



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE CHURCH

Helping Churches
Become Safe Havens

By: Ashley Manuel, CTSS

INFORMATION SHARED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE FOLLOWING:



Florida State University

"This Curriculum is part of The Alliance for Faith-Based Efforts to End Domestic Violence,
Within the Institute for Family Violence Studies, Florida State University College of Social Work."



The Rave Project

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

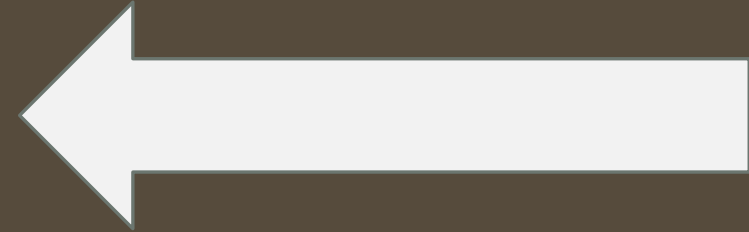
<https://www.theraveproject.org/>



ANANIAS
FOUNDATION

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME:

I was born and raised a Preacher's daughter, the youngest (and most mischievous) of three girls.



Waking up from a Vacation
Bible School Kool-Aid Hangover!

MY FIRST MISSION TRIP: AGE 8



I was invited to be a guest speaker in 2018 for a Breaking the Silence event in Trinidad; discussing Domestic/ Sexual Violence and Trauma.

Guests Speakers



Ashley Aldred,
Virginia U.S.A,
Trauma Services
Specialist with 15
years experience.
Her current work
is with victims of
domestic and
sexual violence



Draine Ramoo,
Women's
Counseling
Psychologist,
Sexual Trauma
Specialist



Debra Diaz,
founder of Project
Providence

Let's Talk About It

With Lennox Boodram



BREAKING THE SILENCE



Saturday 6th October, 2018
Cocoyea Open Bible
3pm

For More Information Call
Lennox Boodram 325-3355

Cocoyea Open
Bible



Project
Providence

PASTOR AGIMUDIE AND HIS WIFE GLENDA





Domestic Violence In Appalachia

“In my opinion, the media portrays domestic violence as something that is almost acceptable in Appalachia; if not acceptable, then definitely to be expected. After all, we’re just a bunch of ignorant hillbillies that don’t know better, right? Or maybe we aren’t as good at hiding it. The truth is, Appalachian women are less likely to have resources to leave when it happens; and that my friends is unacceptable.”

“In theory, the abused person could simply walk away and find other transportation. In Appalachia, this likely isn’t possible. We have to factor in that many Appalachian areas are remote and cut off from metropolitan areas. There is likely no public transportation. Uber simply doesn’t exist, and if it did, how would they pay for it?”

Blackberry Sage Blog 10/26/2021- <https://theblackberrysage.blogspot.com>

“The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence states that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe violence at the hands of their intimate partner-which can include physical injury or battery, psychological intimidation, or other abuse-or sexual violence from an intimate partner. Two of the states with the highest rates of violence against women are in Appalachia: Tennessee and South Carolina. In West Virginia, alone, a call comes into a domestic violence hotline every 9 minutes, as reported by the NCADV.”

Blackberry Sage Blog 10/26/2021 - <https://theblackberrysage.blogspot.com>

VIRGINIA CHURCHES

“Churches-In.com is a directory of Christian churches sorted by state and city. We currently have 109,816 churches in our directory.”

[Virginia Churches \(churches-in.com\)](http://churches-in.com)

For the majority of my life I spent countless hours serving in my Father's Virginia churches. I was a few years older than pictured below when I was exposed to my first incident of domestic violence in the church.



Let's talk about it!!

“BARBARA”



SO WHAT WENT RIGHT IN BARBARA'S STORY?

1. The Pastor and Pastor's wife were willing to listen and believed she was a victim of domestic violence. (Without trying to excuse it due to the abuser also being a member/or attending their church).
2. The Pastor and his wife were willing to open their home to her to provide her and her children with safe haven.
3. The Pastor was willing and did in fact develop a safety plan within the church should the abusing spouse show up to start trouble.

LET PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS KNOW:

They will want to avoid doing anything that will make the situation worse. Here are some "don'ts" the experts suggest you avoid:

Avoid bashing the abuser. Focus on the behavior, not the personality.

Never blame the victim. That's what the abuser does. (So listen without blaming or shaming.)

Don't underestimate the potential danger for the victim and yourself.

Don't promise any help that you can't follow through with.

Don't give conditional support.

Don't do anything that might provoke the abuser.

Don't pressure the victim.

Don't give up. If they are not willing to open up at first, be patient.

Don't do anything to make it more difficult for the victim.

WHY IS WHAT WENT RIGHT SO IMPORTANT?

“ Every hour of every day, in living rooms and kitchens across American, shouting matches turn into punches turn into women slumped on floors. Some never get up. It’s a story as old as time. We call in domestic violence, but the name may contribute to the problem. Merriam-Webster defines domestic as “of or relating to the household or the family.” Domestic chores, domestic happiness, it says. Private, not public. Everyone knows that domestic means Shhhh. It means it’s nobody’s business until it is.”

**Melissa Jeltsen-Huff Post: The Day Domestic Violence Came To Church.
(11/18/2017)**



So it's important that when nobody's business becomes the Churches business that Pastors and Church leaders are prepared!

TRAINING CHURCH LEADERS

“The silence must be broken. Pastors, leaders and people in the faith community must recognize the reality that domestic violence is happening in our congregations. We must not endorse abuse through our silence, lack of knowledge or behind a misinterpretation of Scripture.”



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

[| Rave \(theraveproject.org\)](http://theraveproject.org)

10 REASONS TO INCLUDE PASTORS AROUND THE COLLABORATIVE TABLE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Chosen by victims.

Sought by perpetrators when the victim leaves the home.

Invested with moral authority.

Access to lives at the point of crisis.

Provide educational resources to all age groups.

Held as experts on “marriage” and the family.

Able to offer spiritual comfort and guidance.

Often in regular contact with those who are marginalized.

Able to provide ongoing support after the crisis.

Skilled in talking about hope.

WE START HERE...

Domestic Violence is a crime. Domestic violence is: ...any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.

There are non-legal definitions of domestic violence that help us understand what it looks like in a home over time. So with that in mind, Domestic Violence is “a pattern of assaultive and coercive behavior that may include physical, sexual, and/or psychological abuse as well as economic coercion, property destruction, and/or child abuse that occurs between partners in intimate relationships.”

* The core issue of domestic violence is often power and control! Domestic violence is not limited to a person who physically hurts a spouse or family member because he or she cannot control his or her temper in an argument. Commonly, the core issue of domestic violence is a pattern of behavior used by an abuser to establish power and control over a spouse or family member through fear and intimidation. - Abusers believe they are entitled to control their victims. They believe that threats and violence are acceptable and will produce the desired results. Therefore, domestic violence is purposeful and instrumental behavior.

* The pattern is directed at restricting independent thought and action so that the victim will become devoted to fulfilling the needs of the abuser. - The pattern is not impulsive or “out of control” behavior. Tactics that work to control the victim are selectively chosen by the perpetrator. This achievement is unfulfilling however, because the abuser can never get enough control to make him/her feel comfortable. It is impossible, despite the victim’s attempts to comply.

“The crisis of family violence affects people physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Each of these dimensions must be addressed. Approached from either a secular or a religious perspective alone, certain needs and issues tend to be disregarded...Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and cooperation between secular and religious helpers to deal with family violence cannot be emphasized too strongly.”- Brian Ogawa, National Victim Assistance Academy

How Victims Respond to Trauma: Trauma and the Brain (Physical & Psychological)



VICTIM DEMEANOR

“Sometimes outsiders see a victim’s demeanor as an obstacle. Not all victims of domestic violence seem timid, fragile, and sympathetic. For example, some victims abuse substances as a means of self-medicating and coping with the fear of violence. Victims may drink alcohol, appear mentally ill, and generally seem quite unsympathetic to church leaders. These emotional reactions are normal, but they may result in a church leader mistakenly assuming that the victim is at fault, instead of the abuser. Abusers are often skilled at making the victim appear inept, “crazy”, and/or emotionally unbalanced.”

HOW VICTIMS RESPOND TO VICTIMIZATION SPIRITUALLY

“Traumatic events often lead to dramatic changes in a survivor’s world views so that fundamental assumptions about meaningfulness, goodness, and safety shift negatively.”

“So for those whose views are theologically founded, traumatic events often give rise to questions about the fundamental nature of the relationship between the creator and humankind.”

HOW VICTIMS RESPOND TO VICTIMIZATION SPIRITUALLY CONTINUED...

Many victims believe the following lies about themselves and their abusive situation:

- 1. God is not good.**
- 2. I am worthless.**
- 3. I'll never get over/out of this.**
- 4. Nobody cares.**
- 5. God has forsaken me.**
- 6. I can't forgive.**
- 7. I deserve the abuse.**
- 8. I have not future.**

WHAT OBSTACLES EXIST FOR VICTIMS WHO SEEK HELP WITHIN THE CHURCH?

Mistaken Definitions of Submission

Placing Forgiveness before Safety

Lack of Accountability for the Sin of Abuse

Commonly held myths regarding issues of domestic violence

Lack of understanding regarding abusers and victims

Confusion between Forgiveness and Reconciliation

DINAH'S STORY



Basically what I got from
Dinah's Pastor....



THIS PASTOR STATED THAT “GOD WILL KEEP US SAFE.”

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LOCAL NEWS ▸

Tragic Shooting At Arden Church Highlights Troubling Domestic Violence Trend

 CBS NEWS
SACRAMENTO

MARCH 1, 2022 / 10:56 PM / CBS SACRAMENTO



RESEARCH

A Top Reason for Church Shootings: Domestic Abuse

There were actually two attacks on Sunday, showing how violence at home often enters God's house.


KATE SHELLNUTT | NOVEMBER 7, 2017 08:10 AM



Image: Scott Olson / Getty Images

Iowa church shooting highlights danger of domestic violence

June 6, 2022



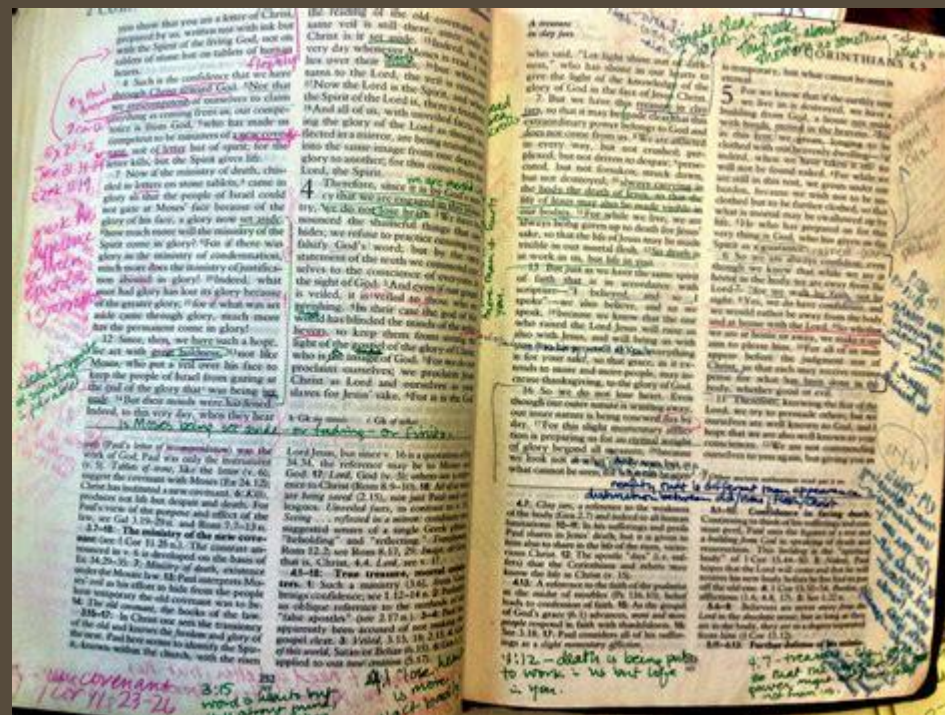
A man killed his 22-year-old ex-girlfriend and her 21-year-old friend outside an Ames church on Thursday before turning the gun on himself, authorities said. He had been arrested days earlier for harassing his ex.

The Connection Between Domestic Violence and Mass Shootings

Nearly every mass shooter in U.S. history — meaning a person who has killed four or more people with a firearm — was a man. According to **The Violence Project**, 98% of mass shootings involve a male shooter. When women are involved in the shootings, they are often participating alongside a male partner, or seeking a way out of a violent situation. However, something else connects many who resort to mass killing: they have a history of domestic violence. A Bloomberg report from 2020 revealed that out of 749 mass shootings in the past 6 years, about 60% involved men who had histories or were in the act of **committing domestic violence**. The deadlier the incident, the higher the chances of a domestic violence history or gender-based motive. In incidents with six or more deaths, the correlation climbed to 70%.

Deborah Epstein, director of Georgetown University Law Center's Domestic Violence Clinic, told NPR's **All Things Considered**:

“It makes sense when you consider what motivates most perpetrators of domestic violence who are using violence in their home as a strategy to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and to control the women in their lives, right? Mass shooters like this one in Atlanta are doing the same thing on a much larger scale. They are subjecting a large group of people they've targeted to this same sense of terror that the motivation is parallel. It's this need to dominate, intimidate and control other people.”



AUTHORITY FOR CONDEMNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAN BE FOUND IN GALATIANS 5:19-21:

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

USING THIS VERSE AS A GUIDE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A SINFUL ACT.

□ Jealousy

Jealousy is often the first sign of a controlling personality.

□ Fits of rage

By raging and threatening, an abuser gains power over a victim.

□ Selfishness

Abusers are very selfish, seeking to have their own needs met, often at the expense of the other person. Husbands should love their wives as Christ loves the church...sacrificially.

□ Drunkenness

Alcohol is not a cause of domestic violence, but it is often present in domestic violence situations.

Abusers frequently use alcohol/drugs as an excuse to batter, saying they “made him lose control.”

Victims may abuse alcohol, too, to cope with their plight. They can be guided to help overcoming addictions, but only after they have achieved real safety from the abuse. Safety should always be the first priority in helping victims.

□ Dissensions and discord

As stated earlier, physical abuse does not have to be present for there to be domestic violence. Threats of abuse are often a part of the abuser's control.

Psychological and emotional abuse destroys relationships and marriages.

□ Sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery

Sexual abuse is also common in domestic violence situations. Sex between husband and wife is never meant to be coercive or hurtful.

Abusers will sometimes engage in affairs or pornography to feed their addictions and also to further hurt or demean their partners.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF FORGIVENESS AS IT RELATES TO ABUSE

Colossians 3:13 says, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” One of the most important principles in Christianity is forgiveness. Jesus taught it in many sermons and through many parables. Christians are supposed to forgive the people who do wrong to us, just as Jesus forgives those who did wrong to Him. Unfortunately, many have taken this Christian mandate to “turn the other cheek,” as instruction to stay in abuse.

HOW DO WE ADDRESS CONCEPTS SUCH AS “TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK” (MATTHEW 5:39) WHEN IN THE CONTEXT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Matthew 5:39 “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

“Turn the other cheek” should not be interpreted to mean “endure more abuse.” During the time and the culture in which this concept was written, turning the other cheek would force your attacker to strike you backhanded, which was considered a cowardly act, causing the person to lose face and be shamed. Therefore, taken in context, turning the other cheek means allowing shame to be brought to the attacker by his own actions, not to ask for more injury.”

(Andersen, J. (2007). Woman submit! Christians and domestic violence. Auburndale: One Way Cafe Press.)

FORGIVENESS DOES NOT=RECONCILIATION



WHAT ABOUT FORGIVENESS IN THE CONTEXT OF ABUSE?

Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation.

Forgiveness is an internal response and choice of one individual in regards to another. Reconciliation implies two people choosing to resolve their differences for the purpose of continued relationship. Domestic violence is the fault of the abuser alone. It is the abuser who chooses to use violence.

Reconciliation can be dangerous for victims of domestic violence because of the complex dynamics of power and control, the lack of accountability for the abuser, and the safety of the victim.

Forgiveness can (and, often in domestic violence situations, must) happen at a distance. A victim's forgiveness should never mean she has given up her right to be safe.

Denying or forgetting is not the same as forgiving.

Church leaders cannot ignore abuse, nor should they encourage a victim to deny its occurrence or its affects.

Where denial thrives, abuse persists.

Abusers often beg for forgiveness, but continue to hurt, threaten, injure, and control the victim.

WHAT ABOUT FORGIVENESS IN THE CONTEXT OF ABUSE CONTINUED...

Forgiveness takes time.

Sometimes church leaders are tempted to move the victim past the pain into forgiveness too soon – remember safety must come first.

It can be very damaging to the individual to rush a victim into forgiveness before they have had the opportunity to properly acknowledge that the abuse was not their fault and process the feelings of anger and betrayal which are inevitable.

Forgiveness is often the last step in the process of healing.

Forgiveness should be encouraged only after ensuring the victim's safety and allowing an appropriate amount of time for processing the trauma (which is different for each person).

Again, forgiveness is not for the purpose of reconciling the relationship. Rather it is forgiveness that allows a person to move past the trauma, releasing her from the power that the abusive relationship has had over her.

Forgiveness may take time. This should not make the victim feel guilty or ashamed.

*Forgiveness does not require a victim to stay with an abusive spouse.

CARRIE'S STORY



OVERVIEW: SO WHAT DO PASTOR'S NEED?

1. An understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and abuse.
2. Recognize the emotional, physical and spiritual impact on victims and their families.
3. Be committed to collaborating with and working with service providers, mental health, police, community resources and shelters.
4. Know how to provide spiritual and professional help, hope and healing through the Word of God.
5. Be committed to breaking the silence by reporting domestic violence; and by not allowing the cries of victims to be silenced and swept under the clerical carpet.
6. To be proactive, not reactive.

HOW CAN PASTOR'S AND CHURCHES HELP?

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THINGS YOUR CHURCH CAN DO TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RAISE AWARENESS

1.

PUT A RESOURCE
LIST IN THE
BULLETIN

2.

DISCUSS HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS
WITH TEENS

3.

TALK ABOUT
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE FROM
THE PULPIT



4.

INVITE A SPEAKER
TO TALK ABOUT
HEALING

5.

DEVELOP A
SERMON OR
SERMON SERIES

6.

VISIT THE ANANIAS
FAITH-BASED
PAGES

7.

HOST A FORUM
ON DOMESTIC
ABUSE



8.

POST A RESOURCE
LIST ON YOUR
WEBSITE

9.

INVITE A SPEAKER
TO TALK ABOUT
CHANGE

10.

DISCUSS
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE IN
MEN'S GROUPS

11.

DISCUSS
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE IN
WOMEN'S GROUPS

12.

USE SOCIAL
MEDIA TO SPREAD
AWARENESS

13.

GET TO KNOW THE
ANANIAS WEBSITE

14.

HOST A MEN'S
BREAKFAST TO
EQUIP THEM

15.

HIGHLIGHT D.V.A.M.
ON YOUR
CHURCH SIGN

16.

ENCOURAGE
DISCUSSIONS IN
SMALL GROUPS



17.

SPEAK OUT
AGAINST SPIRITUAL
ABUSE



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FOUNDATION

See more at www.ananiasfoundation.org/31

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THINGS YOUR CHURCH CAN DO TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MAKE AN IMPACT

18.
COLLECT SUPPLIES
FOR A SHELTER

19.
FUNDRAISE FOR
A DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
ORGANIZATION



20.
SERVE AS
PART OF AN
ACCOUNTABILITY
TEAM

21.
CREATE A
DEDICATED
CHURCH FUND

22.
CHECK OUT OUR
SCRIPTURAL
GUIDE TO
TRANSFORMATION

23.
TRAIN YOUR
PASTORAL AND
COUNSELING
STAFF

24.
SHARE YOUR
IDEAS WITH
OTHERS

25.
PARTNER
WITH LOCAL
COUNSELORS

26.
HIGHLIGHT
VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITIES
AND ENCOURAGE
VOLUNTEERS

27.
SURVEY MEMBERS
ABOUT DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

28.
ESTABLISH
A DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE POLICY



30.
IDENTIFY GAPS IN
YOUR TRAINING

29.
PRAY FOR THOSE
AFFECTED

31.
SHARE A BOOK
WITH THOSE
CAUSING HARM





Thank You



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