

COMMUNITY SURVEY: FAITH & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

A Faith Roundtable was established in 2010 as part of the Charleston County Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence (CCRDV). Local service providers and faith communities were invited to come together to address issues related to interpersonal violence. The members of the Faith Roundtable proposed the development of an online toolkit to address domestic violence from the faith community perspective. In order to direct their activities, the members of the Faith Roundtable decided to conduct a needs assessment for the local faith community around these issues. Faith Roundtable participants contacted various faith communities in the Charleston area for feedback in determining what would be included in such a website and how it could meet the various needs of local faith communities. Twenty-four faith communities were surveyed through a combination of phone calls, face-to-face interviews, and written survey responses.

SURVEY RESULTS

Size of congregation

# of faith communities*	congregation size
8	0-250
6	251-500
4	501-1000
4	1000 +

Average congregation size: 663

*One faith did not respond because they are a faith based social services agency.

Faith traditions and denominations breakdown

Number denotes that of faith or denomination responding.

CHRISTIAN	
Inter-denominational	1
Reformed Episcopal	2
African Methodist Episcopal	1
Baptist	5
Non-denominational	4
7 th Day Adventist	1
Church of God	1
AME	1
Apostolic	1

Pentecostal ¹	2
United Methodist	2
Total Christian responses	21

ISLAM	
Total Islam responses²	2

Jewish	
Jewish Social Services	1

Survey Questions and Responses

Numbers in parentheses following the comments indicate the number of times that comment was given.

1. Does your faith community have a program or ministry to address the needs of victims of domestic violence in your congregation or community? If so, please describe.

Yes = 5

No = 19

Comments from those who answered yes

“The Dream Center has a group called Dream Sisters that meets every Thursday for lunch. They have speakers that address the needs of the group, which includes women who are prostitutes and addicts. There are women who suffer from domestic violence who attend but they find it is difficult to get women to speak up. Many of them feel that while it’s horrible they are still being taken care of and don’t feel that they could take care of themselves. This group invites women who are not connected to the church.”

“Yes. Our domestic violence ministry group Abigail meets monthly.”

“No, they are currently starting a ministry to deal with domestic violence also every last Sunday of the month is Domestic Violence Sunday and they have a speaker talk about domestic violence.” (Even though their answer was “no” their description demonstrates they have a domestic violence program in place.)

“Yes. They are currently in the transitional phase as the previous director of this ministry has moved on and the new director is Sheila Williams.”

“We are a social services agency for the Jewish community. When a case of domestic abuse arises our social worker does an assessment and provides resources as needed and provides counseling. Our resources are limited and we would greatly benefit from any additional support.”

¹ One of the Pentecostal churches is predominantly Hispanic.

² Both from the same mosque.

Comments from those who answered no

“There is no established program or ministry. However, people consult the Imam of the CMC or a few trusted elders in the community.”

“Not at present but trying to put one in place.”

“Currently, just the routine day to day counseling provided by the pastor(s).”

“No, we try to address all issues through the word of God. We notify Authorities in cases of domestic violence.”

“No, they are willing to adapt one with our help.”

“No specific programs. If someone asked for help in this area they would either be in touch with the pastor no call, the pastoral care team or the specific pastor they have a relationship with and reached out to.”

“Not directly, but they have supportive programs.”

“No, but not ongoing or current . . . we did host a ‘Victims of Crime’ event at our local church two years ago to bring about awareness in the community. We want to establish a process for handling such needs in our local church. Right now, we have a member in our congregation who offers temporary housing to victims who come to us, but she can only accommodate one or two at one time. Otherwise we would refer them to some of the locally established assistance organizations.”

“We do not have any specific plans for this cause.”

“Even if it’s just awareness, this would be very helpful.”

2. Do you need support in your congregation with the issue of domestic violence?

Yes = 17

No = 7

Comments from those who answered yes:

“We would be interested in having information/resources so to point people in the right direction.”

“Yes. Issues do come up.”

“Yes, it will be very helpful.”

“Yes. Even if it’s just awareness, this would be helpful.”

“I would say that DV is an issue that should be addressed and a plan should be in place for anyone that may have that need.”

“Yes. They are looking for support and referrals, to help them educate their victims.” (2)

“We would welcome information, financial assistance and any additional resources we can receive.”

Comments from those who answered no:

“Not at this time, we would consider referring if needed.”

“Currently, we are managing well with the cases reported.”

“No, we have been able to diffuse most situations.”

“No. They don’t need help in their congregation but maybe in their local community.” (2)

3. Do you feel equipped to handle domestic violence victims in your congregation or place of worship? Do you feel your congregation or house of worship would benefit from resources around the issue of domestic violence?

a. Do you feel equipped?

Yes = 6

No = 13

Comments from those who answered yes:

“I can probably handle a DV situation but I do not have any special training.”

“Yes, I feel equipped to handle victims and the issues of domestic violence from a ‘Nouthotic’ counseling perspective. However, I feel that it is always best to seek and refer to the subject matter experts in most family issues.”

“We do feel equipped, however, with changing times and laws additional information and resources are always welcomed we could absolutely benefit.”

“Yes, they are mandated by Law and Scripture, they also provide temporary food and shelter for victims that are members of there (sic) congregation.”

Comments from those who answered no:

“Help is limited to consulting.”

“No – I could use some help in this area.”

“No. We don’t know the reporting process.”

“No, not in a direct way – if something comes up in our family life ministries we will address it. I am somewhat equipped but I am not an expert in this area.”

“They feel somewhat equipped as they have women who have been thru domestic violence and are now on the other side help to lead women who they know are going thru it. No one there has any formal training. Yes they feel they could benefit with more resources.”

“In 30 years as a pastor I have never encountered an instance of domestic violence.”

“Not yet. Personally I would refer someone to the above referenced church member for women and children equipped to address the need and refer there. Lay counseling ministry, in the ground work. I am currently working with a new member to our church with a counseling background to address all different types of counseling needs in the congregation.”

“We definitely need assistance to help us deal with this growing problem in our community.”

b. *Would you benefit from resources?*

Yes = 20

No = 0

Comments:

“It would be beneficial for us to have resources.”

“Will certainly benefit from resources and guidance.”

“We do not have enough resources.”

“Having a guide would be beneficial. We love to help! An effective approach is very sensible to both the giver & receiver.”

“More information on what to do when someone asks for help who is freshly abused. More information on how some specific processes work – Legal, where to send people for help, what is confidential and what must be reported.”

“Yes, we could benefit very much from any resources available.”

4. Do you have internet access? If so, do you think it would be beneficial to you in your work to have a practical guide for how to respond to and help victims of domestic violence in the Tri county community?

a. *Do you have Internet access?*

Yes = 23

No = 1

b. *Would you benefit from a practical guide?*

Yes = 23

No = 0

Comments:

“Yes we have internet access, and would be interested in looking into these avenues.”

“A practical guide would be very helpful.”

Note: 4 responses answered with one “yes” to this two part question. A “yes” response was recorded for both parts.

5. If you have internet access and wanted to access a guide for responding to victims of domestic violence in your congregation and the Charleston community, what kind of things would you like to see on that webpage? Please check all that apply.

Total of 23 responses:

15	Sample sermons	65%
23	Local emergency assistance for domestic violence victims	96%
22	Housing options for victims of domestic violence	92%
21	Articles and statistics about domestic violence	87%
22	Safety planning for victims of domestic violence	92%

20	Myths about domestic violence	83%
21	Scriptural issues and discussion related to domestic violence	91%
22	Practical ideas for what your faith community can do to address domestic violence	92%
22	Laws regarding domestic violence	92%
20	An online forum or bulletin board for the exchange of ideas	83%
7	Other (responses listed below along with Comments)	

Other suggestions and comments:

“Financial Resources.”

“would like to have emergency numbers.”

“would like to have a list of organizations who are available to help.”

“specific information regarding the domino effect – impact on children who witness or are involved with the violence. Possibly a number for a hotline that addresses these issues in particular.”

“Thanks for the help.”

“Simply the life you save may be yours.”

“This is a wonderful idea and a tremendous extension to the faith based community.”

“Seacoast is embarking on Missional Communities. They could see domestic violence being a need served by one of these Missional Communities. These groups are bigger than traditional small groups (bible studies) and serve bigger community issues.”

“A speaker’s bureau.”

“Resource kit, what are the legal obligations when helping a victim, and other than physical signs, what are some of the signs as a minister to look for in a victim?”

6. **Do you have any additional comments, suggestions, or feedback regarding resources that you believe would be useful for your faith communities to be able to responsibly respond to victims of domestic violence?** *Note: those with numbers following denote the number with that same response.*

“Training in DV for Pastors/Clergy/Congregations; community meetings & seminars; A way for churches in the same geographic area to work together as a team on DV issues.”

“I think educational workshops, interfaith panel discussions, guest subject matter expert speakers will help.”

“(We) are open to hosting a meeting in Summerville for a faith-based meeting on domestic violence.”

“Interested in trainings/meetings for faith-leaders.” (4)

“Safe housing and phone numbers. Also help for those causing violence.”

“I have been exposed to workshop conducted by atty. Bostic regarding this subject.”

“Please let us know how we can be involved in helping your organization as well.”

“Pastor Robinson believes that there are so many organizations that do so many things that people the church included don’t know about. He believes it will take a combined or unified effort to work to eradicate domestic violence in our community and Mount Moriah is working to make that a reality. He has also agreed to help with scriptures if needed for the web site.” (2)

“They would also like the practical guide to talk about “red flags” so they can know but what is said that DV might be a problem even if it isn’t brought up. The pastors feel in their particular congregation it is likely they don’t hear about it very often as women are keeping it a secret and asking for help on other related issues instead.”

“Subsidized legal assistance is an extremely important resource.”