safe havens

interfaith partnership against domestic violence

because no one should have to choose between faith and safety

Religious Community Response

Develop Protocols to Help Domestic Violence Victims
Have an action plan in place to follow if an abused woman asks for help or if a congregant is abusing his family. Prioritize the safety of victims and accountibility of the batterer. Be ready to make referrals.

Create a Safe Haven
Make your congregation a safe place where abused women can ask for help. Let you community know that you are prepared to provide support. Keep an updated list of referral resources.

Teach Through Life Cycle Events
You may have more contact with families around life cycle events related to the birth of a child, coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. Observe the dynamics within families and share resources as needed. Be aware that pregnancy and the arrival of a child may escalate abusive behavior.

Educate Your Community
Sponsor educational programs on domestic violence. Invite staff from local shelters and other providers to speak at services. Print articles that include lists of community resources in your bulletin. Post bathroom flyers with resource numbers.

Work as a Team
Domestic violence is a complex problem that requires a team approach. Clearly define your role and be ready to refer by building relationships with domestic violence advocates, police, and staff at state-certified batterer intervention programs.

Get Training
Participate in workshops designed for religious leaders to learn safe and effective ways to address domestic violence in your congregation. Network with other clergy and communities for support. Contact Safe Havens for education and technical assistance.

Use Your Prophetic Voice
Give some sermons on domestic violence to build awareness, teach that family violence is not acceptable in your community, and emphasize that help is available. Incorporate special prayers on domestic violence into services.

Support Your Children
Make sure all teachers and youth group leaders receive training about how to recognize abuse and whom to approach with concerns. Include age-appropriate prevention programming about bullying, teen dating violence, and family violence for children and youth.

© Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence, 2014

89 South Street, Suite 603, Boston, MA 02111 | www.interfaithpartners.org | 617-951-3980 | info@interfaithpartners.org