

A Religious Community Checklist

In addition to offering pastoral care to families experiencing domestic violence, as clergy and lay persons we are also responsible for speaking out and breaking the silence in our congregations. It is our role to preach and teach about domestic violence, and to support education about healthy relationships starting at the earliest grades in our religious education programs. In this way, we can play an important part in ending domestic violence in all our communities.

Education Outreach

- Does your church library have books on battering, emotional and verbal abuse and rape?
- Do you subscribe to newsletters of local and/or national programs, such as Faith Trust Institute?
- Is your church staff trained on the issue of abusive behavior?
- Have you provided an educational resource for teens on the issue of dating violence?
- Have you invited speakers from secular services, such as battered women's shelters, child protective services, and rape crisis centers to speak to church groups?
- Do you refer to ending violence in the home through litanies and prayers as well as in sermons?
- Do you provide hotlines and battered women's shelter phone numbers on bulletin boards or in women's washrooms?
- Do you designate a day or month for educating the congregation about domestic violence?

Ministry

- Do you collect items for the nearest shelter for women escaping violent partners?
- Do you maintain an ongoing relationship with staff of domestic violence programs?

Pastoral Care

- Do you offer premarital counseling dealing with equality, conflict, violence and control?
- Do you refuse to provide couples' counseling if there has been violence in the relationship?
- Do you provide support groups for victims of abuse?
- Do you know how to refer to a hotline/shelter?
- Do you know how to discuss a safety plan?