

The Tri County Faith Community Alliance Against Domestic Violence

Guidelines and Accountability Principles for Participants

Many faith communities want to help victims of domestic violence but don't know what they can do. The answer may be simpler than most faith community members would think. Often just being supportive, providing a safe place for victims, and knowing the resources in the community are the first stepping stones for help. The following are some basic benefits, some simple and practical ideas and basic accountability principles for faith communities wanting to make a difference in the lives of victims of domestic violence.

The Benefits:

As a member of the Tri County Faith Community Alliance Against Domestic Violence, you will be:

- At the forefront of providing needed services for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- A part of a grassroots movement to eradicate violence against men, women and children.
- A provider of direct aid to victims fleeing violence.
- Working to build a society where all people can live their lives free of violence and fear.
- Trained and supported with initial comprehensive training, in addition to regular in-services on domestic violence and family related topics.
- An activist for public policy and social change.
- Able to network with other individuals and organizations who serve victims of domestic violence.
- Eligible to participate in causes and caucuses on domestic violence.
- Helping to secure safety for women and children.
- Helping to make abusers accountable.
- Assisting the survivors with restoration, if possible, relationships or mourning the loss of the relationships.
- A mentor to victims and their children.
- A Provider of spiritual and emotional support for a member of your community.
- A vessel to life saving services.
- Able to assist in insuring long-term stability and support.

As a Member of the Alliance, you will be asked to provide Simple and Practical ideas and solutions for Assisting Families in Domestic Crisis

- Don't explain. There is no rational explanation.
- Listen and express compassion with prayer and support.
- Help them to understand that God is a very strong advocate for victims wanting them to be safe.
- Don't take away the survivor's reality. Allow them the time and space to work through the pain.
- Help survivor's to reach the place of forgiveness with integrity and dignity. Don't force them to forgive before they are mentally and emotionally ready to do so.
- Offer loving and understanding support without judgment.
- Allow survivors to express their anger in a healthy way.
- Allow survivors to deal with the spiritual effects of their victimization.
- Assure survivors that God is a constant companion Who shares their journey releasing small doses of revelations each step of the way.
- Be patient. Many victims may have very strong reasons for not leaving their abuser
- Validate the survivor's decisions.
- Help a survivor even if they do not leave.
- Reach out regularly and be present in their lives, if you are invited to do so.
- Don't blame or abandon a survivor's if they decide not to leave.
- Don't blame a survivor's for the breakup of the marriage as the abuser has already broken the bond.

Principle Accountability (Standards)

(Based on the size/resources of the faith organization: small, mid-size** and large***)*

For the purposes of the CCRDV, church sizes will be measured by membership. Small organizations include those faith groups with less than 100 members. Mid-size** organizations include those faith groups with 100-500 members. Finally, the large*** organizations include those faith groups with over 500 members.*

General Standards* for all participating faith groups are as follows:

- Have written policies and procedures in place on how to respond to domestic violence including:
 1. Safety being the number One goal for victims and survivors.
 2. Safety planning. This is done in preparation of leaving the abuser. Studies show that this is the most dangerous and lethal time in an abusive relationship. Therefore, it is important to carefully plan out how the victim can leave safely.

3. Confidentiality. Victims may come to you with their story of abuse. It is never a good idea to share that information without the victim's permission. Also, never try to confirm the story with the alleged abuser.
- Refer to community resources including: domestic violence/sexual assault programs and shelters, batterer intervention programs, and other local programs as needed.
 - Develop referral strategies ahead of time for responding to domestic violence.
 - Encourage faith group members to donate time and money to domestic violence services.
 - Train all members of the faith group leadership about how to recognize and respond to domestic violence survivors. (The CCRDV are ready, willing and able).
 - Have prayer counselors and domestic violence counselors available to talk with individuals before and after presentations
 - Display posters, brochures and contact information about domestic violence around the faith center and on your website.
 - Get to know the resources in the community that you can call if you are confronted with domestic violence in your faith community.
 - Provide videos and other resources on domestic violence in your resource library.
 - Discuss abuse and violence in pre-marital counseling sessions.
 - Preach a sermon/speak to the general assembly on domestic violence in support of the victims while encouraging faith group members to always hold the batterer accountable.
 - Encourage strong couples in the faith community to step up and take survivors and their children under their wings.
 - Encourage men in the faith community to mentor boys on how to treat women with respect.
 - Discuss bullying in Sunday School/children's and youth services.
 - Become a safe place.
 - Become a community advocate.
 - Provide a temporary place to stay if needed.
 - Lead by example.
 - Partner with existing resources.
 - Look for unique ways to raise awareness.
 - Follow up with promises to help.

Intermediate Standards**

- Refer both men and women to separate competent counseling services.
- Help the survivor with such things as packing and getting a house ready to sell.
- Help with changing locks and getting the house repaired.
- Include an article on domestic violence in your newsletter and bulletins.

- Hold a ceremony in remembrance of survivors and victims.
- Offer space and resources.
- Engage in cross referrals.

Advanced Standards***

- Facilitate or co-facilitate regular multi-disciplinary intervention groups to discuss topics and find solutions to domestic violence, dating violence and bullying using guest speakers, established curriculums and techniques.
- Develop a trained response team to appropriately confront violent behaviors in your community.
- Offer community training in anger management and responsible parenting.
- Recognize and process denial, minimization and other defense mechanisms.
- Identify social and cultural contexts for family violence and personal beliefs which lead to violent choices.
- Provide a weekly support group for survivors to include private and individual prayer sessions as requested.
- Appropriately identify the needs of children victimized by domestic violence and offer activities and support.
- Provide help such as:
 1. Providing a place to transfer kids.
 2. Accompanying the victim to court.
 3. Providing household resources, childcare and financial support.
- Help with changing locks and house repairs.
- Care for and mentor children.
- Provide positive summer diversions for kids.