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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL**

Domestic violence is a significant and destructive reality within our society. It inflicts immediate and long-term harm to those who are its direct victims, those who choose to use abusive behaviours and those who witness these behaviours. Families within religious communities are not immune. Often it is the religious leader who is the first resource a person affected by family violence will turn to for practical assistance and spiritual guidance. When faced with such a request the response by the religious leader is critical. The religious leader can play a critical role in addressing immediate safety concerns, accessing appropriate community resources and affecting long-term, and positive, change in the recurrence of violence. By addressing domestic abuse the religious community becomes a place of safety for all its members.

This document is intended as a resource for religious leaders regarding the issues of domestic violence. It can incorporate the theology, language and organizational structure of any given religious community. The intent of its authors is to allow religious communities to develop a document that is ‘their own,’ using the information provided on family violence.

The Protocol contains useful and important information that can:

- Assist a religious leader be prepared to respond to a disclosure of abuse – by a victim, an individual who has used abusive behaviour and/or a witness;
- Assist a religious leader raise awareness within the congregation;
- Assist leaders to prevent further abuse through the early detection of person at risk;
- Provide avenues through which members of congregations and specialized resources within the larger community can work together to assist families affected by domestic abuse.

### **A Word About Pronouns**

This protocol acknowledges that victims of domestic violence are of both sexes. However, because women suffer more severe physical consequences and are more often the victims of abuse, this document will use the feminine pronoun when referring the person who has been abused and the masculine pronoun when referring to the person who acts abusively. Therefore, for the pronoun “her,” read him/her and for “she,” read she/he.

### **2. HOW TO USE THE PROTOCOL**

The Protocol contains both implementation guidelines and detailed information about family violence, Child Welfare and related legal and justice issues. It is organized around the three family components that need to be addressed whenever violence occurs:

- The individual who has been victimized;
- The individual who has chosen to use abusive behaviours; and
- Any children/youth who have witnessed violence between their parents or who have been the direct victims of violence perpetrated against them.

Appendices provide information on specific and related topics which may be of interest to the user.

### 3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following are common terms used throughout this document.

**Religious Community:** a group of people with similar spiritual or religious traditions and values.

**Religious Leader:** a person in a position of leadership within the religious community.

**Domestic Violence, Family Violence, Domestic Abuse:** These terms are used interchangeably throughout this document.

**Victim, Survivor, Individuals Who Have Experienced Abuse in Domestic Relationships:** Within the domestic abuse literature the term ‘victim’ is often used to acknowledge the victimization that occurs in family violence and the pain experienced. The term “survivor” is used to recognize the strength required to live through and recover from the trauma of domestic violence. This document is focused primarily on assisting those who are presently experiencing abuse with their relationships and therefore used the term ‘victim’ throughout. This choice is not to disavow the strength and courage required to survive abusive behaviours by an intimate partner nor the often difficult recovery process. “Individual who has experienced abuse in domestic relationships” is an alternative to ‘victim.’

**Offender, Individual Who Uses or Chooses Abusive Behaviour:** Different terms are commonly associated with different sectors of service delivery. Justice agencies frequently refer to “offenders.” “Individual who uses or chooses abusive behaviour” is an increasingly popular term that emphasizes the aspect of responsibility and choice in violent behaviour and reinforces that the abusive behaviour can change. These terms will be found within this document.

### 4. AUTHORSHIP

This Protocol has been developed by FaithLink , through the collaborative work of:

- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse, Calgary Domestic Violence Committee, HomeFront Domestic Violence Protocol Project;
- The Ecumenical Task Force for the Prevention of Family Violence
- The FaithLink Protocol Task Team.

Special acknowledgement is given to Gaye Warthe, M.S.W., and Cynthia Wild, M.S.W., R.S.W. Gaye has developed domestic violence protocols for over 65 agencies and services within the Calgary community. She developed the draft of the information related to domestic violence and criminal justice included in this document.

We would also acknowledge the work of many other communities who generously shared their work, in particular, the Maricopa Association of Government Regional Domestic Violence Council, Mariposa County, Phoenix, Arizona.<sup>1</sup>

A detailed history of FaithLink is presented in Appendix A.

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<sup>1</sup> Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council on Domestic Violence (2001)

5. PERMISSSION TO USE

**Permission is granted to reprint this material as long as credit is given to the source.**

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### 1. IMPORTANCE for the COMMUNITY to ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is found within every economic level, every geographic region and every race and ethnic group. It crosses all religious boundaries. There is no evidence that being a member of a specific religious group or denomination reduces the incidence or risk of domestic violence. Rather, it is probably found in every congregation.<sup>2</sup> The only difference may be that members of some religious groups remain in abusive relationships longer because of issues of shame and secrecy.

### 2. RABBINIC LEADERSHIP

The position taken by the Rabbi towards family violence is pivotal not only for those individuals directly affected but for the congregation as well. If a Rabbi is dismissive of disclosures of abuse, or attempts to deal with the situation only within a context of prayer, an important avenue for victim safety is blocked. Disclosing abuse is a significant decision taken by a victim of domestic violence. She likely has come to this decision after careful thought and at considerable risk to herself. If her statement is not validated and her safety – and that of her children – is not addressed as the primary concern, she will experience further isolation and continued abuse. It may be a long time before she reaches out again for help. Taking a dismissive position also gives a message of validation to the individual who has chosen to act abusively towards his partner.

If the Rabbi’s response is one that validates and supports the victim, recognizes the need for specialized intervention for all family members and works collaboratively with family violence serving professionals, opportunities are opened for the abuse to end.

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<sup>2</sup> Martin, 1987.

Avenues are also created whereby the issue of domestic abuse can be addressed directly within the congregation and preventive action taken to make the congregation a place of safety, caring and respect for all.

Ways in which a rabbi can ensure that family violence is addressed openly and directly within the congregation include:

- Speaking out and condemning the abuse. (See Jewish Women's International Manuals for Rabbis')
- Ensuring that information on domestic violence and abuse is available to members.
- Consulting with Child Welfare about children who have witnessed violence and who are at risk of abuse.
- Supporting the person who has experienced abuse by contacting domestic violence resources to assist in assessing risk, and in developing a plan for the safety of the family.
- Supporting the person who uses abusive behaviour to seek domestic violence treatment.
- Assisting in the development of a plan to address the spiritual needs of the family.
- Clarifying the role of the congregation in ensuring safety.
- Organizing staff training on domestic abuse.

This is not to say that addressing family violence is easy. The rabbi's role in responding to situations of domestic abuse is perhaps more difficult than other service providers because he/she is called upon: to uphold the values and beliefs of Judaism; to respond in practical and supportive ways to the victim; and to provide spiritual direction to both the person who has been abused and the person who uses abusive behaviour. However, because the rabbi is in many situations the first person a victim will contact for help, he/she can have an important and influential role in helping people living in abusive situations.

### **3. Counselling and Support CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **The Priority of Safety**

When dealing with domestic abuse, the safety of the victim and her children must be the primary priority. Violence within an intimate relationship **always** has the potential to become lethal. In Canada, spousal homicides accounted for 18% of all homicides for the period 1978-97; three times more wives than husbands were killed by their spouses (1485 women and 442 men). For this same period, in Alberta, 165 wives and 67 husbands were the victim of spousal homicides.<sup>3</sup> A victim is in greatest danger immediately following her leaving the relationship.

A rabbi may struggle with how to uphold the *kedusha* of marriage while, at the same time, addressing domestic violence by ensuring victim safety. There may be apprehension that if secular community resources are accessed the victim will be counselled to leave the relationship or the community.

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, 1999.

It is within the marriage relationship that the values of individual dignity, security of person and mutual respect should be paramount. When abusive behaviour by one partner is used against the other, these values are disavowed. Rather, the victimized partner is violated, denigrated and devalued. Under these circumstances one could question whether her marriage is indeed *kadosh*.

By addressing violence within the relationship openly and directly, the rabbi is, in fact, upholding the sanctity of the marriage relationship. By taking actions against continued victimization and oppression he/she is speaking for a relationship that honours individual worth, security and mutual respect.

### **Avoiding Couple Counselling**

It is common for a couple that is experiencing abuse, particularly the abusive partner, to request couple counselling. In making the request, the couple may be sincerely asking for help to make their relationship healthier. However, couple counselling is **never** advisable when violence is present. The partner who has used abusive behaviour may be requesting couple counselling for different reasons: as a way of stopping his partner from leaving; of controlling what she discloses to the officer/counsellor, of saving face within the community. The reality is that unless the abuse is named, the victim safe and the abusing partner has taken responsibility for his behaviour, the violence will continue. Couple counselling is only advised when the violence has completely stopped, both partners have received specialized counseling and the partner who has used abusive behaviour is practicing safe and respectful choices. In joint counselling both parties need the freedom to express their concerns honestly and openly. If violence is still occurring in the relationship, the victimized partner cannot appropriately engage in the counseling process without placing herself at increased risk.

### **Avoiding ‘The Truth’ Trap**

Disclosures of abuse may come at unexpected times and from unsuspecting individuals. Disclosures may include disturbing details – information that may appear ‘unbelievable’ given your impressions of and trust in the person who is being named as the perpetrator of the abuse. The ‘abusing’ person may deny the alleged behaviour. These apparent contradictions may move you to wanting to ‘determine the truth’ of the situation before taking action, e.g., assessing safety, involving appropriate authorities. Although this may seem logical and prudent, the reality is that you cannot determine ‘the truth’ and to attempt to do so is counterproductive on a number of levels.

- If the disclosure is one of abuse against a child, any attempt to do your own ‘investigation’ has the potential of placing the victim at increased risk. It also hinders the investigation by Child Welfare and/or the Police. In cases of alleged child abuse, the responsibility for determining ‘the truth’ lies with the courts.
- A disclosure of abuse by a victim is a statement of her own experience – a statement of her reality. It therefore cannot be denied, even if we may have difficulty ‘believing’ the actuality of what is described. We must work with her disclosure and take whatever action is appropriate to ensure her safety and to access appropriate community resources.

- Individuals who chose to use abusive behaviours often deny or rationalize these choices. These patterns make it difficult, if not impossible, to determine ‘the truth’ of any given situation. It is more productive to take a position that encourages the taking of responsibility for being safe and respectful with relationship and of seeking appropriate counselling.
- Attempting to determine ‘the truth’ in domestic violence situations places you in a position of taking sides for one party against the other. The taking of sides automatically alienates one party from your involvement. If it is your intention and responsibility to provide guidance and support to each member of the family you will want to take as neutral a position as possible in the question of ‘who is to blame.’ If you become polarized, you are also immobilized in helping the congregation deal with the fact that one of its families is experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Referral is Not Failure**

The Calgary community is fortunate to have an array of specialized services to address family violence. These include: a specialized Domestic Conflict Unit within the Police Service; emergency (three week residency) and second-stage (six to twelve months residency) shelters for female victims and their children (one of which has a partnership with Jewish Family Services to ensure culturally appropriate service); treatment services for adult victims, child witness and/or victims and the individuals who have used abusive behaviours; services to address sexual assault, addictions, mental health and other related issues. There is a co-ordinated response between the police, justice and treatment services for victims and those charged with domestic violence related offences.

Utilizing these services, and working collaboratively with the professionals involved allows for an enhanced level of support and counselling for the family members affected. The rabbi is free to offer – his/her area of expertise – to family members. Secular professionals can address the physical, emotional and psychological effects of the violence, confident that the spiritual needs of clients will be addressed by the officer. A collaborative working relationship also enhances the support provided to those affected by domestic abuse and reduces any conflict some family members may feel in accessing ‘secular’ resources. Referral to and working with community resources is an appropriate and helpful course of action – not an admission of failure. In speaking to this point Martin notes: “The basic principle here is: don’t try to deal with family violence by yourself. A team approach is needed, not only for safety reasons, but because violent families have a multitude of needs and will need to draw on many resources to work for change.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Empowerment of, Patience With, the Victim**

Rabbi’s may find it frustrating to work with domestic violence situations. Part of this frustration comes from the indecision many victims experience in taking steps to leave the relationship. They may also leave, but return to, the relationship on numerous occasions. There are many reasons for this vacillation. (See Supporting Information: Domestic Violence 101, section 5) What is important is for the rabbi to exercise patience with her process and to allow any decisions to be hers. Within the abusive relationship

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<sup>4</sup> Martin, 1987, p. 71.

she learned to be very cautious and to not make decisions that will increase the likelihood for further violence. If a rabbi takes a directive approach, for example, advising her to leave, arranging for space within a shelter, she may comply but the decision will not be hers. The more the rabbi can give her information and be supportive of her – whatever choices she makes – the more the victim is empowered and therefore strengthened in her position.

**Constraining the Person Who Has Been Abusive** (See Supporting Information: Domestic Violence 101, Section 10)

One of the struggles a religious leader will face is deciding what limits within the congregation need to be placed on the person who has been abusive. The victim may feel unsafe to attend services if her partner may also be present. The abusing partner may use activities at the congregation as a means of having contact with her. This contact – even indirect – may be used to exert control or intimidate.

The first consideration of the religious leader is the safety of the victim and her children. Therefore, any restrictions imposed will be applied to the abusing partner. These restrictions may include requests to attend another synagogue. If there are legal sanctions that prohibit contact with the victim and/or the children, it may be necessary to request that he not attend any public services and/or activities offered by the congregation. While imposing constraints on the attendance of public services and/or activities the rabbi can offer support and counsel on a private basis. This would allow the individual to meet with the rabbi during the week ensuring no contact with the victim occurs.

The lifting of constraints should be with the consent of the victim and only with clear evidence that the individual has taken responsibility for his actions and has sought specialized counselling. The victim is the best person to speak to her own safety, and that of her children. If the couple are living together she knows whether the abuse has stopped or only taken a different, more subtle form. Even if the couple are separated, and there has been no further incidences of abusive behaviour, the victim may continue to fear for her safety until her healing process is complete.

**Providing Care to Family Members**

“Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow, don’t walk behind me, I may not lead, just walk beside me and be my friend and together we will walk in the path of Hashem”

Domestic violence is a difficult situation to address, not only by the Jewish community, but by social agencies and our community as a whole. There are many facets that need to be considered and a range of services to be provided. It also has long-term implications for all affected. The Jewish community has an important and vital role to play when violence touches families within its midst. The following are suggested ways in which the corps can be responsive.

- **Support:** Isolation is one of the characteristics of families affected by violence. The abusing partner may deliberately hinder the victim from involvement with friends, family and social events. The victim may feel that the

congregation would not be accepting if it is aware of the abuse and so limits her involvement. If she is being physically abused, she may withdraw when she is bruised or injured. Children also learn to 'keep the secret' of their family. The individual who has acted abusively may feel ashamed of his actions.

Once a disclosure is made, the congregation is in a position to offer support and acceptance to each member of the family. The victim may be in need of practical assistance, may need to talk about the abuse experience, and will want to 'make sense' of her experience within the context of her Judaism. Although the behavioural choices made by the abusing partner are not condoned, his worth as a person can be affirmed. He can be encouraged to seek specialized assistance in making better choices. If his partner chooses to leave the relationship, he may become depressed or frantic in his efforts to avert the ending of his marriage. He needs strong support to accept the consequences of his actions. Children need to know that their friends do not hold them to blame for the actions of their parents. They need support in continuing to 'love' the abusing parent even though they 'hate' his abusive actions. Continued involvement in the activities of the community can provide stability and sanctuary at a time when their family life may be very disruptive.

- **Understanding:** It is easy to become impatient with a victim who seeks help but, seemingly, takes no steps to act on the advice or to access resources available to her. She may even leave the relationship only to return. It is important for the community to not 'give up' on her and her situation. Women who experience family violence will often state they do not want the relationship to end – they want the violence to stop. Abusive relationships are not always all negative. There are times when they are very good, and the victim holds on to the hope that the abuse will eventually end. Understanding some of the dynamics about domestic violence allows the rabbi and/or congregational members to take a 'longer-term' view. It is critical for the victim to know that support is available, whenever she chooses to access it. She will choose the time that is right for her.

It is also important for those who become the supports for family members to be supported themselves. The congregation may want to consider establishing a family violence response team (See Protocol Guidelines, section 4). This would allow some to be primary supports to the victim, some to the partner who has acted abusively and others to support the 'caregivers.' A response team can also carry the responsibility of making decisions about the level of involvement the abusing person should have within the congregation. Having the response team make a decision, for example, to remove an individual from a position of authority frees the rabbi to continue to act as a spiritual guide to the person.

- **Prayer** Prayer is a vital part of helping a victim reconcile her experience with her Judaism. She may feel that, because God did not answer her prayers for the abuse to end, that she is abandoned by God. If she separates from her partner she may feel that she has turned her back on the Jewish values of Shalom Bayit

and family. Encouraging her to use prayer as a vehicle to healing helps her to again feel the presence of God in her life.

As the individual who has acted abusively begins to acknowledge responsibility for his choices and actions, he may be overcome with guilt and a sense of being separated from God. The development of empathy for the person he has harmed is a positive step towards making safe behaviour choices. Prayer can be an avenue through which he can seek personal repentance (Tshuvah).

- **Growth:** It is not unusual for those who have experienced very difficult circumstances to identify a new perspective to life as a result. Recovering from the trauma of being victimized within one's family can provide opportunity for psychological and spiritual growth. The person who has acted abusively may have used Torah or Jewish 'values' to justify his actions. He will need guidance to broaden his perspective of the marital relationship and the worthiness of the individual.

### **Person Safety and Self Care**

While recognizing the potential for healing and support the Jewish community holds for those effected by domestic violence, the decision to respond should taken with awareness for personal safety and the supports in place to ensure appropriate self-care for the rabbi and those lay leaders who may become involved in handling the impacts upon the congregation.

- **Personal Safety**

Given the volatility of domestic violence situations, rabbi's are well advised to be careful for his/her own safety. Police services consider domestic disputes some of the most dangerous situations they have to confront. Thus it is prudent for rabbi's to take precautions to minimize personal risk: interview family members in neutral, safe settings; when possible work in pairs – preferably male-female – or have someone else close at hand; avoid intervening directly in violent episodes – call the police. (See Protocol Guidelines, Section 3 for more details)

- **Self-Care**

Working with victims of abuse requires listening to the recounting of the violence experienced. Part of the healing process is the telling – and re-telling – of the experience. She needs someone with whom she can 'process' her emotional pain. Likewise, the person who has acted abusively, if he acknowledges his behaviour and its effects, will want opportunity to process his feelings. This may include processing his own victimization experiences. Both partners will seek to understand the abusive incidents and the dynamics of their relationship within the context of their Judaism

A Rabbi will want to be available to the family members, but in doing so needs to recognize the impact upon his/her own psychological health. Vicarious victimization occurs when we enter into the healing process with those who have been victimized. Just as the direct victims need opportunity to tell someone of their experiences, so too

the listener needs opportunity to process the impact he/she feels through the extension of empathy.

Dealing with the immediacy of a crisis situation is demanding, but resolution to the issues faced by family members in the aftermath may not be easily or quickly resolved. Issues of custody and safe visitation for the children, housing, court appearances, financial concerns may arise. Additionally, there may need to be difficult decisions made within the congregation, with resultant impacts upon the life of the congregation that will need to be managed. (See Protocol Guidelines, Section 4) A significant time commitment can be required in addition to an enormous output of physical and emotional energy.

Those most directly involved in assisting the family and managing the impacts upon the congregation require support and the opportunity to debrief. Each person involved will have been impacted by the abuse itself, by the struggles of making decisions, and of carrying what could be a considerable emotional burden for an extended period of time.

To ensure that faith leaders and congregational leaders who are called upon to assist the family and the congregation it is recommended that two levels of support be put in place.

- Administrative support and guidance from *denominational* personnel ensures faith leaders and lay leaders feel they are making decisions within the context of *denominational policy* and that they have the support of the larger church body behind them.
- A resource person, from outside the congregation, who can assist individuals and the leadership group debrief their feelings and experiences in working with the family and resultant impacts upon the congregation. This person could be from another congregation in the city, someone from *denominational administration*, or a local professional. Their role is to listen and provide objective feedback and spiritual guidance. Because they are integral to the healing process they need to be readily available. They should be chosen on the basis of their counselling skill, their ability to maintain confidentiality (within the limits of the law) and their understanding of family violence.

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# PROTOCOL GUIDELINES

## 1. RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Disclosures may come from each, or all, of the three family components of concern when violence is present: the adult who has been victimized; the person who has used abusive behaviours; and children/youth who have witnessed violence between members of their family or who have been directly abused. Whoever the family member is who is making the disclosure, the response of the person receiving the disclosure is critically important. This may be the first time that this person has told anyone about the abuse.

### Goals

Disclosures may be made in person or during a telephone call. Once abuse has been disclosed, the immediate goals are:

- Safety for the person who has been abused
- Accountability for the person who has used abusive behaviours; and
- Provision of information on specialized community resources.

### Response Steps

Faith leaders and members of faith communities in helping roles are not expected to have expertise in the area of domestic violence or child abuse. However, depending on the nature of the situation, there are some steps a faith leader may need to take.

1. **Assess the safety of the victim:** If the disclosure is via a phone call by the victim, ask “Are you safe now?” If the answer is “No,” the priority is for her to get to a safe place. Provide suggestions – an emergency shelter, a room that can be locked from the inside, preferably with a phone; a neighbour’s place or a place where other people are around. Encourage the victim to call the Police – 911 – if she is in immediate danger, or do so yourself if this is her request.
2. **Help the abused person contact a domestic violence shelter for assistance in developing a safety plan.** If the disclosure is in person, provide a private space for the individual to contact one of the domestic violence shelters. Shelters can assist callers to assess risk and to develop a safety plan. Ask if the individual would like you to remain with them while they contact the shelter. Shelter numbers are printed on the *24-Hour Help for Everyone* card and in the Community Resources list (Appendix E)
3. Give information on resources available to assist families affected by abuse. **Provide the *24-Hour Help for Everyone* card. This card includes the numbers of all shelters and is available in a number of languages.** See Appendix E: Community Resources. Identify those resources that best suit the individual’s needs.
4. **Individuals disclosing concerns about their behaviour being abusive or becoming abusive can be helped to contact a specialized domestic violence treatment agency.** The following steps need to be considered:

- Assess the safety of the victim and any children. Ask “Where is she now? Where are the children? Are they safe? Has anyone been injured?” Ask to speak to the victim or get the phone number where she can be reached.
- Assess the safety of the person who has been abusive. Ask about his present level of anger. If the individual is expressing any degree of concern about his ability to remain safe, and still has easy access to the victim, strongly suggest that he leave the situation. Suggest that he tell his partner that he is leaving the house for a set period of time, e.g., 30-60 minutes, that he will return but will leave again if he still feels he may be abusive again.
- Assess the emotional state of the person who has been abusive. Ask “Are you depressed, anxious, enraged? Are you feeling suicidal? Have you attempted suicide in the past? Have you been using alcohol or drugs?” If you think he is likely to be a danger to himself, his partner or the children, **CALL THE POLICE.**
- Refer the individual to appropriate resources.

The *24-Hour Help for Everyone* card lists resources. The Men’s Help Line and/or shelters can also make referrals for individuals concerned about their own behaviour.

5. **Report risk to children.** If children are in a home where there are concerns about their safety or their witnessing violence, Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services - Child Welfare - at 297-2995 must be consulted. Abuse does not need to be proven prior to consulting with child welfare.
6. **Risk of Harm to Self or Others** Family violence situations can be very dangerous and volatile. Individuals may make threats to harm themselves or others. These should be taken seriously and may require reporting to the police at 266-1234 or in an emergency 911.

### **A Word About Intervention**

Intervention with adults can only take place with their voluntary consent. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, all adults must be assumed to be competent to make their own decisions. The individual disclosing abuse to faith leaders, staff or volunteers must make the choice to accept assistance or not. Their decision needs to be respected. Both people and circumstances have the capacity for change. For this reason providing the opportunity to access information on more than one occasion may be helpful. Intervention should be aimed at maximizing safety and personal options.

When children or youth (up to age 18 years) make disclosures of abuse and/or witnessing family violence, their consent for intervention is not required. The law requires that the disclosure be reported to Child Welfare. (See Section E: Child Abuse, or Appendix C)

## **Do's and Don'ts of Responding to a Disclosure of Domestic Violence**

### **If the person disclosing is the adult who is experiencing the abuse:**

#### **DO:**

- Find a private place to talk.
- Believe the person disclosing abuse.
- Reassure the person experiencing the abuse that it is not their fault.
- Provide information on agencies and programs specializing in domestic violence. Give a copy of the 24-Hour Help for Everyone card.
- Support and respect the choices of the person experiencing abuse. If they decide to return home support them in contacting a domestic violence shelter to develop a safety plan.
- Protect confidentiality. DO NOT give information to the person who is abusing or to others who might pass on information.
- Report risk to children.

#### **DON'T:**

- Don't minimize the danger.
- Don't tell the person who is experiencing the abuse what to do. Provide information and support.
- Don't react with disbelief, disgust, or anger at what you are told.
- Don't blame the person who has been victimized for the violence. People who are victims often blame themselves.
- Don't recommend couples counselling or approach the abusive spouse and ask for the other side of the story. These actions can endanger the person being abused.
- Don't recommend "marriage enrichment", "mediation", or a "communications workshop".

### **If the person disclosing the abuse is the person who is acting abusively:**

#### **DO:**

- Believe the person disclosing the abuse.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of taking responsibility for the abusive behaviour.
- Hold the person who is being abusive accountable for his/her use of abusive behaviour and for stopping these behaviours..
- Talk about the importance of safety planning for all members of the family.
- Encourage them to call a domestic violence shelter or an agency providing domestic violence treatment programs for people using abusive behaviour. The Men's Help Line is also available. Sit with them and provide support while they are making the call.

#### **DON'T:**

- Don't minimize what you are being told.
- Don't try to find excuses. Abuse is not caused by stress, alcohol, or a significant life change. Many families deal with these issues without hurting each other.
- Don't recommend couple counselling to address the abuse.
- Don't allow the individual who acts abusively to use religious excuses for his behaviour.

## 2. RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURES<sup>5</sup>

**Reference: Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services  
Child Welfare 297-2995**

### **Goals**

When a disclosure of abuse is made by a child or adolescent, the immediate goals are:

- The safety of the child/youth making the disclosure;
- Reporting the disclosure to Child Welfare; and
- Maintaining confidentiality.

### **Response Steps**

If a child/adolescent discloses that they have been abused or child abuse is suspected (emotional, physical, sexual, neglect or a child witnessing violence) **maintain strict confidentiality** among personnel directly involved with the child/adolescent. **Do not contact the child's family.** Take the following steps:

1. Know the signs and symptoms of abuse. (See Appendix C)
2. Support the child/adolescent. If there is a disclosure of abuse:
  - Listen calmly;
  - Believe the child/adolescent;
  - Reassure the child/adolescent that they are not to blame;
  - Do not interview the child/adolescent to collect more information;
  - Do not agree to any involvement that causes you to feel uncomfortable or is outside your role.
3. The person who receives the disclosure and/or who identifies signs and symptoms of abuse is responsible for ensuring that the information is reported to Child Welfare authorities. Reporting does not require the consent of administration, however most faith organizations require that supervisory staff be informed of reports to Child Welfare.
4. Consult with Child Welfare. **Personnel are not required to prove that the child is in need of protective services.** They are only required to report observations or disclosures of suspected abuse. It is essential that reporting to Child Welfare be prompt, at the earliest possible time following the disclosure of abuse or suspicion of abuse. This allows time for a Child Welfare worker to respond.
5. **Ask for instructions from the Child Welfare screener on:**
  - What to expect (e.g. investigation, no action);
  - When action can be expected;
  - How the faith community can assist;
  - Contact person if the faith community has any questions;
  - Direction on any communication with the child's/adolescent's family;

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Calgary Domestic Violence Committee (CDVC) Protocol Project in conjunction with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic Board of Education.

- Who will assist with safety planning for children/adolescents returning to homes where they are witnessing violence?
6. Document observations or disclosures, action taken, and the plan for further action as communicated by Child Welfare. Complete any forms required by the faith organization or the professional association of personnel involved.
  7. Have information on community resources where help is available for domestic violence and abuse issues. If the family is involved in a program, encourage them to contact their counsellor if they are having difficulties or contact the identified Child Welfare worker with continuing or escalating concerns.
  8. Seek support for yourself. Listening and responding to a disclosure of child abuse is stressful.

### **Do's and Don'ts of Handling Disclosures of Child Abuse<sup>6</sup>**

#### **DO:**

- Report disclosures and indicators of abuse to Child Welfare
- Deal with any medical emergencies
- Accept the seriousness of what has been disclosed
- Give the child as much time as they need to tell what happened.
- Let the child know that the full range of feelings they may be experiencing is normal.
- Let them know that they did not do anything to cause the abuse.
- Encourage the child to let you know what happens.
- Keep the information confidential. Inform only those people who need to be aware of the abuse.

#### **DON'T:**

- Don't notify the parents or guardian that a referral to Child Welfare has been made.
- Don't guarantee confidentiality (information that indicates a child may be at risk must be reported to Child Welfare), "quick fixes," or make promises that can't be kept.
- Don't display a strong emotional reaction. Expressing discomfort, disgust or embarrassment may make the child feel responsible for you or communicate that you are not comfortable hearing about the abuse.
- Don't assume that the crisis has passed because time has passed since the last incidence of abuse. This is particularly true of sexual abuse.
- Don't probe for information if abuse is disclosed: this is the role of the Child Welfare worker.

#### **You Can Help By:**

- Assisting the child to identify people in their lives who will be supportive.
- Assisting the child to find the community resources they may need.
- Continuing to provide a safe and supportive environment for the child.
- Continue to be aware of behaviours or incidents that cause concern. Child Welfare workers

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted the Calgary Domestic Violence Committee (CDVC) Protocol Project in conjunction with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic Board of Education and in consultation with Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services.

may need more information to pursue an investigation.

- Seek support for yourself. Listening and responding to a disclosure of child abuse of domestic violence is stressful.

### 3. SAFETY ISSUES

Safety – for the victim, for her children and for the faith leader - is the first consideration when addressing issues of domestic violence and child abuse.

#### **Safety for Victims**

Faith leaders are not expected to be experts in assisting individuals to develop safety plans for themselves and other family members. Domestic violence shelters have 24-hour crisis lines with trained crisis counsellors to assist with safety planning, to help assess risk and to provide support and information to all members of the family. When a victim accesses shelter services the faith leader can provide support and begin to work collaboratively with social service personnel. If the victim is hesitant in contacting community resources, the faith leader needs to assess safety and encourage her to develop a safety plan.

- **Safety Planning for Leaving an Abusive Relationship or Situation<sup>7</sup>**

Safety plans must be developed to take into account the specific circumstances and abilities of each individual. All or some of the following information may be helpful in planning for the your safety.

1. If possible, pre-program emergency numbers into your phone (i.e., 911).
2. Keep a phone in a room you can lock from the inside.
3. Plan an escape route out of your home.
4. Try to put away a little money at every opportunity, even enough for a phone call.
5. If possible, try to keep an extra key to a vehicle hidden.
6. Gather important papers (both your own and your children's) such as birth certificates, social insurance numbers, citizenship and immigration papers, Alberta Health Care cards, immunization records, etc. Put these in a safe place, preferably outside your home, such as a safety deposit box or with a trusted friend.
7. Put together a suitcase of essential items such as clothing and medicines and store them in a safe place. Make plans for any pets that you have that you are unable to take and cannot leave behind. If you have no place to leave your pets and this will prevent you from leaving, mention this to the shelter when you call.
8. Have a list of shelters and phone/TTY numbers accessible but hidden. If you are ready to leave, keep checking to see if there is space for you and your children. If possible, check to see if the shelters are barrier free for your needs.
9. Ensure that some form of emergency transportation is available upon request. This may be through a trusted friend or through community supports.
10. Work out a code that can be used on the phone with a person that is trusted. The code could mean to contact the police or to inform them that you are leaving. It may also

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<sup>7</sup> Reprinted with permission from Safety From Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Service Providers, Public Legal Education Network of Alberta (2002)

be important to develop signals or codes for neighbours to call the police, such as banging on the floor or wall in case of emergency.

11. Look at options for safe places (i.e., a friend, a neighbour, a relative, motel, or emergency shelter). If you can do so safely, contact the people in advance to let them know you are coming. This allows them to watch for you and call for help if needed. Do **not** go to a friend or relative's house if your partner/caregiver is likely to try to find you there. This can be dangerous for both you and those trying to assist you.
12. Whenever calling a shelter or other resources, phone another number or press several numbers immediately afterwards, so that your partner/caregiver cannot press the redial button and find out whom you were speaking with.
13. If you have a support person that your partner/caregiver is not aware of, keep that person's name and address confidential.
14. Review your safety plan monthly.

**If you have left the abusive situation or relationship, you need to:**

1. Call the police immediately if the abusive person tries to contact you.
2. Develop an escape plan and practice with your children.
3. Change door locks, add dead bolts, if possible install motion sensor lights in the yard or install a security system. Ensure all entrances are well lit and keep doors and windows securely locked. Ask for your landlord's assistance if possible.
4. Keep a telephone in a room that locks from the inside. If possible, purchase a cellular phone and keep it nearby (i.e., purse, pocket, etc) or in an accessible hiding place.
5. Obtain a private or unlisted telephone number. If possible, pre-program emergency numbers (i.e., 911) into the telephone's directory.
6. Consider renting a post office box for your mail – addresses may be listed on legal orders and police reports and can be accessed by the abusive person.
7. Develop signals or codes for neighbours and friends to call the police, such as banging on the floor or wall in the case of emergency.
8. Have a safety plan for the children. Teach your children not to let the abusive person in the home. Prepare the children to respond to the abusive person who comes to their school or day care center. If a protection order includes provisions about the children, give a copy to the children's school or childcare facility.
9. If it is not safe where you live, choose a safe place to go (i.e., trusted friend or relative, motel, emergency shelter, etc.). Check to see which shelters are barrier free for you and if they have accessible support that you require. Do **not** go to a friend or relative's house if the abusive person is likely to find you there. This can be dangerous for both you and those trying to assist you.
10. Keep a copy of all protection orders and custody orders with you at all times.
11. Change any appointments the abusive person was aware of (i.e., medical or dental appointments).
12. Shop at different stores and frequent different social spots so that the abusive person will be less likely able to find you.
13. Call the telephone company and ask about "Caller ID," so that you can identify the telephone number of anyone attempting to call you. Ask that your phone be blocked, so that if you make a phone call, no one will be able to get your new, unlisted phone

number. In some areas, you can press \*67 before dialing, which will block your number from appearing on the phone you are calling.

14. Review your safety plan monthly.

- **Critical Questions to Ask a Woman in Crisis**

These questions are designed for a faith leader who has just been told about an incident of abuse by a woman who is seeking his/her counsel.<sup>8</sup>

1. **Frequency and Severity of the Abuse**

- Is this the first time an abusive episode has occurred?  
See if she is willing to talk about other instances of abuse in their relationship. Try to assess the frequency of such acts and whether they have become more frequent over time.
- Could you describe for me the behaviours that are part of the abuse?  
Try to assess the severity of the abuse and whether it is becoming more severe over time. It is important to remember that verbal abuse can be very painful and has long-term consequences, just like physical forms of abuse

2. **Safety**

- Is it safe for you to return home at this time? Are your children safe in the home?
- Do you have a safety plan? By that I mean some means by which to leave your home quickly should it become unsafe for you and the children. Do you have access to a car at all times? Is there public transportation close to where you live, or taxi service?
- Do you know how to contact a transition house [emergency shelter] in our community if you should decide to seek refuge there?

Make sure you have the name and telephone number of a shelter available as well as a brochure describing their services to give her if she would like it.

- Has there ever been a time that your husband's anger frightened you or made you feel unsafe? Do you fear that your husband could harm himself or damage your property?
- If you have reason to become concerned about your own safety or the safety of your children, what can this [faith community] do to help you find a refuge?

Make sure that she leaves your office with a telephone number for use in case of emergency. If possible, have a small team of people who would be able and willing to assist in such an emergency so you do not have to should this responsibility alone.

3. **Therapeutic Options**

- Have you ever sought the help of a mental health professional, like a psychologist or psychiatrist? Are you aware of the differences in approach between a clinical psychologist, a psychiatrist and a social worker?

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<sup>8</sup> Clark Kroeger and Nason-Clark (2001)

It is important for the faith leader to know what forms of assistance have been sought in the past and whether or not therapeutic intervention has been helpful.

- Are you aware of the therapeutic resources available in our community?

It is important for the faith leader to know something about who is available, what their training or orientation to therapy is, how much experience they have in providing service to abuse victims, what they charge for services, their wait list, and whether they offer emergency services or twenty-four hour crisis intervention.

- Have you considered whether it might be a good idea to seek the help of a trained mental health professional in dealing with the pain of abuse?

Faith leaders can be an important bridge, linking the resources of the congregation with the resources of the community. A suggestion from an minister can be a powerful encouragement to seek help from a professionally trained counsellor.

#### 4. **Practical Support**

- Are there day-to-day tasks that are difficult for you to complete at the moment?
- Do you have access to a car or transportation?
- Is there someone you could leave the children with if you needed to be free of childcare responsibilities for a few hours?
- Do you have sufficient food, and are your other material needs met?
- Are there ways the corps could make daily living a bit easier? How?

#### 5. **The Children**

- How is the crisis at home affecting your children? Are they aware of the frequency and severity of the abuse?

Children are seriously affected by witnessing abuse; watching their father batter their mother has a long-term impact on boys as well as girls.

- What do your children most need right now?

Many abused women do not fully understand how traumatic violent conflict between adults is for their children.

- Are there ways the corps could reach out to your family at this time?

It may be that the children would like to be involved in age-appropriate groups in the corps but do not have a way to get there; a Sunday-school teacher or youth worker could be informed that the family is undergoing difficulties and alerted to be especially attentive to the child's needs. If you want to speak to congregational workers about the situation, you will need the mother's explicit permission to do so.

#### 6. **Spiritual Issues**

- How has the abuse you have suffered affected your faith? Your relationship with the congregation?
- Have you found some helpful Scripture passages to read during this painful time?

You want to offer the abused woman a brochure listing Scripture passages that focus on healing.

- Have you been able to pray about the abuse you are suffering?  
It may be appropriate to pray aloud for the abused woman, her healing journey, her children and hope for the future. Your prayer can be a model of how she herself could pray about her life and her suffering.
  - Do you feel supported by your congregation during this period of crisis?  
Explore her expectations of the congregation, the leaders and the people, and assess whether she has been disappointed or uplifted by responses to her suffering. If she has been disappointed, try to determine how the congregation might fill in the gaps in the days and months to come.

### Safety for Faith Leaders

There are unavoidable risks associated with providing support and spiritual direction to individuals who may approach you for help at a time of personal crisis when they are most vulnerable. This is especially true in domestic violence situations.

Faith leaders might want to consider the following risk management strategies when engaged in counselling or providing spiritual direction to individuals who have been abused:

- Faith leaders need to assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counselling and counselling-related relationships;
- Physical contact of any kind (e.g., touching, hugging, holding) between faith leaders and the persons they counsel can be misconstrued and should be avoided;
- Counselling sessions should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times. No sessions should be conducted in private living quarters. Sessions should not be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being counselled.
  
- Faith leaders should maintain a log of the times and places of sessions with each person being counselled.
- Faith leaders should be aware of situations where a conflict of interest exists and his/her judgment may be impaired:
  - By prior dealings,
  - By becoming personally involved, or
  - By becoming an advocate for one (person) against another.In these circumstances, the faith leader should advise the parties that he or she can no longer provide services and refer them to another resource.

**In order to help keep yourself safe in situations where you have knowledge that violence is occurring in a relationship, the following are offered as guidelines:<sup>9</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> Cooper-White, P. (1995)

- Avoid home visits. If you are asked to meet someone in their home and you are concerned that domestic violence may be an issue, suggest that they come to your office and at a time when you know other people will be present and available to help. If a person who is abusive is coming to the faith leader's office to meet with you, ask someone in your office (with whom you can ethically share at least that you have some concern about things becoming volatile) to be available nearby in case a threatening situation develops and police intervention is necessary.
- If a person who is being abused requests that you escort her/him to meet with or confront her/his abusive partner, this is not generally advisable. Confronting the abusive partner may escalate risk for the abused person and any children in the home. Encourage the abused person to access support and counselling from a specialized domestic violence resource.
- In situations where a person who has experienced abuse wants to go home to collect clothing or personal possessions for example, suggest that the police be called for a "civil standby" a procedure in which police meet the person outside her/his home and accompany her/him inside long enough for her/him to gather her/him belongings or accomplish her/his business there. Also, if you are going into a situation that has potential for violence, have a plan in mind in case of violent attack, paying particular attention to the location of exits and phones and possible sources of emergency support.
- Providing support in the area of domestic violence can be overwhelming for the helper. Faith leaders need to be sensitive to the impact of such counselling on their own spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental health. It is important for faith leaders to be aware of warning signs in both their professional and personal lives that might indicate potential problems.

## **SAFETY PLANNING HANDOUT FOR VICTIMS**

- **Safety Planning for Leaving an Abusive Relationship or Situation<sup>10</sup>**

1. If possible, pre-program emergency numbers into your phone (i.e., 911).
2. Keep a phone in a room you can lock from the inside.
3. Plan an escape route out of your home.
4. Try to put away a little money at every opportunity, even enough for a phone call.
5. If possible, try to keep an extra key to a vehicle hidden.
6. Put important papers in a safe place, preferably outside your home.
7. Put together a suitcase of essential items. Make plans for pets. If you have no place to leave your pets, mention this to the shelter when you call.
8. Have a list of shelters and phone/TTY numbers accessible but hidden.
9. Ensure that some form of emergency transportation is available upon request.
10. Work out a code with a person that is trusted that can be used on the phone.
11. Identify safe places (a friend, neighbour, relative, motel, shelter). Do **not** go to someone's house if your partner/caregiver is likely to try to find you there.
12. Whenever calling a shelter or other resources, phone another number or press several numbers immediately afterwards.
13. Keep confidential the name and address of any support person.
14. Review your safety plan monthly.

- **If you have left the abusive situation or relationship, you need to:**

1. Call the police immediately if the abusive person tries to contact you.
  2. Develop an escape plan and practice it with your children.
  3. Ensure that your home is secure. Ask for your landlord's assistance if possible.
  4. Keep a telephone in a room that locks from the inside.
  5. Obtain a private or unlisted telephone number.
  6. Consider renting a post office box for your mail.
  7. Develop signals or codes for neighbours and friends to call the police.
  8. Teach your children to not let the abusive person into the home.
  9. If it is not safe where you live, choose a safe place to go (trusted friend or relative, motel, emergency shelter).
  10. Keep a copy of all protection orders and custody orders with you at all times.
  11. Change appointments the abusive person was aware of (i.e., medical or dental).
  12. Change your shopping and social habits.
  13. Ask your telephone company about "Caller ID," have your phone blocked, get an unlisted number.
1. Review your safety plan monthly.

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<sup>10</sup> Reprinted with permission from Safety From Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Service Providers, Public Legal Education Network of Alberta (2002)

#### **4. RESPONDING TO THE IMPACT UPON THE CONGREGATION<sup>11</sup>**

When abuse occurs within a family of faith the repercussions can be felt throughout the congregation. These varying impacts must be recognized and managed in ways that facilitate healing and wholeness for all concerned. Whoever within the family unit the abuse is against, its reality raises questions of how the tenets of the faith are made practical. When the response by faith leaders is open and direct, avenues are made available for repentance, accountability and behavioural change, healing, forgiveness and reconciliation to occur.

##### **Goals**

The following goals should guide the process of responding to and managing the impact of abuse upon congregants and the congregation:

- Providing support and caring to a variety of individuals and groups;
- Informing and educating the congregation.
- Appropriately applying tenets of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation;

##### **Response Steps**

1. **Create a Response Team:** The work of responding to domestic abuse within a congregation is difficult and could require a significant time commitment. A Response Team, comprised of individuals with varying areas of expertise, can better carry the responsibility and act collectively in making and implementing decisions. Although the faith leader will be directly involved, with a Response Team responsible for managing the process, he/she is freed to provide spiritual guidance to individual members and the congregation.

**Depending upon the resources of the congregation, the Resource Team may be comprised of**

- staff and congregational members;
- congregational, *denominational* administration and/or community representatives; or
- community resource personnel.

**The work of the Team will required the following skills:**

- The ability to provide support and counsel to individuals and/or groups;
- The ability to provide emotional and practical support to family members directly affected by the abuse, i.e., the victim, child witnesses, the partner who has been abusive; and, in cases of child abuse, the non-abusing parent;
- An understanding of family violence, including the effects on victims and witnesses and the characteristics often exhibited by persons who choose to use abusive behaviours;
- The ability to liaise with community systems and professionals, e.g., the police, the justice system, therapists, shelters, Child Welfare;
- The ability to mediate practical family issues;

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<sup>11</sup> Adapted from: Heggen, Carolyn Holderread. (1993) and Sevcik, I (1996)

- The ability to work co-operatively within the structure of a team.

**It may take an extended period of time, e.g., 1-2 years, before resolution of all the issues involved is gained. Nor should the emotional stress of the work be underestimated. Team members need to be emotionally stable and healthy, having resolved any of their own abuse issues.**

2. **Restrict Access to the Person Who Has Been Abusive** This should be one of the first actions taken by the Response Team. It is a difficult but necessary step. Restricting access to public worship and other meetings and/or activities where there may be contact with the victim and other family members is critical for the safety of the victim. There may be court imposed restrictions which need to be honoured by the congregation. If there are no legal sanctions prohibiting attendance, the Response Team should make its decision in consultation with the victim. By taking her wishes into account the congregation – through the Response Team - expresses its support to her. It also gives a clear message about the inappropriateness of violence and the congregation's willingness to address it directly and firmly. Placing restrictions on the person who has been abusive allows other survivors to feel safe within the context of the fellowship. Over time the restrictions may be lessened, depending upon the individual's willingness to take responsibility for his abusive actions and to make non-violent choices. Any lessening of restrictions should always be done with the agreement of the victim and the knowledge of the congregation.

Restricting access does not mean spiritual support is also withheld. The goal of the church is restoration to faith and fellowship. "True repentance...involves the bitter realization of inner wretchedness. Because of the agony of this step, the [abusing person] needs the support and love of Christian friends or a pastor."<sup>12</sup> (See Section 4 below for practical ways the abusing person can be supported.)

**3. Identify Individuals and Sub-groups that Require Attention and Support. The Response Team will want to identify those individuals and groups requiring attention and support. They will vary depending upon the abuse situation and the involvement of family members, particularly the person who has been abusive, in the life of the congregation and may include:**

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<sup>12</sup> Heggen, p. 124.

- Family members directly affected;
    - If the abuse has been against an adult intimate partner:
      - the victim (adult and/or child)
      - the abusing partner
      - child witnesses
      - the non-abusing parent if the abuse has been against a child.
      - If the abuse has been against an extended family member, e.g. an elder person:
        - the direct victim
        - the abusing person
        - witnesses – children and/or other adults
  - Individuals and groups within the congregation associated with a family member, for example:
    - Sunday School classes, youth groups
    - Women's and/or men's groups
    - Church management groups (Boards, Counsels)
  - Other non-related survivors within the congregation
  - The congregation as a whole.
- 4. Organize Support Groups** The Response Team will want to ensure that each identified person or group is provided with a designated person or group to listen, offer support and assist in decision-making. The degree of support required will vary depending upon a number of factors.
- The nature of the abusive behaviour itself. Abuse involving a child, particularly sexual abuse, elicits a much stronger response than does violence between adults. If the abusive person has been actively involved with other children, the question of whether other children have been victimized must be raised.
  - The degree of involvement within the congregation by family members, particularly the person who has acted abusively. If there has been peripheral involvement in the life of the congregation, the response by members of the congregation will be less than if the individual and/or family members are integrally involved. If the person who has acted abusively holds a leadership position within the congregation, a decision to remove him from positions of authority may result in divisions within the congregation as individuals question the need for this decision. If the person takes responsibility for his actions the impact within the congregation will be less than if he denies his actions.
  - The size of the congregation itself. In smaller congregations, there are closer relationships between members of the whole group. In larger congregations, not everyone within the congregation will have ties to individual members of the family.

The work of each support group will again vary, depending upon the individual circumstances. There may be need to meet with Sunday School and/or youth groups

to help participants understand and offer support to one of its members. For survivors of past abuse, the awareness that abuse has been present within a trusted environment may again place them in crisis. They may again feel unsafe and have to address some of their own victimization issues. (Healing from trauma is often a process that resembles a spiral. Issues once thought resolved may surface at different stages of life or in circumstances that trigger memories.)

The support team working with the person who has been abusive will want to:

- Become educated re: the factors influencing and associated with the use of abusive behaviours. (See Supporting Information: Domestic Violence 101, Section 6)
- Ensure that action is taken to remove him from any positions of authority within the congregation;
- Encourage responsibility taking and access of specialized therapy;
- Offer to assist him in covering the cost of counselling;
- Establish regular times he can meet with the faith leader and/or a spiritual mentor;
- If he is a member of a small group, the group may want to hold periodic ‘worship services’ to provide him opportunity for corporate worship;
- Support him through any court process and sentencing conditions;
- Work with therapists and other community services, e.g., justice and corrections system personnel;
- With other support groups, mediate issues between conflicted family members. This most often involves custody and/or safe visitation of children. Children are often used as a means by the abusive partner to gain access to the victim partner. Efforts to place children in positions where they are being used for ulterior purposes should be avoided. They themselves are in crisis, grieving the loss of close contact with a parent, whom they love even if they hate his behaviour.

**5. Inform the Congregation.** The Response Team will decide how broadly information needs to be shared within the congregation. Factors influencing this decision will include the size of the congregation and the circumstances of the

situation. Whether it is the whole congregation, or a designated part, that is informed of the situation, the purpose is threefold:

- To give accurate information to prevent rumours;
- To enable support to family members; and
- To allow the congregation to work openly and effectively in addressing resultant issues.

A number of methods can be used in keeping the congregation informed. Whatever method is utilized it is important to be sensitive to family members. If they are present, their supports should also be present, and readily available to them.

- General meetings to:
  - Give information about the process being followed;
  - Give opportunity for members to react and to give advice to the Response Team regarding how to proceed. One of the ways a congregation may choose to support a family is by assisting with the financial cost of accessing counseling services.
  - Provide opportunity for small group discussions.
- Separate meetings with congregational groups directly associated with a family member to:
  - Allow venting of feelings;
  - Support for the victim and witnesses of the abuse.
- Regular updates through memos and private mail:
  - Regarding the steps being planned or taken;
  - Regarding family members well being;
  - To invite feedback.

**6. Educate the Congregation.** One of the issues the congregation will have to address is the betrayal of trust it has experienced by the abusive person's actions. Questions of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation need to be addressed. In order to do so, the Response Team will want to provide opportunities for processing tenets of faith and their practical application.

- **Repentance:** Reconciliation and restoration of a violated relationship – within a family setting, or within a congregation – cannot happen without true repentance by the person who has acted abusively. Within the New

Testament context, repentance refers to a complete change of mind, and a turning away from sin and towards God. Profound grief and sorrow for sin are frequently expressed. Within the context of family violence, repentance by the person who has been abusive should be marked by:

- Acknowledgement and responsibility taking for abusive actions;
  - Feelings of deep sorrow for the pain caused by his actions;
  - Development of empathy for the pain experienced by the victim;
  - Taking the necessary steps to assure his abusive choices will not recur, including the development of a ‘relapse prevention plan,’ accepting consequences (e.g., court ordered conditions, the lose of relationship, submitting to congregational discipline, engaging in therapy);
  - Paying restitution, e.g., paying for the counseling required by those directly victimized.
- **Forgiveness:** (See Clerical Considerations for details.)
  - **Reconciliation:** Although reconciliation and restoration of fellowship is the hoped for result, those working with the family and with the congregation need to be realistic about the difficulty of obtaining this goal. Because of the tensions and discomfort issues of family violence raise, and the often long process of healing and court sanctioned accountability, there is a tendency to offer quick forgiveness and reconciliation. To do so is counterproductive to the victim, the person who has acted abusively and to the congregation. True reconciliation of the family’s relationships can only occur when there is a high degree of assurance that safety and respect will replace abusive behaviours. Similarly, for reconciliation to occur with the congregation there must be evidence that abusive behaviour will not recur.

To assist the congregation in understanding the issues and process of moving from repentance to reconciliation the following may be helpful.

- Learning about the factors that influence and are associated with the use of abusive behaviours;
- Hearing from individuals who were abusive in the past but have made significant changes to be safe and respectful in relationship;
- Hearing individuals who have experienced abuse recount their victimization and healing process, including how their communities of faith was helpful – or not – to their recovery;
- Incorporating information about domestic abuse within educational forums for children and youth to increase their awareness and assist them in offering support to their friends who have experienced abuse;
- Incorporating elements into the worship service that address the issue of domestic abuse. These could include the minister speaking about

the sin of domestic violence from the pulpit and incorporating elements into worship that are sensitive to survivors of abuse. As appropriate to the congregation's practice, worship services can incorporate rituals, liturgies, prayers, laments that name the sin of abusive behaviours and acknowledge the pain caused to its victims.

**7. Facilitate Closure.** In order for the congregation to gain closure and move beyond the betrayal of trust resulting from abuse within its midst, it must decide the abusive person's continued involvement in the life of the congregation. Leading the congregation in making this decision will be the last task of the Response Team. The decision the congregation makes should be dependent upon whether there has been responsibility taking on the part of the person who was abusive and the wishes of those who have been victimized. During the time of initial crisis, and the period following, restrictions were likely placed on the abusing person. These may have been eased as he took definite steps to change his behaviour. If the conditions for reconciliation have been met the congregation can ask:

- The person who has been abusive to communicate to the congregation regarding the actions he has taken to ensure his ability to be safe;
- The victim and family their wishes regarding his presence within the fellowship;
- Other survivors to express their feelings about his return.

Again, safety continues to be the primary consideration.

With evidence of genuine change on the part of the person who had been abusive,

agreement of the victim, family members and other abuse survivors the congregation may devise a schedule whereby the individual is gradually re-integrated into the full life of the congregation. If the victim and/or family members would not feel safe or if there is not strong evidence that genuine change has occurred, the congregation should not agree to restoration of fellowship. It should then pursue assisting the individual to move to another denominational congregation or fellowship group.

## RESOURCE LIST FOR FAITH LEADERS

Name:	
Position	
Phone number e-mail	

Name:	
Position	
Phone number e-mail	

Name:	
Position	
Phone number e-mail	

Name:	
Position	
Phone number e-mail	

Name:	
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## APPENDIX A

### HISTORY OF THE FAITHLINK INITIATIVE

#### Background

In May 1999, the Action Committee Against Violence (ACAV) in collaboration with the United Way of Calgary and Area and the Calgary Injury Prevention Coalition commissioned Angus Reid to conduct a survey to determine Calgarian's attitude toward violence. One of the survey questions asked where victims of domestic violence could seek help. The survey determined that 16% of respondents felt that victims could seek help from their church. It was clear from these results that faith communities play an important role in addressing the issue of violence against women.

Dr. Nancy Nason-Clark, Chair of the Religion and Violence Research Team at the Muriel McQueen Ferguson Centre for Family Violence Research, University of New Brunswick, states that it is exceedingly hard for us to believe or admit that domestic violence does exist within faith communities. Because of this, there are few resources available to help the offender, the victim, the children or the congregation. All too often faith leaders have maintained that the problem of domestic violence is greatly exaggerated and does not have any particular relevance to women of faith. Nason-Clark calls this the 'holy hush.'<sup>13</sup>

#### History

In September 1999, RESOLVE Alberta and the YWCA Family Violence Prevention Centre and Sheriff King Home hosted two informal community discussions with Dr. Nason-Clark. It is her belief that "both secular and sacred service providers can benefit from enhancing their referral network to include each other and thereby augment the healing process." She indicates that "many religious abuse victims want both the support and care of their faith community and the skills and services that secular agencies can provide."<sup>14</sup>

As a result of these discussions, a working group formed to examine ways to promote greater dialogue between the faith communities and domestic violence service agencies in Calgary. On April 01, 2000 a workshop involving members of the faith communities and domestic violence serving agencies was held in Calgary. The Cathedral Church of the Redeemer hosted this conference as part of its Connection series. The objectives of the workshop included:

- To raise awareness of family violence
- To affirm what is being accomplished; and
- To suggest a framework for working together.

During the workshop it became evident that the potential for partnership between the faith community and domestic violence serving agencies in the struggle to end family violence is immense. Workshop participants addressed the question of how faith communities and domestic violence service agencies could collaborate to help victims of domestic violence. A number of recommendations were generated and a work group formed to

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<sup>13</sup> Nason-Clark, N. & Beaman-Hall, L. (1997).

begin the work of implementation. These recommendations formed the foundational elements of a long-term initiative to build bridges between faith communities and domestic violence serving agencies in Calgary to better assist parishioners who may be experiencing violence and abuse in their lives.

### **FaithLink Committee**

The work group completed a strategic planning process and evolved into the FaithLink Committee. **The mission of FaithLink is to build bridges between the domestic violence serving agencies and faith communities.**

Our achievements to date have included:

- Expanding membership on the committee by reaching out to faith communities not currently represented;
- Developing a generic protocol that will serve as a template for the development and implementation of protocols in faith communities;
- Development and distribution of a brochure for faith leaders on how to respond to domestic violence; and
- Organizing a training workshop with Dr. Nancy Nason-Clark for faith leaders in November, 2001 which was attended by 82 faith leaders and domestic violence service providers.

## APPENDIX B: SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

### Concepts and Beliefs

- **Authority, Justice and Accountability** (John Scanzoni. “Authority in Christian Marriage.” The Reformed Journal, November, 1974, pp. 20-23.)

In his article, Scanzoni notes that there are several Pauline passages that “suggest that men should rule women...hereditary monarchs should rule over commoners and that masters should rule over slaves.” He argues, however, that just as we have reinterpreted that latter two, so should we re-examine our interpretation of those references to the former. He argues that these texts are set within and

Reinforced the existing social order of Paul’s first-century Roman world. ...But we know from Paul’s letter to Philemon, for example, that freedom, not slavery, was the Christian ideal and that love and justice demanded that Christians release slaves from bondage and treat them as equals. And we know from Galatians 3:18 that Paul saw the Christian fellowship as intrinsically destructive to the existing social order in terms of ethnic, social and economic, and gender hierarchies.

Addressing the issues of domination within marriage, Scanzoni notes:

....authority can be divided into two very different aspects: legitimate or earned authority, and *nonlegitimate* power. Throughout the Bible, the appeal is made for humans to submit to God’s legitimate authority because he earned and deserves it. ....we gladly submit to our Lord because he deals with us in bounty and mercy (justice and beyond) and love....Nonlegitimate power is ...the exercise of power that is not earned or deserved, power that goes beyond reasonable bounds of equity and justice, power that attempts or purports to be unaccountable. The exercise of nonlegitimate power inevitably stirs up hostilities and resentments, often leads to serious conflicts, and many times tears up social relationships...

In contrast to the first century,

Most Christian women [today] are as socially and spiritually prepared as most Christian men to enjoy all the freedoms promised in the gospel.

Consequently, it would seem that the husband has no more *inherent* right to authority over the wife than does the monarch over commoners, masters over slaves. Instead, ...legitimate authority must be earned and maintained in just fashion. The Biblical passages (especially Eph. 5) that compare male authority to that of Christ over the church call on the husband to achieve something for his wife that by definition is unattainable.

....how can a husband love his wife short of death? How does the living Christ love the church, his bride? He seeks to bring us into a life that is rich, full and abundant. He seeks for our interests in both time and eternity. He never forces...patiently waits...lets us go our own way to learn better...always deals with us justly...

...just as Paul discreetly undermined slavery by telling Philemon to love his slave Onesimus, just so he was undermining gender inequality by telling husbands to love their wives....it was a new thing for Christian men to learn they should love. The best and greatest they could do was to love so that their wives felt justly treated. At the very least, this means that nonlegitimate power has no place in the husband-wife relationship. And what it ultimately means is what Paul must have had in mind when, in introducing the marriage passage, he tells all Christians 'to be subject to one another.' (Eph. 5:21)

Justice between husbands and wives means that authority is negotiable. Neither spouse has the right to decide any matter simply because of gender...

...in no case does the husband in frustration over negotiation with his wife ever pull rank and assert: "I am the husband, you must do as I say." That is nonlegitimate power and that is not living as Christ loves. ...The husband did not get to be husband because of any proven ability, nor is he accountable if he pulls rank.

...authority within the equal-partner marriage stems from equal investments of every sort. Each is concerned for the best interests of the other (Phil. 2) and for the partnership as a whole, because in so doing his/her own interests will best be met. ...when the wife is equal in authority...both can challenge each other anew to be all that God wants them to be both in the marriage and in their service to him in the world.

- **Beliefs to be Challenged** (Carolyn Holderread Heggen. Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches. Herald Press, Scottdale, Pen., 1993. Also comments by Heggen and David Shroeder, Theological professor of New Testament and Ethics, CMBC, Winnipeg, presented at 'A Door of Hope: A Conference on Family Violence and Sexual Abuse,' Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1994, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee, held in Calgary)
  - **God intends for men to dominate and women and children to submit.** Genesis 2 is often used to justify the dominant position of the man in relationship to women. Heggen and Shroeder argues however that
    - Genesis 1 presents a picture of male and female being created simultaneously, given equal responsibility, both being depicted as having been created in the image of God and both being the pinnacle of God's creation.
    - The original intention of creation was mutual accountability and respect. Dominance is a result of sin. We should not base our family relationships on the basis of sin.
    - Mat. 20:20-28 suggests that hierarchical authority structures should not characterize Jesus' followers.
    - Ephesians 5:21-6:9 reflects a revolutionary shift from patriarchy to mutuality and foreshadows the radical equality of all in Christ which is summarized in Galatians 3:28.

- **Because of her role in the Fall, woman is morally inferior to man.**
  - Studies show that women who believe they are morally defective, and thus unable to trust their sense that something is wrong in a given situation will find it hard to confront an abusive man...when females can't trust themselves, they easily give up their power and ability to resist things done to them, particularly by a male. ... Mothers with low self-esteem cannot effectively guard against abusive fathers.
- **That the patriarchal family of the Old Testament was ordained.**
  - The patriarchal system was culturally defined. Abraham was a patriarch before God intervened in his life.
  - The Sinai laws are mostly against the patriarchal system. Within the culture females, the poor, the stranger had no power. The law says those who are powerless have to be protected.
  - Teachings that cause pain cannot be spiritually true.
- **Marriage must be preserved at all cost.**
  - Maintaining a façade of marital well-being must not take precedence over protecting vulnerable people.
  - The woman is admonished to keep the bond of marriage vow, but the man who has been abusive has first broken the bond by his behaviour.
- **Suffering is a Christian virtue.**
  - We must make a clear distinction between voluntary suffering for a greater good and involuntary suffering which results from another person's sin against us and yields no greater good.
  - The crucifixion is not a symbol of suffering that is perpetrated by God. It is a symbol of how violent man can be towards man.
- **Christians must promptly forgive those who sin against them.**
  - The ability to forgive someone who has offended and hurt us is an important step towards our own healing and happiness.
  - Quick repentance by the abuser overlooks the complexity of the issue. When we give quick forgiveness may deny the offender the possibility of being held accountable for their behaviour and make it less likely they will get the help they need to truly change.
  - The person who has been abusive can seek forgiveness from God even though the victim is not yet ready to offer forgiveness. Repentance and forgiveness work independently. Forgiveness can be given even though the repentance has not been realized. We can forgive apart from the other person.
- **Relevant Scriptures** (Melissa A. Miller. Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds. Herald Press, Waterloo, Ont., 1994. Grant L. Martin. Counseling For Family Violence and Abuse. Word Publishing, Dallas, 1987.)
  - Psalms 41:7-9; 88:6-7, 14-18; the Psalms in general:
    - Express the feelings often experienced by victims and those who have used abusive behaviours:
      - Loneliness, sorrow, joy, sadness, loss
      - Anger towards God

- Point us back to God for salvation, refuge, strength
  - Express caring for the poor, powerless (victims)
  - Give examples of trust in a God of justice who restores balance in an unbalanced world.
- Mat: 18:1-9: addresses children, the exercise of power:
  - Humility is true greatness
  - The powerless will become leaders
  - Child abuse is condemned
  - We are responsible for our actions.
  - Don't blame the victim: cease offending.
- Ephesians 5:21-6:4 – heralds a revolutionary change in family relationships
  - 5:21 – husbands, wives, children are called to be subject to one another in reverence
  - The greater responsibility is on husbands, e.g., nine verses as opposed to three for wives.
  - Families are called to practice mutual submission, i.e., giving way to accommodation.
  - The marital relationship is reciprocal with equal give and take, each holding the other accountable.
  - Women, within the cultural context of Paul's writing, were considered property of husbands or fathers. Paul addresses them as persons of value with free will and with conscience to choose to be submissive.
  - Wives are called to submit; husbands to love; children to honor; parents (fathers) to avoid provoking children to anger. Each person is equally important. Each must use their power respectfully. Each must accommodate the other.
  - Husbands are to share power respectfully. Mutual submission is required. Christ's model of sacrifice for the church is the ultimate act of submission. The husband is called upon to 'die to self,' to accommodate the wife, to set aside his agenda as a way of demonstrating Christ-like love.
- I Corinthians 7:3-4
  - Sexual relationships that are:
    - Mutual, respectful, consenting
    - Marital rape or coercion has no place in the Christian home
  - Children are to honor in the Lord. Blind obedience is not commanded.
  - Parents (fathers) are to take care with their power to ensure that their children are not violated – not pushed to exasperation and anger.
  - The new marital relationship is marked by shared power.
- Mathew 7:9-11:
  - Parents are called to be sensitive to the needs of their children.
- Romans 12:2, 9-18
  - The ability to see things from different points of view is required in responding to family violence. The Church has the potential to step outside our normal perspective to view the system accurately. The Church is intended to be a counter culture through the expression of:

- Compassion
  - Just relationships
  - Empathy and harmony.
- John 4; 11, 12: Show women interacting with Christ with mutual respect and equality.
  - His discussion with the Samaritan woman demonstrates his willingness to step outside the social boundaries of his day to value the person – a woman.
  - He shows compassion for Mary's suffering.
  - He accepted Mary's act of discipleship.
  - These examples infer how men and women should interact with each other.
    - Christ does not dominate or control
    - He treats women as real people – not property as was the social norm.
    - He expresses respect and sincerity.
- Luke 1:46-55; Phil 2:5-8: Point to a world where there is justice, equality, shared power for all.
  - Christ did not exploit power. Rather, he humbly identified with those he came to serve.
  - Those with the greater power e.g., parents, men, must guard against exploiting that power.
  - God desires fair relationships. He rejects systems which set one group over another. He seeks systems wherein each person's contribution is valued, each person's voice is welcomed.
- Exodus 34:7; Leviticus 26:39:
  - The generational influence of wrong doing.
- Genesis 2:24:
  - The goal of marriage is oneness.

## **APPENDIX C: CHILD ABUSE**

### **THE CHILD WELFARE ACT**

The following excerpts are taken from the Alberta Child Welfare Act, with amendments, 1996.

#### **Definitions**

1. (2) For the purposes of this Act, a child is in need of protective services if there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the survival, security or development of the child is endangered because of any of the following:

- a) the child has been abandoned or lost;
- b) the guardian of the child is dead and the child has no other guardian;
- c) the guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to provide the child with the necessities of life, including failing to obtain for the child or to permit the child to receive essential medical, surgical or other remedial treatment that has been recommended by a physician;
- d) the child has been or there is a substantial risk that the child will be physically injured or sexually abused by the guardian of the child;
- e) the guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from physical injury or sexual abuse;
- f) the child has been emotionally injured by the guardian of the child;
- g) the guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from emotional injury;
- h) the guardian of the child has subjected the child to or is unwilling or unable to protect the child from cruel and unusual treatment or punishment;
- i) the condition or behaviour of the child prevents the guardian of the child from providing the child with adequate care appropriate to meet the child's needs.

(3) For the purposes of this Act,

- a) a child is emotionally injured
  - i. if there is substantial and observable impairment of the child's mental or emotional functioning that is evidenced by a mental or behavioural disorder, including anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggression or delayed development, and
  - ii. there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the emotional injury is the result of
    - a. rejection,
    - b. deprivation of affection or cognitive stimulation,
    - b. exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony,
    - c. inappropriate criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations or expectations of or towards the child, or
    - d. the mental or emotional condition of the guardian of the child or chronic alcohol or drug abuse by anyone living in the same residence as the child;

- b) a child is physically injured if there is substantial and observable injury to any part of the child's body as a result of the non-accidental application of force or an agent to the child's body that is evidenced by a laceration, a contusion, an abrasion, a scar, a fracture or other bony injury, a dislocation, a sprain, hemorrhaging, the rupture of viscus, a burn, scald, frostbite, the loss or alteration of consciousness or psychological functioning or the loss of hair or teeth;
- c) a child is sexually abused if the child is inappropriately exposed or subjected to sexual contact, activity or behaviour, including prostitution related activities.

### **Legal Obligation to Report**

- 3 (1) Any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe and believes that a child is in need of protective services shall forthwith report the matter to the director.
- (2) Subsection (1) applies notwithstanding that the information on which the belief is founded is confidential and its disclosure is prohibited under any other Act.
  - (3) This section does not apply to information that is privileged as a result of a solicitor-client relationship.
  - (4) No action lies against a person reporting pursuant to this section unless the reporting is done maliciously or without reasonable and probable grounds for the belief.
  - (5) Notwithstanding and in addition to any other penalty provided by the Act, if a director has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a person has not complied with subsection (1) and that person is registered under an Act regulating a profession or occupation prescribed in the regulations, the director shall advise the appropriate governing body of that profession or occupation of the failure to comply.
  - (6) Any person who fails to comply with subsection (1) is guilty of an offense and liable to a fine of not more than \$2,000. and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term of not more than 6 months.

### **Confidentiality in Reporting**

91 (4) Notwithstanding subsection (2), the name of the person who reports to the Minister pursuant to section 3 or 4 shall not be disclosed or communicated to any person without the consent in writing of the Minister.

## **INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE<sup>15</sup>**

### **Emotional/Psychological Abuse**

Physical indicators may include:

- Speech disorders, i.e. stuttering;
- Medical conditions which may be associated with or may be triggered by chronic stress, i.e. asthma, allergies, headaches, stomach aches;
- Lags in physical development.

Behavioural indicators may include:

- Displays inappropriate emotional response to situations;
- Engages in extreme behaviour, i.e. cruelty, vandalism, stealing, cheating, fire setting;
- Is self-deprecating, or makes grandiose claims of competence;
- Self-stimulating behaviour, i.e. tics, tremors, scratching, self-rocking;
- Self-mutilation;
- Suicidal behaviour;
- Verbal abuse, directed at the child, by the parents/guardian.

### **Neglect**

Physical indicators may include:

- Chronically unattended medical or dental problems such as infected sores, decayed teeth, glasses not provided when needed.

Behavioural indicators may include:

- Chronic failure by parent/guardian to provide the basic necessities, i.e. food, clothing, shelter, adequate adult supervision;
- Chronic unexplained absences, lateness or fatigue, which can be explained by the failure of parent/guardian to provide for the basic necessities;
- Behavioural concerns, i.e. adolescent pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, risk taking behaviours, by the child, that pose a threat to safety.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical indicators may include:

- Unexplained change in physical appearance, i.e. bruises, bald spot, burns;
- Unexplained injuries, i.e. fractures.

Behavioural indicators may include:

- Child exhibiting low self-esteem, fear;
- Wariness or inability to tolerate physical touch of others;
- Choice of clothing that covers body and may be inappropriate for weather conditions and avoidance of changing for activities;
- Isolation, inability to form good peer relationships;
- Extremes in behaviour: aggression or withdrawal.

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<sup>15</sup> This section has been adapted from a document developed by the Calgary Domestic Violence Committee (CDVC), the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic Board of Education.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Physical indicators may include:

- Difficulty in walking or sitting;
- Pain or itching in the genital area;
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections;
- Wetting or soiling self;
- Frequent, unexplained sore throats.

Behavioural indicators may include:

- Shows unusual interest in sexual matters and seems to have sexual knowledge beyond their developmental stage;
- Tiredness, withdrawal, hyper-vigilance and behavioural extremes;
- Compulsive masturbation;
- Self-mutilation;
- Acts out sexually towards other children or adults, i.e. sexually explicit behaviour.

## **Witness/Victim of Domestic Violence**

Physical indicators may include:

- Parents frequently report that they have consulted with a physician about the physical complaints of their children, but no medical problem was diagnosed;
- Physical complaints, i.e. stomach aches, headaches, chronic colds, allergies;
- Sleep disturbances, i.e. nightmares, insomnia, bedwetting;
- Eating disturbances;
- Depression.

Behavioural indicators may include:

(Behavioural indicators include those identified for physical and emotional abuse.)

- Fearful, i.e. afraid of loud noises or loud voices;
- Approval seeking, caretaking behaviour;
- Behavioural extremes, i.e. acting out, isolated, withdrawal, extreme compliance, perfection seeking;
- Absence from school, running away from home;
- Early pregnancy and/or early marriage;
- Self-mutilation;
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **LEGAL SANCTIONS**

In addition to criminal charges laid by the police, the following is a list of legal sanctions to domestic violence that are available. (See Appendix D for detailed conditions that apply to each category.)

#### **Peace Bonds**

Requires that an individual “keep the peace” and obey any other conditions ordered by the court.

- For anyone in need of protection from physical violence or threats
- Usually apply for a Peace Bond when already going through the criminal system (i.e. assault charges)
- Victim does not need a lawyer to obtain
- Do not have to be legally married to obtain
- Can include additional conditions (i.e. mandatory counselling)
- Victim contacts the Provincial Court Criminal Division Clerk’s Office or the local police to request a Peace Bond
- Can be ordered for a maximum of 12 months
- Violation of a Peace Bond is a criminal offence and offender can be arrested and charged
- Requires an in-person hearing and the victim may have to attend court to give evidence
- No court fees for application
- Peace Bonds are public documents, therefore individuals involved in same-sex relationships may be reluctant to apply
- A copy of the Peace Bond should be kept on the victim at all times

#### **Restraining Orders**

Restrains one party from having contact with another.

- For anyone in need of protection from physical violence or threats
- Can be put into effect relatively quickly (within 24 hours)
- Access is not immediate and not available outside court normal court hours
- Victim does not need a lawyer to obtain
- Must be obtained in combination with another legal action
- Victim seeks Restraining Order through the Court of Queen’s Bench
- Requires that an affidavit or completed questionnaire be completed
- Only in effect when the accused has been served
- Can be ordered for 6 months, but can be renewed
- No court fees for application, but will require a process server to serve the Order on the accused

- Violations of the Restraining Order cannot be dealt with by the Criminal Code – not a criminal offence, instead can only be cited for civil contempt
- Restraining Orders are public documents, therefore individuals involved in same-sex relationships may be reluctant to apply
- A copy of the Restraining Order should be kept on the victim at all times.

### **Emergency Protection Orders**

Can provide immediate protection to victims of domestic violence.

- Obtained with the assistance of police, although victim can apply her/himself
- Police can only apply with the consent of the victim
- Available on a 24 hour basis
- Can be granted up to one year
- Can keep the accused away from the home, workplace, or school, or other premises where family members might be present
- Can grant exclusive rights to occupy the home to certain family members for a specified period
- Can direct police to seize and store weapons
- Can specify any other provisions for the immediate protection of family members
- No fee for filing an application if done without a lawyer
- Violation of the Order is a criminal offence
- Not available to same-sex couples, couples who are dating, and non-family caregivers.

### **Queen's Bench Protection Orders**

Provides for long-term protection for victims of domestic violence

- Has the same measures of protection for the Emergency Protection Order (above), in addition to extra provisions (i.e. reimbursement for losses due to violence, temporary possession, and mandatory counseling)
- Can be enforced up to one year
- Free if granted as part of an Emergency Protection Order review
- Victim may apply for protection order directly from the Court of Queen's Bench (does not require a lawyer)
- Violation of the Order is a criminal offence and also offender can be cited for civil contempt
- Not available to same-sex couples, couples who are dating, and non-family caregivers

### **Exclusive Matrimonial Home Possession Order**

Requires one person to leave the family home and prohibits him or her from entering the home or being near the home.

- Can be obtained for either a home that is owned or rented
- Order may also give the victim possession of the furniture in the home and the family vehicle
- Abusive spouse may be ordered to pay the rent or mortgage

- Only available to legally married couples
- If the person is living on a reserve, she/he will not be eligible for an Exclusive Possession Order
- Does not stop the abusive person from contacting the victim by phone or by other means outside the home (i.e. no protection available outside the home)
- A lawyer should be obtained as the legal procedures can be complicated
- Victim should keep a copy of the Order with her/him

## **APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Community Services**

- Awo Taan Calgary Native Women's Shelter:..... 531-1970  
Secure, 21 day shelter and counseling for abused women and children
- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse:..... 237-6905
- Calgary Counselling Centre:..... 265-4980  
Individual / group counseling for women, children and men affected by violence
- Calgary Immigrant Women's Association: ..... 263-4414  
Counseling, including family violence, literacy, legal, settlement services
- Calgary Legal Guidance:..... 234-9266  
Court preparation; Quick Restraining Orders
- Calgary Police Service  
Child Abuse:..... 206-8390  
Domestic Conflict Unit:..... 206-8339  
Sex Crimes Unit..... 206-8390  
Victims' Assistance Unit..... 206-8398
- Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services (Child Welfare)...297-8080
- Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter:..... 232-8717  
Administration:..... 290-1556  
Secure, 21 day shelter and counselling for abused women and children  
Community based services to abused women who are unable to access shelter
- Child Abuse Hot Line: .....1-800-387-5437  
Telephone crisis support for children and youth
- FaithLink:..... 242-3567  
Support to faith leaders and communities regarding family violence situations
- Kirby Rotary House:..... 705-3250  
Long term shelter for abused seniors – male and female
- Legal Aid Society of Alberta:..... 297-2260  
Free legal services – financial means testing required
- Men's Crisis Line:..... 266-4357  
Telephone crisis counseling and support
- Sonshine Community Services:..... 243-2002  
Long term housing and counseling for abused women and children  
Community based counseling for women
- YWCA Family Violence Prevention Centre & Sheriff King Home: 266-0707  
Administration:..... 266-4111  
24 Hrs crisis line:..... 266-0707  
Secure, 21day shelter and counseling for abused women and children  
Group counseling for men who have acted abusively

### **Awareness Resources**

Action Committee Against Violence: (403) 268-6716

24 Hour Help Cards (printed in different languages)

Resource and Activities Manual for Turn Off The Violence Week

Community Resource Inventories

Numerous Printed Resources re: Domestic Violence

Violence Information and Education Centre

Website: [www.viec.org](http://www.viec.org)

Email: [info@viec.org](mailto:info@viec.org)

Phone: (403) 209-3129      fax: (403)209-3261

### **Web sites**

