



Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden, Inc

Strengthening Families

Responding to Domestic Violence

A Resource for
Parishes

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Introduction

Violence is a scourge on families. The outcomes of domestic violence and child abuse can be catastrophic for individuals and have far reaching consequences in communities and society. Violence, however, is entirely preventable. With appropriate supports, families can thrive.

Members of the church are viewed by victims of violence as safe and trusted individuals to which to turn when they need help. This guide is intended to provide representatives of the Church with an array of tools to help them respond professionally and compassionately.

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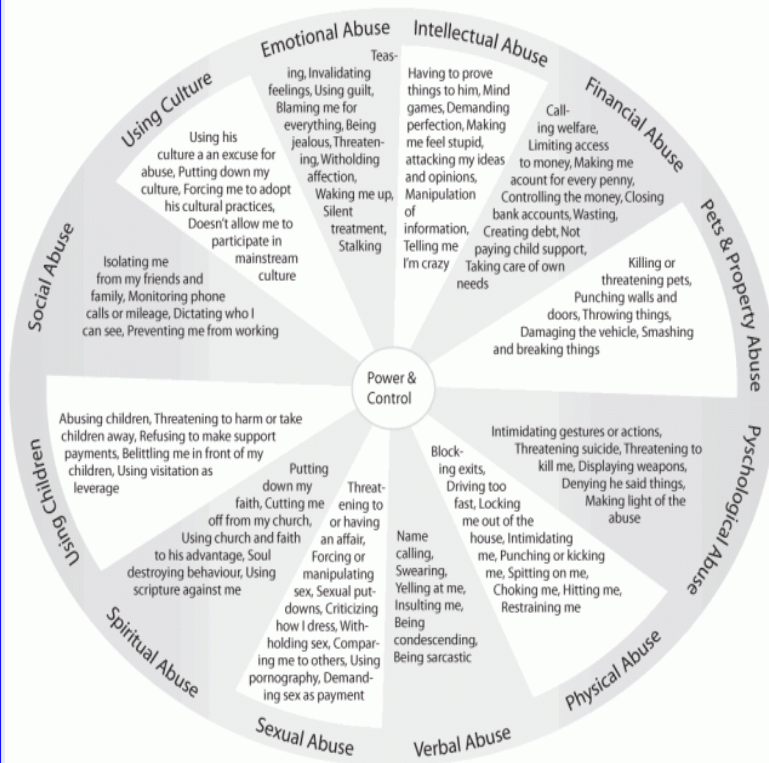
Domestic Violence

- Is a pattern of abusive behavior
- Is not just physical abuse
- Is an attempt to gain power and control
- Is not an anger problem
- Often worsens over time
- Can have a devastating impact on the children

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Power and Control Wheel

The Power and Control Wheel



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Bringing an end to violence is easier when we know the factors that contribute to it. As with any issue, there are certain factors that protect against it and others that are correlated with it. These are known as Protective and Risk Factors.

Protective Factors

These positive influences in families increase the potential that a family and/or any of its individual members will not use violence and will thrive.

Family Connectedness, Clear Family Rules and Expectations, the Development of Social Skills, and the Development of Problem Solving Skills are all protective factors that can keep family members safe.

Risk Factors

Although, not a direct cause of violence, a risk factor increases the potential that a family member will become a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Poverty, Substance Abuse, Witnessing Domestic Violence, Trauma, Social Rejection, Lack of Parental Involvement or Negative Parental Involvement are all risk factors for violent behavior.

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Four ways to Respond to Domestic Violence

1. Educate

- Teach families the alternatives to violence to create healthy homes
- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms and how to respond
- Help victims understand what the church teaches and how to be safe

3. Challenge It

Although it may be scary to say something when we know there has been domestic violence, challenging the behavior is a way to make it stop. Men, especially, have the ability to influence the behavior of other men by letting a batterer know his behavior is unacceptable.

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Four ways to Respond to Domestic Violence

2. Talk about it

Keeping silent about violence of any kind creates a breeding ground for it. Talking about it sets the tone and lets victims and batterers know that violence is not acceptable. Homilies, public speaking engagements, and private conversations are all appropriate venues to talk about this evil.

4. Create Opportunity

Victims of violence often stay with their abuser because they have no other financial options. Increased opportunity to employment, education, or transportation can provide an avenue to safety.

Educate Families

Catholic Charities offers multiple educational options to help families and those in ministry. Among the ways we educate are:

- **Family Strengthening Workshops**

Because domestic violence is often a secret, victims may hesitate to expose themselves by attending a presentation specifically on domestic violence. They may, however, be motivated by a desire to be good parents.

Catholic Charities is able to provide an individual or a series of educational workshops that seek to address both the risk and protective factors for violence.

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The workshops, which are fully interactive, offer participants the opportunity to ask questions in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere.

The workshops also seek to create greater financial stability for families by offering incentives that may be saved to “buy” needed baby items, and they may be offered participation in a matched savings program to assist with a major purchase such as a house or education.

For More Details turn to the next page.

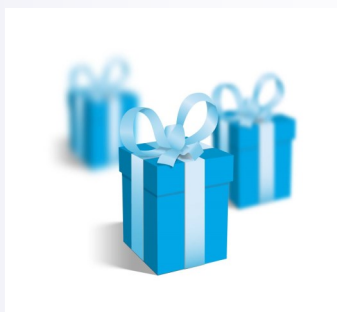
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Family Strengthening Workshop Components



Presentations between 45 and 90 minutes focus on various aspects of family life including the impact violence has on children and families. Each session will focus on both the risk and protective factors necessary to end violence.

Participants will earn incentives called “Baby Bucks” for each session they attend. The amount will vary based on the topic and length of the session. Participants can redeem their “Baby Bucks” immediately following the session for a small item or save them for a more substantial item later



Each participant will have the opportunity to learn whether they might qualify to participate in a matched-savings program that could allow them to save for a large purchase such as education or to buy their own house.

Sample Workshop Topics

- 3 Keys to a Healthy Pregnancy
- All Babies Cry
- Why Read?
- Good Touch/Bad Touch
- Look What I Can Do: Child Development
- When Love Hurts
- Helping Children do Well in School
- Create a Stable Financial Future
- Creating an Envelope of Security Around your Children

For a full list of presentations or to request a customized workshop contact
Sylvia Loumeau at 856-342-4162

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Educate Clergy and Religious

- **Presentations to those in ministry**

Catholic Charities is able to provide presentations of all lengths to priests, sisters, deacons, and lay ministers that will help them learn how to recognize the warning signs of domestic violence, breakdown the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement on domestic violence, and share information and resources that can help to provide a professional and compassionate response to victims and batterers.

To request information on any of these educational options, contact Sylvia Loumeau at 856-342-4162

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Talk About It

- **Counseling Services**

The counselors at **Catholic Charities** recognize the hidden nature of domestic violence, so rather than waiting for victims to share that they have been abused, our counselors know to ask. Every new request for individual, couple, or family counseling includes an assessment for domestic violence, and we often meet with spouses separately in order to give victims the freedom to disclose abuse without fear of reprisal from the abuser.

Victims are given the opportunity to process their experiences and to rebuild self-esteem, while abusers

Talk About It (continued)

are given the opportunity to discuss the early life experiences that shaped their behavior while still being held accountable.

- **Homily Talking Points**

Priests and deacons hold an especially powerful role in ending domestic violence if they talk about it and educate their congregation from the pulpit. Batterers and victims alike respond when they know and understand the Church's teaching on violence.

Catholic Charities is able to assist clergy in the development of their homilies by sharing a number of talking points.

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Among these are:

- The Church does not encourage victims to remain in dangerous situations and while sad, divorce is sometimes a necessary option
- The Gospels should never be used to support abusive behavior in any form
 - Wives be subordinate to your husbands...(Col 3:18)
 - When someone strikes you on your right cheek...(Mat 5:39)
- Domestic violence is not God's punishment for some other wrong

To request more information on homily talking points, contact Sylvia Loumeau at 856-342-4162

Talk About It (continued)

- **Safety Planning Talking Points**

Whenever possible it is important to talk with victims of violence about how to keep themselves and their children safe. They benefit from discussions that help them plan how to avoid incidents of violence and to know what to do if they choose to leave.

Some points that any concerned person can share are:

While in an Abusive Relationship

- Remove weapons from the home or try to make them inaccessible
- Have a phone available at all times
- Develop a code word to use with friends or family that indicate danger is imminent

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When Leaving an Abusive Relationship

- Have a spare car key hidden somewhere outside of the home
- Have some extra money, to which the abuser does not have access, saved
- Have all essential documents (birth certificates, driver's licenses, green cards, work permits, children's social security cards, credit card, bank paperwork) all together and easily accessible
- Change typical routines and travel patterns

It is important to note that victims of violence are most at risk of lethal violence when leaving their abuser. Trust the victim if she does not think it is safe to leave.

To request more information on safety planning points, contact
Sylvia Loumeau at 856-342-4162

Challenge It

When we see domestic violence and say nothing, we collude in its perpetuation. Here are a few ways to challenge it:

- Post anti-violence materials in vestibules, waiting rooms, and other easily visible places
- Call the police when hearing or witnessing an incident
- Do not laugh when others make jokes about violence and let them know it is not funny

Catholic Charities is able to challenge domestic violence in a therapy group setting. While still recognizing their dignity, batterers are challenged by professional counselors and their peers to end the use of violence as a means of dealing with frustration and powerlessness.

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Create Opportunity

Women often remain in violent relationships when they do not have the resources to leave. Lack of money, information, an inability to speak English, or fear around immigration status can be significant barriers. Parishes can create opportunity for victims of violence by:

- Offering ESL classes
- Making domestic violence materials available around the parish
- Know the services **Catholic Charities** provides

Catholic Charities may have short-term funding to help relocate a victim. We can also determine whether a victim might be eligible for participation in a matched savings program that might qualify her to pursue an education or purchase a house of her own.

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USCCB Letter on Domestic Violence

In 1992, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued their first letter on domestic violence: When I Call For Help, A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence. In it, they tell us that this issue is a priority to be addressed and that we must work to end the cycle of violence. Ministers are often first responders following an incident of violence, and must be prepared to respond appropriately.

For a copy of the Bishops' letter.

[Click here.](#)

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Domestic Violence Resources

NJ Statewide Hotline—I (800) 572-SAFE (7233)

Atlantic County

Atlantic County Women's Center

Toll free: 1-800-286-4184

TTY: (609) 645-2909

Cumberland County

Center for Family Services

1(886) 295-SERV (7378)

1-800-286-4353

Camden County

Camden County Women's Center

(856) 227-1234

TTY: (856) 227-9264

Gloucester County

Center for Family Services

(856) 881-3335

Cape May County

CARA, Inc. (Coalition
Against Rape & Abuse, Inc.)

Toll free: 1-877-294-CARA
[2272]

TTY: (609) 463-0818

Salem County

Salem County Women's
Services

Emergency Shelter 24-Hr.

Hotline: (856) 935-6655

Toll free: 1-888-632-9511

TTY: (856) 935-7118

Catholic Charities Counseling Services—I-866-682-2166

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden,
Inc.

Atlantic City	609-345-3446
Bridgeton	856-200-0654
Camden	856-342-4100
Penns Grove	856-299-1296
Rio Grande	609-886-2662
Salem	856-339-4102
Vineland	856-691-1841
Westville	856-845-9200

Outpatient Counseling Services
1-866-862-2166

The Camden Center for Law and Social
Justice
856-583-2590

To schedule a Strengthening Families Series at
your parish, contact Sylvia Loumeau, Director
of Clinical Services at 856-342-4162.

