



Ending Domestic Abuse: A Pack for Churches

“provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair”

Isaiah 61:3

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Introduction

Aim

The aim of this policy is to enable the Church to address domestic abuse both within its own community and wider society. Also to work through how to deal with domestic abuse issues in today's world. It is intended to raise awareness and to highlight some of the areas that need to be considered in making our churches safe places.

It is intended to help:

1. Survivors of domestic abuse
2. People who are at risk of domestic abuse
3. Churches
4. Church Leaders
5. Pastoral Workers.

This is not an all inclusive resource. The information contained within it will not equip individual Church leaders or Church members to be able to respond fully to the needs of those who are suffering or who have suffered from aspects of domestic abuse. However, it aims to:

1. Educate members of church communities about the existence and effects of domestic abuse
2. Encourage churches to take necessary measures to be recognised as places where domestic abuse is taken seriously, victims are believed and respected and perpetrators are challenged.
3. Provide ideas for theological reflection on issues of domestic abuse
4. Promote the importance of referring victims of domestic abuse to specialist secular organisations and encourage churches to support the work of these organisations
5. Raise awareness of the need for specialist help for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women. However, domestic abuse can be inflicted by women on men and also in same sex relationships. Female terms for victims and male terms for abusers in this resource are used as this is the most common presentation of domestic abuse, although the needs of male victims should be treated with equal concern.

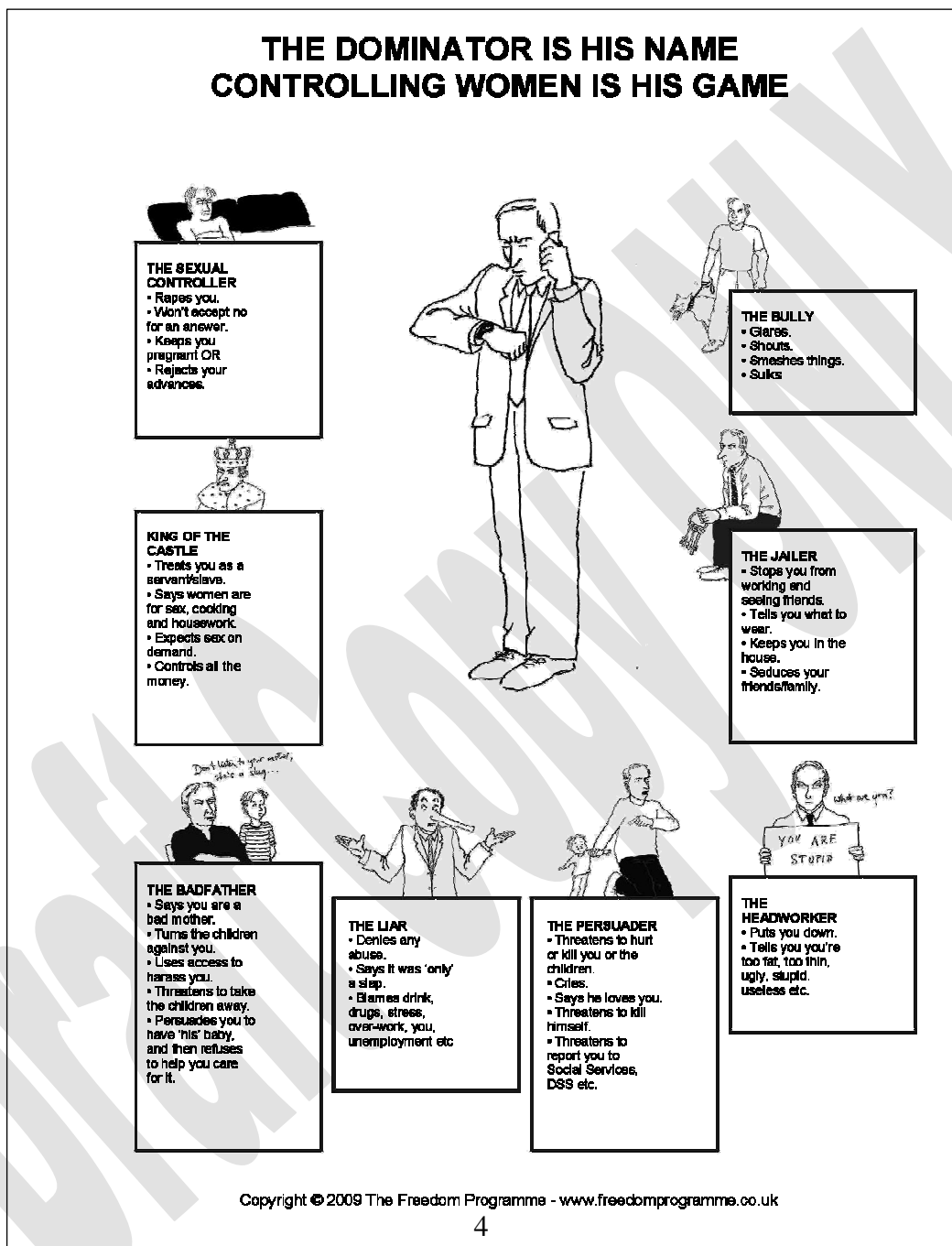
EXPERTISE IN THE FIELD OF SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE CAN BE FOUND IN THE MANY WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S AID AGENCIES. OFTEN CHURCHES *DO NOT* HAVE THAT EXPERTISE. WITHOUT *PROPER* TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN THIS FIELD WE CAN DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. THEREFORE THIS PACK INVOLVES SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND EMPOWERING THEM TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL CARE FROM THOSE RELEVANT AGENCIES.

Introduction

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is the abuse of a person physically, sexually, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, socially or financially within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'. Domestic abuse is also known as domestic violence. (Adapted from the Women's Aid definition of domestic violence)

A perpetrator of domestic abuse chooses to behave in abusive ways in order to develop and maintain power over and control of their victim. These behaviours can be separated into eight personas. (The dominator graphic is used with permission from Pat Craven)



Introduction

Who experiences domestic abuse?

There is no particular profile for a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse. People experience domestic abuse regardless of their social group, class, age, race, disability, sexuality or lifestyle. Most abuse is carried out by men against female partners, but abuse can be inflicted on men by women and can also occur in same sex relationships.

It is often assumed that domestic abuse is a 'working class' experience, but domestic abuse happens across the social spectrum.

Any children in a family where domestic abuse is perpetrated will be severely affected by this abuse.

They may:

1. Witness the violence directly, or indirectly by seeing their mother's distress or injuries
2. Intervene to protect their mother, either physically or by getting help
3. Be forced by the adult abuser to join in with the abuse
4. Have disrupted routines, sleep patterns, etc
5. Be allowed little or no social contact with others
6. Be told to keep it 'secret'
7. Be experiencing abuse
8. Be neglected

It is important to understand the added impact of women who have no recourse to public funding. The situation for them is as follows¹:

Many women come to the UK, often legally, in the hope of improving their lives. They may come on temporary work permits, student visas or spousal visas. Some women come to the UK to marry. The 'no recourse to public funds' rule says that a woman in this position - even if she's married to a British citizen - is not entitled to certain state benefits, including housing benefit and income support.

But these are the benefits a woman must be able to claim to get a place in a refuge if she needs to escape violence. As a result, many newly-married women in the UK are trapped in violent marriages and even if they do muster the courage to seek help from the authorities, they are simply turned away.

Further information and guidance for women with no recourse to public funding can be found from Southall Black Sisters, whose details can be found in the Local and National Support Services on page 10.

¹ This information is taken from

[http://www.wrc.org.uk/what we do/campaigns/women with no recourse to public funds/default.aspx](http://www.wrc.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigns/women_with_no_recourse_to_public_funds/default.aspx)

Introduction

Who are the perpetrators of domestic abuse?

Just as there is no particular profile for someone who experiences domestic abuse, there is also no particular profile for someone who perpetrates domestic abuse.

Doctors, lawyers, police officers, doctors, teachers, lorry drivers and soldiers have been found to be abusing their partners. Perpetrators of domestic abuse are from every part of society and although they may present themselves in a certain way to the world, the disclosure of their partner should be taken seriously and believed.

People who abuse their partners make a choice to do so; to gain power and control over them. Other factors such as childhood issues, alcohol, drugs, mental and other health problems are not the cause of domestic abuse, they may be factors in the situation, but they are not the cause.

Domestic abuse also happens within the Church community. Church leaders and prominent members of local churches have been found to be abusers, and there are many more still perpetrating abuse against their partners on a daily basis. The reality for someone married to or in a relationship with an abusive perpetrator who is a church leader can be horrific. On top of the terrible abuse they are suffering, they feel a responsibility to the church their partner is leading to stay quiet and continue to suffer.

Introduction

Statistics

The statistics below are just a snapshot of the horrific and all pervasive reality of domestic abuse both in the UK and globally.

- Globally, women between the age of 15-44 are more likely to be maimed or die as a result of male violence than through cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war combined. (UN 2007)
- Domestic violence is the largest form of abuse of women worldwide, irrespective of region, culture, ethnicity, education, class and religion. (United Nations)
- In the UK, 2 women a week die due to intimate partner violence. (Women's Aid 2010)
- In the UK a woman is assaulted in her own home every 6 seconds. (Day to Count 2000)
- Women who are victims of domestic violence are three times more likely to be injured when pregnant. (Refuge 2007)
- In the UK 25% of women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. (Home Office 2007)
- On average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim of domestic abuse calls the police. (Amnesty International)
- The estimated total cost of domestic abuse on the UK economy is around £15.7 billion. (Professor Walby 2008)
- Every year 3/4 million children live in fear of domestic violence. (Women's Aid)

Introduction

Misconceptions about domestic abuse

Most of us have some attitudes, beliefs or ideas about domestic abuse which are incorrect and are based on a misconception about what domestic abuse is and who it affects. The aim of the list below is to challenge those misconceptions.

1. It happens to ‘those women’

It can be thought that domestic abuse happens to a certain ‘type’ of women, this type may be based on: a socio economic status; a level of inner strength or confidence; religious or cultural background etc. This is not the case. Domestic abuse can affect any woman regardless of her race, colour, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or level of confidence and inner strength. The only common denominator within a domestic abuse situation is an abusive man.

2. It happens because of...

Domestic abuse can sometimes be thought to be caused by many things. These could include alcohol or drug misuse; unemployment; mental or physical health problems; stress; a lack of submission by a woman; unemployment or historically having lived through abuse as a child. This is incorrect. Domestic abuse happens because an abusive person chooses to behave in a way that will enable them to have power and control over another person. All other reasons that are given to cause domestic abuse are excuses and are used to justify abusive behaviour.

3. A woman can cause a man to become abusive

Often a man will tell his partner that she “made” him do it and many victims have been asked, “What did you do to let things get this bad?” A woman is never responsible if a man chooses to behave in an abusive and controlling way.

4. Victims of domestic abuse understand what is happening to them

When someone is in an abusive relationship, they will often not understand what is happening, and may not even realise what they are experiencing is abuse. Everything is a big confusing mess.

5. “Why doesn’t she just leave?”

This is a question asked many times about those in abusive relationships. If it was that easy, of course a woman would leave. An abusive man will ensure his victim thinks she cannot cope alone, will undermine and put her down until she believes she can’t cope alone. It can appear financially impossible to leave the situation. Statistically the time a woman is at most risk of being murdered is when she is trying to leave an abusive relationship, therefore leaving is a very dangerous thing to do. Also maybe we should be focusing on what an abusive man should or should not be doing, rather than looking at what his victim, who will feel completely powerless can do.

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6. Leaving is a choice

As with the previous question, there is a misconception that when a woman is in an abusive relationship, she has the choice to leave. This is often not the case. As has already been mentioned, leaving will put her in immense danger. A perpetrator may threaten to harm the woman, her children or himself should she make any attempts to leave. Also when in an abusive relationship, a woman may believe that leaving is outside of the realms of possibility, this means that for her leaving is NOT a choice.

7. Abusive men are not bad fathers

It has often been stated that if a man is abusive to his partner that does not necessarily make him a bad father. This is incorrect. By being abusive to the mother of the children, he is being a bad father.

8. Domestic abuse is about anger

Domestic abuse is a choice to behave in a controlling way; it is not about being angry. All abusive tactics employed by abusive men will be used regardless of whether they feel anger or not.

9. If someone discloses abuse they are probably being “over dramatic”

The statement is both completely untrue and very dangerous. In actual fact any evidence of abuse is likely to be the tip of the iceberg. Most women living in threatening and controlling situations are reluctant to admit what is happening to them for many reasons. These include the shame of being abused; the fear of what their abusive partner will do if they tell anyone; their partner will have minimised and justified his behaviour to her, which will often cause her to believe it wasn't ‘that’ bad and he was justified in being abusive.

10. False Repentance

Although it is possible for perpetrators to change and be transformed through God's power, very often a perpetrator will appear repentant or appear to become a Christian in order to gain space for his abuse to continue. If he appears to come to faith in Christ and/or appears repentant or remorseful; this cannot be taken at face value. To ascertain whether repentance or conversion is genuine it should be measured over a long period of time, consulting regularly with the victim, as she is most able to see if change has taken place.

Introduction

Local and National Support Services

There are many outstanding services for domestic abuse victims throughout the UK. It is so important that the church acknowledges their wealth of knowledge and experience and fully utilizes them.

SOME OF THE NUMBERS BELOW MAY APPEAR ON THE PHONE BILL OF THE PERSON WHO CALLS THEM. PLEASE ENSURE ANYBODY ADVISED TO USE THEM IS AWARE OF THIS.

Name of Organisation	Purpose	Website	Telephone Number
National Domestic Violence Helpline	A national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.	http://www.womensaid.org.uk/ http://refuge.org.uk/	0808 2000 247 (24 hours)
Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline	A service for women in Scotland experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.	http://www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk/index	0800 027 1234 (24 hours)
Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline	The Helpline is for anyone in Wales who is experiencing, or has experienced domestic abuse, or for anyone who is worried about domestic abuse happening to a friend, family member or colleague.	http://www.welshwomensaid.org/index.html	0808 80 10 800 (24 hours)
Northern Ireland Domestic Violence Helpline	A service for women in Northern Ireland experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.	http://www.niawf.org/	0808 80 10 800 (24 hours)
National Centre for Domestic Violence	A free, fast, emergency service to survivors of domestic violence enabling them to apply for an injunction within 24 hours of first contact (in most circumstances).	http://www.ncdv.org.uk/	0844 8044 999
The National Stalking Helpline	Practical advice and information to anyone who is currently or previously been affected by harassment or stalking.	http://www.stalkinghelpline.org/	0300 636 0300
Southall Black Sisters	Support and advice on issues regarding no recourse to public funding issues	http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk	020 8571 0800 (Mon-Fri 10am–5pm Closed Wed 12.30pm to 1.30pm)

Introduction

Local and National Support Services

Name of Organisation	Purpose	Website	Telephone Number
Respect	A helpline for men who commit domestic abuse and for people concerned for someone they know who they think is abusive.	http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk/	0845 122 8609 (10am-1pm, 2pm-5pm Mon, Tues, Weds, Fri)
Broken Rainbow	Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.	http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk/	0300 999 5428 (2-8pm Mon and Thurs, Weds 10am-1pm)
Men's Advice Line	A confidential helpline for men experiencing violence and abuse from their partners or ex-partners.	http://www.mensadvice.org.uk	0808 801 0327 (10am-1pm, 2pm-5pm Mon-Fri)
Local Police Non Emergency Number	Contact to report non emergency crime, raise a concern or ask advice.	http://website.lineone.net/~familykeens/policeno.htm	Please complete details for your local service
Please complete details for your local service	Please complete details for your local service	Please complete details for your local service	Please complete details for your local service
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The Church's Response

A Charter for Churches

It is important for the membership of our churches to debate the issue of domestic abuse and to develop our understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on the lives of victims and their families.

By adopting this Charter, the local church will be committing itself to undertake positive steps to provide information, support and pastoral care for those experiencing domestic violence.

By displaying this Charter on its premises, the local church will be making a public statement about its condemnation of domestic violence and its availability to offer information, care and support to those who are victims.

The Charter

This Church-

1. Understands domestic abuse to be the abuse of a person physically, sexually, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, socially or financially within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'.
2. Holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and irreconcilable with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living.
3. Accepts that domestic abuse is a serious problem which occurs in church families as well as in wider society.
4. Undertakes to listen, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse.
5. Will always place the safety of women and children as the highest priority.
6. Will work with domestic abuse support agencies, will learn from them and support them in appropriate ways, and will publicise their work.
7. Will play its part in teaching that domestic abuse is a sin.
8. Believes in a God of love, justice, mercy, and forgiveness.
9. Will teach what it means to be male and female, equally made in God's image.
10. Will seek to appoint advisors to encourage the use of good practice guidelines and keep the church informed about the implementation and development of these guidelines

(From a Charter developed by Churches Together in Gloucestershire, and adapted by Churches Together in the Merseyside Region, The Baptist Union of Great Britain, The Methodist Church and others)

Please find two copies of the Charter in this pack to be displayed in the Church meeting place.

The Church's Response

How should the local Church respond to domestic abuse generally?

1. **Believe it! Both outside and inside the church;** for many people in church domestic abuse is a taboo subject, which “doesn’t happen here, and we don’t like to talk about it.” However, people in church will either know victims or be victims themselves. It is therefore vital that this subject is on the agenda of the church.
2. **Create a list of domestic abuse contacts to refer people to.** See page 10
3. **Support your local domestic abuse resources/initiatives;**
 - a. Research what services are available. Start by calling the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0800 2000 247
 - b. Contact your local domestic abuse services and ask them what support they would most value
 - c. Place them on your church’s list of giving
 - d. Hold an annual gift day for your local Domestic Abuse Resource, Women’s Aid, Refuge or other agency
 - e. Run events through the year to raise funds
 - f. Offer them space or one-off use of church and community hall
 - g. Invite speakers from local agencies to your church groups to raise awareness
 - h. Develop a scheme to provide emergency packs of toiletries or small bags of play things for children
 - i. Become a part of you local Domestic Abuse/Violence Forum. You can do this by contacting you local forum, details of most local forums can be found here:
<http://www.womensaid.org.uk/azfora.asp?section=000100010009&itemTitle=Domestic+Violence+Fora>
4. **Adopt the domestic abuse Charter for Churches;** please see page 12
5. **Be aware of limitations;** we have many limitations and to not take account of this and work within those limitations is likely to do more harm than good. Our job is to provide a ‘safe’ place for victims and refer them to the appropriate professionals.
6. **Educate your church using local expertise;** invite your local domestic abuse service to do presentations and/or training.
7. **Ensure support is available for children;** domestic abuse has a serious effect on children. Ensure you have an effective child protection policy and that Church leaders and members are child protection trained.
8. **Confidentiality;** in view of the serious or real risk of potential harm to the victim and any children, it is important to respect the information disclosed to you. It should be shared on a need to know basis, with full consideration given to any safety issues.
9. **Pray** for all involved.

The Church's Response

How can the Church challenge abusive behaviour?

1. **Display posters, leaflets and cards** that offer information about help that is available locally. Place domestic abuse contact number cards on seats and other suitable locations. Put up posters in toilet cubicles. Remember it is important for people to be able to access material discreetly and without embarrassment.
2. **Use preaching and teaching** to make it plain that domestic abuse is wrong.
3. **Pray** regularly for organisations that work in this area and for victims and offenders.
4. **Review the content of your marriage preparation.** Does it deal with the issues of conflict, control and abuse?
5. **Challenge inappropriate behaviour** and encourage inclusive language.
6. **Make your church a safe environment** and provide opportunity for prayer and listening.
7. **Discuss issues in youth groups** with the help of one of your local agencies. Make the necessary resources available.
8. **Encourage training for greater understanding** e.g. developing skills in listening and pastoral care.
9. **Make books on domestic abuse issues available** on your church bookstall and in your church library.
10. **Stand up for the individual's rights**, in church, locally, nationally and internationally.
11. **Bring together a group to address these issues** and keep the subject in your consciousness.
12. **Designate a special day each year** when your church will focus on developing awareness of domestic abuse issues. November 25th is recognised as an international day of action to end violence against women. Publicity can be obtained from www.unifem.org/campaigns/sayno/

The Church's Response

Enabling the church to become a safe space

Initial response:

1. Accept that domestic abuse is a specialist area of counselling and refer victim to relevant organisations
2. Work alongside your local domestic abuse services group
3. Offer a listening ear to victims

Education:

1. Attend courses
2. Listen to organisations with relevant experience
3. Listen to victims and survivors
4. Study; read books, use online resources (see pages 26-28)
5. Evaluate your own attitudes and beliefs about domestic abuse. Consider whether any need challenging

Prevention:

1. Educate your congregation
2. Raise the issue with Church leaders and members
3. Make space for this issue in your contact with schools, youth groups, marriage courses and any other ministries the church does
4. Highlight the issue through prayer, preaching and Bible Study. Don't take it for granted that others put the same meaning to things that you do. Interpret, explain and make it relevant

Awareness:

1. Raise awareness about domestic abuse by ensuring it is regularly mentioned appropriately in preaching, teaching and small groups
2. Create spaces to discuss, educate and develop understanding of domestic abuse and related issues

Set up a pastoral team:

1. Develop a group of people within the Church to:
 - a. Pray for domestic abuse issues, both within the Church and more widely
 - b. Become trained in supporting those suffering abuse within the church
 - c. Refer victims to the relevant local or national service
 - d. Provide a point of contact and accountability for the church leadership on domestic abuse issues
2. Contact Restored about how to do this

Supporting Those Involved

Recognising signs of domestic abuse

It is very difficult to create a definitive list of signs that domestic abuse is possibly happening because:

- a) Perpetrators are very good at lying to hide their behaviour and victims of abuse will be very skilled at hiding whatever abuse is happening due to fear, shame and the desire to protect themselves and their children.
- b) Domestic abuse can occur on many levels and at opposite extremes, for example, a woman may never be allowed to work or leave the house, or instead, may be forced to work long hours. A woman may never be allowed to leave the children alone, or she may never be allowed to touch the children or go near them.

The warning signs below may suggest that domestic abuse is occurring. The list is not exhaustive.

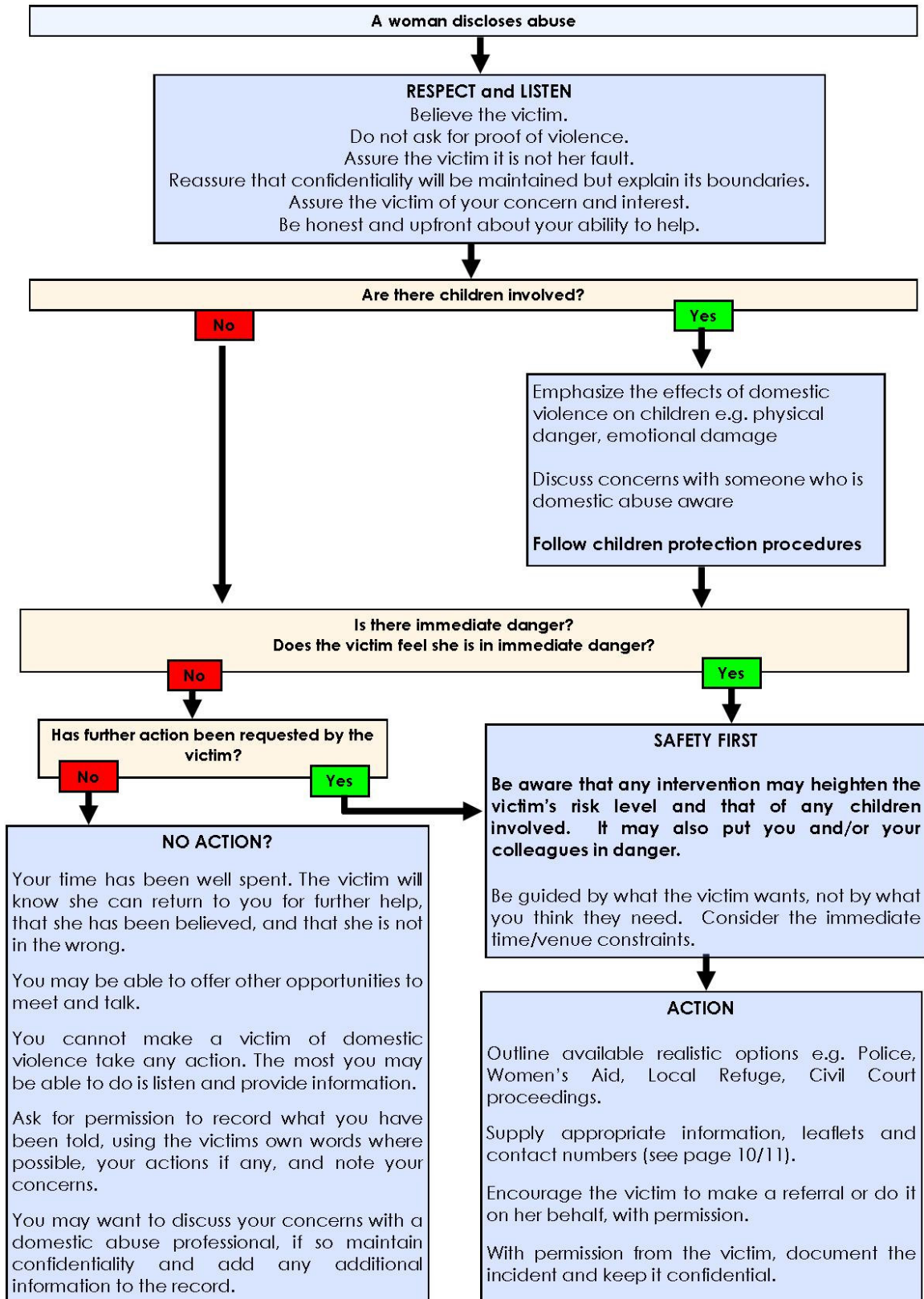
- 1. A woman may never be seen alone, she is always accompanied by her partner.
- 2. She may become more and more isolated, possibly moving a long way from family. She may not have any friends or may gradually stop seeing them, she may withdraw from church.
- 3. Her partner may talk over her or for her and she may be reluctant to speak. Her partner may appear controlling or may regularly make disparaging comments about her.
- 4. She may have unexplained injuries. However, most perpetrators are skilled in ensuring the injuries he inflicts on his partner are in places that are easily able to be covered up. When approached about any injuries she may make excuses about how they happened.
- 5. If her partner is behaving publicly in an inappropriate manner she may justify and excuse his behaviour.
- 6. She may lose her job, have regular unexplained absences from work or often be late to work.
- 7. She may appear to be very fearful, jumpy or over careful in her partner's company.
- 8. Her partner may contact her excessively, constantly texting and ringing her.
- 9. She may have no access to money.
- 10. She may not want people to visit her at home or may not be comfortable giving out her address or details.
- 11. Her partner may be unsociable with her friends, family or colleagues, or he may be extremely charismatic and friendly to everyone. He may belittle her in public.
- 12. If she has children she may find it very difficult to control them and they may call her names and ignore her. Her children may be extremely clingy to her and not want to leave her.
- 13. Her partner may tell people she is abusing him and that he is a victim of domestic abuse.

Supporting Those Involved

14. In a new relationship her new partner may constantly want to be with her and may 'surprise' her with visits when he knows she will be spending time with other people.
15. She may move in with him/become engaged to him/become pregnant very quickly after first meeting him or starting a relationship with him.
16. He may seek to present her as unreasonable and himself as the victim of her unreasonable behaviour.
17. Her behaviour may start to change after meeting him/beginning a relationship with him.
18. She may stop talking about her partner.

Supporting Those Involved

Abuse disclosure flowchart



Supporting Those Involved

Do's and Don'ts when supporting a victim

Do:

1. Find a safe place to talk.
2. Have someone else present – if this is acceptable to the victim.
3. Allow time for the person to talk.
4. Listen to what she has to say – and take it seriously.
5. Believe her, her description of the abuse is only the tip of the iceberg.
6. Give priority to her immediate safety.
7. Empower her to make her own decisions.
8. Support and respect her choices. Even if she chooses initially to return to the abuser, it is her choice. She has the most information about how to survive. However if there are children involved their safety must come first.
9. Give her information about relevant support agencies and if appropriate, offer to contact the agency on her behalf and do so in her presence or offer a safe and private place from which she can contact the relevant agency.
10. Use the expertise of those who are properly trained.
11. Reassure her that this is not her fault, she doesn't deserve this treatment, and it is not God's will for her.
12. Let her know that what the abuser has done is wrong and completely unacceptable.
13. Love and support her.
14. Be patient.
15. Protect her confidentiality.

Don't:

1. Judge her or what she tells you.
2. Make unrealistic promises.
3. Suggest that she should "try again" evidence shows that victims experience a number of violent incidents before seeking help.
4. Minimise the severity of their experience or the danger they are in.
5. React with disbelief, disgust, or anger at what she tells you.
6. React passively.
7. Ask her why she did not act in a certain way.
8. Blame her for his violence.
9. Act on the person's behalf without her consent and/or knowledge.
10. Expect her to make decisions quickly.
11. Make decisions for her or tell her what to do.
12. Recommend couple counselling/ family mediation/ marriage courses/ healthy relationship course. These will not help domestic abuse situations.
13. Encourage her to forgive him and take him back.
14. Send her home with a prayer/ directive to submit to her husband/ bring him to church/ be a better Christian wife.
15. Contact the person at home, unless they have agreed to this.
16. Approach her partner for his side of the story, this will endanger her.
17. Give information about her or her whereabouts to the abuser or to others who might pass information on to the abuser.
18. Discuss with church leaders who might inadvertently/intentionally pass information on to the abuser.
19. Encourage her dependence on you or become emotionally or sexually involved with her, this will re-abuse her.
20. Do nothing.

Supporting Those Involved

Do's and Don'ts when dealing with a perpetrator

Do:

1. Place the victim's safety as the highest priority.
2. Meet him in a public place or in the church with several other people around, if meeting him is appropriate.
3. When not in his presence, pray for him. Ask God to help him stop his violence, choose to change his behaviour and find a new way of living.
4. Understand that he alone is responsible for his behaviour and that being abusive is a CHOICE.
5. Ensure that any actions you take are victim centred and do not lose sight of the abuse he has perpetrated.
6. If he is still in the relationship only speak to him about the abuse if he has been arrested, or his behaviour has been challenged by outside authorities.
7. If he is no longer in the relationship, only speak to him if his partner is in a safe environment and the abuser is not able to harass her (either personally or electronically by text etc), and his partner has given you permission to speak to him about his abuse.
8. Maintain awareness of the danger he may pose to you, other people, but especially to the victim, her children and wider family.
9. Research treatment programmes and services to help him change his behaviour.
10. Find ways to collaborate with the police, probation and other services to hold him accountable.
11. Address any religious rationalizations he may offer or questions he may have.
12. Name the abuse as his problem, not hers. Tell him that only he can stop it; and you are willing to help.
13. Take seriously any murder threats he may make and inform the police and, if they involve the victim, her children or family also inform her.
14. Share any concerns you have with a properly trained professional.
15. Remember domestic abuse is always the responsibility of the perpetrator.

Don't:

1. Go to him to confirm the victim's story.
2. Meet with him alone and in private. .
3. Approach him or let him know that you know about his violence. If he is to be approached this should be by a trained professional and should be a) with the victim's permission, b) her awareness that they plan to talk to him and c) certainty that his partner is safely separated from him.
4. Allow him to use religious excuses for his behaviour.
5. Pursue couples' counselling with him and his partner if you are aware that there is violence in the relationship.
6. Give him any information about his partner or her whereabouts, if she has left him.
7. Be taken in by him minimising the abuse, denying he was abusive or lying about the abuse.
8. Accept him blaming the victim, anything or anyone else.
9. Be taken in by his "conversion" experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as he proceeds with accountability. If it is not genuine, it is only another way to manipulate you and the system and maintain control of the process to avoid accountability.
10. Advocate for the abuser to avoid the legal consequences of his violence.
11. Provide a character witness for any legal proceedings.
12. Forgive an abuser quickly and easily.
13. Confuse his remorse with true repentance.
14. Send him home with a prayer.

Domestic Abuse and the UK Law

“Domestic Violence accounts for 25% of all reported violent crime”

There are two forms of legal redress for instances of domestic violence. Firstly, a complaint can be made to the police, which, if substantiated by evidence, will result in a criminal prosecution. Secondly, a victim can pursue directly a claim for damages and/or other remedies through the civil courts.

The Criminal Court

As regards criminal legal procedure, the victim reports the domestic abuse to the police and the police investigate the allegation. The Police furnish the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) with the evidence and the CPS make a decision as to whether there is sufficient evidence to secure a conviction. Most cases of domestic violence will be categorised as an offence against the person such as assault, battery, actual bodily harm, grievous bodily harm or one of a number of sexual offences, depending on the severity of the conduct and the extent of the injury. **If the CPS decides to prosecute, it must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the defendant has committed the offence.** If the defendant pleads not guilty, the trial will take place either in the Magistrates Court or the Crown Court dependant upon the nature of the offence. The aim of the process is to bring the defendant to justice, whilst supporting and protecting the victim through police domestic abuse units and victim support schemes. Before and during trial, where the Court considers that the victim is still at risk of attack, it may either remand the defendant into custody or attach conditions to bail.

The Civil Court

There are various forms of redress in the Civil Courts. Advice as to pursuing a civil claim can be sought from the organisations listed in the Resources Section. The organisations are networked and will be able to refer an enquirer to a more appropriate organisation if necessary.

Criminal offences concerning domestic abuse will almost always give rise to a corresponding civil liability; in fact, evidence of a criminal conviction for the conduct may be admissible as evidence for a civil claim. However, it is also possible to pursue a civil claim where the conduct does not constitute a criminal offence or there is insufficient evidence to convict. The standard of proof in the civil courts is lower than that in the criminal courts; **the claimant must prove that the defendant committed the civil wrong on the balance of probabilities rather than beyond reasonable doubt.** It is therefore much easier to prove a civil wrong than it is to prove a criminal wrong. Also, if a victim is not happy to report the perpetrator to the police, civil action may still protect her from him.

A civil claim for domestic abuse would usually take the form of an action for negligence, battery or trespass to the person, depending on the circumstances of the case. The kinds of remedies available are: (a) damages – financial compensation for the defendant’s conduct; (b) injunctions – restraining the defendant from a course of action amounting to harassment; (c) non-molestation orders – prohibiting a person from molesting another person or child within a relationship; (d) occupation orders – stipulating an individual’s occupation rights.

Introduction

Throughout history the Bible has been used to justify, perpetuate and propagate the abuse of women. The misuse of the Bible in this way not only gives perpetrators the ability to start and continuing abusing, it can cause those who are experiencing domestic abuse to be plagued with spiritual dilemmas about the abuse being inflicted on them.

This section is aimed at ascertaining some of the helpful ways of understanding Scripture and also identifying some of the Scriptures or belief systems that have been used in an unhelpful way, and re-examining them.

1. It is important to recognise the divine authority of the Bible; “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,” (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. The word of God that is the Bible must be understood in relation to His incarnate Word, Jesus; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)
3. All this must be understood within the context of love; “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)
4. That for any and all actions we take, an account will be required of us; “Each of us will give an account of himself before God.” Romans 14:12

Theology Tables

The table below lists some Scriptures that have been used unhelpfully with regard to victims of domestic abuse. They also show how they can be used helpfully and resources for further study

Scripture	Unhelpful Application	Helpful Application	Resources
Submission “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord” Ephesians 5:22	Obedience The woman must obey her partner	Mutual Submission The previous verse (5:21) says” Submit to one another” And 5:22 must be read in light of the mutual submission we should be giving to one another. To submit does not mean to obey, it means to choose to place oneself under another.	
	Not submitting causes abuse If a man abuses his partner it is because she is not being submissive enough.	Submission is a choice Submission cannot be forced, it must be chosen. Not submitting can never justify abuse.	
Headship “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.” Ephesians 5:23	The asserting of power The man is the head; therefore he has all the power and the right to assert it.	The laying down of power The example given of headship is of Christ’s headship of the Church. When Christ came to earth, He gave up all His heavenly power, for His bride the Church. The original Greek word used for head in this passage is Kephale, this word means the head of a river or the source of the river. It is does not imply superiority.	
	Superiority Headship means being superior and having the right to take more than give.	Sacrificial Love The headship Christ gave was never forced, it was a choice. It also meant Him being willing to lay down His life for His bride. “Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.”	
Rulership To the woman he said, “...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” Genesis 3:16	Rulership: a Right God determined men should rule their wives, therefore that is how it should be	Rulership: a Result A consequence of sin is that a man will rule over his wife, it is not God’s best plan for humanity, before the fall men and women were equal.	

Scripture	Unhelpful Application	Helpful Application	Resources
Creation of Woman “The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18	Inferior To help means to serve, this verse shows that God created women to serve men and suggests they are inferior to them.	Equal The word "helper" (ezer) here referring to women, most often refers to God in the Old Testament usage (e.g. 1 Samuel 7:12; Ps 121:1-2). Therefore there is no suggestion at all of female inferiority.	Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: William Webb
Forgiveness “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Matthew 6:12	Disregard Forgiving someone should mean disregarding what they have done and maintaining the same relationship with them regardless of whether they change.	Consequences Sin has consequences and forgiving does not remove those consequences. Forgiveness is a process and must not nullify the consequences of abuse or mean that the situation must continue as it always has. Women should not have to stay in an abusive situation in order to forgive their partner.	Luggage Nooma: Rob Bell
The Original Sin “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Genesis 3:6	Sin: Women are weaker Eve took the fruit, and gave some to her husband; this shows women are weaker and more likely to be sinful.	Sin: Equal Responsibility Man and woman were both participants in the Fall: Adam was no less to blame than Eve. Romans 5:12-21 “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned”	
Divorce “But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, causes her to become an adulteress...” Matthew 5:32	Contract Marriage is a contract and the person who cancels the contract i.e. files for divorce is the one who is responsible. Therefore if a woman divorces a man for abusing her, she is at fault, not him.	Covenant Marriage is a covenant; divorce is the breaking of that covenant. When a man chooses to be abusive, he breaks the covenant. If his wife chooses to divorce him, she is making public his breaking of the covenant, not going against what the Bible says about divorce.	Not Under Bondage: Barbara Roberts Divorce and Remarriage: David Instone-Brewer

Scripture	Unhelpful Application	Helpful Application	Resources
Suffering “In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.” 1 Peter 1:6	Accept Women should accept abuse and use the suffering as an opportunity to grow their faith.	Refute By staying in an abusive situation a woman is risking being murdered. When Jesus was tempted to risk His life, He said, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’” (Matthew 4:7) God wants abused women to be safe and protected.	http://www.hidde nhurt.co.uk/Religion/hurdles.htm

The table below looks at some beliefs and attitudes which will enable the Church, and Christians individually, to more effectively support those suffering.

Domestic abuse is a sin	<p>Domestic abuse is a gross injustice that can never be condoned under any circumstances. It is sinful and offends the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person. It also offends God’s law of love.</p> <p>When dealing with domestic abuse, it must be always be with the understanding that domestic abuse is a sin, a choice by a person to hurt another person. It should also be understood as a criminal act.</p>
The church has a responsibility to support and help abused women	<p>Throughout the Bible God has consistently called His people to support and help the poor and needy; “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” Isaiah 1:17. “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” Hebrews 13:3.</p>
The Church has a responsibility to hold the perpetrator accountable	<p>Domestic abuse is a sin, Romans 6:26 says, “For the wages of sin is death...” In order to show love to a perpetrator of abuse we must hold them to account in order to enable them to choose to change. Galatians 6:1 says “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”</p>

Resources

Books

Pat Craven (2008) *Living with the Dominator* Freedom Publishing

Rosalind B. Penfold (2005) *Dragon-Slippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like* Penguin Group, Canada

Catherine Clark Kroeger and Nancy Nason-Clark (2001) *No Place for Abuse* InterVarsity Press, USA

Barbara Roberts (2008) *Not Under Bondage* Maschil Press, Australia

Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger (1992) *I Suffer Not a Woman*, Baker Books, USA

Sandra Horley (2002) *Power and Control: Why Charming Men Can Make Dangerous Lovers* Vermillion, London

Websites

RAVE

RAVE is an initiative that seeks to bring knowledge and social action together to assist families of faith impacted by abuse.

<http://www.theraveproject.org/>

Restored

Restored is an international Christian alliance working to end violence against women and to transform relationships.

<http://www.restoredrelationships.org/>

PASCH

An international coalition of men and women dedicated to promoting peace and safety in Christian homes.

<http://www.peaceandsafety.com/>

Faith and Freedom

Support and advice for those supporting someone suffering domestic abuse.

<http://www.faithandfreedom.webs.com/>

Not Under Bondage

Not Under Bondage is a book written by a survivor of domestic abuse which explains the scriptural dilemmas of abuse victims, carefully examines the scriptures and scholarly research and shows how the Bible sets victims of abuse free from bondage and guilt. The website also has much useful free information in the links and resources sections.

<http://www.notunderbondage.com/>

Resources

Hidden Hurt

Hidden Hurt is designed to help understand the dynamics of an abusive relationships, the different forms (or faces) abuse can take, its effect on both direct victims (ie person being abused) and indirect victims (ie children living in a house where abuse occurs), specific issues facing the Christian abuse victim, and helpful links and telephone numbers inside the UK.

<http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/>

The Hideout

Women's Aid have created this website to help children and young people to understand domestic abuse, and how to take positive action if it's happening to you.

www.thehideout.org.uk/default.aspa

AVA

AVA provides a range of domestic abuse services to UK based organisations and agencies working in the voluntary and statutory sector as well as to individual practitioners.

www.avaproject.org.uk/

Refuge

Refuge's network of safe houses provides emergency accommodation for women and children when they are most in need.

www.refuge.org.uk

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is the key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. They support a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

www.womensaid.org.uk/

The White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) is the UK branch of the global campaign to ensure men take more responsibility for reducing the level of violence against women.

www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/

Rights of Women

Rights of Women is a women's voluntary organisation committed to informing, educating and empowering women concerning their legal rights.

www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/

Men's Advice Line

The Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner.

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Resources

Broken Rainbow

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse
www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

Respect

A helpline for men who commit domestic abuse and for people concerned for someone they know who they think is abusive.

www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Articles

Spiritual obstacles to ending an abusive relationship:

<http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/Religion/hurdles.htm>

Clergy responses to domestic violence

<http://www.mendingthesoul.org/2007/04/clergy-responses-to-domestic-violence/>

Why a victim can't 'just leave'

<http://www.notunderbondage.com/free/WhyDidntYouLeave.html>

DASH Risk Toolkit

Multi-Media

Keira Knightley Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctoZbeD-GIY>

Australian Commercial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvBKlBhfgPc>

Verbal Abuse: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmBgPsK-Im0>

Eminem and Rihanna: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueIHwf8o7_U

Example Domestic Abuse Focused Liturgy²

Compass 6. Engage

6.5

Notes

Domestic Abuse is the abuse of power of one person over another, within an family or intimate relationship. The abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, emotional, social or financial. It forms a pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour.

Domestic Abuse

Violence Against Women is the most common but least punished crime in the world. We are all horrified when we hear of rape being used as a weapon of war in other parts of the world. We might be amazed to know that nationally, almost 50% of female murders are as a result of Domestic Abuse. We are shocked when we hear that 167 women are raped every day in the UK. We might be deeply saddened to know that every year thousands of women, children and some men on Merseyside are living in fear of domestic abuse. This is wrong. We move from disgust through dis-ease to dismay; this is our problem, here and now.

This Engage paper asks us not only to be aware of what is happening around us, regionally, nationally and world-wide, but also to examine the structures and relationships that we belong to. In fact, it asks us to dig deep into our souls to challenge our understanding of gender, power and God. It seeks to supply a few facts, some challenges to our attitudes and some pointers for those who need to know more.

Globally, women between the age of fifteen and forty-four are more likely to be maimed or die as a result of male violence than through cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war combined. At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Abuse in the home is not a rare problem, it is just rarely admitted as one.

MYTHS AND FACTS

There are many myths that surround the issue of domestic abuse DA.

Commonly held beliefs are:

DA is something that only affects a few individuals; No, it is widespread.

DA only affects women; No, it happens to anyone including some men.

DA is provoked; No, the fault lies with the abuser.

DA only affects individuals from deprived areas of society; No, it happens across all sectors of society.

DA should be solved within the four walls of the home, it is a private matter; No, abuse is wrong. Help is needed, DA won't just 'go away'. What is true, is that many people feel trapped and do not know where to turn to for help.

DA is not located in any one culture. It is the largest form of abuse of women worldwide, irrespective of region, culture, ethnicity, education, class and religion.

Chester Diocese, of which we are a part, has stated that, "Domestic Violence is an offence against humanity and a sin against God, which occurs in church families as well as in wider society".

Throughout history the Bible has been wrongly used to justify, perpetuate and propagate the abuse of women. A few brief verses overleaf serve to make us think and pray.

² Created by St Mary's Church Upton

Notes

As you read this paper :

You may be in an abusive relationship at the moment, confused and frightened.

You may be looking back on an abusive relationship and still feeling the fear that it inflicts .

You may be worried for someone who is being abused and want to understand what they are going through.

You may even be worried that you are abusive towards the person you love and want to break this corrosive trait.

We hope and pray that it will be of some help.



SOME BIBLE REFERENCES

Genesis 1v26-27: God said, "Let us make human beings in our image...male and female he created them". *There is no hint of 'hierarchy' here, just as there isn't in God himself. In Genesis 3v15 we read of the husband's 'rule', but this is a consequence of sin, not God's intention, prescription or plan for humanity.*

Genesis 2v18: "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him." *The word "helper" (Hebrew ezer) here referring to women, most often refers to God Himself in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 7v12 Psalm 12v1-2). Therefore there is no suggestion at all of male superiority. The English language obscures the way the Hebrews would have heard this text.*

Ephesians 5v21-25: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

All 'submitting' is the context of mutual submission. To submit in this context does not mean 'obey everything', it means to choose to place oneself under another person in love. It cannot be forced and not submitting can never justify abuse. Christ's headship is about laying down his power for his bride, the church; that is the radical model for husbands.

CONSIDER

PAUSE: What feelings emerge in you as you read these facts and texts?

PRAY: Talk to God about your feelings.

THINK: About your own relationships... marriage, family, employment...

Can you make a difference where you are, as you share 'Faith for life'?

ACTION

National Domestic Violence hotline on 0808 2000 247

Wirral Family Safety Unit (Wirral Council) includes a team of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. (IDVA). 0151 606 5442 (see their website for details and hours).

Rape and Sexual Abuse RASA helpline 0151 666 1392

Respect Phone Line (.org) For men who want to change their abusive behaviour. 0845 122 8609 (see their website for details and hours).

Ask about our **Transform** Group here in St.Mary's Upton, a group for those who find themselves alone after a long term relationship breakdown.

We are also actively supporting '**Stop the Traffik**'; campaigning against the buying and selling of people.

www.stm-upton.org.uk/audio February 2011 Engage linked sermons.

www.stm-upton.org.uk/Heart, Mind and Soul/Engage for more information and prayers.

www.hiddenhurt.co.uk An excellent website describing the Freedom Programme.

www.restoredrelationships.org
A very helpful website from which some of the material on this



Compass Sheet has been drawn from. You can sign up for more information and men can consider joining "First Man Standing" (speaking out on matters of Violence Against Women).



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Churches Together in Gloucestershire for developing the Charter

Merseyside Churches Together for adapting the Charter

The Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Methodist Church for developing the Charter and other resources for addressing domestic abuse

Susan Dunn and the Churches in Tunbridge Wells, Kent for developing their development of this pack

Mart and Dianne DeHaan for the Domestic Abuse Policy they developed with Catherine Clark Kroeger

No Place for Abuse - Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence , by Catherine Clark Kroeger & Nancy Nason-Clark, InterVarsity Press, Illinois

The resources available on www.hiddenhurt.co.uk

The resources from the FaithTrust Institute

Daniel Metcalfe for developing the section on Domestic Abuse and the Law

Susannah Holland and SOS domestic abuse project, Southend

Roy Bishop

Barbara Roberts

Graeme Skinner from St Mary's Church Upton

The Charter

This Church-

- 1. Understands domestic abuse to be the abuse of a person physically, sexually, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, socially or financially within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'.**
- 2. Holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and irreconcilable with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living.**
- 3. Accepts that domestic abuse is a serious problem which occurs in church families as well as in wider society.**
- 4. Undertakes to listen, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse.**
- 5. Will always place the safety of women and children as the highest priority.**
- 6. Will work with domestic abuse support agencies, will learn from them and support them in appropriate ways, and will publicise their work.**
- 7. Will play its part in teaching that domestic abuse is a sin.**
- 8. Believes in a God of love, justice, mercy, and forgiveness.**
- 9. Will teach what it means to be male and female, equally made in God's image.**
- 10. Will seek to appoint advisors to encourage the use of good practice guidelines and keep the church informed about the implementation and development of these guidelines**



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