

# Safe Sacred Space

A Training Guide for Family Violence Task Forces



**Georgia  
Commission on  
Family  
Violence**



This training guide was developed by the Georgia Commission on Family Violence and the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence to assist Family Violence Task Forces training the faith community on responding to domestic violence.

# Safe Sacred Space

## A Training Guide for Family Violence Task Forces

### Acknowledgements

This guide was created by the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project. The Project was supported by subgrants No. W14-8-024 and W14-8-026 awarded by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council administering office for the STOP Formula Grant Program. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council or the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

A majority of the framework and format of this manual was adapted from the Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force's Faith Community Workgroup, created by Dianne Juhl for Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force.

The Faith and Domestic Violence Initiative has greatly benefited from the work of the FaithTrust Institute. We highly encourage you to peruse their website for more articles and resources on this topic at <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org>.

### Regarding Gender Language in This Manual

According to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics special report, "Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010," published in 2012, women account for 85% of victims of intimate partner violence and men account for the remaining 15%. The majority of domestic violence homicides in Georgia tracked by the Project involve men killing women in heterosexual relationships. The language we use in this report reflects these realities. However, it should not be construed to suggest that all victims are women and all perpetrators are men. We acknowledge that men are abused by women in intimate partner relationships and are sometimes killed by them. Domestic violence also impacts same-sex relationships at the same rate (or higher) as heterosexual relationships, and lives are also lost.

### *How to Use this Guide*

...

We have created this guide for Task Forces to use in their communities to train faith leaders. Use these notes with or without the provided PowerPoint to help you in the creation of your training program.

Please contact Project Coordinators Jenny Aszman, GCFV at [jenny.aszman@dcs.ga.gov](mailto:jenny.aszman@dcs.ga.gov) or Taylor Tabb, GCADV at [ttabb@gcadv.org](mailto:ttabb@gcadv.org) if you have any questions.

## Safe Sacred Space: A Training Guide for Task Forces

In 2009, the Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) and the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) launched the Faith and Domestic Violence Initiative in direct response to the findings of the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, a joint initiative of GCFV and GCADV. Through fatality reviews, we found that sacred communities played a significant role in the lives of victims, abusers, and their families. Interviews with survivors and with families who have lost loved ones to domestic violence-related homicide revealed that victims, survivors, and surviving family members consistently turned to sacred communities for support and safety, whether they disclosed the abuse they are experiencing or not. We also found that victims are more likely to turn to their place of worship for support than they are to turn to a domestic violence program.

These findings suggest that faith communities are uniquely positioned to provide an effective and compassionate response to those who are experiencing domestic violence. The goal of this initiative is to prepare sacred community leaders, including clergy and lay leaders, to respond to domestic violence within the context of their sacred traditions. It is our hope that the Family Violence Task Forces will use the information provided to train local faith communities on the dynamics of domestic violence, local resources, and effective responses to domestic violence in their congregation.

In 2015, GCFV and GCADV revised the Safe Sacred Space materials to make them more accessible to faith communities and user-friendly for trainers and speakers. We also developed ***Safe Sacred Space: A Manual For Faith Leaders*** as a companion material to this training guide. We highly recommend for you to familiarize yourself with the manual content prior to conducting a training. Copies of the manual may be requested from [www.georgiafatalityreview.com](http://www.georgiafatalityreview.com). We recommend providing one manual for each faith community you train.

The topic of faith and domestic violence is very extensive. While every effort has been made to include all the information Family Violence Task Forces will need, this guide is not comprehensive and is not intended to replace the technical assistance provided by the Fatality Review Project Coordinators. Please contact Taylor Tabb with GCADV [ttabb@gcadv.org](mailto:ttabb@gcadv.org) or Jenny Aszman with GCFV [jenny.aszman@dcs.ga.gov](mailto:jenny.aszman@dcs.ga.gov).

## We Want to Hear From You!

Please help us make this Train-the-Trainer kit even better by providing us with feedback. Is there a topic that we did not cover? Is there something you would like to see explored more thoroughly? How was the material received in your community? Let us hear about your experiences. Send any suggested improvements or comments to help make this program more effective to Taylor Tabb with GCADV [ttabb@gcadv.org](mailto:ttabb@gcadv.org) or Jenny Aszman with GCFV [jenny.aszman@dcs.ga.gov](mailto:jenny.aszman@dcs.ga.gov).

## Make This Training Guide Work For You

The PowerPoints and handouts can be organized to fit the needs of a particular audience and presentation format. The order of the presentation segments, the selection of handouts, additional speakers and other pieces should be determined for the overall agenda. Make sure to include local community resource information in the slides and handouts. When possible, provide local statistics on calls to the domestic violence program, calls to the police and TPO filings.

## Engaging Faith Leaders

We often hear from Family Violence Task Forces and others conducting outreach to faith communities that getting them to respond to training invitations is the biggest obstacle. Below are some suggestions we have collected that can help you in engaging and making connections with faith leaders.

- Making connections will be time and labor intensive but will pay off in the long run. Personal connections via phone calls and in-person meetings are preferable.
- Engage faith leaders in conversation about domestic violence. Pay attention to their demeanor and response. Ask if they ever talk to their congregation about the issue. Explain your agency's services or task force's role and ask if they are interested in training opportunities. Tell them what you can offer and ask them what their needs are. Trainings can be tailored to suit each congregation.
- Plug into other meeting opportunities—look for existing events and groups. In many areas, faith leaders meet regularly at ministerial associations or civic coalitions. You may find new faith connections at these meetings.
- Be creative in your approach. Calling an event a “domestic violence” event may intimidate people. However, adding domestic violence information to a related topic such as women's health or healthy relationships can be helpful. Also, because faith communities deal with a host of social issues, ask them what other information may be helpful to their congregants and customize the information for them.
- Expand your scope and consider reaching out to elders, lay ministry leaders, women's groups, social action committees, hospital and prison chaplains, and other ministries.
- Consider a faith community's needs when scheduling events. Avoid holy days and consider morning or evening events. We have had great success in hosting trainings organized around a breakfast meeting. Consider the possibly diverse dietary needs of your attendees and provide kosher or halal options when appropriate.

See Appendix A for more suggestions on how to outreach to faith leaders.

## Who Should Train Faith Leaders?

Everyone brings their own personal views and experience. You do not need to be a person of faith to train faith leaders. However, it is important to check-in with yourself about your own experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about faith communities and religion prior to the training. Examine your own personal experiences with religion and faith, your personal views, and how that might impact your approach with faith communities, and training abilities. This being said, we still encourage your task force to think strategically about who is best fit to present this information to faith communities.

## *Trainer Tips and Notes: Things to Consider Prior to the Event*

Set clear goals for your training presentation.

*Examples may include:*

- Breaking the silence which has surrounded the issues of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, and teen dating violence,
- Conveying basic information about these issues,
- Placing issues in a religious/faith context,
- Connecting people to local resources, and
- Explaining the mission and purpose of the Family Violence Task Force.

Know the response you want from religious groups or faith communities.

*Examples may include:*

- Safety for abused, battered women, children, and men,
- Accountability for abusive partners/persons,
- Restoration of individuals and, when desired by both parties, restoration of relationships – or – mourning the loss of the relationships, and
- Referrals to local domestic violence advocates.

Know your audience and prepare accordingly.

Sometimes, clergy believe that domestic violence is simply not happening in their community because they never hear about it. In reality, if victims are not talking about their experiences, it is usually because faith leaders have not created an atmosphere in which it is safe to disclose. After the silence surrounding domestic violence has been broken, faith-based leaders often begin to hear the stories of abuse that had been occurring in their congregations all along.

*Prepare for potential “sticky places” when speaking with the faith community.*

Below are several “sticky places” that may surface in your training. Be prepared going into trainings on how you will respond to these sentiments and beliefs in a respectful way if they come up. We have offered some suggestions below and throughout the rest of the training notes.

- *Denial that domestic violence is happening in their congregation, minimizing the seriousness of the situation, and concern about stigma facing the congregation.* Utilize current statistics and research (National, statewide and local) to convey the prevalence of the problem and talk about how domestic violence affects all communities. Framing domestic violence as a community problem no longer subjects any one faith or community to public scrutiny.
- *Philosophical differences regarding divorce, separation, submission etc.* Try finding the common ground between domestic violence advocacy and religious beliefs. Examples may include creating safer communities, justice and peace.

- *Victim blaming.* Gently point out how even the most seemingly benign statements can be interpreted as placing the blame on victims. For example asking someone what they did to provoke the abuse or suggesting that they have things they need to fix about themselves as well. Depending on your comfort level, you may also point out suggesting for victims to “pray harder” or “be a better wife” may also suggest that the victim is doing something to cause the abuse or has control over the other person’s behavior.
- *Encouraging spiritual solutions only and/or engaging in a solution that can do more harm such as couples counseling.* Couples counseling is not safe in relationships with a power imbalance where one person is using violent and coercive tactics to control the other person. See also Appendix B for a statement on couples counseling and domestic violence.

## Training Basics for Adult Learners

It is important to consider aspects of adult learning when planning your training. Adult learners are individuals who are 25 or older and whose brains are more developed than child and adolescent learners. Adult learners learn differently than younger learners. Below are some additional general training tips regarding the best way to engage adult learners and foster a cooperative learning environment.

### *Understanding the adult learner*

- They decide for themselves what is important to be learned.
- They validate information based on beliefs and values.
- They expect what they learn to be immediately useful.
- They have experience to draw on and may have fixed viewpoints.
- They can be a great learning resource to the trainer and fellow learners.

### *Engaging the adult learner*

- Ask them questions.
- Ask them about their own experiences.
- Make it “real” by using examples that relate to them or the point you are making.
- Use exercises and activities.
- Use a variety of mediums (power points, videos, handouts).

### *Starting off on the right foot*

- Greet participants when they arrive.
- Make introductions.
- Set ground rules and share training schedule/agenda.
- Explain goals, objectives, and context.

# Safe Sacred Space Presentation Outline

## I. Introduction

## II. What is Domestic Violence?

## III. How Widespread is the Problem of Domestic Violence?

## IV. What are the Dynamics of Domestic Violence?

## V. Barriers to Leaving

## VI. Roadblocks and Resources

## VII. Recognizing and Responding Appropriately to Domestic Violence

## VIII. Closing

## I. Introduction

- *Opening Prayer* - Consider opening your event by asking someone from a faith community to do a brief ecumenical prayer.
- *Welcome & Acknowledgements* - Introduce yourself, share the mission of the Family Violence Task Force, the reason for speaking with the group, and the goals of the training.

*Possible script:* “Domestic violence is a community problem with a devastating impact on families. We believe faith communities have a role to play in ending domestic violence by increasing their awareness of this issue, intervening when domestic violence is suspected, helping to meet the basic needs of battered women and their children, and working towards prevention. We hope our conversation today will give you some tools to begin working towards these goals. We are not asking you to be an expert on domestic violence, just to become part of the community response to it. Faith communities have a special role beyond that of local domestic violence programs and agencies because you are uniquely positioned to help stop violence in families by making it clear that abusive behavior is never acceptable.”

- *Gender Disclaimer* - Consider making a statement at the beginning of the presentation about the language you will be using. You may say something like this, “Research shows that a majority of domestic violence victims are women and most perpetrators are men. We recognize that both abusers and battered persons may be either male or female; for clarity of this presentation, we will refer to abused, battered persons as ‘she’ and abusers or perpetrators as ‘he’.”
- *Address Subject Matter* - We recommend addressing the difficult nature of this subject matter. The following script may be helpful in doing so.

*Possible script:* “Domestic violence is a difficult subject to talk about because it makes people uneasy and uncomfortable. I commend you all for being here today. We may be afraid to talk about domestic violence for fear of raising an issue that our church/religious group/faith community doesn’t want to hear. In addition, we may fear that if we acknowledge domestic violence is affecting people in our church/organization, we’ll get involved in situations beyond our capabilities.

However, I believe that the act of talking about domestic violence is necessary to break the silence that has traditionally surrounded this issue in our faith communities. I believe that the act of walking with the families in our own faith communities who are affected by domestic violence is an act of compassion and justice, protecting the vulnerable among us and giving them hope. Both acts (speaking and walking) help to establish a climate of safety for those hurt by abuse, while supporting abusers to change their behavior.”

## II. What is Domestic Violence? (Slide 2-3)

- Ask the audience what they think of when they hear the term “domestic violence.” When possible, put their responses on a whiteboard. Give them a couple of examples if they are having trouble getting started.
- Present the following working definition, explaining that we all may have a different definition of domestic violence based on what we’ve heard or seen on TV, our own personal experience with family violence, or what we’ve read in the newspaper, books, etc.

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviors used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. It includes physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse and economic deprivation. Over time, without appropriate intervention, the abusive behavior can escalate in both frequency and severity.

- Introduce the idea of spiritual abuse as an additional form of abuse. Ask the audience what they think spiritual abuse is and to give examples. Present the following working definition:

Spiritual abuse is the misuse of real and perceived spiritual authority and/or power, and using that position for self-satisfaction or to get their own way regardless of the other person’s wishes. This can include a spouse/partner who demands unquestioning or blind obedience and submission at all times, a spouse/partner who denies, minimizes or ridicules your spiritual beliefs, and/or a spouse/partner who refuses to allow you access to worship communities or faith-based groups.

## III. How Widespread is the Problem of Domestic Violence? (Slides 4-5)

- Provide an overview of current statistics and trends of domestic violence.
  - 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence during their lifetime.
  - The majority of victims (85%) are women, but men can be victims of domestic violence, too.
  - More than 3 women are murdered every day by their husbands or boyfriends.
  - Domestic violence is a leading cause of injuries for girls and women between the ages of 15 and 44 in Georgia.
  - Domestic violence affects persons of all ages, educational backgrounds, income levels, religions, sexual orientations, and cultures.
  - Include statistics on dating violence, elderly abuse, etc. as time allows.



- When concluding this section, be sure to note: given this data, statistically, every church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or faith-based community in the United States probably has members who are living with domestic violence.
- Visit [www.gcadv.org](http://www.gcadv.org) and [gcfv.georgia.gov](http://gcfv.georgia.gov) for up-to-date data.

*Who is battered? Who is the batterer?*

Address the many stereotypes and beliefs people have about both victims and abusers. Stress that despite these stereotypes, domestic violence happens to all groups of people and there is no typical victim or batterer.

#### IV. What are the Dynamics of Domestic Violence? (Slides 6-10)

The Power and Control Wheel is a good tool for explaining the tactics that abusive partners use to gain and maintain control over their partner. Give a copy of the wheel as a handout for participants.

- Explain the Power and Control Wheel (Appendix C). Discuss the tactics on the wheel and ask the audience for additional tactics that are not listed. Note that most of the behaviors/tactics shown in the eight segments of the circle are not necessarily punishable by law – generally speaking, only physical or sexual assaults are punishable by law. If time permits, ask the participants to give you some specific examples of abuse from each segment of the wheel.

*Possible script:* “In 1984, the ‘Power and Control Wheel’ was created by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota. Over several months, they convened focus groups of women who had been abused by their partner. They documented the most common abusive behaviors or tactics that were used against these women. The tactics chosen for the wheel were those that were most universally experienced by the abused women. Power and control are at the center or hub of the wheel because these are the underlying motive for the various kinds of abusive behaviors or tactics that are used by an abuser to restrict the activity or independence of another individual. The most typical types of controlling behaviors and tactics are described in the eight segments of the circle (read aloud the eight spokes). An abusive person may use only some of these behaviors or tactics to control another individual – those behaviors or tactics used typically comprise a pattern. Physical and sexual violence, or the threat of either, are shown on the outer rim. That assaultive behavior helps the abuser to establish and then periodically maintain the control which is continually being reinforced by the other behaviors.”

- Discuss the dynamics of abuse.
  - Domestic violence is not a disagreement, a marital spat or an anger management problem. The abuser is not out of control; in fact, abusers know that violence, or the threat of violence, will serve to control the victim. The abuser will make the choice about how much violence to use, and when and where to use it. This decision making process shows that the abuser is, in fact, in control.

- In most relationships, the abuse and violence slowly builds. Tactics of emotional abuse usually happen first and can be very difficult to identify when it's happening. Physical abuse may not begin until months or years into the relationship and may begin with relatively minor types of physical violence that don't cause injury, then slowly become more dangerous over time.
- Leaving an abusive relationship (or simply planning to leave) is actually the most dangerous time. Most victims are killed after or during the process of leaving. Giving a victim the advice to "just leave" is not advised. Instead offer to connect the victim with the local domestic violence program for confidential safety planning and support.
- On occasion, when people have difficulty distinguishing the victim from the abuser, they will use the term "mutual domestic violence." By definition, domestic violence cannot be mutual as one partner is engaging in behaviors to gain and maintain power and control over the other partner. However, there are many forms of violence that are described interchangeably as "domestic violence," which often results in a victim being mislabeled as the abuser.
  - **Resistance violence** is committed by a victim in reaction to the abuse that she is experiencing, and includes defending herself from an attack;
  - **Pre-emptive violence** is committed by a victim because she is anticipating an attack by the abuser or has been "walking on eggshells" for so long, she is trying to precipitate an end to the tension. The victim often knows that the longer the tension builds, the risk of injury is increased;
  - **Situational violence** happens in reaction to the victim's circumstances; there is no pattern, or it is out of the victim's character to use violence;
  - **Mutual violence** differs from domestic violence because violence or aggressive behaviors may be used but not in the context of one person using those behaviors to make the other partner feel afraid and controlled. Overall, the power imbalance and tactics found on the power and control wheel most often do not apply.
- Explain the Equality Wheel (Appendix D).

*Possible script:* "This wheel represents aspects of a healthy relationship. We as people of faith or people of good conscience understand that this is the type of relationship our faith traditions and teachings call us to have and nurture with our intimate partner. Equality is at the center or hub of the wheel because it is the guiding value and motive of people in a healthy relationship. In place of aspects of controlling behavior, there are varieties of ways of expressing honesty, mutuality, and respect. Needs are expressed fully by both partners – in fact, probably more fully than in an abusive relationship. There is no assumption that people in a relationship based on equality will agree all the time; however, the whole relationship is surrounded by a commitment to nonviolence (physical, sexual, and emotional) when dealing with difficult issues."

## V. Barriers to Leaving (Slides 11 -19)

“Why does she stay?” is a question often heard when doing trainings or public speaking on domestic violence. Focus is often on the victim and why she stays rather than asking why the abuser behaves this way or why he isn’t held accountable. It also does not address the multitude of barriers most victims face. Consider asking the audience if they can give examples of barriers. You may also take this opportunity to point out that not everyone wants to leave an abusive relationship, sometimes they want the family/relationship to stay intact but the violence to stop.

### *Common barriers to leaving*

- Love
- Isolation
  - Isolating the victim from family and friends limits options for outside support
- Promises that he will change and hope that he will
- Self-blame
  - Many victims have been made to feel, by the batterer as well as by others, that they are failures and are responsible for having brought on the abuse.
- Denial/minimization/shame
  - Some victims may feel tremendous shame and embarrassment about the partner’s abusive behavior, and may view themselves as needing to figure out how to help the batterer learn to be less abusive, or to adapt or change in order to halt the abuse.
- Pressure to “keep the family together” or “stand by your man”
- Trauma from childhood abuse or exposure to family violence
  - Violence may be normalized for the victim.
- Cultural and/or religious beliefs about male/female roles, divorce, violence toward women
  - Violence towards women may be seen as acceptable. In some cultures and religious traditions, the victim is stigmatized and shamed for leaving a spouse - even an abusive one - or for seeking a divorce. In such instances, the victim may feel the additional pressure of staying because her honor is at stake and she risks humiliation of the entire family if she leaves.
- Batterer’s escalating violence/stalking
  - Victims may fear a lot of the abuser’s threats and what he will do if she leaves.
- Fear he will take the children.
- Ineffective Response by Police, Prosecutor, Judicial System
  - Previous response by the criminal justice system may further isolate victims.
- Lack of...
  - Money
  - Affordable housing
  - Transportation
  - DV Shelters
  - Jobs
  - Day Care
  - Legal Assistance
  - Health Insurance
- Immigrant Women:
  - Language barriers
  - Batterer control of immigration paperwork
  - Fear of deportation
  - Distrust/lack of understanding of U.S. legal system

- HIV+ victims
  - Stigma regarding status
  - Healthcare
- LGBT victims
  - Victims may not seek help because they don't believe that help is available for same sex domestic violence or because they fear they will be mistreated because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Victims with physical disabilities
  - Abuser may be the caretaker
- Victims with chemical dependency or mental health issues

## VI. Roadblocks and Resources (Slides 20-21)

The goal of this section is to encourage the attendees to think about how their own sacred texts, sermons, prayers and pastoral care can be a **roadblock** to safety or a **resource** to safety. Below is an explanation of the concept of Roadblocks and Resources. See also slides 17-18 in the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

- Compassionate responses from clergy or laypersons can contribute to the healing process of domestic violence victims/survivors, but even the most well intentioned person may inadvertently respond in a way that potentially puts victims in more danger and creates **roadblocks** to victims getting the support and resources they need.
- How the faith community responds (or does not respond) to domestic violence can create **roadblocks** to safety for victims. For example the silence and shame of domestic violence can be perpetuated when this issue is not openly addressed within the congregation. Faith communities can remove this roadblock by openly engaging in dialogue about domestic violence.
- Another common roadblock is when abusers misuse sacred texts or teachings to justify, minimize, or excuse intimate partner violence. Faith communities can remove this roadblock by examining how their sacred texts, sermons, beliefs could be used to oppress or control someone.
- Spirituality and religious tradition can be a valuable **resource** to safety for abused persons. People living in or with the crisis of domestic violence are also experiencing a spiritual crisis and often look to their ministers, priests, or religious leaders for guidance and assistance whether or not they openly disclose that they are being abused. People also turn to their fellow congregational members for support and assistance.
- In fact, a key finding of the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project is that many victims who were killed turned to their religious leaders for support before they reached out to other systems such as the police and courts. Even though most victims do not openly disclose that they are being abused, they are paying attention to the messages they receive regarding sacred texts,

values, and beliefs and applying it to their personal situations. Therefore, faith communities have great potential for offering resources, referrals, and safety to congregants.

- Congregants are listening to what is being said about marriage, divorce, family, forgiveness, etc. and applying those messages to their own personal situations. They are also paying attention to what is not being said eg. when domestic violence is not addressed the assumption is that they are alone and/or that this behavior is to be accepted.
- Recommend that they take time on their own to evaluate what their doctrine says about these issues and if there are ways they could reframe the messaging to be make sure it is supportive to victims.

## VII. Recognizing and Responding Appropriately to Domestic Violence (Slides 21-30)

Acknowledge that beginning a conversation about domestic violence can be challenging. These conversations may be easier to begin if posters, literature, sermons, discussion groups or other congregation-wide initiatives on domestic violence are already in place. If this is not yet the case, clergy and other spiritual leaders can still talk to congregants by simply stating: “As you may know, abuse by a partner — a spouse, date or even an ex-partner — is unfortunately very common in our society, including in our own congregation. Because of this, I am now asking every congregant if they are safe at home and in their relationships.” Remind them that safety of their congregants is critical, and no one should be asked about domestic violence unless the setting is private and the climate is respectful. Clergy and spiritual leaders must also be ready to respond appropriately and connected to service providers in the community should a congregant disclose abuse.

Remind them that, even if no one discloses that they are experiencing domestic violence, it does not mean that no one is experiencing domestic violence. However, they have now opened the door to future conversations when someone is ready or needs to talk. Encourage them to continue to speak about domestic violence with their congregants.

Share with them this list of potential indicators that a congregant might be experiencing domestic violence and refer to slide 20 in the accompanying PowerPoint presentation:

- Injuries which are inconsistent with the explanation,
- Embarrassment or attempts to hide injuries,
- Quiet or frightened demeanor in partner’s presence,
- Tense, jittery and deferential to partner,
- May complain of “nervous stomach” or “sleeplessness”,
- Mention partner’s temper,
- History of repeated injuries,
- Multiple injuries in stages of healing,
- History of depression, possible suicide attempts, and/or
- Edginess, fearfulness, high anxiety.

One of the most important things for them to do is to listen and believe the victim who is disclosing abuse to them. They may be the first person to hear the entire story. Providing support and care for victims lets them know someone is there for them. Remind them to remain calm and don't tell others what she tells them unless she says that it's okay.

Emphasize that they can play an invaluable role in helping assess the level of risk, initiating a discussion about the need for a safety plan, and making referrals to appropriate services if a congregant discloses to them that they are in a threatening or violent relationship.

Faith leaders can share any of these encouraging responses with victims:

- I care about you.
- I worry about you.
- You are not alone.
- It is not your fault.
- You don't deserve to be abused.
- Violent behavior is never appropriate.
- You have the right to make choices.
- You can make a better life for you and your children.
- You have the right to be safe.
- You have a right to have friends and to see your family.
- It is possible to reestablish control over your life.

Encourage them to develop relationships with the domestic violence experts in their community so that they can make warm referrals for both victims and those who use violence in their congregation. Encourage them to use this script, "I know a really good advocate at (name of program) who can help you. Would you like for me to call them with you or give you their information?" Make sure they have Georgia's 24 hour statewide hotline 1.800.33.HAVEN or 1.800.334.2836 (se habla espanol).

Provide each faith organizations with a copy of ***Safe Sacred Space: A Manual for Faith Leaders***. This manual contains much more information for faith leaders to refer to when responding to domestic violence in their congregation, including holding abusers accountable. Copies of the manual may be requested from [www.georgiafatalityreview.com](http://www.georgiafatalityreview.com).

### *Mandated Reporting*

When speaking with clergy and lay leaders, they may ask you about whether or not they are mandated to report abuse. They are not mandated to report domestic violence between adult partners but, after a change to the Georgia Mandated Reporting Laws in 2012, they are now mandated reporters of child abuse. See the explanation on page 22 of ***Safe Sacred Space: A Manual for Faith Leaders*** to assist you with this conversation. Include a disclaimer that no legal advice is being given and that they should consult their attorneys with any questions.

### *What Else Faith Leaders Can Do*

In addition to what they learned at the training, faith leaders can engage in any of the following ways to address domestic violence and support victims in their congregation.

#### Education & Outreach

- Update library materials
- Invite speakers to church events
- Train staff on dynamics of domestic violence
- Hang bathroom flyers on domestic violence services
- Provide brochures and other literature and resources on domestic violence
- Print hotline/referral numbers in every newsletter, bulletin, and weekly service leaflet
- Participate in community-wide events to address domestic violence
- Mention domestic violence in prayers and newsletter articles
- Speak about domestic violence and healthy relationships

#### Material Support

- Emergency expenses fund for victims and their families
- Safer home funds (changing locks, etc.)
- Collect items for local DV program (ask them what they need)

#### Care for Individuals and Families

- Develop protocols for response to domestic violence within their congregation
- Premarital counseling on equality, conflict, power, control
- Refer to hotline/shelter
- Refuse couples counseling for domestic violence
- Create plans for holding abusers accountable

Refer to page 34 of the ***Safe Sacred Space: A Manual For Faith Leaders*** for more details and ideas.

## VIII. Closing (Slide 29)

- *Thank you* - Thank the participants for taking time out to attend the training.
- *Offer continued opportunities* - Leave contact information, local resources, and invite them to any upcoming trainings or family violence task force meetings.
- *Closing litany or prayer* - Consider closing your event by asking someone from a faith community to do a brief ecumenical prayer.

## APPENDIX A

Transforming Communities  
Technical Assistance, Training & Resource Center  
Creating Safety, Justice & Equality

### Building Relationships with Faith Communities

*Below are suggestions for how to effectively outreach faith leaders/communities to involve them in domestic violence prevention efforts.*

#### How to Outreach to Faith Leaders

**Make personal contact with faith leaders** - Personal conversations work better than emails or letters.

**Draw from already established relationships** - If a co-worker or you are members of a faith community, talk with your own leaders about the issue.

**Take time to build relationships** - If you are not a member of the community you are reaching out to, build relationships with a few key people in that community first.

**Work with allies in the community** - Find a faith leader or lay person from within the congregation who is invested in preventing domestic violence and can be your ally.

**Recognize that this is a long-term process** - Building lasting relationships with faith communities takes time and effort.

**Recognize that there are other issues** - Domestic violence is just one of many social and faith issues the faith leader may be dealing with. Be patient, as their priorities may be different than yours.

**Be of service** - Appeal to faith leaders' self-interest. Demonstrate that you and others can help keep their community safe.

**Meet faith leaders where they are** - Many faith leaders have not had training on domestic violence-at the same time, they do not want to feel ignorant, shamed or inadequate for not knowing much about this problem.

**Acknowledge their current efforts** - Faith leaders are already working in their communities and have many strengths (i.e. they have the trust of their members and can play an important role in raising awareness and promoting safety for families).

**Be respectful of faith leaders' religious beliefs** – Focus on underlying shared values of safety, respect, compassion and trust. But also be aware of the need for accountability (from the community as well as the batterer).

**Be aware of cultural and linguistic issues** - Ask questions about what cultural issues are relevant in that community. Consider the specifics of the community when determining what domestic violence prevention work is relevant. Keep in mind culture, faith, geography, language and other unique factors.

**Let go of your agenda** - Use care not to use language or agendas which might trigger a level of discomfort that could work against your efforts. In other words, teach only the truth about



domestic violence and its causes, but by using a language that is relevant, and which also feels relatively non-judgmental, your collaborative community may be more responsive.

**Present yourself as a resource-** Offer information about domestic violence, such as brochures or resources. Videos such as "Broken Vows" or "Religion and Newsweekly" as well as "What Every Congregation Needs to Know About Domestic Violence" may be helpful. Check out the resources at FaithTrust Institute: [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

**Recognize people's strengths** - People have different skills –some are great networkers, some are salespeople, some are good at strategic planning or facilitating – everyone brings a strength to the action process.

**Recognize shared values** - If you encounter tensions or problems, identify shared values as a reminder of why you are working together and redefine things in a way that can be used with support by all collaborators.

## Examples of Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration Efforts

### **Bring Faith Leaders and Advocates Together:**

- Attend the local interfaith coalition/council meetings
- Invite faith leaders to sit on your board or on the local domestic violence council
- Invite several local faith leaders to a breakfast or lunch, providing information and training as a "hidden agenda"
- Invite a faith leader and members of the congregation to watch a video and talk about domestic violence in the community
- Provide or request financial resources or benefits such as food or transportation
- Suggest putting on a community event together

### **Provide Information:**

- Provide brochures to the place of worship
- Put domestic violence prevention bumper stickers in the church newsletter
- Place an ad in the local religious newsletter
- Prepare a list of local resources available to victims, children, and batterers, which faith leaders can call for help in situations of domestic violence
- Help with the creation of a domestic violence education program or policy at the church/temple/mosque or spiritual gathering place
- Help with the translation of materials

### **Volunteer to Provide Presentations:**

- Speak about domestic violence in your own congregation
- Offer to present a workshop or brief presentation for members of the community such as interfaith council meetings
- Provide a workshop for clergy and lay staff at the church/temple/mosque or other place of worship about domestic violence prevention
- Invite faith leaders and community members to volunteer trainings (free of cost)

## APPENDIX B

### A Policy Statement on Domestic Violence Couples Counseling

The following policy statement on couples counseling appears in *Confronting the Batterer*, written by Phyllis B. Frank and Beverly D. Houghton, PhD, for the Volunteer Counseling Service of Rockland Co., Inc.

Couple counseling is not a viable therapeutic tool for use in violent family relationships. We define a violent family relationship as one in which physical or sexual assaults occur, threats of violence occur, and/or a woman lives in an environment of fear caused by her partner. Couple counseling remains inappropriate even when both parties request it and/or want to maintain the couple relationship.

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

Volunteer Counseling Services (VCS) will not utilize couple counseling in violent relationships. Treating a couple together, before violence is addressed and stopped, could:

1. Endanger the battered woman who may face violence or threats of violence for revealing information during therapy which is disapproved of by her partner;
2. Lend credence to the common misunderstanding that battered women are responsible for the violence inflicted upon them;
3. Ignore the denial, minimization and deception about the violence that occurs when the focus of the counseling is on the couple's interaction;
4. Indicate that the therapist condones violence or that violence is acceptable or not important;
5. Reinforce stereotypical sex roles, thereby ignoring the battered woman's right and responsibility to choose whether or not to save the relationship;
6. Increase the battered woman's sense of isolation, as she may prevaricate about the violence or fear to speak, even in therapy. This can have the effect of discouraging her from taking any other positive action to eliminate the violence inflicted upon her; and
7. Imply that the battered woman has responsibility for seeing that the batterer gets help. Therapists need to be particularly wary of the manipulation inherent in a batterer's refusal of anything other than couple treatment.

VCS will recommend referral to a community's domestic violence services (shelters, safe-homes, support groups, advocacy services, and batterer's rehabilitation programs) to provide safety, legal assistance, and expertise in dealing with violence. Battered women should be encouraged to utilize these services. VCS further recommends that services be mandated for batterers. Should one or both partners receive individual counseling as a result, it is vital that the therapist be knowledgeable about the issue of domestic violence and the therapeutic implications for treating battered women and batterers. This includes that therapists not assume that equal power exists in male/female

relationships or that each partner is able to talk openly about violence. Therapist should directly and separately interview each partner to assess the incidence and current extent of the violence occurring in the relationship.

Ending violence in the relationship is dependent solely on the batterer's motivation and commitment to do so. This will not always happen and, if it does, it may not occur overnight. It is possible only if the batterer seeks help, gets help and keeps working on it. Many men will drop out of treatment along the way. However, even continued participation by a batterer in a program is no guarantee that he will change. If battering continues, a woman may eventually need to ask herself, "Am I willing to stay in a violent relationship?" The answer to that must be arrived at by each individual woman.

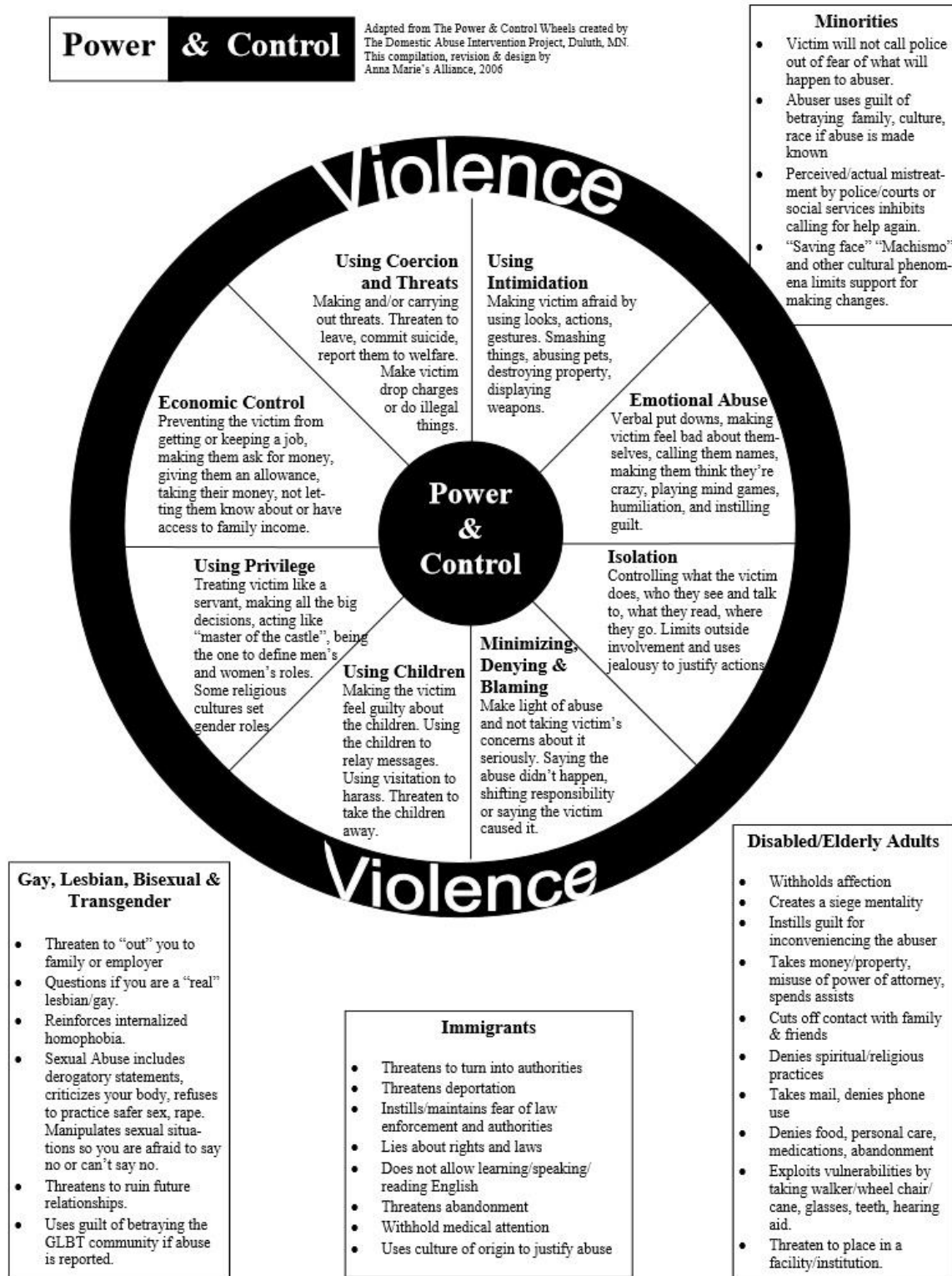
If the batterer does change and the relationship is intact, couple counseling becomes a viable modality – but only for non-violent relationships in which both partners separately request couple counseling. A former violent individual can be redefined as non-violent if:

- The former batterer participates in some form of ongoing treatment (educational workshops, support groups, individual counseling, etc.) to consolidate his behavioral change and to provide his commitment to work on ending his violence;
- The former batterer acknowledges his responsibility for his violent actions; he recognizes his ability to control and stop his violence toward his partner; he further states clearly that he will not be violent towards her; she validates, in a separate session, not only that he was not been violent, but that he has affirmed to her his commitment never to be so again;
- A significant period of time passes during which his treatment continues and there is no further violence (Approximately one year from onset of treatment).

The batterer and the battered woman have two different problems. His problem is his violent behavior. Hers is that she is coupled with a batterer. These two distinct issues are safely and effectively dealt with in separate counseling.

APPENDIX C

Power and Control Wheel

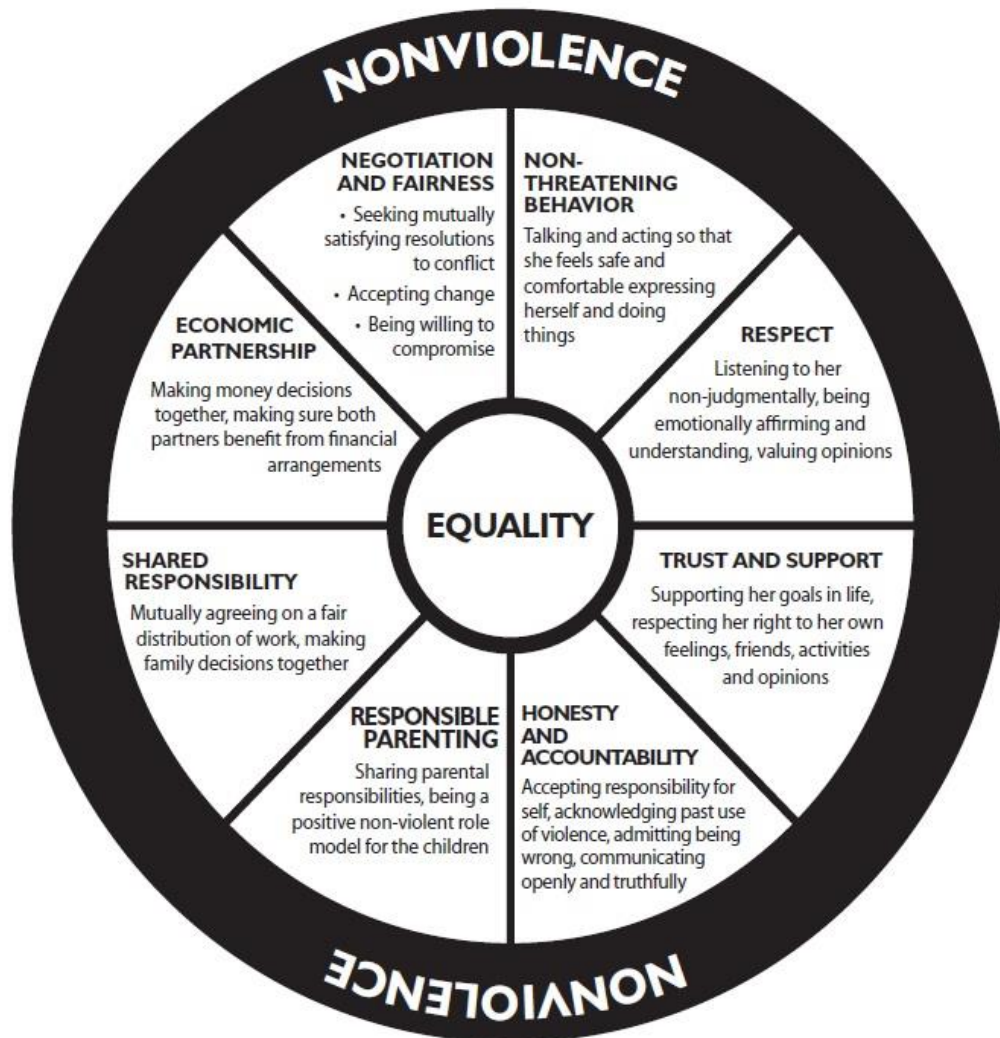


Appendix D

Equality Wheel

**Equality Wheel**

*This material was prepared in deference to battered women however this material is relative to victims/survivors regardless of gender.*



Domestic Abuse Intervention Project  
202 E. Superior St. Duluth, MN 55802  
218-722-2781