

Engaging the Faith Community in your Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence

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Today's Agenda

- Why Faith Communities?
- Considerations and Ideas for Partnerships
- Building Connections and Relationships
- Successful Continuing Collaboration
- Creating an Effective Partnership
- Addressing Conflict and Harmful Practices
- Envisioning a New Reality
- Resources

Why Faith Communities?

- Survivors of violence are more likely to go to their faith communities for help before going to the police or a domestic violence agency for help (2011 GA Fatality Review)
- Sociologists Anne L. Horton and Judith A. Williamson have commented, "Each year more abuse victims, perpetrators, and family members seek help from clergy and religious leaders than all other helping professionals combined."

Why Faith Communities?

- From 2004-2011, 30% of victims killed by their perpetrators were involved with a faith community, the same percentage of those who had been involved with their county Magistrate Court for help (2012 GA Fatality Review)
- Faith Communities shape our consciousness, beliefs, morals and values; When our Faith Communities are silent or teach us about dangerous messages, there is tremendous negative impact*

Why Faith Communities?

- In all communities, a person's faith and their Faith Community can be a critical resource for survivors.
- In rural communities, a Faith Community may be the only resource within miles of a survivor's home.
- LGBT survivors are likely to go to their faith community for help as long as their sexuality is accepted by that community; Rates of Domestic Violence are about the same in same gender relationships as in heterosexual relationships

Why Faith Communities?

- In immigrant communities, a Faith Community of one's country of origin may be the only safe place for them to turn for help. (*Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community*)
- In African-American communities, attending church, our mosques/masjids, synagogues & other worship spaces are often the first places sought after to help cope with life stressors from discrimination, family crises, disease, substance abuse recovery, and natural disaster (*Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community*)
- Religion and spirituality shape the ways in which Latinos approach and respond to life situations including Domestic Violence. Religion contributes to an emphasis on family preservation within Latino culture. (*Faith Trust Institute*)

Why Faith Communities?

- Faith Communities often know families across generations and may have regular access to homes, unlike social service agencies.
- Faith Communities offer very unique and vital opportunities for early education, prevention and intervention because they are normally at the center of our major life-cycle events, such as marriages, births, naming ceremonies, baptisms and christenings, and funerals.

Important Facts to Remember

- Most common faith traditions in the US: Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, American Indian spiritualities and Christianity (Roman Catholic, Mainline protestantism, evangelical protestantism, historic black churches, roman catholicism in Latino communities) represents 75% of the US population
- Abuse does not favor one religious, economic, religious, or ethnic group over another. It is found in all groups! No faith tradition or religion allows or encourages domestic violence (Faith Trust Institute)

Considerations and Ideas for Partnerships

1. Create and implement effective conversations with faith communities in order to build collaborative relationships
2. Construct an effective training for faith leaders and faith communities
3. Formulate ideas and responses to address conflicting values or harmful practices

Considerations and Ideas for Partnerships

- 4. Recognize the intersections of faith and domestic violence
- 5. Develop and employ strategies to achieve long-term engagement with faith communities

Building Connections and Relationships

What are the first steps for outreach?

1. Identify who you want to reach.

- Think about who you have already worked with
- Which faith communities are in close proximity?
- What faith leaders and faith communities are active in community advocacy?
- Remember to be inclusive of various faith traditions

Tip: Begin with those that are interested and cooperative, it may be small but you can build momentum

Building Connections and Relationships

2. You MUST build trust.

- In order to build a partnership, it takes authenticity, time and persistence
- Make personal invites and in-person connections with faith communities, leaders, institutions, and alliances.
- Let faith leaders know that you want to support their efforts, not only train them
- Celebrate all accomplishments, big or small

3. Lead with a sense of urgency

- Doubt and denial is prevalent amongst faith communities, let them know alarming statistics and how many you serve in their area
- Share stories of victims and survivors, with confidentiality

Building Connections and Relationships

4. Encourage A Team Approach

- Let them know how much you and other community agencies can help
- When connected to community resources, faith leaders are able to focus more on their unique role

5. Ask willing faith leaders for help

- It can be difficult to come from the outside, so ask faith leaders you had a relationship with to reach out to others

Successful Collaboration Wheel



Reprinted from "Collaborative Action: How to Get It Done" by Dr. Robert Kegan, Harvard Business School Press, 2008. Adapted by the National Center for Community Engagement and Leadership, University of Maryland System, 2010.

The Collaboration Continuum

The continuum begins with "networking" and works through a spectrum of levels to increase complexity, ends with "multi-sector collaboration"

1. Networking
2. Coordination
3. Cooperation
4. Collaboration
5. Multi-Sector Collaboration

Creating an Effective Partnership

- A goal of your partnership may be to develop a training for inter-faith leaders
- Utilize the methods identified earlier and your ideas to bring inter-faith leaders together
- Collaborate with other local agencies from FVIPs, VWAP programs, reproductive justice agencies and more
- Select a neutral location, where it does not favor a person of a particular faith; be intentional about being inclusive
- Invite faith leaders and members from faith communities to local taskforce meetings, coalition meetings, etc.

Creating an Effective Partnership

- Schedule your trainings wisely, this is often the most difficult step. Gatherings that take place during the week often work best for clergy to attend
- Conduct a training in stages, remember it takes time and there is copious information to impart
- Reach out to religious governing bodies and alliances to contact multiple faith leaders at once and to publicize your gatherings, meetings, training, etc.
- Think creatively about your training or initiative/partnership name, remember to be vision-focused instead of problem-focused

Creating an Effective Partnership

Collaborations can focus on the following but is not limited to these areas:

- **Breaking the Silence** – Speaking, Preaching, Teaching, & Talking about domestic violence
- **Safety & Support** – Putting the survivor first
- **Assessments** – How has the faith community responded to domestic violence in the past?
- **Education & Training** – Improving the knowledge, prevention, and response efforts of other clergy and lay leaders; Teaching on opposing the use of theological or text justifications of violence
- **Accountability** – developing effective methods to engage perpetrators
- **Community Collaboration** – Connecting to local and national resources for assistance, referrals and partnerships

Creating an Effective Partnership

Conversations, Gatherings, Trainings & more can include and lead to discussion on the Intersections affecting faith and domestic violence such as:

- Crisis of faith
- Patriarchy
- Racism
- Cultural Differences
- Sexism & Gender Inequality
- Classism
- Homophobia
- Xenophobia

Addressing Conflict and Harmful Practices

- It is most effective to address conflict and harmful practices once a relationship has been established between the advocate or agency and the faith leader and community.
- It is best to address in a group setting with other faith leaders, this way no one has to be singled out

Addressing Conflict and Harmful Practices

In a group setting or gathering, it is effective to use a story or scenario that illuminates the harmful practice

- Share your concern, facts and statistics that indicate why this practice is harmful and dangerous
- Remember and inform others that the aim is to always be survivor-centered.
- Please share examples of a challenge in addressing conflicts with faith communities and leaders

Envision A New Reality!

- It may be helpful to identify and define your faith community initiative as movement towards the reality you are seeking to create – e.g. focusing on healthy relationships as the ultimate goal; equality amongst men and women
- This work is about more than ending violence, its ultimate aim is towards creating healthy, thriving relationships, families, communities, and societies!

Resources for Faith Leader Alliances

- Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta (FAMA) – www.faihallianceofmetroatlanta.com
- Gurdwara Sahib/Sikh Study Circle (Stone Mountain) – 770.808.6320
- Archdiocese of Atlanta (Catholics) – www.archatl.com
- The Vedanta Center (worship center for Hindu and several faiths) – www.vedanta-atlanta.org
- Muslims for Progressive Values Atlanta – www.mpvatlanta.org
- Regional Council of Churches of Atlanta – www.rccapilgrims.ning.com
- The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education – www.acpe.edu

Resources for Agencies & Organizations

- Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (GCADV) – www.gcadv.org - 404.209.0280
- Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) – www.gcfv.org - 404.657.3412
 - GCFV & GCADV produce the Annual Georgia Fatality Review
- Local Atlanta Domestic Violence Agencies (e.g., Women’s Resource Center to End Domestic Violence (WRCDV) – 404.370.7670)

Resources for Agencies & Organizations

- Spark! Reproductive Justice NOW (www.sparkrj.org)
- Local Family Violence/Batterer Intervention Programs (FVIPs or BIPs)
- SisterSong – Women of Color Reproductive Justice Network (www.sistersong.net)
- The Kindred Moxie Network - Equips faith leaders to end violence (www.kindredmoxie.org)
- FaithTrust Institute (www.faihttrustinstitute.org)
- Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing & Training (www.crossroadsantiracism.org)
- United 4 Safety – DV/IPV in LGBT Community (www.thehealthinitiative.org)
- Shalom Bayit (www.ytfl.org/shalombayit) Wendy Lipshutz
- Women Watch Afrika (www.womenwatchafrika.org) – Glory Kilanko

National Resources for Agencies & Organizations

- Safe Havens: Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence (www.interfaithpartners.org)
- The Faith Trust Institute (www.faihttrustinstitute.org)
- IDVAAC – The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (www.dvinsitute.org)
- National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women (www.vawnet.org)
- *Walking Together: Working with Women from Diverse Religious and Spiritual Traditions*

Questions & Feedback

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Executive Director & Founder,
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The Kindred Moxie Network will offer an action-oriented training program especially for Faith Leaders
