



Not in Our Pews

Working to end Domestic Violence
in our homes, congregations and
communities



Myths and Facts

MYTH

- Domestic violence occurs when men and women assault each other. Women are just as violent as men.

FACT

- Abuse occurs in a relationship when one person coerces, intimidates or dominates another. The National Crime Victimization Survey of the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 85 percent of serious spousal assaults are perpetrated by men against women. Domestic violence can't be assessed by asking, "Who hit whom how many times?" You must ask, "Who is terrified, hurt repeatedly or afraid to speak out?"

Myths and Facts

• MYTH

Stress causes abusive behaviors.

• FACT

Most people who are living under severe stress do not abuse. Stress may be a contributing factor, but reducing stress will not necessarily reduce violence in the family. Psychological, physical and financial control of an intimate partner is a problem, not a symptom of stress.

MYTH

- Drugs and alcohol cause batterers to abuse their intimate partners.

FACT

- Domestic violence and substance abuse are two separate problems, however, they may occur simultaneously.
- Elimination of substance abuse doesn't necessarily eliminate physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Substance abuse is not an excuse for battering, but society often views it as a reason for the abuse.

MYTH

- Victims of domestic violence do not seek help and will not use it when offered.

FACT

- A study of women in Texas family violence shelters found that most shelter residents had repeatedly sought various forms of help before entering the shelter. In many cases, women found that friends, family, the medical community or police often discounted their abuse, sided with their batterers or did not believe their stories.

MYTH

- What goes on within a family is a private matter.

FACT

- Domestic violence is a community problem. The harmful, hurtful and dangerous behavior that we have outlawed in public places should not be tolerated in our homes. Victims of domestic violence need support and assistance, and abusive people should be held accountable for violating criminal laws. Under state laws domestic violence is almost always a misdemeanor.

MYTH

- Some religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam sanction violence or ill treatment of women.

FACT

- According to scriptures in these religions, a woman should be respected and never ever abused.

Definition of Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviors and tactics used by one person over another to gain power and control.



Domestic violence



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

Types of abuse include:

- verbal abuse
- financial abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- physical abuse
- religious abuse

Identifying Abuse in children and youth



External symptoms of children and youth exposed to domestic violence include:

- Aggression / Bullying
- Lower social competence, including less empathy with others
- Lower verbal, cognitive and motor abilities
- Restlessness, impulsivity and difficulty concentrating
- Behavioral and academic difficulties in school
- Immaturity, delays in development and regression to earlier developmental stages

Internal symptoms of children and youth exposed to domestic violence include:

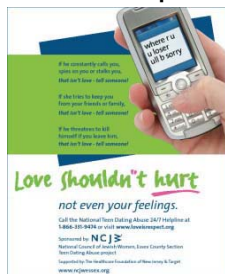
- Depression, anxiety and hyper-vigilance
- Fearful, withdrawn and inhibited behavior
- Lower self esteem
- Shame and feeling responsible for the abuse
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



Definition

- **Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.**
- **Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.**
- **Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.**

Red Flags in Teen Dating relationships



One out of every three students will be involved in a dating abuse situation before high school graduation.

Does your boyfriend/girlfriend:

- Act jealous and possessive?
- Keep you from seeing your family and friends?
- Blame you as the cause of the abuse?
Says, "you push my buttons."

- Pressure you for sex?
- Control you? Is bossy and makes all of the decisions.
- Call, email or text frequently to find out where you are?

Intimate Partner Violence – adult

- Calls you names, insults you or puts you down
- Prevents you from going to work or school
- Stops you from seeing family members or friends
- Tries to control how you spend money, where you go or what you wear

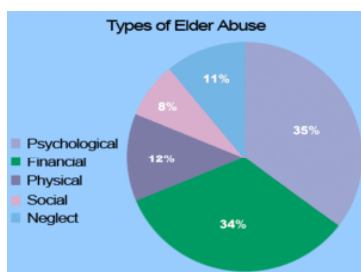
- Acts jealous or possessive or constantly accuses you of being unfaithful
- Gets angry when drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Threatens you with violence or a weapon
- Hits, kicks, shoves, slaps, chokes or otherwise hurts you, your children or your pets
- Assaults you while you're sleeping

- Forces you to have sex or engage in sexual acts against your will
- Blames you for his or her violent behavior or tells you that you deserve it



Definition of Elder Abuse

- Elder abuse is a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult.



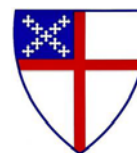
Warning signs of Elder Abuse

- Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, and burns may be an indication of physical abuse, neglect, or mistreatment.
- Unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, and unusual depression may be indicators of emotional abuse.
- Bruises around the breasts or genital area can occur from sexual abuse.
- Sudden changes in financial situations may be the result of exploitation.

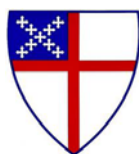
- Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, and unusual weight loss are indicators of possible neglect.
- Behavior such as belittling, threats, and other uses of power and control by spouses are indicators of verbal or emotional abuse.
- Strained or tense relationships, frequent arguments between the caregiver and elderly person are also signs.

2009 General Convention

- The 76th General Convention spoke clearly against the widespread practice of Domestic Violence:



- That members of the General Convention covenant pray for victims and their families
- That appropriate interim bodies review and recommend ways to counter the culture which sustains domestic violence



- That the convention strongly encouraged all Episcopal bishops and other clergy and lay leaders to participate in domestic violence training as may be available to them

- That clergy take leadership in making such information and training available to their congregations and the community



Questions to Consider

Before you meet with a domestic violence victim, survivor or perpetrator to provide advocacy or faith-based counseling, ask yourself these questions:

- What are my attitudes, feelings and thoughts about domestic violence?
- What qualifications do I have for helping victims, perpetrators and survivors of domestic violence?
- What are my limitations?
- What information and resources can I access to help victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence in my community?

How can faith communities and domestic violence programs work together?



FAITH
IN ACTION

What Faith Communities can do

- Become educated about the dynamics of domestic and other violence through reading, meeting with local advocates or talk with representatives from your State's Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Coalition or the National Domestic Violence Hotline.
- Educate your community through sermons, speeches and prayers about domestic violence and healthy relationships.
- Utilize age-appropriate curricula on bullying, healthy dating relationships and domestic abuse for children's and youth classes and groups.
- Listen to survivors of domestic abuse within your faith communities and ask them for ideas about how you may be more supportive to them.
- Invite you local domestic violence program staff to speak and facilitate discussions with members of your faith community.

- Encourage members of your faith community to support and get involved with the local domestic violence program in your community.
- Display posters and resource telephone numbers and hotlines that address domestic and other forms of abuse.
- Create a fund to help victims of domestic abuse in your community.

- Utilize or develop a resource list that includes telephone numbers for the local shelters, where to get clothing, food, childcare, transportation, counseling, etc.
- Participate in Domestic Violence Awareness Month activities in October, Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in February, Child Abuse & Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April.

- Train staff, especially those who work closely with children to be aware of the signs of abuse.
- Know the mandatory reporting requirements regarding child abuse, teen dating violence, domestic violence and elder abuse in your State.
- Be aware of safety for all.
- Listen and take seriously

RESOURCES



- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence – www.ncadv.org/
- State Coalition Against Domestic Violence – ie: www.wcadv.org
- Liz Claiborne Foundation – www.lcaof.org/ or www.loveisnotabuse.com/
- Avon Foundation – www.avonfoundation.org/
- Break the Cycle - www.breakthecycle.org/
- National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life - www.ncall.us/
- Stop Bullying – StopBullying.gov
- Faith Trust Institute - www.faithtrustinstitute.org/about-us

- **Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence (DVD)**
Presents the stories of 6 battered women – Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant – and demonstrates how religious teachings have been misused to perpetuate abuse and how religious communities can work proactively to end domestic violence. This comes with additional resources including interviews with clergy, psychologists and advocates; discussion of theological issues and a 46 page study guide; and 25 awareness brochures. (one hour broken into 2 parts)
- **Domestic Violence: What Churches Can Do (DVD)**
This one-hour program for use in Christian education offers basic information on domestic violence, as well as concrete ideas about how congregations can become involved in prevention and can offer a safe space for battered women. Utilizing a 20-minute video (an edited version of [Broken Vows](#)) the program provides worship materials, background information, discussion questions, and practical steps congregations can take to become involved in preventing domestic violence. Includes a 24-page study guide and a package of awareness brochures. 20 minutes/Color/2002

- **Violence in the Family: A Workshop Curriculum for Clergy and Other Helpers**
Marie Fortune, Revised 2002. Pilgrim Press.
For use in continuing education for clergy and in training community advocates to the address religious questions. Includes teaching and worship materials which can be duplicated. Has workshops plans for Spouse Abuse Workshop and for Child Abuse in the Family Workshop. Each has a DVD that would need to be purchased: *Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence* (spouse abuse) or *Hear Their Cries: Religious Responses to Child Abuse* (child abuse).

- **God's Reconciling Love: A Pastor's Handbook on Domestic Violence**
By Nancy Murphy, Northwest Family Life Learning and Counseling Center
With contributions from Rev. Dr. Randy Bridges, Rev. Dr. Luis Carlo, Rev. Keith Galbraith, Rev. Nate Mullen and others.
This much-needed handbook includes basic information about domestic violence, theological reflections, referral resources and concrete suggestions for a compassionate Christian response to abuse in the home.

- **Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know**
- The Rev. Al Miles
- Fortress Press Domestic violence is as ancient as the family unit itself. And according to the American Medical Association, one quarter of American women will be abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Ministers can help care for these victims. Loving and sensitive support can make a tremendous difference to survivors as they struggle with the long and difficult process of healing and regaining trust in themselves and others. Often, however, pastoral caregivers possess the same misconceptions about domestic violence as does the uninformed public. Miles addresses the issues related to inadequate pastoral response to this pervasive problem. He explores the dynamics of abusive relationships and the role which clergy members can take to heal this painful situation.

Rev. Al Miles has served as hospital chaplain in a number of medical centers throughout the United States since 1981 and now coordinates the hospital ministry at The Queen's Medical Center in Hawaii. He is the author of articles on domestic abuse and has counseled victims and perpetrators for eighteen years.

- **Violence in Families: What Every Christian Needs to Know**
Rev. Al Miles
Augsburg Books
Domestic violence is an often glossed-over danger in families today, and Christian families are not immune. The warning signs can be hidden or disregarded. Reverend Al Miles confronts the issues surrounding family violence, its causes, and possible solutions. He also discusses how all people are affected and can help address the issue. With an honest and down-to-earth tone, this book provides guidance and information for lay people as well as for individuals experienced with the complex nature of domestic violence.
- **Ending Violence in Teen Dating Relationships: A Resource Guide for Parents and Pastors**
The Rev. Al Miles
Augsburg Books
This book explores the complex issue of teen dating violence. Through interviews and other research, he provides critical information that parents, caregivers, clergy, and educators can use to protect teens and help them foster healthy dating relationships. Miles offers thoughtful advice and answers to such questions as: What constitutes violence in teen dating relationships? Why is the problem so pervasive? What are the warning signs that parents and other caring adults can watch for that may indicate a teen is being either abused or abusive? And what can the church do to help?