

## **Guidelines for Working with DV Victims & Abusive Partners**

Remember the Goals:

- 1. SAFETY for the woman and children**
- 2. ACCOUNTABILITY for the abuser**
- 3. RESTORATION of individuals; and IF POSSIBLE, relationships**

### **DOs and DON'Ts with an Abused Woman**

DO believe her. Her description of the domestic abuse is only the tip of the iceberg.

DO reassure her that the abuse is not her fault, she doesn't deserve this treatment, it is not God's will for her.

DO give her referral information; like ARMS 503-846-9284 or National Hotline. 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

DO support and respect her choices. Even if you do not understand.

DO encourage her to think about a safety plan: set aside some money; copies of important papers for her and children; a change of clothes hidden or in care of a friend if she decides to go to a shelter. Plan how to exit the house the next time the abuser is violent. Plan what to do about the children if they are at school; if they are asleep, etc. (This is both practical and helps her stay in touch with the reality of the abuser's violence. Safety planning is a process that is ongoing.)

DO protect her confidentiality.

DO help her with any religious concerns. Send her to ARMS for help with this, too.

DO assure her of God's love for her, and of your commitment to help her through this difficult time. Pray with her.

DO help her see her partner's violence has broken the marriage covenant and that God does not want her to remain in a situation where her life and the lives of her children are in danger.

DO support her and help her to mourn the loss of the relationship if he is unwilling to make changes and the relationship comes to an end.

DO NOT give information about her or her whereabouts to the abuser or to others who might pass information on to the abuser. Do not discuss with the church council or elders who might inadvertently pass information on to the abuser.

DO NOT minimize the danger to her. You can be a reality check. "From what you have told me, I am very much concerned for your safety . . ."

DO NOT tell her what to do. Give information and support.

DO NOT react with disbelief, disgust, or anger at what she tells you. Let her know that you are concerned, that what the abuser has done to her is wrong, and she did not deserve to be treated abusively.

DO NOT blame her for his violence. Encourage her to understand she cannot control his choices.

DO NOT recommend couples counseling or approach her husband and ask for "his side of the story." These actions will endanger her.

DO NOT recommend mediation or communications workshops. Power and control are the problem.

DO NOT send her home with a prayer and directive to submit to her husband, bring him to church, or be a better Christian wife.

DO NOT encourage her to believe forgiveness is the answer for the problem.

DO NOT encourage her dependence on you or become emotionally involved with her.

DO NOT do nothing.

## **DOs and DON'Ts with an Abusive Partner**

DO approach him and express your concern and support for him to be accountable and to deal with his abusive behavior (once she is in a safe place).

DO meet with him, but do not allow him to focus on his wife being the problem.

DO address any religious rationalizations he may offer or questions he may have.

DO name the abusive behavior as his problem, *not hers*. Tell him that only he can stop it.

DO refer to a program which specifically addresses domestic abuse.

DO assess him for suicide or threats of homicide.

DO warn the victim if he makes specific threats towards her.

DO find ways to collaborate with community agencies and law enforcement to hold him accountable.

DO NOT approach him or let him know that you know about his abusive behavior. This cannot be done until she is in a safe place and you have her permission

DO NOT allow him to use religious excuses for his behavior or accept his blaming her for his behavior.

DO NOT encourage couples counseling with him and his partner if you are aware that there is domestic abuse.

DO NOT go to him to confirm the victim's story.

DO NOT give him any information about his partner or her whereabouts.

DO NOT be taken in by his minimization, denial or lying about his abusive behavior.

DO NOT be taken in by his "conversion" experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as he proceeds with accountability. If it is phony, it is only another way to manipulate you to maintain control and avoid accountability.

DO NOT advocate for the abuser to avoid the legal consequences of his violence.

DO NOT provide a character witness for him with purpose in any legal proceedings.

DO NOT confuse his remorse with true repentance.

DO NOT send him home with a prayer. Instead, work with others in the community to hold him accountable.