

# **Pieces of a Bigger Picture**

**Faith Communities and Service Providers Working Together** to Support Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are. - 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

### **Develop Protocols**

Have an action plan in place to follow if a victim of abuse asks for help or if you learn that a church member is being abusive. Prioritize the safety of victim(s) and the accountability of the batterer. Make sure all teachers Be ready to refer to area and youth group leaders receive service providers.

training about how to recognize abuse and whom to approach with concerns. Include age-appropriate prevention programming about teen dating violence and family violence for children and youth.

**Educate** 

Our Children

#### Create a Safe Haven

Make your church a safe place where victims of abuse can ask for help. Let your community know that you are prepared to provide support. Keep an updated list of referral resources for women, men and children.

**Life Cycle Events** You will have more contact with families around life cycle events such as baptisms, confirmations, first communions, weddings, and funerals. Observe the dynamics within families and share

Teach

through

resources as needed. Be alert that pregnancy and the arrival of a child may escalate abusive behavior.

#### **Pastoral**

Get

pastors for support. Contact Safe Havens for education

and technical assistance.

## **Use Your Prophetic Voice**

Give sermons on domestic violence to build awareness, teach that family violence is not acceptable in the Christian community, and emphasize that help is available. Use **Training** special prayers on domestic Participate in violence, e.g., during the workshops designed Pastoral Prayer or for clergy to learn safe and Prayers of the effective ways to address People. domestic violence in your congregation. Network with other

#### **Educate the Congregation** Response Sponsor education programs on domestic

violence. Invite staff from local domestic violence agencies to speak during worship or adult Work education. Print articles that include lists of as a Team community resources in the bulletin. Domestic violence Post bathroom flyers with is a complex problem resource numbers. Include that requires a team approach. abuse in pre-marital, Clearly define your role as a counseling. pastor, and be ready to refer by building relationships with domestic violence advocates, police, and staff at state-certified batterer intervention programs.