Aging.

Who Is Eligible for Service from the Area Agency on Aging?

Persons who are eligible for protective service from the Agency on Aging are individuals who:

- are over 60 and a resident of York County;
- are unable to perform or obtain services that are necessary to maintain their physical or mental health;
- have no responsible caretaker;
- are at imminent risk of danger (to person or property) due to one of the following:
 - financial abuse
 - psychological/emotional abuse
 - neglect/omission of care whether passive, active or self
 - physical abuse
 - sexual abuse/assault

Protective service is provided on a case-by-case basis so that the Agency can best determine the way to meet the complex needs of the person.

The York County Area Agency on Aging is located at 141 W. Market Street and is open weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m. Referrals for protective service may be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling (717) 771-9610 or 1-800-632-9073. After hours, an on-call worker will be paged and respond to your call.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE MILITARY

The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) is a well-established Department of Defense program designed to address domestic violence among active duty and retired military personnel and their family members. The objectives of the Family Advocacy Program are to prevent spouse and child abuse, to encourage the reporting of all instances of such abuse, to protect victims, and to treat all affected family members.

There are two local Family Advocacy Program offices that can be contacted for prompt attention, assessment, and intervention in cases of abuse or at risk of abuse within the military. Clients who are eligible for treatment at military medical facilities can use these services free of charge. This population includes active duty military, retired military, and their family members. Local points of contact are the Family Advocacy Program in New Cumberland, PA (DESSP-P) at (717) 770-7066 and at Carlisle Barracks in Carlisle, PA at (717) 245-4602 or 3775. If you are working with military clients, you are encouraged to call for more information about these services.

Transitional Compensation is for military family members who are survivors of abuse, and they may be eligible for significant monthly payments for themselves and their children for up to three years. If an active military service member is incarcerated or separated from military service as a result of spouse or child abuse, family members can apply for and receive these benefits as long as they do not live with the abuser. The Transitional Compensation benefits are in place to encourage reports of abuse and to enable the family to get re-established financially in the absence of the service member. They are not available to military retirees.

Recently the Department of Defense has added the option of Restricted Reporting for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. However, it still encourages unrestricted reporting of these crimes.

Domestic Violence Restricted Reporting (Confidential) Option

Although the Department of Defense encourages unrestricted reporting in order to hold offenders accountable, it has established a Restricted Reporting option. Military personnel and their adult family members who are victims of domestic violence now have a restricted reporting option available to them. Victims now have the option to disclose details of their maltreatment to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment, advocacy and counseling without triggering the official investigation process.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Sexual Assault Restricted Reporting (Confidential) Option

This now allows a sexually assaulted Military Service member to disclose his/her assault to specifically identified personnel without triggering an investigative process. To make a restricted report the victim must notify one of the following personnel: Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Victim Advocate, any Military Healthcare Provider, or Chaplain.

This will offer the victim the choice of receiving any or all of the following services:

- Medical treatment
- Sexual Assault Forensic Exam
- Advocacy Services
- Referrals for Counseling

Neither law enforcement nor the military criminal investigation organization will be informed of the report, thus eliminating the opportunity for offender accountability.

Sexual Assault Unrestricted Reporting Option

A Military Service member who is sexually assaulted and desires an official investigation of his/her allegation should make an unrestricted report using current reporting channels (chain of command or law enforcement). They may also report to the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator or Victim Advocate. The unrestricted report initiates the investigative process and victims are given the choice of receiving any or all of the above services offered to Restricted Reports plus the option of Legal Services.

Family Advocacy Program, New Cumberland (DESSP-P)
Victim Advocate (717) 770-3130
Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (717) 770-7066

Chaplain at Carlisle Barracks (717) 245-3318

Military One Source, 1-800-342-9647, is a 24/7 hotline for FREE counseling and referrals for all active duty Service members and members of the National Guard, Reserve, and their families.

Clergy Response

COUNSELING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Spiritual and religious leaders can be an important part of the process to enhance the possibilities of a new life for a victim of domestic violence. We are invited and called to participate in a way that can make the difference between sickness and health, sometimes between life and death. Hope and change are possible. Should a victim of domestic violence entrust you with their story, remember these points:

Believe the victim. This is important. No matter who the abuser is, no matter how incredible the story sounds to you, believe the victim's story. The victim is probably minimizing the pain, not exaggerating it. If you know the abuser and cannot imagine that he or she would do such things, be aware that family abusers may have a Jekyll and Hyde personality. Their private lives are utterly at odds with that which the public sees. "I just can't believe it" may be the common expression, but victims may hear such language as doubting their credibility. Choose more direct expressions like "How frightening that must be for you to be at home."

Make the victim's safety your top priority. If a victim is calling you by phone, ask if they are in a safe place now. If the victim is in your office, ask what she or he will do when she or he leaves. The abuser has probably threatened even worse abuse if the victim ever tells. The victim may be in greater danger for having told you. Expressing your concerns for the victim's safety and strategizing how to increase safety will aid the victim in making safety their number one priority.

Empower the victim. Victims feel radically disempowered, unable to protect themselves or to claim any control over their lives. Allow the victim to make decisions for her or himself. You might want to ask, "Do you want to report this to the police?" You might offer to go along. "Have you received medical attention?" "Do you want to go to the hospital or to your private doctor?" "Have you thought of going to a safe shelter?" Follow up by giving the victim the phone number. "Have you applied for a Protection From Abuse Order?" Explaining what a PFA can do will provide choices for the future (see pages 73-74).

It may be frustrating and even frightening for you if the victim's decision is to return to the violent home. It is not unusual for victims of domestic violence to leave home and return several times. **Commit yourself not to abandon the victim.** A shelter in St. Paul, Minnesota advises that it is helpful to say, "I don't want you to go back. I am afraid for you if you do. But no matter how many times you return to your partner, I will still be here for you when you need me."

Validate the victim's feelings. The cycle of violence is like an emotional roller-coaster. Victims may feel that they are crazy. Let them know that their feelings are normal and understandable and valid - even if they frighten you. Nightmares, phobias, feelings of great fear and terror, paralysis and helplessness are all typical responses. Victims of domestic violence may express great rage and hostility toward their abusers, especially once they have gotten to a safe place where they can afford to vent their anger and hurt. Some even talk of killing the abuser. Respond to their feelings- not to the words. Do not ask them not to feel that way or try to convince them that they really love their partner. Do not project your own emotional responses to the victim's story or process them with the victim.

Support faith statements that tend to the victim's well-being. Spiritual questions abound for victims of domestic violence. Messages from the church may be bars in a victim's cage - or doors to liberation. Take the victim's sense of spirituality seriously, even if you think it is distorted or mistaken. Victims are struggling to make sense out of their experience, to find meaning in their lives. If a victim's views are keeping her or him stuck or confused, you can respectfully offer some alternatives.

As a Christian, a victim may believe, for instance, that they are called to suffer as Christ suffered; that battering is a cross that God wants her to bear. Saying "I am confident that God does not want you to suffer" can be heard as an alternative and gives an offering of hope.

Victims may be seriously opposed to divorce. Your responses can mean the difference between them living in perpetual hell or choosing life. Sharing your denomination's perspective on marriage and divorce can offer a healthy and faithful understanding of the issue. For some people who are battered, God's loving acceptance is a source of strength and self-esteem after all other resources fail.

Many victims of domestic violence say that forgiveness can be a spiritual barrier in their souls. "I couldn't leave until I dealt with the messages about forgiveness I had received from the church," is a common response. Many pastors emphasize reconciliation that assigns forgiveness a crucial place in healing. When used thoughtlessly, such themes can be truly dangerous for victims of domestic violence. There are many stories of pastors who tell such victims to be patient, to pray, and to forgive their violent partners.

Think carefully about your timing when talking about forgiveness. In the beginning of your support, anger and refusal may be more appropriate than forgiveness. For other victims, forgiveness may never come. Explain the meaning of repentance and forgiveness.

Remember other family members. Other family members may need support as well. You may not realistically be able to say everything to everyone but you can determine when you want to be a resource and when you want to refer to others. The children of a battering relationship are also harmed, whether directly by violence or by the emotional damage that results. Some victims of domestic violence seek help when the violence begins to seep over to the children. Abusers in the family are often the most difficult to deal with. Pastors should recognize their limits. Abusers need highly skilled counselors. Pastors should be aware that abusers may come asking for "forgiveness" as a substitute for abuse counseling.

At the very least, be aware that batterers are not monsters but they do need to be held accountable for their actions. They are ordinary people. They have serious problems with rage, with power and domination, with boundaries or with the effects of their own upbringing.

Find support for yourself. To work closely with family violence can be frightening and exhausting. Hearing such stories can evoke strong reactions. It may bring up repressed memories of abuse in your own life, or provoke psychological and spiritual turmoil. This is normal. Do not hesitate to find a source of support for yourself. You may feel tired after a session of pastoral counseling. It takes a great deal of energy to be with someone who is being battered. Your self-nurturing and how you refresh yourself may be a model for the victim to take care of her or himself.

COUNSELING BATTERED WOMEN

Be aware of who she is.

- **Allow her to tell her story.**
Let her know you believe her and want to hear about her experiences.
- **Help her identify with her feelings.**
Support her right to be angry. Don't deny any of her feelings.
- **Be sensitive to the differences between women of other races, cultures, and classes.**
Realize that no woman is a stereotype and each has had different life experiences.
- **Respect the cultural values and beliefs that affect her behavior.**
Know that these beliefs may have been a source of security for her in the past and their importance to her should not be minimized.
- **Be aware of the differences between rural and urban women.**
Be aware of the physical isolation and cultural values of rural women.
- **Know that she does not need rescuing.**
Help her assess her own resources and support system.

Remember, a battered woman is in a crisis that prevents her from using her coping skills and problem-solving abilities. Help her get in touch with her strengths and emotional resources, and the decision she makes will be her own.

Be aware of who you are.

- **Be aware of your own attitudes, experiences, and reactions to violence.**
Keep in mind the role that violence has had in your life.
- **Know your own limits of time and energy.**
Be aware of your agency's policies and services so you can be realistic. Remember, you help define problems, not solve them.
- **Beware of your own needs to be a powerful expert.**
Do not give advice. A battered woman has had countless people tell her what to do. She needs someone to care.
- **Be conscious of your own cultural biases, beliefs, and prejudices when counseling women from different backgrounds.**
Realize that there may be biases against you and that these must be dealt with honestly.
- **Do not diagnose.**
Focus on concrete problem solving and emotional support, not subjective interpretations of behavior.
- **Do not convey disappointment if the woman elects to return to the violent relationship.**
Be honest and explain your fear, but let her know she can always come back and that you still care about her.

Remember, you may be one of the first people in her life to show respect and support at a time when she needs it most. What you get in return is the knowledge that you have been helpful to someone.

**Texas Department of Human Services
Produced in cooperation with the Texas Council on Family Violence**

COUNSELING MALE VICTIMS

Men can be victims of domestic violence and abuse. They may be abused by a female partner, a family member, or a male partner in a same-sex relationship. Male victims experience the same feelings and likely need the same information, support, and options as female victims. The material in the previous sections about relating to abused women and victims of domestic violence applies also to male victims. **However, there are several additional issues to be considered when counseling male victims.**

1. **Be Aware.** It is common for abusive men (batterers) to claim to be a victim or to see themselves as the “real victim.” When an abuser’s partner will not do what he says, or doesn’t show the kind of respect he demands, such noncompliance is often perceived by the abuser as his partner being abusive to him. Likewise, if she has called the police, had him arrested, gotten a protection from abuse (PFA) court order against him, left him, or has tried to end the relationship, he may interpret these actions as attacking and abusing him. **Abusive men are often quick to present themselves as the “abused party” to get other people to take their side against the primary victim,** and they are good at it.

Furthermore, it seems that a growing number of abusive men are erroneously filing for PFAs against their victims, or are calling the police trying to have her arrested. Sometimes abusers seek “help” from victim services, pastors, attorneys, or others as part of their effort to discredit the victim, to undermine her support system, or to punish her. These abusers are skillfully dishonest and highly manipulative. They seek to maintain a good public image and can be quite convincing. **Therefore, clergy must be careful and wise.**

2. **Listen to his story and believe him – but with healthy skepticism.** This skepticism should not be overt or obvious, but **it is important to carefully assess and discern whether a man is truly a victim or not.** He may be playing the victim role as a strategy of his coercive control or to avoid accountability for his abuse. Therefore, it will be important to ask more questions, to be attentive to how he talks about his own behavior, to listen for indicators of male entitlement (see page 21), to carefully observe body language, and to look and listen for evidence of genuine fear and powerlessness.

For example, it is common, although inappropriate, for victims of domestic abuse to accept some of the blame for the abuser’s behavior and to talk about what they did wrong. Abusers, however, will almost never admit to having done anything wrong or inappropriate. **A typical posture for an abuser is to blame everything on his partner and to refuse any personal accountability. Signs of these behaviors should arouse suspicions.** Often an abuser may be afraid of losing his reputation, or looking bad, or losing the relationship, but will not show evidence of living in fear of physical or emotional harm.

We should always begin by believing a male victim and should never discount his claims just because he’s a man. But we must be careful to look for and recognize the signs of imposters – abusers who are trying to prevent us from believing and serving the real victim. If it becomes apparent that a man is an abuser and not a victim, we must find ways to hold him accountable and try to get him into an intervention program for abusers.

Some abusive men may also have been victimized. In such cases, the person usually needs an intervention program for his abusiveness first, since becoming accountable for his abuse will help to reframe his victimization. Men who are truly victims, and who are not abusive, need to be believed and taken seriously whether their abuser is male or female.

3. **Masculinity issues.** In our society, most men are socialized by popular culture to believe that as men they are supposed to have more power and they have the right to be in control of their partners and children. This sense of male entitlement may be reinforced by religious beliefs that men are to have authority and be in charge of the home and that women are to be submissive and obedient.

In addition to the normal feelings that victims may experience, a male victim of domestic abuse may also have feelings of shame and failure for **NOT** being in control in his relationships. This is especially true if the abuser was a woman; any abuse by a woman may call his manhood into question. This shame, along with fear of being ridiculed, teased, and not believed, keeps some men from disclosing abuse. Being a male victim of abuse, or any crime including domestic violence, is not the fault of the victim, and, therefore, is not about his masculinity. This may be a difficult understanding for a male victim to recognize and accept.

4. **Parenthood.** Male victims who have children may need extra support and encouragement regarding their parenting, especially if they have left an abusive relationship and provide primary care for their children. Some men may need to learn basic parenting skills. However, other abused men may have already been responsible for the care of their children or have shared the care of the children with their partners. Do not assume that a single father needs to learn parenting skills, but offer support as requested or needed.

5. **Disclosure of homosexuality.** A man who is victimized by his male partner may feel trapped into not reporting the abuse if he has not told his family, friends, and co-workers about his sexual orientation. He may not want to call the police, file for a PFA, or seek options and support in order to keep the relationship private. His abuser may have told him that if he leaves the relationship, the abuser may tell others of their relationship. Always provide support and options to the male victim. When he is ready to leave, he will.

ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York, and YWCA of Hanover Safe Home offer free and confidential services to all victims – regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

CHECKLIST FOR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

- _____ Is the victim safe?
- _____ Are the victim's children safe?
- _____ Does the victim need medical attention?
- _____ Does the victim want to call the police?
- _____ Does the victim know what a Protection From Abuse Order (PFA) is?
- _____ Does the victim want a Protection From Abuse Order?
- _____ Does the victim want to file criminal charges against the abuser?
- _____ Were the children abused? If yes, call Child Line (1-800-932-0313).
- _____ Review with the victim information on safety planning.
- _____ Refer the victim to ACCESS-York / YWCA of York or YWCA of Hanover Safe Home for options, support, advocacy, housing, support groups, hot line numbers, etc.
- _____ Have you listened to the victim non-judgmentally? Is your conversation ending with an "open door" so that the victim knows that you will be available for future talks?
- _____ Have you asked the victim what his/her needs are now?

SAFETY TIPS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Tips to Share with a Victim to Plan for Safety

- **Tell** your kids that, if there's violence, their job is to stay safe, not to protect you. Find a safe place for them to stay in case of violence, such as with a neighbor or in a locked room. Teach them to call 911 and what to say to the dispatcher.
- **Hide** money, spare keys, and a small bag of clothing at work or at a friend's house. For small children, hide a favorite toy or stuffed animal that will comfort them.
- **Inform** your employer about the situation and develop a safety plan at work. Share a photo and description of the abuser with them and any pertinent legal documentation, such as a protection order.
- **Document** the abuse by taking photos of bruises and injuries, tell your doctor and get copies of your medical records; save threatening voicemails, notes, and e-mails and write each incident down in a journal.
- **Gather** important documents or copies of documents such as passports, birth certificates, social security cards, insurance papers, work permits or green cards, ownership documents for car and/or house, checkbooks and bank account numbers. Hide these papers at work or at a friend's house. Know the abuser's social security number, birth date and place of birth.
- **Consider** obtaining a protection order. It directs the abuser not to contact, communicate with, attack, sexually assault or telephone you, your children or other family members. If you have a protection order, carry a copy of it with you at all times.

Safety Tips for Victims Planning on Staying – When You Are Afraid

- **Move** away from the kitchen, bathroom, garage or anyplace where there are dangerous sharp objects.
- **Plan** the easiest escape route. Decide on a door or window to exit quickly and safely. Make sure your kids know the route and practice it with them. Have a code word so they know when to call law enforcement.
- **Don't** wear necklaces or scarves – these could be used to strangle you.
- **Always** make sure weapons are secured and that guns aren't loaded.

Safety Tips for Victims Who Have Left Their Abuser

- **Change** the locks on your doors. Install steel/metal doors, a security system, smoke detectors and an outside lighting system.
- **Get** Caller ID for your telephone so you can screen your calls.
- **Consider** getting a post office box for your mail or participating in a confidential mailing program (if available in your state).
- **Learn** about your legal rights and options. If you have legal papers, keep copies of them with you at all times.
- **Tell** neighbors, friends, landlords or coworkers that your abusive partner no longer lives with you. Share your safety plan with people you trust. Explain it to your children.
- **Tell** your employer/coworkers about you situation and ask them to screen your calls, move your desk, change your work schedule/hours or accompany you to your car.
- **Tell** the school or daycare or others spending time with your children who can pick them up and who can't. If you have a protective order, make sure they know about it.
- **Vary** your routes to work, to school or daycare, to the grocery store and other places you frequent.
- **Call** a friend or someone else who will be supportive, when you feel down and ready to return to an abusive partner.

**Compiled and produced by
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence**

SAFETY PLANNING

Safety Planning

The experience of domestic abuse tends to be isolating; victims often feel so alone. Planning for one's safety may be enhanced by building a network of trustworthy people and strategies that can strengthen the victim and provide emotional and physical support.

Safety plans will vary dependent upon the individual situation but are likely to include: identifying a place to go in case of an emergency, such as a friend or relative's, as well as the local shelter; setting aside extra money and car keys and packing a bag in anticipation of the need to leave quickly; obtaining extra copies of prescriptions for her or himself and/or the children; or developing agreed upon signals with neighbors, friends or relatives as a clear call for help when abuse occurs.

Plans may also incorporate steps to take when the abuser's tactics of control include attempts to locate the victim through other sources such as the children at school or situations in which a risk of child-kidnapping exists. Information about a victim's safety plan must never be shared with batterers. In addition, every safety plan needs a back-up plan for secure shelter if the other elements fail.

Rehearsal is a key factor in the effectiveness of safety plans. Victims should walk through safety plans in order to evaluate their feasibility. Modifications may be made when rehearsal reveals flaws. Once a plan appears appropriate to a victim, the victim should literally practice this plan with enough repetition so that it comes quickly and completely to the victim's recollection during crises. Remember – leaving can be the most dangerous time.

It is critical that victims understand that safety plans must be flexible. Plans must change as the circumstances merit alteration. As a part of safety planning, when a victim has decided to separate from the abuser, we should explore the following considerations with her:

Leaving Safely

1. Keep these items with someone you trust: a spare set of keys, a set of clothes, important papers, prescriptions, and some money.
2. Keep any evidence of physical abuse (ripped clothes, photos of bruises and injuries, etc.)
3. Plan the safest time to get away.
4. Know where you can go for help and tell someone what is happening to you. Have the phone numbers of friends, relatives and domestic violence programs with you.
5. Call the police if you are in danger and need help.
6. If you are injured, go to a hospital emergency room or doctor and report what happened to you. Ask that they document your visit.
7. Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them: a room with a lock or a neighbor's house where they can go for help. Reassure them their job is to stay safe, not protect you.
8. Arrange a signal with a neighbor, i.e., if the porch light is on, call the police.
9. Contact the local domestic violence hotline listed below to find out about laws, the shelters, and other resources available to you *before* you have to use them, or during a crisis.

**Call: ACCESS-York / YWCA of York (717) 846-5400, (717) 637-2235 or 1-800-262-8444
YWCA of Hanover Safe Home (717) 632-0007**

Compiled by Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and Women's Center, Montgomery County, and modified for use in this manual

Items to Take Checklist

- Identification
- Birth certificates for you and your children
- Social Security cards for you and your children
- School and vaccination records
- Medical records (for all family members)
- Money, checkbook, bankbooks, credit cards, debit cards, ATM cards
- Keys – house/car/office
- Driver's license and registration
- Medication that you or your children take/prescriptions
- Changes of clothing for you and your children
- Welfare identification
- Passport(s), Green Card(s), work permits
- Divorce papers, marriage certificate, will
- Copy of protection order
- Lease/rental agreement/house deed
- Mortgage payment book, current unpaid bills
- Insurance papers
- Address book
- Pictures, jewelry, items of sentimental value
- Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- Small saleable items
- Journal of injuries/abusive and stalking incidents and photographs of injuries
- Abuser's social security number, date and place of birth and recent pay stub

Phone Numbers I Should Know

- ✓ Police/sheriff's department near home, school and work _____
- ✓ Local domestic violence program _____
- ✓ National Domestic Violence Hotline 1.800.799.SAFE(7233) & 1.800.787.3224(TTY)
- ✓ Lawyer referral service/legal services agency _____
- ✓ Victim/witness services _____
- ✓ Court clerk/county registry of protection orders _____
- ✓ Prosecutor's office _____
- ✓ Work number _____
- ✓ Supervisor's number _____
- ✓ Minister/Priest/Rabbi/Faith Leader _____

If it is an emergency and you need to get out right away, don't worry about gathering these things. While they're helpful to have, getting out safely should be your first priority.

Compiled and produced by:
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

ASSESSING WHETHER BATTERERS WILL KILL

Battering can lead to murder. Batterers who have killed have exhibited at least one of the following characteristics:

1. **Threats of homicide or suicide.** The batterer who has threatened to commit suicide, kill his/her partner, the children or the victim's relatives must be considered extremely dangerous.
2. **Fantasies of homicide or suicide.** The more the batterer has developed a fantasy about who, how, when and/or where to kill, the more dangerous the batterer may be. The batterer who has previously acted out part of a homicide or suicide fantasy may be invested in killing as a viable "solution" to his/her problems.
- *3. **Depression.** In a case where a batterer has been acutely depressed and sees little hope for moving beyond the depression, he/she may be a candidate for homicide and suicide.*
4. **Weapons.** In a case where a batterer possesses weapons and has used them or has threatened to use them in the past in his/her assaults on the victim, the children, or him or herself, his/her access to those weapons increases the potential for lethal assault.
5. **Obsessing about partner or family.** A batterer who is obsessed with the victim, who either idolizes the victim and feels that he/she cannot live without the victim or believes he/she is entitled to the victim no matter what because the victim is a spouse, is more likely to be life-endangering.
6. **Centrality of the victim.** If the loss of the battered partner represents or precipitates a total loss of hope for a positive future, a batterer may choose to kill.
7. **Rage.** The most life-endangering rage often erupts when a batterer believes his/her partner is leaving the relationship.
8. **Drug consumption, including alcohol.** Consumption of drugs, including alcohol when in a state of despair or fury, can elevate risk of lethality.
9. **Pet abuse.** Those batterers who assault and mutilate pets are more likely to kill or maim family members.
10. **Access to the battered partner and/or family members.** If the batterer cannot find his/her partner, the batterer cannot kill the victim.

If it is concluded that a batterer is likely to kill or commit life-endangering violence, extraordinary measures should be taken to protect the victim and their children. These must include exercise of all possible powers regarding bail, conditions on bail, and other protection available for victims, as well as referrals and follow-up. The victim should be advised that the presence of these indicators may mean that the batterer is contemplating homicide and that he/she should immediately take action to protect her or himself and should contact the local domestic violence agency to further assess lethality and make safety plans.

*Clinical depression may need to be addressed medically

*Clinical depression with or without outside influence, such as drugs

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLERGY RESPONDING TO ABUSERS

Remember the overarching goals

- **SAFETY** for the victim(s) – usually the woman and children
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** for the abuser – usually the man
- **RESTORATION** of the individuals and, if possible, of relationships
OR
MOURNING the loss of relationships

Some DOs and DON'Ts when relating to abusers

1. If the abuser has been arrested or his abuse has become general public knowledge, **DO** approach him and express your concern and support for him to become accountable for his behavior and to deal appropriately with his violence and abuse.
2. If his abuse is NOT known publicly, **DON'T** approach him or let him know you know about his violence/abuse unless: a.) you have the victim's permission, b.) she is aware that you plan to talk to him about it, and c.) you are certain that she has a good safety plan in place and is fully aware of the risks of possible retaliation by him.
3. If you meet with the abuser, **DO** attend to your own safety and **DON'T** meet with him alone or in private. Meet in a public place or at the church with several others around.
4. **DO** be very clear that ***ALL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE MUST STOP!*** Inform the abuser repeatedly and consistently that violent and abusive behavior is not acceptable under any circumstances and it must end.
5. **DON'T** accept the abuser's rationalizations or blaming of the victim. **DO** clearly name the abuse as his problem, not hers. Even if the abuser is under extreme pressure at work, or even if the victim is having an affair, violence and abuse is not acceptable. **DO** tell him that he is fully responsible for his abusive behavior and that only he can stop it – but you are willing to help.
6. **DO** offer the abuser hope that change is possible. Group treatment designed especially for abusers is usually the most effective. **DO** refer him to the ADVANCE Program of Lutheran Social Services in York, PA, or check with your local domestic violence shelter, crisis hotline or mental health center to find a similar battering intervention program in your area.
7. **DO** hold the abuser accountable - consistently. Promises to change, or remorse and repentance, are often simply a part of the cycle of violence designed to avoid accountability. Unless accompanied by concrete actions such as going to a program for abusers, such claims are meaningless.
8. **DO** remember that secrecy is the soil in which abuse and violence flourish. **DO** help the abuser understand that accountability involves accepting full responsibility for his abuse and for the effects of his abuse on others. Secrecy must end. He needs to be accountable to all those who are aware of his abusive behavior, unless the partner/victim objects.

9. **DON'T** take the abuser's word about whether or not the violence has stopped. Rather, check with the abused partner at a safe and appropriate time. Often it may be necessary for a couple to separate until there is no longer any danger of abusive behavior.
10. **DON'T** pursue or urge marital therapy or couples' counseling until it is abundantly clear that the violence has stopped and that no fear continues in the relationship. Before that, couples counseling will not be effective and may be dangerous. Only then, and only if the victim desires it, can they work on any mutual problems in the relationship.
11. **DON'T** give the abuser any information about his partner or her whereabouts.
12. **DON'T** advocate for the abuser to lessen the legal consequences of his violence and **DON'T** provide a character witness for this purpose in any legal proceedings.
13. **DO** assess him for suicide and take all threats against himself or his partner or children seriously. Threats of harm to others or self are indicators of a higher risk of lethality in domestic violence situations. No threat is an empty threat. **DO** encourage the victim to call the police and have charges pressed if he is making threats to harm or kill.
14. **DO** address any religious rationalizations he may offer for his actions, and any faith questions he may have. **DON'T** allow him to use religious justifications for his behavior.
15. **Do** pray with him and for him, but remind him that God will not simply change his behaviors or the underlying core beliefs that support them. The abuser will need to do the hard work of changing and it will be a slow and challenging process. **DO** reassure him that God will help him and that you will walk with him to help him stay on track and be accountable.
16. **DON'T** offer or promise quick forgiveness. Yes, God forgives, but the abusive behavior must end – permanently. Too often obtaining forgiveness is just another strategy to avoid real accountability and bypass the need to change. **DON'T** ever pressure the victim to forgive her abuser or judge her if she does not. She is the only one who can decide when and if she is ready to forgive – that is between her and God. **DO** support her choice to not forgive. For her this may be about staying safe, not about punishing or condemning him. He can go on with his life and his relationship with God even if she is not yet ready to forgive.
17. **Do** pace yourself for the long haul. **DON'T** try to be everything the abuser needs. Refer him to a program for those who abuse as described in #6 above, and then **DO** maintain a supportive pastoral stance to foster accountability and offer encouragement in times of discouragement or setbacks in his change process. **DON'T** accept short-term change as sufficient. **DO** affirm positive changes, but keep the long-range goal of real transformation always in view.

Some of the information in this section was drawn from materials prepared by:
FaithTrust Institute (formerly the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic
Violence), Seattle, WA www.faithtrustinstitute.org

Ruby Friesen Zehr for the Purple Packet produced by the Mennonite Central
Committee and their Domestic Violence Task Force. www.mcc.org

BREAKING THE SILENCE: WHAT FAITH COMMUNITIES CAN DO TO STOP THE VIOLENCE

Spiritual Leader:

- Educate yourself about the dynamics of domestic violence, the issues related to it, and the sacred texts of one's tradition.
- Establish a vision of the faith community as a safe place for the vulnerable, ensuring safe and appropriate confidentiality for those who disclose abuse.
- Acknowledge the fact that, with very few exceptions, some form of abuse and/or family violence exists in virtually every congregation. It is important for spiritual leaders to move from denial to being proactive.
- Speak out against domestic violence, sending the message that abuse is unacceptable and contrary to religious teachings. Recognize that safety for victims/survivors is the highest priority in every situation.
- Educate your faith community through sermons, speeches, and prayers around the subject of domestic violence, and healthy marriages/relationships.
- Encourage the inclusion of subjects of bullying prevention, healthy dating relationships and domestic abuse for age appropriate children's educational programs and youth activities. Resources to assist you are available through your local domestic violence organizations (See inside back cover of this manual for a listing of resources).
- Educate staff members on the signs of domestic violence

Faith Community:

- Listen to survivors of domestic violence in your faith community and ask them for ideas on how your faith community can better support them.
- Invite ACCESS-York / YWCA of York, YWCA of Hanover Safe Home, or another domestic violence organization in your area to speak and to facilitate discussions with your faith community.
- Invite ADVANCE, a program of Lutheran Social Services, or another domestic abuse and battering intervention program in your area to speak and facilitate discussions with your faith community.
- Display brochures and phone numbers for family violence programs and hotlines on bulletin boards and in the rest rooms.
- Participate in or sponsor Domestic Violence Awareness activities in October.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. **Know your attitude about domestic violence.**
2. **Lend your support.** Listen and believe someone if they confide in you that they are being abused. Telling you may be their first step in finding safety. Find out immediately if he/she is safe.
3. **Do not blame the victim.** Let him/her know that they are not alone. Emphasize that no one deserves to be beaten.
4. **Be informed.** Learn about domestic violence and the options and resources available to victims.
 - Encourage the victim to:
 - Call police - dial 911
 - Leave the scene immediately
 - Seek medical attention
 - Call ACCESS-York / YWCA of York at 717-846-5400 or 1-800-262-8444, Still Waters at 717-637-2235 or YWCA of Hanover Safe Home at 717-632-0007
 - Consider legal options of filing criminal charges or Protection from Abuse Order
 - Develop a safety plan
 - Talk with your children and identify a safe place for them
 - Arrange a signal with a neighbor
 - Tell someone you trust about the abuse
 - Establish a safe place for important papers, spare keys, and money
5. **Don't be afraid to ask if someone is being abused.** (On a professional or personal basis).
6. **Screen for domestic violence during premarital counseling.**
7. **Financially support programs working to end violence.**
8. **Hold the batterer accountable.** Do not blame the victim or make excuses for the batterer's behavior, refer the abuser to ADVANCE, a batterer's intervention program 717-852-9706.
9. **Participate in special domestic violence awareness events.** Display purple ribbon; give a sermon regarding domestic violence using texts, traditions, and values of your religion as resources.
10. **Become a positive role model for nonviolence.** Set the example. Encourage respect for self and others. Model power *with* rather than power *over*.
11. **Teach children that violence is never acceptable in a relationship and that we must respect each other.** Implement healthy relationship programs in your religious school and your youth groups.
12. **Encourage families to monitor what their children watch on TV.** Does the program reward aggressive behavior? Does the program promote equality in relationship? Talk to children about what they watch and point out the good and bad of the programs.
13. **Don't be afraid to speak up when someone minimizes or takes lightly the problem of domestic violence.**
14. **Schedule speakers who speak about domestic violence.** With the assistance of the local domestic violence programs, provide training for staff and volunteers on how to recognize signs of abuse and how to respond.
15. **Create an environment of awareness by displaying resource information through posters and brochures.**
16. **Don't expect that you must have all the answers.** Refer those in need to the appropriate resource. You have provided a wonderful service if you just do that.

Domestic violence can be eliminated only if we come together as a community recognizing the seriousness of the problem and being firm in our resolve to be part of the solution.

ACCESS-YORK / YWCA of York: (717)846-5400 or 1-800-262-8444,
Still Waters: (717) 637-2235, YWCA of Hanover Safe Home: (717) 632-0007

A SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

Fundamental to assisting victims of domestic violence is the clergy member's responsibility of conveying the message that:

- Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. It is important to believe the victim.
- Abuse is not acceptable and is not the fault of the victim. Clergy's silence when counseling can be harmful because it can send a message that it is the victim's fault.
- The first concern is for the safety of the victim and her/his children. A victim should not be made to feel guilty if she or he must leave the home in order to protect her or himself and her/his children.
- When someone is leaving an abusive relationship it is one of the most dangerous times – discuss safety plans.
- **If there is a question or suspicion of domestic violence or concern about safety, it is imperative that the couples are not counseled together; rather they should be seen individually.**
- There are programs which provide support (see resources at the end of this manual).
- The location of any shelter for victims of domestic violence is confidential. Give the victim the telephone number of the shelter, not the location.
- There is no law or legal mechanism that mandates reporting partner abuse.
- According to Pennsylvania law (Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Title 42) "clergy are not compelled to disclose any information in any legal proceeding, trial, or investigation that was acquired from any person secretly and in confidence without the consent of that person."
- Clergy are encouraged to report suspected cases of child abuse to Children and Youth Services.
- Hold the abuser accountable.
- Clergy should resolve what their response would be if asked to testify on behalf of the abuser. Clergy may choose to accompany and give pastoral support, but should not engage in supporting abusive, criminal behavior through testimony.

Legal options are available to families in abusive relationship, but clergy do not need to know all the details of the law to help victims of domestic violence. As a matter of fact, attempting to give legal advice can impede the victim from taking the appropriate legal actions. Information, however, can be obtained through the local shelter program or at the state coalition office. **Making a telephone call to a domestic violence program is the most appropriate action clergy can take.**

Due to clergy's powerful role in shaping the community's attitudes about domestic violence, it is essential that members of the clergy speak out against domestic violence. The message will then be given to the justice system and throughout the community that violence within the family is immoral, illegal, and intolerable.

SELF CARE FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Every clergy person or care-giver must clearly understand the demands and potential risks of ministering in situations of violence or abuse. Along with making the safety of victims and survivors the highest priority, **it is also necessary for clergy to be prepared to attend to issues of safety for themselves and their families.** This section provides information and guidance for your own care and well-being so you can minister effectively and appropriately when domestic abuse becomes known.

Clergy, therapists, and other care providers (whether professional or volunteer) who work with domestic violence victims or abusers must plan for physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social self-care, perhaps to a greater degree than is needed when responding to other issues.

1. Seek to Prevent Major Crises

An important step in providing safety and self-care for you, your family, and for those involved in abusive relationships is to **develop a pattern of routinely “screening” everyone to whom you minister for indicators of abuse.** Once we learn to recognize key indicators of abusive behavior in abusers and the effects of abuse in victims and survivors, we can train ourselves to be looking for these signs all the time. This attentiveness and asking the right questions in appropriate situations, enables us to become aware of possible situations of abuse before it might otherwise come to light.

Once we are aware, we can offer support, information and referrals, etc. as may be appropriate before the situation becomes a major crisis or before the abuse escalates further. This helps us manage our time and involvement more effectively than if we wait and need to react on a moment’s notice to a serious incident of violence or sudden separation. Times of severe crisis are also more volatile and potentially more dangerous for all involved. **Responding early enhances safety for everyone.**

Here is some important information about “screening” for domestic abuse.

- It should not be a formal or obvious screening like might be done by a doctor or therapist – just good observation and general questions.
- It is learning to ask simple open-ended questions to potential victims in private settings about physical and emotional safety.
- It creates an opportunity for the person, if or when they are ready, to disclose that they are being mistreated, or that they are afraid, or other similar concerns.
- It is learning to be alert for patterns of language or behavior that may be indicators of entitlement or abuse in the relationship (see page 21).
- Attentive screening for abuse and offering appropriate support before the abuse escalates to a severe crisis enhances safety for victims and survivors, and enhances our capacity to provide manageable pastoral care and ministry.
- For women, the elderly, and other potential victims, we might ask a question or two about this whenever we have reason to talk with them privately.
- However, it is crucial that we do this only when we are certain that no one who could be a potential abuser is present or able to overhear the conversation.
- This “screening” is not a once and done thing. Such questions should be repeated periodically with all parishioners who are potential victims. It may not feel safe for a victim to disclose abuse until you have asked several times.
- Don’t press or probe, simply ask and accept the answer given, without judgment.

Some examples of appropriate questions include:

- How are things going at home these days?
- Do you usually feel free to express yourself at home or are there times when you feel you can't say or do what you think is right?
- Do you ever feel pressured, embarrassed, humiliated, or disrespected at home?
- Are you ever afraid for your safety or that of the children?
- If you could change one thing about your relationship, what would you change?
- What, if anything, about your relationship makes you worried or afraid?
- How do things at home change, if at all, when your partner gets home?

For men or those who might be in a position to be abusive, it is important to be attentive to language or actions that show patterns of possessiveness, control, or disrespect. We might also ask them questions about themselves and their relationship with their partner, **but don't try to get them to admit that they behave abusively.** They are probably quite convinced that they are not abusive. Rather, use questions that might reveal evidence of control, abuse of power, avoiding accountability or hiding things, rigid gender roles, rule making, etc. (see page 19).

2. Pace Yourself for Extended Ministry

An important part of self-care for clergy is making appropriate referrals for professional services and pacing your involvement for long-term engagement. **Don't try to attend to situations of abuse by yourself and don't expect things to be resolved quickly.**

Never pressure victims to do what you think would be best for them and don't make decisions for them. It usually takes much longer than expected for a situation of domestic abuse to be resolved. Sometimes it doesn't seem to get resolved even if the relationship ends. **So we must not burn ourselves out in short term ministry, but pace our involvements so we can stay engaged for the long-term.**

Refer victims to the domestic violence victims' service agency in your area. If you can safely do so, refer abusers to a domestic abuse (battering) intervention program. These specialized services for abusers are much preferred over ordinary therapy or counseling. If individual counseling is also needed, it can happen along with an abuser program. And remember, joint couples counseling is not safe until the violence has ended.

Try to maintain a supportive pastoral relationship with everyone – victim(s) and abuser – to the fullest extent possible. **But this must be done without compromising the safety of victims and without colluding in any way with the abuser. "Support" for the abuser must be firm and based on the need for full accountability. Support is NOT excusing the abuse or declaring him forgiven. It means loving him firmly and calling him to accountability, transformation, personal growth and change.** Some abusers will accept such pastoral support and others will totally reject it.

3. Don't Be a Lone Ranger – Establish Support for Yourself

You cannot be everything the victim or abuser needs. Nor can you minister well in such situations without support and consultation. **Therefore, lovingly explain that it is important for you to tell the basic facts of the situation to at least one (or perhaps two or three) appropriate people to consult with them and have their support.** This helps establish safety for you and your family if the abuser makes accusations or spreads rumors about you, which is not uncommon. It also shares the burden so you are not in this work alone. **It is unwise to be the only person who knows about an abuse situation. Work things out to inform someone within a week or two.**

Obviously the person/people you choose to inform needs to be appropriate – mature, sensitive, compassionate, able to keep confidences. **Always get permission from the person you are working with before telling anyone.** It is recommended that you suggest to the victim and/or abuser (if both, do this separately) the name of each person you desire to inform. Ask if they feel ok or have reservations about that person knowing. If they have reservations, respect their concerns and suggest an alternate person. Those you might consider informing could include: the person who provides oversight for you in ministry (your bishop, or district/conference minister, or the senior pastor if you are an associate), or an associate minister, an elder, or some other appropriate lay leader. Depending on the situation, **it may also be appropriate to inform your spouse.** This may be important for the safety of your spouse and family.

Furthermore, you might suggest that each of the persons you are working with (victim and/or abuser) consider sharing with a few additional people of their choosing to be a support network for her or him. For these, you might request to be informed in advance of those they want to tell so you can either affirm or express reservations as appropriate.

When working with an abuser, don't offer or promise absolute confidentiality or secrecy. Remember, secrecy is the soil in which abuse flourishes. See page 62-63, *Suggestions for Clergy Responding to Abusers*, for more information.

4. Be Aware of the Risks – Violence, Emotional Trauma, and Slander

It is not uncommon for both battered women and the men who abuse them to have been victims of physical, emotional, or sexual trauma as children or in their adult past. Those who provide support and ministry for such survivors of trauma are at risk for emotional attacks, false accusations, physical violence and vicarious traumatization.

Planning for safety is an integral part of ministry in domestic abuse situations for clergy and congregations. **Working with victims of domestic violence subjects the pastor or care-giver to the same dangers the victim faces.** Because a batterer acts with a sense of entitlement, when he believes the pastor is interfering with his perceived right to control the victim, he might direct his violence to the pastor. **Any threats from the batterer, specific or implied, must be taken seriously,** both for the sake of the victim and the care-giver. Not taking a threat seriously communicates to the victim that denial and minimization are safe and acceptable, when, in fact, her very survival may depend on taking prompt and specific action. Therefore, clergy must learn to assess risk.

An abusive man may react with escalating violence toward the victim or those who help her if she tries to leave him. The most dangerous times are when:

- She is planning to leave, informs him she's leaving, and when she leaves; and
- During the first weeks or months after she has separated; or
- After she has gotten a protection from abuse (PFA) order requiring him to leave.

Assessing the abuser's level of dangerousness or lethality risk is tricky (see page 61).

Always take the victim's fear and her sense of how dangerous he is seriously.

Any man who behaves abusively or violently to his partner should be considered capable of escalating his violence to more dangerous levels, including murder.

Do not assume that perpetrators of domestic violence are mentally, psychologically, or emotionally ill. **Most abusers**, even those who "act crazy" when they are abusive **do not register any mental health or emotional disorders on standard psychiatric or psychological evaluations.** Such instruments, as valuable as they may be, are not accurate measures for domestic violence and abuse.

Be aware that the abuser may show up and intrude into a counseling session or other setting where you see the victim – even at a church service or meeting. This is not uncommon, and churches and clergy should have a plan to respond, perhaps calling security or police quickly if needed.

Calling to the parishioner's home may identify you, the care-giver, to the abuser subjecting both you and the victim to risk if the batterer checks phone calls made in his absence. Clergy must also be attentive and have a plan in the event of being accosted by the batterer in the community or in his/her own home as well as in the office. For this reason **clergy may want to be sure to know the abuser's name, appearance, the make and color of his car, etc.** especially if the abuser is unknown to the pastor. It may also be important for the clergy person's family to have a plan in place so they know what to say and do if the abuser calls or shows up at the pastor's home.

Vicarious traumatization exceeds the usual definition of counter-transference. It can lead to over-identification with either the victim or the batterer. Over-identification with the victim may evoke the care-giver's personal victimization history and can lead to feelings of depression, hopelessness, or fear. When a care-giver conveys fear, the victim may think she has to care for the care-giver by verbally defending the batterer or by discontinuing the pastoral relationship. Or, the care-giver who experiences vicarious traumatization may become detached and assume the role of rescuer, possibly setting goals that the victim considers unrealistic.

There is even a risk to the care-giving relationship when the care-giver tries to portray a neutral, professional attitude. If the victim sees the care-giver as too detached, it re-victimizes her by communicating acceptance of the abuse or contempt for her part in what happened. Further, the care-giver who tries to maintain control of the interview or the counseling relationship may inadvertently use subtle techniques of control akin to those used by the batterer. This can both alienate and frighten the victim.

Language and the tone in the care-giver's voice convey attitude. Not picking up on a victim's mention of her partner's controlling behavior or domestic violence leads the victim to believe the care-giver condones violence in interpersonal relationships. When working with perpetrators, neutral language may inhibit the batterer's sense of accountability, as when the care-giver says, "What happened?" rather than, "What did you do?" Similarly, referring to physical abuse as a "disagreement" or "dispute" minimizes the reality of domestic violence. Voicing the belief that behavior is caused by the interaction between a couple, a care-giver blames the victim for her partner's violence rather than expecting accountability from the perpetrator.

An emotional reaction to working with trauma survivors or violent perpetrators is inevitable. Therefore, emotional and spiritual self-care is crucial. It can be accomplished in several ways. Caring for oneself begins with the simple acts of deliberate rest and adequate diet. Journal writing or meditation may be helpful to express strong emotional reactions to this work. The care-giver with a personal victimization history may find personal therapy to be helpful. Peer support is also essential for clergy working with trauma survivors.

For more information on vicarious traumatization, see Sandra Bloom's [Self-Care for the Caregiver](#) at the website www.sanctuarysage.com. Also read [Trauma and Recovery](#) by Judith Herman, M.D. or [Empowering and Healing the Battered Woman](#) by Mary Ann Dutton.

Legal Considerations

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE LAW

For many years, wives were considered the property of their husbands. In the 1770s, English Common Law granted husbands the right to beat their wives as long as the stick they used was no thicker than the thickness of their thumb (“Rule of Thumb”). Such laws were maintained in Europe and America until the late 1800s when a few states rescinded this “right”.

Over the next one hundred years, even though the law no longer sanctioned wife beating, it did not communicate that such violence was criminal behavior. Abuses against women were termed “domestic disputes” and such disputes were considered a private matter and, as a result, were not treated as seriously as other assaults by the criminal justice system. Strong cultural norms about male dominance, the sanctity of the family and the importance of private property prevented these laws from being enforced.

During the 1970s, when women began to effectively organize to speak out about the abuse they were suffering, efforts were made to improve the legal system’s response to battered women.

Today, almost every state has passed some form of domestic violence legislation. Most of the new laws provide for a civil protection order which restrains the batterer from violence and threatening behavior.

Protection From Abuse Act

In Pennsylvania, the ***Protection From Abuse Act*** was signed into law in 1976. Since 1976, there have been changes in the Act which help more victims to receive a wide array of comprehensive services. A victim may file a PFA (Protection From Abuse Order) against: a spouse, ex-spouse, current or former sexual/intimate partner, parents on behalf of minor children, siblings, parents against children and children against parents, other persons related by consanguinity (blood) or affinity (kinship), persons living as spouses or persons who have lived as spouses.

What is ABUSE under the PFA Act?

1. Causing or trying to cause physical harm- with or without a weapon.
2. Putting someone in fear of immediate and serious physical harm.
3. Rape or sexual assault.
4. Interfering with a person’s freedom of movement.
5. Stalking.

Under the law, abuse does not cover “mental” abuse (insults, degradation and use of profanities).

What type of protection can you get with a PFA?

- Order the abuser to stop.
- Evict the abuser from the home.
- Establish temporary custody and visitation rights.
- Order the abuser to pay financial support (temporarily).
- Order the abuser to stay away from your school, employment, business.
- Order the abuser not to threaten, stalk or harass you.

- Order the abuser to give up any weapons used or threatened to be used against you and prohibiting your abuser from possessing other weapons during the duration of the order.
- Order the abuser to reimburse you any restitution for out-of-pocket expenses as a result of the abuse.
- Order the abuser to go for a drug and alcohol evaluation.
- Order the abuser to go for a psychiatric evaluation.
- Order the abuser to be enrolled in a batterers' program.

How to File

A person who elects to proceed with a Protection From Abuse Order can:

1. Contact their local domestic violence program. For assistance in York County, Legal Advocates are available through ACCESS-York, a program of YWCA of York, and YWCA-Safe Home in Hanover.
2. Contact a private attorney.
3. Complete a Protection From Abuse Petition, obtained from the PFA Coordinator at the York County Courthouse.

If the courthouse is closed, one should call 911 and ask for the Duty Justice in order to determine if an emergency order is appropriate.

When the petition is completed, it is filed in the Prothonotary's office then presented to the judge for consideration of a temporary order. If a temporary order is granted, a date is scheduled for a hearing to determine whether or not a permanent order should be issued.

What Happens If The Protection Order is Violated?

If the abuser willfully violates any of the provisions set forth in the Protection From Abuse Order, the abuser can be held in contempt of court. The maximum punishment the abuser could receive is a \$100 to \$1000 fine and/or six (6) months imprisonment.

Other Legal Options

In addition to the Protection From Abuse (PFA) court order, victims of domestic violence can file a Criminal Complaint. This can be done by calling the police (911). Civil suits can also be brought against the abuser, whether the abuser is a spouse or not, and restitution can be sought.

The best resources of information on legal options are your lawyer and your local domestic violence program. Participating programs in York County are **ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York: (717) 846-5400, (717) 637-2235 (Still Waters) or 1-800-262-8444;** and **YWCA of Hanover Safe Home, (717) 632-0007.** The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), at 1-800-932-4632, can provide you with additional information.

ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York

Resources

RESOURCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

This list of resources provides additional help in understanding the issue of domestic violence. It does not include all the resources that are available. Many of the resources listed here are available at ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York (717-845-2631, ext. 226), or at YWCA of Hanover Safe Home (717-632-0007), or at ADVANCE, a domestic abuse and battering intervention program of Lutheran Social Services in York (717-852-9706). All of these programs are dedicated to the elimination of domestic violence.

Books

- Alsdurf & Alsdurf, *Battered Into Submission*, The Tragedy of Wife Abuse in the Christian Home, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989.
- Bancroft, Lundy and Silverman, Jay, *The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics*, Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications, 2002.
- Bancroft, Lundy, *Why Does He Do That?*, (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002.
- Brothers, Barbara Jo, *The Abuse of Men: Trauma Begets Trauma*, New York, NY: The Haworth Press 2001.
- Bussert, Joy, *Battered Women*, New York: Division for Mission in North America, Lutheran Church in America, 1986. (Subtitled "From a Theology of Suffering to an Ethic of Empowerment".) This book is a welcome addition to the field from the perspective of a Christian pastor. It is the first real effort to deal with the theological roots not only of sexism but of violence and punishment within marriage.
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- Dutton, Mary Ann, *Empowering and Healing the Battered Woman*, New York, NY: Springer Publishing Co., 1992.
- Eisikovits, Zvi & Buchbinger, Eli, *Locked in a Violent Embrace*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2000.
- Fortune, Marie M., *Keeping the Faith*, New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1987. (Subtitled "Questions and Answers for the Abused Woman".) This book addresses the practical issues and questions concerning religious faith and domestic violence faced by many victims. A good resource for clergy that can also be given to victims.
- Green, Holly Wagner, *Turning Fear to Hope*, Nashville, Camden, New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984.
- Hamberger and Renzetti, *Domestic Partner Abuse*, New York, NY: Springer Publishing, 1996.
- Hearn, Jeff, *Violences of Men*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

- Heggen, Carolyn Holderread. *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*, Scottsdale, PA: Herold Press, 1993.
- hooks, bell, *The Will To Change: Men, Masculinity and Love*, New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 2004.
- Horton, Anne L., and Williamson, Judith A., *Abuse and Religion*, Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1988.
- Jacobson and Gottman, *When Men Batter Women*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Jones, Ann and Susan Schechter, *When Love Goes Wrong*, New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1992.
- Kroeger and Beck, *Women, Abuse and the Bible; How Scripture Can Be Used to Hurt or Heal*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.
- Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Nason-Clark, Nancy, *No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Kupers, Terry, L., *Revisioning Men's Lives: Gender, Intimacy and Power*, New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1993.
- Lampman, Lisa and Shattuck, Michelle, *God and the Victim: Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, Justice, and Forgiveness*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999.
- Lewis and Fortune, *Remembering Conquest: Feminist/Womanist Perspectives on Religion, Colonization and Sexual Violence*, New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1990.
- Miles, Rev. Al, *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2000.
- Miles, Rev. Al, *Ending Domestic Violence in Teen Dating Relationships: A Resource Guide for Parents and Pastors*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.
- Miller, Melissa A. *Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds*, Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1994.
- Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey, *Women, Men, and the Bible*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, Eighth Printing, 1986.
- NiCarthy, Ginny, *Getting Free*.
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- Pease, Bob, *Recreating Men: Postmodern Masculinity Politics*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000.

Poling, James Newton, PhD and Neuger, Chrisite Cozad, PhD, eds., *Men's Work in Preventing Violence Against Women*, New York: NY: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2002.

Renzetti, Claire, Edleson, Jeffrey, and Berger, Raquel, *Sourcebook on Violence Against Women*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001

Strom, Kay Marshall, *In the Name of Submission*, A Painful Look at Wife Battering, Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1986.

Switzer & Hale, *Called To Account*, The Story of One Family's Struggle to Say No to Abuse, Seattle, WA: The Seal Press, 1984, 1987.

Tracy, Steven R., *Mending the Soul*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.

Weitzman, Susan, *Not to People Like Us*, Basic Books, 2000.

Journals and Periodicals

Daughters of Sarah Magazine, 3801 N. Keeler, Chicago, IL 60641.

Journal of Religion and Abuse, Advocacy, Pastoral Care & Prevention, Haworth Pastoral Press

Violence Against Women, Sage Publications, CA

Videos

"Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence", 59 minute 2 part video. FaithTrust Institute, Seattle, WA.

"Hostages At Home", 52 minutes. King-TV Intermedia.

"It's Not Like I Hit Her", 23 minute video about emotional abuse.

"When Love Hurts: Understanding and Healing Domestic Abuse", a 4-part video series available on-line. RBC Ministries, Day of Discovery, www.rbc.org.

"Wings Like A Dove: Healing for Abused Christian Women", 34 minute video. FaithTrust Institute, Seattle, WA.

Web Sites

FaithTrust Institute—an International, Multi-Faith Training and Education Organization working together to address the religious and spiritual issues of sexual and domestic violence: www.faithtrustinstitute.org

Family Violence Prevention Fund: www.familyviolencepreventionfund.org

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence: www.pcadv.org

CONTACT INFORMATION – For York County, PA

INFORMATION OR REFERRAL

F.I.R.S.T. (717) 755-1000
1-800-673-2529

VICTIM SERVICES

Domestic Violence

ACCESS-York, a program of the YWCA of York (717) 846-5400 24-Hour Hotline, Support Groups, Options Counseling, Legal Advocacy, Shelter (717) 637-2235 1-800-262-8444

YWCA of Hanover Safe Home (717) 632-0007 24-Hour Hotline, Legal Advocacy, Emergency Shelter, Support Groups/ Counseling

Child Abuse

Childline 1-800-932-0313

York County Children & Youth Services (717) 846-8496 1-800-729-9227

Lehman Center (717) 845-5771 Crisis Nursery for Children (Shelter ages 0-6) 24-Hour Hotline

Elder Abuse

Area Agency on Aging (717) 771-9610 1-800-632-9073

Sexual Assault and Other Violent Crimes

Victim Assistance Center, a program of the YWCA of York (717) 854-3131 24-Hour Hotline, Counseling for Children and Adults, Support Groups, Legal Advocacy 1-800-422-3204

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND BATTERING INTERVENTION – FOR ABUSERS

ADVANCE, a program of Lutheran Social Services (717) 852-9706 Educational programs for those who have been abusive in relationships

CRISIS INTERVENTION

Crisis Intervention Services (717) 851-5320 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-673-2496