



United States Department of Justice

Office on Violence Against Women

Working Together to End the Violence

What Faith Leaders Can Do

Communities of Faith: Making a Difference

BECOME a safe place.

Make your place of worship a safe place where victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence can come for help and healing. Display materials that include local and state hotlines for domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence victims.

EDUCATE the congregation.

Provide ways for members of the congregation to learn as much as they can about domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence. Include information in monthly newsletters, on bulletin boards, and in marriage preparation classes. Sponsor educational seminars for your congregation on violence against women.

SPEAK out.

Use the pulpit to talk about domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence. As a faith leader, you can have a powerful impact on people's attitudes and beliefs.

LEAD by example.

Volunteer to serve on the board of directors at a local domestic violence or sexual assault program or attend a training to become a crisis volunteer.

OFFER space.

Provide meeting space for educational seminars or weekly support groups or serve as a supervised visitation site when parents need to safely visit their children.

PARTNER with existing resources.

Include your local domestic violence or sexual assault program in donations and community service projects. Adopt a shelter for which your place of worship provides material support, or provide similar support to families as they rebuild their lives following a shelter stay.

PREPARE to be a resource.

Seek out training from professionals in the fields of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

INTERVENE.

If you suspect violence is occurring in a relationship or in a family, speak to each person separately. If you suspect an individual is being or has been victimized, speak to them privately. Help the victim plan for safety. Refer individuals to the community resources available to assist them. Couples' counseling may compromise the safety of the victim. Advocate for the rights of and safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators.

SUPPORT professional training.

Encourage and support training and education for clergy and lay leaders, chaplains, and seminary students to increase awareness about domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

Adapted from: *Ending Violence Against Women, An Agenda for the Nation*

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Office on Violence Against Women

800 K Street, NW • Washington, DC 20530 • Phone: (202) 307-6026 • Fax (202) 305-2589