

# Three Things You Can Do to Offer Hope, Help, and Healing to Catholics Dealing with Domestic Violence

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Catholics For  
Family Peace

Education and Research on Domestic Abuse



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE FAMILY

# Domestic Violence Awareness 101

- ❖ Domestic abuse is a pattern of behavior that a person uses **TO CONTROL AN INTIMATE PARTNER THROUGH FEAR AND INTIMIDATION.**
- ❖ It includes **PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, STALKING, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE.**
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control states it is a **PREVENTABLE CONDITION.**

# Prevalence: Domestic abuse

- ❖ 1 in 4 women reported suffering **severe physical violence** by an intimate partner, 1 in 7 men reported the same. (CDC, 2010)
- ❖ Nearly half of women (48.4%) and half of men (48.8%) reported experiencing **psychological aggression** by an intimate. (CDC, 2010)

# *AMORIS LÆTITIA*

OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

- Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union. ... The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity. (54)

# Wishing Every Good for Couples

- ❖ Many people experience safe, loving relationships.
- ❖ Men are not the enemy:  
Most men do not abuse women, especially physically.
- ❖ Women are not the enemy:  
Most women do not abuse, especially psychologically.
- ❖ Many parents create a safe, loving home for their children



1. Pray

2. Learn

3. Act

## Catholics For Family Peace Education and Research Initiative

- We provide education, resources, and research that help pastoral leaders recognize domestic abuse and respond with compassion.

Work closely with  
USCCB and others to  
share Church Teaching  
about abuse





# *When I Call for Help*

## **Key points**

“...acting to end the abuse does not violate the marriage promises.”

“As bishops, we condemn the use of the Bible to support abusive behavior in any form. A correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love.”

“Finally, we emphasize that no person is expected to stay in an abusive marriage.”

# Referring for Help

“We also encourage church ministers to see themselves as **‘first responders’** who

- Listen to and believe the victim’s story,
- Help her to assess the danger to herself and her children, and
- Refer her to counseling and other specialized services.”

- *When I Call For Help*

# Goals for Pastoral Helpers

Intervention has three goals:

Safety for the victim and children;

Accountability for the abuser; and

Restoration of the relationship (if possible), or the mourning over the loss of the relationship.

# Prayer is Fundamental to our Work

Private prayer - Join us for 3 p.m. daily prayer

Community prayer - Rosary groups

Mass in Observance of DVAM,  
Intercessory prayer, Prayer of the Faithful  
Healing Service for Challenging Situations

# Educate

Website, Facebook, Twitter

DV Awareness in Marriage Prep

DVAM Toolkit

Webinars

Support/consult on your programs

# Research

State of Catholic Response

DV in Pregnancy

Clergy Response to DV

Faith Response to People who are  
abusive

# Family Peace's Module for Marriage Prep

- Available in English, Spanish and French
- Provided without cost, upon request
- Includes aids for facilitators
- Clear teaching for couples
- Private questionnaire for individual reflection
- Contact information for help
- Sources for further study
- **Contact us at [catholicsforfamilypeace.org](https://catholicsforfamilypeace.org)**

# Learn More

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Eastern**

**Honoring Survivors' Spiritual Needs: Supporting Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Survivors of Domestic Violence**

Sharon A. O'Brien, Catholics For Family Peace, panelist

Find recording at <https://nrcdv.org/trainings>

**Saturday, October 3, 2020, 6:00 p.m. Eastern**

**4th Annual National Catholic Mass in Observance of DVAM, Vigil Mass**

Bishop Mark Brennan, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Presider and Homilist

Access on Facebook livestreaming

<https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofWheelingCharleston/> or on website at

<https://www.dwc.org>



# Learn More

**October 14, 2020, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern**

***Promoting Peaceful Relationships at Home Webinar***

Hosted by USCCB's Dr. Julia Dezleski and presented by Dr. Lauri Przybysz, Education Director, Catholics For Family Peace. Register at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/promoting-peaceful-relationships-at-home-tickets-119489717963>

**October 7, 14, 21, 28 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Eastern**

**Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence**

A four part series to discuss how racism and misogyny impacts survivors ability to seek safety and justice, Register here: [www.interfaithagainstdv.org/events](http://www.interfaithagainstdv.org/events)

National Black Catholic Congress at [nbccongress.org](http://nbccongress.org)



A screenshot of the "Family Ministries" website. The header features a family photo and the text "Family Ministries". Below the header are navigation tabs for "MARRIAGE", "FAMILY LIFE", "STORE", and "PASTORAL RESOURCE". A sidebar on the left contains a "Bulleted" menu with items like "Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach" and "Prayers of the Faithful". The main content area is titled "Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach" and includes an emergency contact number: "In an emergency, dial 911 or call the National Domestic Violence 24-Hour Hotline at 800-799-7233, 1-800-787-3224 TTY for counselling assistance. Website: www.adhv.org". It also features a "Mission" section and an "Action Plan" section.

A screenshot of a media resource page. The title is "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS". The text states: "Family Peace offers you this Media Resource to address domestic abuse and violence and Education and Research Initiative is part of Social Service's Consortium for Catholic University of America. Catholic community on ways to promote family respond to domestic abuse and to provide prayer for all families. Our initiative provides". On the right, there is a "TABLE OF CONTENTS" with three items: "1 HOW TO HELP", "2 SPREAD PEACE ON SOCIAL MEDIA", and "3 SPREAD PEACE THROUGH PRAYER".

A screenshot of the "Catholic Charities ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON" website. The header includes the organization's logo and navigation links for "About Us", "Get Help", "Volunteer", and a prominent red "DONATE" button. The main banner features a photo of hands clasped together with the text "FAMILY PEACE". Below the banner, there are sections for "RESOURCES" (with a link to "Catholic Teaching and Response"), "Domestic Abuse" (with a video thumbnail of Fr. Kevin Domestic Violence Homily), and "CONTACT US" (with contact information for Laura Yeomans, Parish Partners Program Manager, and an "EMAIL" button). The footer includes the text "Helping Friends and Family" and a "SELECT LANGUAGE" option.

# Catholic Resources

[www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace)

- Pastor's Domestic Violence Packet
- Restroom flyers
- Bulletin inserts
- Resource sheets
- First response call sheets

[Laura.Yeomans@CC-DC.org](mailto:Laura.Yeomans@CC-DC.org) 202-315-9110

**You and your family deserve to be safe and loved in your home.**

Sometimes bad things happen in good families. Wiling, hitting, shouting, insults, not sharing income. If you are experiencing or using these behaviors at home or living in fear, change is possible. You can be safe and bring peace to your family.

**24/7 NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:**  
**1-800-799-SAFE**

**Catholic Charities**  
ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON  
Imagining Hope. Building Futures.  
[www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace)



2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE	1-800-799-SAFE

**District of Columbia**

**When Someone Reports Domestic Violence: Listen with Love**

When a person calls for assistance concerning domestic abuse we have a unique opportunity to help. Offering compassion and listening with love are the first steps.

**Listen quietly.** Believe her/his concerns. As you listen keep your mental focus on the strengths of the person instead of the abuse. She/he may report some sad or scary event. Redirect your mind to the person's courage or steps to get help.

**Thank them for calling and say that the church wants to help them. Repeat back some part of what you heard.** An example would be:

"Thank you for calling. You are concerned about your family's safety. We at \_\_\_\_\_ parish want to help you."

**Let her know that there are local agencies that can assist her, that you'd like to make sure she has the phone numbers to call.**

"There are DC agencies that help people facing this situation. I want to make sure you have

- **JCADA**  
The Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse offers a ministry of counseling, crisis services, safety planning, and legal assistance to people of all faiths. Ideal for people considering workers and counselors focused on domestic abuse issues. High quality care by professional social workers. Office located in nice area in Rockville.  
**District Alliance for Safe Housing**  
www.DASHDC.org The Housing Resource Clinic, located at the West Branch Church on 400 1st SW and takes place from 1:30p-4:30p
- **(301) 315-8041**  
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- **(202) 462-3274**  
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**LISTEN WITH LOVE**  
A guide for parishes on  
**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTREACH 2019**

**Ministering to Families Living With Domestic Abuse**

- What are the U.S. Catholic Bishops' recommendations?
- What Catholic and community resources can help?
  - How can parishes make a difference?

**You and your family deserve to be safe and loved in your home.**  
Sometimes bad things happen in good families. Wiling, hitting, shouting, insults, not sharing income. If you are experiencing or using these behaviors at home or living in fear, change is possible. You can be safe and bring peace to your family.

**Domestic Violence Prevention Resources in the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.**  
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1 (800) 799-7233  
1 (800) 799-7233 (T) for hearing impaired  
Website: <http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/>

**Calvert County - Crisis Intervention Center** (410) 330-8121 or (301) 855-3898 The Center provides crisis assessment, counseling, shelter for persons suffering domestic violence and those who abuse.

**Charles County - Center for Abused Persons** (301) 646-3126 The Center provides counseling, referrals to shelter. The Center offers court-ordered counseling programs for persons using violence.

**St. Mary's County - Southern MD Ctr for Family Advocacy** (301) 373-4141 The Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy provides domestic violence counseling, shelter, and advocacy as well as legal representation in court when possible.

**Montgomery City - Abused Persons Program** (301) 771-4023 Emergency shelter, Court advocation, Counseling for survivors and those who abuse. Family Justice Center (301) 779-0664 The Center provides counseling, intake, crisis services.

**Prince George's County - Community Crisis Services** (301) 731-8200 The Center provides crisis assessment, counseling, and shelter.

**Health Coalition Against Domestic Abuse** (301) 315-8041 DC's only faith-based, crisis services, safety planning, and legal assistance to people of all faiths. Serves Washington, DC, Metro area.

**District of Columbia - Spurners and Advocates for Empowerment (SAFE)** (202) 879-7857 500 Indiana Ave NW, Rm 4100, Washington, DC 20001 provides on call advocacy 24 hours/day. House of Ruth - (202) 687-9021 Agency provides counseling, child care and shelter services.  
**KCAD** (202) 315-8041 Free counseling, safety planning.

For more information: [www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace](mailto:www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace)  
Contact Catholic Charities: [Laura.Yeomans@CC-DC.org](mailto:Laura.Yeomans@CC-DC.org)

# What Can You Do?

Use DVAM Toolkit

Join National Catholic DVAM  
Partners Committee

Create/support a diocesan response

Let's Explore the DVAM Toolkit!

# Catholic Teaching

- *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. - 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7*

Promote Positive Behaviors -

Promote Virtues

Positive Parenting

Positive Problem-solving techniques

# How to normalize the Topic

- Identify Catholic and Secular DV Awareness resources
- Offer to collect items or provide gift cards for local shelter
- Ask Agency to provide a workshop on healthy relationships
- Invite agency leaders to your office to meet staff & learn about their services
- Arrange a screening of a DV faith-specific video. Invite professionals to answer questions



# Unique Ways Catholics Experience DV



# Why bring up domestic violence in relationship education?

- Domestic violence usually creeps into a relationship slowly.
- Survivors may not recognize it until much later when it becomes glaringly obvious.
- It is important for people to know how to **recognize abuse** in its early stages and for victims **to seek counsel** from a professional domestic violence counselor.

# Mutuality and Respect Between Spouses

- Church teaching calls husbands and wives into a partnership of equal dignity, both created in the image of God.
- While many spouses understand this call to mutuality and equal authority in marriage, **others enter marriage with destructive attitudes** about how men and women should relate to one another.

# Arguments or Abuse: Teach the Difference

- **Healthy conflict resolution** involves both parties working respectfully on a solution that is fair to both of them.
- Abusive relationships have a well-established pattern of behavior marked by **rigid control and manipulation.**

# When Someone Turns to You For Help

## WHAT TO SAY

- I am concerned about you.
- If someone is hurting you, please seek professional help.
- Help is available 24 hours a day on the National Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).
- No one deserves to be treated this way.
- Abuse is not part of a loving and healthy relationship.
- You did not do anything to cause this abusive behavior.
- You cannot do anything to **change** this abusive behavior.

# When Someone Turns to Your for Help

## WHAT **NOT** TO SAY

- Why don't you just leave?
- Why do you tolerate that behavior?
- What did you do to cause your partner to get angry?
- If your partner is so bad, why are you with him/her?
- Why don't you go to couples' counseling?
- I would never allow that to happen to me.

# A Word About Counseling

- When someone wonders if their own or spouse's behavior is abusive, he or she should seek individual counseling.
- If domestic abuse is suspected, a marriage counselor not trained about domestic violence should not be pursued.
- Counseling about domestic violence is generally provided free of charge at domestic violence service agencies.

# About Forgiveness

- Victims of domestic violence should not be pressured to forgive.
- Forgiveness takes time.
- Sometimes it is not safe to reconcile.
- Do not pressure a person to leave.
- Leaving an abusive relationship can be a time of great danger.



# Barriers Preventing Survivors from Seeking Services

- Lack of awareness of resources
- Lack of faith-sensitive services
- Stigma of seeking services
- Misuse/misunderstanding of religious texts
- Partner who is abusive is “well-known/respected/connected” in the Church
- Clergy’s level of knowledge and support of value of services

# Summary

- Domestic violence is a preventable condition
- Clergy and pastoral leaders can make a difference  
Offer hope, help, and healing .
- Catholics For Family Peace is here to support your efforts
- Know/post the National DV Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

# Contact Information

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